

# WATC AY 15-16 Assessment Report

The mission of WATC is to provide quality higher education and leadership in workforce training that supports economic development for a global economy.

During the AY 2015-2016 WATC offered x different programs across six departments including Aviation, Manufacturing, Transportation and Skilled Trades, Nursing, and General Education. The departments offered a variety of degree completion options including Associates of Applied Science, Technical Certificates, Certificates of Completion and transferable General Education courses.

Academic Year 2015-2016 was a building year for the WATC Assessment Process. During this year, the Director of Assessment worked with faculty, Deans, and other academic leaders to build and implement a sustainable Assessment Plan. In May of AY 15-16, the Director of Assessment position was eliminated and plans put in place for the creation of a faculty based Assessment Committee.

Faculty across the college participated in the assessment process by identifying the assessment tasks, performing the student assessments, gathering the required data, evaluating the data, and formulating any necessary curriculum improvement plans. Additionally during AY 15-16 faculty worked with the Director of Assessment to complete the following assessment tasks:

- Audit and map program/discipline outcomes across the curriculum
- Selected the skills based and knowledge based assessment tasks used in program/discipline assessment plan
- Create and implement the tools to communicate student learning outcomes to students – Edu-Cate
- X the quality standard for assessment tasks
- Identified standard for student success on assessment task

## Student Learning Outcomes

### General Education Outcomes/Student Learning Outcomes

In order to establish a consistent general education core and outcomes expected of all graduates, Wichita Area Technical College adopted a set of four core general education outcomes (known at the college as Student Learning Outcomes) in AY 15-16. The student learning outcomes allowed Technical Programs and General Education programs to cohesively support student learning of core components of education in a manner that prepares them for a 21<sup>st</sup> century academic and professional environment. The student learning outcomes, their corresponding descriptions are:

1. Communication: The student will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively using written and oral communication.

2. **Critical Thinking:** The student will demonstrate the ability to think critically, logically and abstractly.
3. **Information Literacy:** The student will recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.
4. **Problem Solving:** The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze information and solve problems.

The WATC Assessment Plan calls for Student Learning Outcomes to be phased into the college over four-year period. Once phased in the Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed on a rotating four-year cycle. AY 15-16 was identified as the pilot year for the Student Learning Outcome – Communication. During this year, two rubrics (one oral and one written) were developed and adopted as the evaluation tool for communication. Faculty from across the college including aviation, manufacturing, and health sciences were volunteered to pilot the communication rubrics in their program courses.

[Results of communication pilot here](#)

### **Communicating Student Learning Outcomes to Students**

In order to communicate the Student Learning Outcomes integration into technical programs and general education courses across the college the outcomes were grouped together to form the acronym Edu-Cate. The plan to Edu-Cate was adopted college wide in the Spring of 2016 with all courses and programs defining specific Skill, activities, assignments, and assessments within the program/course that facilitate the learning process and fulfillment of the student learning process. The plan to Edu-Cate appears on every course syllabus across the college. Faculty were required to complete the communication portion of Edu-Cate however, the most programs completed the remaining portions as well. If necessary, these portions will be updated as the college moves through the SLO implementation schedule. Examples from different SLO and programs/disciplines are below.

#### **Communication (Oral and Written) – Medical Assisting**

The student will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively using written or oral communication. Students are offered opportunities to apply written or oral communication skills through a variety of course assignments and tasks incorporating specific concepts and knowledge related to Medical Assisting. Examples of this are class discussions, participating in collaborative online activities, and discussions with other students needing assistance.

#### **Analysis (Problem Solving and Critical Thinking) - Welding**

The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze information and solve problems. The student will demonstrate the ability to think critically, abstractly and logically about industry related concepts. Students are trained to self-evaluate throughout the welding process, they engage in a visual inspection process using a program specific criteria that prepares them for industry standards.

Technology (Informational Literacy and Technological Skills – General Education – Sciences

The student will recognize when information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. WATC encourages the use of current and emerging technologies in the classroom or online. Students in the online and traditional classroom will be offered opportunities to initiate the use of technology in pursuit of scientific knowledge.

Expertise (Industry Specific Skills - Aerospace Manufacturing

The student will engage in activities, assignments and assessments that foster excellence in communication, analysis and technology in order to enhance industry specific skills. By participating in courses in Aerospace Manufacturing, students will develop the skills and knowledge to enhance their chosen career pathway. Students are trained to develop these skills through repetitive practice and evaluation which prepares them for the interview process and the necessary skills to gain employment.

### **Program Level Assessment**

All programs at Wichita Area Technical College have established program or discipline outcomes. The program and discipline outcomes connect student learning to the activities in the classroom. The program outcomes are specific to technical programs such as Medical Assistant and Automotive Service Technology, while the discipline outcomes are specific to general education courses such as English and Mathematics.

These outcomes are housed in WIDS (Worldwide Instructional Design System) and mapped through the program courses to determine where each outcome is introduced (I) practiced (P) and assessed (A).

Using the curriculum maps, each program or discipline identified specific assessments tasks (one skills based assessment and one knowledge based assessment). The tasks were used to gauge how well students learned the important concepts from the course as outlined in the list of outcomes.

While the assessment tools vary between programs and disciplines, typical examples are listed below

- Welding – Bar Napkin Project in CWG 149 (Skills Based)
- Nursing – Skills Checklist
- Automotive Service Technology – Diagnostic Assessment in TAS 134 (Skills Based)
- Science – Final Exam – Chemistry 135 and BIO 150
- Humanities – Final Essay in Art Appreciation

As part of the overall college, assessment strategy each technical program/discipline evaluates the knowledge and skill based assessment tasks using the same goal or quality objective of (100%). Each program/discipline or Academic area determine the standard of student success as is appropriate to the assessment, their program or their industry For example in the Transportation and Skilled Trades department all programs use the goal of 100% of the students will obtain 70% or better on the skills and knowledge based assessment regardless of program. In the nursing program, 100% of the student must achieve 100% on both the knowledge and skills based assessment. In the general education department, 100% of the students must obtain 70% or better on the assessment regardless of discipline area.

### **Program Outcome Evaluation**

In May of 2016 the Director of Assessment position was eliminated. By September of 2016 the WATC Assessment Committee made up of faculty representation from each academic department was operational. Assessment Committee members assisted faculty in the evaluation of 15-16 assessment data and formation of specific recommendations and actions when necessary. AY2015-2016 assessment data was pulled by ITAS and forwarded to faculty. Faculty reviewed the data and identified if goals were met or not met. Improvement objectives and interventions were then identified for any unmet goals. Listed below is an example of improvement objective and interventions from Humanities \_ speech and IPC –

Increase students' writing skills to improve performance.

Students lack effective writing strategies:

1) Create “scaffolded” writing assignments: Break long writing assignments down into shorter, scaffolded assignments. For a research paper, for example, you might ask first for a proposal or statement of intention in which the student must articulate the purpose of his paper (who will it try to convince of what?). At a slightly later stage, you might ask for a list of relevant bibliographic resources, then for an argument, clearly stated in 1-2 sentences. This can help to illuminate for students the component tasks of a writing assignment, while not permitting them to wait until the last minute to begin work.

2) Require drafts: Faculty can include the submission of intermediate drafts as part of an assignment, providing feedback at each of the stages. This has a number of advantages. First, it allows instructors to see where students are having problems while those problems can still be addressed. Second, requiring drafts communicates to students that good writing involves progressive refinement. Third, writing in drafts allows students to experiment and take some chances in their writing while the stakes are still low. Fourth, when students receive constructive feedback on early drafts and improve their writing as a result, they see the benefits of revision directly and begin to develop the ability to diagnose writing problems on their own. Finally, requiring drafts discourages plagiarism.

3) Use performance rubrics: Writing isn't a single task; it involves many component tasks.

Furthermore, the nature of writing depends heavily on both the specific assignment (i.e., the purpose of the writing) and the conventions of particular disciplines. Developing clear grading criteria can help students learn to recognize the component tasks involved in particular kinds of writing and identify what they need to work on. Rubrics help to demystify the writing process to students, but also to illuminate its complexity.

### **Program Outcome Assessment Results - AY 2015 -2016**

Transportation and Skilled Trades – 100% of the Skills and Knowledge based Assessment goals - Met

Health Sciences - 85% of the skills based assessment goals were met while 50% of the knowledge-based goals were met

General Education is divided into areas including Humanities (Theatre, Philosophy/ethics/logic/religion, Introduction to literature, Government, History, Composition, Art, Speech/IPC) Math, Science, and Social Science. Humanities – Art met the goals for AY 15-16. In addition, the Math department also assessed Pacer math courses and reported that 50% of the goals were met.

Aviation – 100% of the skills and knowledge based assessments goals - met

Manufacturing – 92% of all Assessment goals were met in Manufacturing

Nursing - Nursing assessed two knowledge based and one skills based assessment. 100% of goals for skills based were met – 50% of knowledge based assessment was met.

### **Summary of results**

AY 15-16 was a building year for the assessment planning and strategies at WATC. Many challenges were identified and the college continues to work through those challenges. On positive side, significant sustainable progress was made in the area of assessment during AY 15-16.

### **Achievements**

- AY 15 – 16 saw the formation of a sustainable assessment structure
- General Education Outcomes were streamlined into four Student Learning Outcomes
- Across the curriculum student learning was identified and measured
- Utilization of WIDS as the home for WATC assessment

### **Challenges**

- AY 15-16 was building year so much of the processes were new for faculty
- New faculty in many program areas struggled with interpreting data for assessments they did not create or select
- Obtaining correct and complete data pulls from Blackboard
- Some programs were over ambitious and selected too many items to assess
- Pilot for Communication was not a success as only one technical program actually implemented the rubric

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