

Annual Update: 2008-09-12

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Since our last update of September, 2007, 7 faculty teaching a total of 12 classes have requested and received tutors in their classrooms as part of the Tutors Without Borders Action Project (TWB). Participating faculty are expected to document and report on their experience of using tutors in the classroom as part of the effort to measure the effectiveness of the action project. Faculty may choose the method in which to evaluate the impact of the tutors on student learning. Examples have included faculty that kept journals to note significant observations. A math tutor was requested by the Heating and Ventilation (HVA) instructor to assist students with applying math concepts required to calibrate the heating units. The class has historically tracked a 20-25 percent drop out rate. Adding a math tutor to the course resulted in ALL students that enrolled in the class completing the course during the spring, 2008 term. A survey administered to students participating in classrooms with tutors was overwhelming positive with all respondents indicating high satisfaction with the availability and helpfulness of the tutors. As TWB has become part of the regular tutoring support, students are engaged directly in the classroom with the full range of learning support services offered by the College. The classroom tutor acts as a liaison with the students in the classroom by introducing students to the full resources of the Learning and Resource Center (LaRC) and Student Life. Students are introduced to the Writing and Math Centers in the LaRC much earlier in the semester. Student Life supports an extension of the TWB by offering Study Group Central. Study Group Central provides space and snacks for students to continue working with their classroom tutor outside of class.

Review (09-16-08):

The popularity and benefits of this program clearly continue. It is not clear, however, whether the next steps mentioned in last year's update (e.g., hire for the rotating faculty position; development of the desired class presentations; comparison of retention rates between TWB and non-TWB sections) were completed.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

In an effort to gain an objective perspective of the effectiveness of the action projects, task forces were formed fall, 2007 from faculty and staff that had no previous involvement with the development or implementation of the projects. The make up of the task forces were intentionally designed to include staff from outside of instruction. The task force charged with evaluating the TWB conducted interviews with students and faculty that had used tutors in the classroom. Survey data collected from students and faculty was analyzed. The TWB task force presented their findings and recommendations at the All College meeting held in April, 2008. The recommendations included adopting the TWB action project with some modifications that included prioritizing providing tutors in developmental classes and expanding the communication of the availability of tutors to come into the classroom.

Review (09-16-08):

The project leaders are commended for reaching out to staff outside of the instructional division for feedback; this practice illustrates the inclusion and collaboration characteristic of high-performing organizations and AQIP Category 9. The leaders clearly have been mindful of gathering opinions of the key project stakeholders as they evaluate the project (Category 3); it will also be important to compare retention rates for users and non-users, as was indicated in the

initial project description.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The Tutors Without Borders (TWB) Action Project has developed processes that have been integrated as part of the regular operation of the Learning and Support Resource Center's tutoring support. These processes include the recruitment and training of tutors to work in the classrooms, training for faculty on how to incorporate a tutor in the classroom, and developing an online request form to expedite the matching of faculty with classroom tutors. As part of the planned faculty release to conduct research of teaching and learning outcomes (see Assessment of Student Learning Action Project) the research is expected to include an in-depth analysis of the delivery of developmental education for students scoring below the mandatory placement scores to enroll in college level math and English. It is expected that tutoring strategies will be influenced by the findings of the research and will be incorporated in the TWB Action Project. Effective fall, 2008 a policy change of the Colorado Community College System, has implemented student fees in all math and English courses of \$5.25 per credit hour to expand tutoring support for developmental math and English courses. The new revenue will be used fund additional tutoring and add a full time position to the Learning and Resource Center. One of the responsibilities of the new position will be to formalize the data collection and analysis of tutoring practices. These data will continue to be used to modify the tutoring practices as part of the college's commitment to continual quality improvement of student learning.

Review (09-16-08):

More extensive program evaluation clearly forms the agenda for this action project. The project leaders outline a systematic evaluation process, with a revenue stream, that is linked to other continuous improvement projects on campus. The institution is commended for its attention to Measuring Effectiveness (Category 8), and the focus on collaboration, learning, and information that characterize high-performing institutions.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Faculty may request tutors to provide a range of services. Tutors are available to assist with specific classroom projects such as a research paper, or a discipline specific tutor such as a math tutor may be requested to assist in the application of math concepts in a non-math class such as the earlier example described in HVA. A tutor may also be requested to present on a specific topic such as scientific notation. Tutors working the classroom are compensated for their time based on the tutor's education level, experience, and the level of professional tutoring training the tutor has completed. As part of new faculty orientation, faculty members are encouraged to request a tutor to come into the classroom to describe the learning supports available across the campus. A Learning and Support Services map with common branding placed across the campus is planned to help students navigate the available learning resources available across the institution.

Review (09-16-08):

Red Rocks has certainly developed a robust portfolio of effective practices in providing tutoring services to its students, and helping its faculty to identify effective means on incorporating tutoring supports into classroom instruction. Their work could be beneficial to other institutions.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

We have yet to develop a systematic way to recruit tutors. Faculty are encouraged to refer

advanced students interested in working as tutors. We are exploring more formal communication strategies that will promote tutoring opportunities to students that will engage both instruction and student government through Student Life. Efforts are also continuing to develop to encourage and support part time faculty in using tutors in the classroom.

Review (09-16-08):

The project leaders may consider sending an invitation to students who appear on the dean's list or who are members of academic honor societies as strategies for recruiting tutors. It is difficult to make suggestions about how to encourage part-time instructors to use the program without knowing what the current barriers seem to be (e.g., part-time instructors not knowing about the program? Not on campus outside of classes enough to meet with instructors? Other factors?).

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-16-08):