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| **Vincennes University, IN** |
| **Project: Assessing General Education in Early Colleges** |
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| **Version 1.0- Project** |

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| **Q:** | **What is the current status of your project?** |
| **A:** | In-progress |

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| **Q:** | **Please indicate the original project start date, original project end date, and anticipated completion date if project is not completed. Please list dates on separate lines.** |
| **A:** | Project Start Date: Fall 2014  Project End Date: Summer 2016  Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 2016 |

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| **Q:** | **Briefly describe the current status of the project. Explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution’s most recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio, if applicable.** |
| **A:** | VU has been working to create a systematic assessment process, including early college sites.  Three successful reports detailing VU's strong progress on assessment have been submitted to the HLC (April 2012, 2013, and 2015).  The 2013 report focused on VU's developing general education assessment and described VU's efforts to develop critical thinking assignments that ask students to work through ill-defined problems and that synthesize Indiana's new (2012) statewide general education outcomes with VU's new outcomes.  VU worked quickly to pull together assessments and results for the 2013 HLC report.  Reports are no longer required, and this project was designed to move assessment beyond the VU main and Jasper campuses, enabling VU to expand its systematic process, first, to all early colleges, and then to all locations.  The implementation phase of the project is nearly complete, and a pilot completed--a report is linked. |
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| Link : [VU & Early College Critical Thinking & Written Communication Assessment Report](https://my.vinu.edu/documents/59898/4883780/VU+%26+Early+College+Critical+Thinking+%26+Written+Communication+Summer+2016+Assessment+Report.pdf/14082a45-161d-4c16-9734-09c027fb92f3) https://my.vinu.edu/documents/59898/4883780/VU+%26+Early+College+Critical+Thinking+%26+Written+Communication+Summer+2016+Assessment+Report.pdf/14082a45-161d-4c16-9734-09c027fb92f3 | |

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| **Q:** | **List the project goals as stated in the original project declaration along with the metrics/measures for assessing the progress for each goal.** |
| **A:** | One implied goal was to build a common assessment that can be deployed at all locations in order that VU can make a true comparison between the learning outcomes of Vincennes/Jasper campus students and students at other locations.  The measures for assessing the project, the deliverables, include the following:  #1: 60% of students will achieve a level 3-"Acceptable" in all dimensions of the CT evaluation rubric.  #2: Early college students will succeed on par with VU's traditional students.  #3: Early college faculty will be surveyed regarding critical thinking and the assessment results. |

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| **Q:** | **Describe what has been accomplished with this project over the past year, specifically referring to quantifiable results that show progress. You may need to include a discussion clarifying how the original goals and anticipated outcomes may have shifted during the year.** |
| **A:** | The goals of the project have not shifted during the process, and VU is on track to meet all the goals.  Student artifacts from the VU main campus (200 student artifacts pulled for Vincennes/Jasper Campus Critical Thinking and 50 artifacts pulled for Vincennes/Jasper Campus Writing assessments) and the early college assessment (10 Vincennes/Jasper campus artifacts and 30 Early College artifacts for each of the following disciplines: History, Biology, and Spanish for CT and ENGL 101 for the Written Communication assessment) have been assessed and results generated--see the linked report--with the pilot results indicating early college students meeting or exceeding the critical thinking results of VU main campus students.  The writing results were lower, based on the writing success standard, but a review of the results for individual rubric dimensions indicate early college results compared favorably with the same Vincennes/Jasper results (see the graphs in the report).  VU will need to shift #1, the "acceptable" goal, to align more clearly with upcoming CT rubric applicability and clarity revisions.  Goal #3 must still be addressed after distributing the pilot results to the early college faculty.  The additional written communication goal is new and, like the CT standard, needs to be reviewed, along with the rubric, in light of the results. |

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| **Q:** | **Describe how various members of the learning community have participated in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project’s duration, particularly during the past year.** |
| **A:** | A broad range of faculty from the main campus, members of administration (college deans), and faculty from early colleges collaborated to assess student artifacts in the summer of 2016.  In addition, faculty on the Vincennes and Japer campuses and the early colleges have linked course to Blackboard Outcomes so student artifacts could be collected for assessment.  Also, faculty from the Vincennes campus and early colleges have participated in professional development supported and funded by the administration--the Assistant Provost, Provost, and President.  Staff in the Center for Teaching and Learning (Blackboard Outcomes oversight) and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have helped to manage the project and collect the data from the project. |

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| **Q:** | **Describe the effect that this project has had on the institution, students, and others in the learning community. What has the institution learned that can be identified as a good practice to use in other aspects of its quality work or from which other institutions might benefit?** |
| **A:** | This project has fostered a campus-wide discussion and collaboration regarding student outcomes.  While the results of the pilot are preliminary, they have given VU faculty at all locations some indication that outcomes for students in the early colleges are similar to the outcomes of Vincennes and Jasper campuses, at least for the critical thinking outcomes.  In some cases, early college students appear to be better than those of campus students.  It is good for the early college faculty to know their students can perform well and good for VU faculty to understand that similar outcomes are being achieved at the early colleges.  It's also gratifying to know that things like common professional development and the communication that arises from sharing assignments are serving an institutional good.  The results of VU's assessment projects have raised a number of issues.  VU assumes overall results might be better than they currently are (or seem to be).  Scaffolding student learning and revising instructional methods have been at the forefront of the discussions and collaborations among the faculty.  The issue of assignment design has been one of the most important aspects of these discussions.  VU is concerned that some assignments fail to elicit the critical thinking results described in the assessment rubric.  VU faculty and administrators are working on ensuring VU faculty are asking students to demonstrate the outcomes VU intends to assess.  Faculty have also begun to discuss both the content of the rubric and the goals set for student outcomes.  In addition, VU has learned more about the advantages of and gained experience using electronic systems to engage stakeholders at a distance, in this instance, using Blackboard Collaborate.  VU has used Collaborate for norming and other rater issues that arise during the assessment process.  Also, VU has been using Blackboard Outcomes as a technical tool for general education assessment in order to systematize processes, better utilize systems of communication, and engender collective ownership of VU's assessment processes and student results. |

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| **Q:** | **Describe the anticipated challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project’s goals.** |
| **A:** | In the short term, completing this project does not pose great challenges.  However, this pilot has implications for expanding VU's assessment of general education to all it's locations, even beyond the early colleges.  Sustaining communication regarding assessment results will be a challenge moving forward, keeping open the lines of communication between the faculty, administration, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.  VU is in the process of thinking through what is meant by "communicating results" beyond simply putting out a report.  VU will have a large group discussion of the results during an upcoming Curriculum and Academic Affairs Committee meeting, but continuing to provide hands-on, engaging professional development is part of the communication challenge in the future.  VU is planning to use more Collaborate sessions for development, but VU recognizes it must either capture and catalog these sessions or develop YouTube videos if VU is going to reach all faculty as new and adjunct faculty come on board "need to know."  It is simply impossible to reach all of them at one time.  In this regard, the increasing level of funding and support necessary to maintain the ongoing professional development and assessment while expanding the assessment process into other locations will pose a challenge as VU creates and assesses larger samples of student work, establishes the necessary staffing, and compensates faculty reviewers of student work.  Finally, as the process becomes more involved and inclusive, leveraging our available technology (Blackboard) for assessment processes might present a growing challenge. VU built subject repositories that all early college faculty could use rather than registering all faculty and students for VU's Blackboard system.  The approach creates some challenges for uploading artifacts and requires considerable work to see which course sections and students have uploaded, but allows for more students to use the system when all the courses are uploaded.  The approach might not be sustainable. |

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| **Q:** | **In light of the project goals, current circumstances, institutional learning from this project, and anticipated barriers to success, list the next steps to be taken over the course of the next 12 - 24 months in order to complete or institutionalize the results of this action project. Provide a timeline for completing each next step.** |
| **A:** | #1--(September 2016) Share the results of the summer 2016 assessment with all stakeholders.  #2 & 3--(September-October 2016) Communicate assessment expectations to all faculty in all early college locations and engage VU faculty in conversations concerning assignment design based on the assessment results.  #4--(October 2016) Survey the early college faculty regarding critical thinking and assessment results.  #5--(October 2016) Engage the VU faculty to finalize CT rubric revisions.  #6--(November--December 2016) Revise the project target in light of the rubric revisions. |

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| **Q:** | **Provide any additional information, inquiries, or concerns that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project. Enter N/A if not applicable.** |
| **A:** | N/A |

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