



Closing the Loop:

Using Assessment to Improve Student Learning

2019-2020 General Education Highlights



Category 1B: Speaking & Listening

Strategy Employed

- Develop/provide study sheets with key concepts and/or practice exercises.

Increase in strategy use from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 (based on CQI Results)

- 52.38% (33.33% to 85.71%)

Specific Example

“Instructors in Oral Communication 1000 meet weekly with the professor to discuss classes, student assignments, participation, and performance. During meetings, we talk about what went well in class and how we could change things that did not go well. / Personally, I have altered class lessons based on my students' capabilities and questions. I have incorporated more workshop time, Q&A time, and discussion during lectures and after speeches. I have also provided students with study guides or note sheets. On presentation grading rubrics, I provide detailed feedback indicating the students' strengths and weaknesses. I also provide instruction for how to strengthen weak points in a speech.”

Category 4A: Life Sciences

Strategy Employed

- Modified the amount of time spent on specific course content.

Increase in strategy use from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 (based on CQI Results)

- 23.25% (68.42% to 91.67%)

Specific Example

“The course was designed using a classic "small to big" approach in biology, where the semester started with talking about life as individual organism (cell structure, function), and then gradually moved on to talk about population, community, and eventually ecosystem and conservation. The student assessment from previous semesters suggested that students did not find the first section about individual organismal biology connected to the rest of the course. Students told me that even though they found the topics interesting (about diseases, diabetes, etc.), they had a hard time to fit the information into the bigger picture of the course. I also consulted with my colleagues who teach the lab section of the course, and they agree that the lab (a separate course) does not include much information about organismal biology. Therefore, this semester I removed most of the first section of the course, except a few very critical concepts. Throughout the semester, I explicitly provided information during the lectures to help student joining the new concepts with previously covered information. This is a quote from a student's email I received yesterday "I found that it was really intriguing and you connect it very well with everyday to keep it interesting. I also think you do a very good job at interconnecting the sections throughout the semester. I felt as though I remember everything from the first day to now because of how interconnected they are and the class was in doing so.”

Category 5C: Diversity and Global Issues

Strategy Employed

- Change assessment strategies to gain more accurate insight into what students are learning.

Increase in strategy use from 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 (based on CQI Results)

- 31.43% (28.57% to 60.00%)

Specific Example

“I noticed that in students' written assignments, they relied heavily on personal experience, and very often did not incorporate course material into their responses. I created additional scaffolds for them through both more explicit assignment instructions regarding the need to incorporate course material, and in addition, provided explicit rubrics which students can view prior to completing their assignments. This revision was based on what I learned at the Transparency Project Professional Development a few years ago. I realized that students needed much more explicit directions and scaffolding about what to aim for in their written commentaries. After making these changes, I have noticed a great improvement in students' written work in the course, and I am now sharing my revisions with another professor on our team who also teaches the online version of this course.”