General Education:
Just When You Thought It Was Safe to Swim

June 14, 2013
Student Affairs & Research Conference

William E. McCloskey, PhD
Professor of English
Co-Chair, Learning Assessment Committee
Monroe County Community College
Monroe, MI
Monroe County Community College

- A comprehensive community college in Michigan
- About 4,000 full-time students
- 53% transfer  47% career **
- Locally elected Board of Trustees (7)
General Education Obstacles

- Board of Trustees
- Two decades of “fits and starts” (and a little ennui)
- HLC (2000) “warning”
- HLC (2010) dodging the bullet by joining the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning (2007)
Overcoming the Obstacles

- Creating the Assessment Plan
- Forming the Learning Assessment Committee (LAC)
  - Creating a common vocabulary
  - Creating Goals, Competencies, Outcomes, Objectives
  - Identifying “satisfier” courses
  - Creating rubrics
- Trustee and Faculty buy in
- Hiring an Institutional Researcher
- Successful completion of the HLC Assessment Academy
General Education Goals and Competencies

• **Communication**
  – Write effectively
  – Speak effectively
  – Use current and appropriate tools and resources

• **Critical Thinking**
  – Understand the elements of scientific inquiry
  – Use numbers and quantitative relationships
  – **Access and evaluate information from credible sources**

• **Social and Cultural Awareness**
  – Recognize expressions of the human experience
  – Recognize the interrelationship of social factors on human thought and action
  – Demonstrate knowledge of responsible citizenship
Satisfier Courses

• A course will satisfy a General Education Competency if all the Learning Objectives are met in the course. However, it is understood that the purpose of the course is to teach and evaluate these objectives. In other words, the Learning Objectives are germane to the course, not supplemental or peripheral.

• For example, to meet the “Access and evaluate information from credible sources” competency, the substance of the course must deal with all of the objectives; it is not enough to have a research assignment or project as part of the class.
Goal: Critical Thinking

• **Competency**: Access and evaluate information from credible sources

• **Learning Outcome**: Students will demonstrate an understanding of various structures within the information environment and the process by which this is produced, organized, and disseminated
Goal: Critical Thinking

Competency: Access and evaluate information from credible sources

• **Learning Objectives**: In order to achieve the learning outcome, the student will be able to
  
  – Determine the scope and type of information needed to effectively analyze and support a thesis
  
  – Access a variety of databases, references, and other sources appropriate for the information needed
  
  – Demonstrate that the accessed information has provenance, logic, validity, relevance, and credibility
  
  – Demonstrate the ability to use the accessed information ethically and legally through proper attribution
  
  – Demonstrate an ability to synthesize the accessed information into written or oral presentations appropriate to the academic discipline
Assessment Today at MCCC:
And we thought we were done!!

• General Education Assessment
  – The “roll-out” of the nine competencies
  – The issues with external accreditations

• Program-level Assessment
  (Occupational/Career Tech Ed)
QUESTIONS???????