

Student Learning Connections



A newsletter from the Student Learning Committee



Spring 2010

A Letter from Kristin LaTour

I have been involved with the Student Learning Committee since I started teaching here in 2003. As a part of my tenure goals, I wanted to learn about a committee that was meaningful to me, and since I had a background in graduate school with the concept of the Learning College, the Assessment Committee seemed like a good fit. I started by attending meetings as a visitor with my department colleague, Jim Baskin, and before I knew it, I was working on a sub-committee investigating general education assessment practices at other community colleges. And here we are now. We have gen. ed. learning outcomes, but we still need to tie them into our syllabi and curriculum. We have made gains in making assessment meaningful to faculty and students, but we still don't have full participation, and the system needs some retooling after almost three years of trying a new model.

It is with these great gains and future needs that I am stepping off the committee. New leadership is here in Kristin Ciesemier who will help faculty develop meaningful assessment at the classroom, course and program levels. The committee has strong, dedicated membership, and I'm certain a new chair and faculty leader will come forward. I have great hopes for student learning and our research of it here at JJC. I will continue to cheerlead, but from a sideline position working in my department rather than with the whole college. But I'll be here cheering the work on, and I know it will go on.

SLC Seeks Successor for LaTour as Chair

The Student Learning Committee (SLC) will select a new Chair or Co-Chairs at its April 15 meeting as Kristin LaTour steps away from the position to pursue other activities. The SLC is designed to guide the development, implementation, reporting and ongoing use of assessment plans for student learning in academic and technical departments and student service areas.

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What's New for You in the Library?

Thanks to an Assessment Grant from the Student Learning Committee, the library has purchased a number of recently published titles that focus on the college classroom and student learning. Consider visiting the Student Learning Website @ <http://www.jjc.edu/about/committees/student-learning/Pages/library-assessment-tools.aspx> for a list of annotated titles. Links from this website lead directly to the catalog for availability information.

Most of the titles will be found in the 371.1 – 378.167 section, including the 2010 title **Effective Grading** from Barbara E. Walvoord, a prominent speaker on student assessment. The second edition of *Effective Grading*—the book that has become a classic in the field—provides a proven hands-on guide for evaluating student work and offers an in-depth examination of the link between teaching and grading.

Authors Barbara E. Walvoord and Virginia Johnson Anderson explain that grades are not isolated artifacts but part of a process that, when integrated with course objectives, provides rich information about student learning, as well as being a tool for learning itself. The authors show how the grading process can be used for broader assessment objectives, such as curriculum and institutional assessment.



Assessing The Online Learner: Resources and Strategies for Faculty

by Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt

"Assessing the Online Learner offers guidance for designing and implementing creative assessment practices tied directly to course activities to measure student learning in an online environment.

Filled with illustrative case studies, authentic assessments based in real-life application of concepts, and collaborative activities that assess the quality of student learning rather than relying on the traditional methods of measuring the amount of information retained."

Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide

by Linda Suskie

"This edition includes expanded coverage of vital assessment topics such as promoting an assessment culture, characteristics of good assessment, audiences for assessment, organizing and coordinating assessment, assessing attitudes and values, setting benchmarks and standards, and using results to inform and improve teaching, planning, and decision-making."

The Student Learning Committee Website is: <http://www.jjc.edu/about/committees/student-learning/Pages/default.aspx>.

SLC Seeks Chair cont.

The Chair's duties include calling meetings, developing the agenda and monitoring the budget. The Chair, like all SLC members, represents their department and traditionally serves a two-year term. The new Chair begins duties Fall semester 2010. Information about the work of the Student Learning Committee is available at <http://www.jjc.edu/about/committees/student-learning/Pages/default.aspx>. For Chair info. contact [Kristin LaTour](#) at x6707, C-1063.



Assessment Coordinator Joins JJC!

Kristin Ciesemier came on board in January as Assessment Coordinator. Prior to JJC she was the vice president for [out-reach](#) and director of partnerships at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. Other positions include directing a multi-state consortium integrating educational technology ([NCRTEC](#)) and managing science and math [programs at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory](#). She also has high school and community college teaching experience.

The common thread through all of these diverse experiences has been her keen interest in discerning the quality and impact of innumerable courses, projects and programs. She was attracted to JJC by the opportunity to do assessment full-time.

Kristin is available to help faculty, staff and administrators with all forms of assessment—class, course and program. Her office is J 3007B. Telephone: x 2862. Email: kciesemi@jjc.edu.

General Education Outcomes What's Next?

In 2008, JJC began a multi-year project as a member of the [Higher Learning Commission's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning](#). Our project involves developing and assessing general education student learning outcomes — a critical component for our accreditation. The HLC describes their views and expectations in a [Statement on General Education](#) — an excerpt follows:

...general education is intended to impart common knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and to develop in them the skills and attitudes that an organization's faculty believe every educated person should possess.

JJC's general education outcomes were drafted and revised during Spring and Summer 2009. The [final version of outcomes](#) has been incorporated into CurricUNET and the course templates so faculty can begin identifying the general education outcomes for new and existing courses.

The SLC will create a plan this spring to assess JJC's gen. ed. outcomes. The assessments can take a variety of forms and may vary for each outcome and within each discipline.

In a [2009 national study](#) by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the tools being used to assess general education student learning outcomes included:

- ◆ 40% Rubrics applied to examples of student work
- ◆ 37% Culminating or capstone projects
- ◆ 35% Surveys and self-reports
- ◆ 27% Locally developed common assignments in some courses
- ◆ 26% Standardized national tests of general skills, such as critical thinking
- ◆ 23% Locally developed examinations
- ◆ 16% Standardized national tests of general knowledge, such as science or humanities
- ◆ 1% Student essays/writing portfolios

Thirty-six percent of the AAC&U institutions used assessments based on a sample of students, 24% used departmental assessments and 17% used assessments that all students complete as evidence of general education outcomes.



Assessment Accolades!



Congratulations to **Dr. Scott Keller** and the Veterinary Medical Technology Program staff for continuing to produce outstanding graduates. JJC has a **10 year (since our inception) pass rate of 99%** on the Veterinary Technician National Exam. The VTNE national average pass rate is close to 70%. This academically rigorous program also has 75% of its graduates earning Honors or High Honors status at JJC.

The Vet Tech program takes great pride in the success of its graduates. Not only are graduates placed in local small animal practices but recent graduates have been hired by the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Shedd Aquarium. This is noteworthy because positions at vet schools and at aquariums/zoos are rare and very competitive.



Kudos to **Mary Beth Luna**, nursing department chair, and her faculty and staff for their continued excellent performance. NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses) results for 2009: National Average =88%; State Average =91%; **JJC Average= 95%** (155 candidates). NCLEX-PN results for 2009: National Average=86%; State Average=91%; (National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses) **JJC Average=99%** (124 candidates)

Congratulations to **Bette Conkin**, dean of arts and sciences, who has been selected as a peer reviewer for the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) of The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Kudos to **Kyle Richardson**, culinary instructor and chef, who has completed the process and been awarded the title of approved certification evaluator for the American Culinary Federation.

The college's **Academic Skills Center** has been certified by the National Collegiate Testing Association (NCTA). Membership within the NCTA signifies that a college abides by standards and guidelines recognized as best practices among testing centers. Kudos to **Stephanie Braun**, academic skills center manager, on achieving certification for JJC's center.



Congratulations to three JJC faculty members who presented sessions at the Illinois 14th Annual Assessment Fair for community colleges on March 5. **Andy Neill and Beth Padden** reprised their JJC [assessment fair](#) presentations on mnemonic devices and critical thinking. **Roxanne Munch** discussed development of a departmental rubric for the research paper process.

A JJC Foundation **Award of Excellence Grant** was obtained to develop a college-wide philosophy of reading education and guiding principles congruent with this philosophy. Dr. Norm Stahl, who has authored over 100 publications on developmental reading, including the *Handbook of College Reading and Study Strategy Research*, and Dr. Sonya Armstrong, Professor of Postsecondary Literacy at Northern Illinois University, will be working with JJC faculty to gather data on discipline-specific reading expectations. Identifying the college-reading needs across disciplines will provide guidelines to inform programming, staffing, delivery and assessment of reading.

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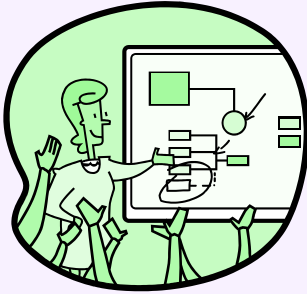


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Assessment Extravaganza Extraordinaire a Success!

The Student Learning Committee recruited JJC presenters and hosted a mini-assessment fair, the [Student Learning Extravaganza Extraordinaire](#), on February 11, 2010. The event began with a coffee hour sponsored by the PPD committee.



The total duplicated headcount for all 9 sessions was *120 participants* – of these 84 were full time and 35 were adjunct faculty. Evaluation revealed that overall the sessions and presenters received positive ratings and met the expectations of the participants. Lunch was provided for all presenters and participants.

The nine concurrent sessions and presenters were:

- ◆ [Incorporating Critical Thinking Through Writing](#) - Beth Padden
- ◆ [Memory as a Way of Doing](#) - Andy Neill
- ◆ [What is with These General Education Outcomes](#) - Kristin LaTour
- ◆ Podcasting Lectures - Kathy Wolz
- ◆ Assessing Students in Technical Areas - Anne Gean and Margaret Semmers
- ◆ [How do General Education Outcomes Affect Me?](#) - Kristin LaTour
- ◆ Assessing Group Processes - Sandy Baker-McKeon
- ◆ Student-led Assessment - Wayne Gawlick
- ◆ [Meet the New Assessment Coordinator](#) - Kristin LaTour & Kristin Ciesemier

Some comments from the evaluations included:

- ◆ *practical aspects, advantages for students, . . . GREAT speaker*
- ◆ *I got at LEAST one good idea from each session!*
- ◆ *New techniques and ideas to enhance learning*

