

## The Outcomes Project (TOP) at Waubonsee Community College

## A View from the TOP

Waubonsee's  
TOP MEASURE**Managing Human**

**Interaction:** the ability to make and navigate relationships

**Expanding Knowledge:**

the ability to build on one's own knowledge base

**Adapting Concepts:** the

ability to build upon a concept

**Shaping the Future:** the

ability to use knowledge for change

**Utilizing Facts:** the

ability to apply a fact to a new situation

**Reflecting:** the ability to

think about one's own thinking and learning

**Expanding Knowledge:**

the ability to build on one's own knowledge base

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In addition to following our own institutional guidelines, as described in Waubonsee's vision, mission, and goals, The Outcomes Project (TOP) is also guided by the 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning that were developed by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE).

**1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. It begins with a vision of the styles of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve.

**2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.** Learning is a complex process. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration.

**3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear,**

## 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

**explicitly stated purposes.** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations derived from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals.

**4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experiences along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes.

**5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement.

**6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.** Faculty play a vital role, but assessment's questions can't be addressed without participation by student

affairs, librarians, students, and administrators.

**7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom.

**8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.** Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

**9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.** As educators, we have a responsibility to the public to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations.

## What is The Outcomes Project (TOP)?

For more information  
contact: Stacey Randall,  
Outcomes Assessment  
Specialist  
Collins Hall, Room 236A  
(CTLT)  
Extension 2897  
[srandall@waubensee.edu](mailto:srandall@waubensee.edu)  
or visit the TOP Web site at  
<http://top.waubensee.edu>

*TOP (The Outcomes Project) is a multi-faceted, institution-wide, faculty-driven initiative with a mission to improve the process of assessing student outcomes. The TOP initiative is dynamic in nature with an emphasis on process, rather than a final destination.*

*A commitment to a holistic, cross-disciplinary approach for assessing student outcomes is at the heart of TOP. Early in the project, it was recognized that the traditional general education/programmatic outcomes dichotomy did not provide this holistic approach. Rather, an approach was needed that would integrate the outcomes of the college's varied programs, disciplines, and curricula. In a quest for this holistic approach, TOP focused its energies on building a model for outcomes assessment that would provide a unique institution-wide framework with common language. The results were the TOP MEASURE and Waubensee's Outcomes Cycle. We invite you to join us on this journey as we work to improve student learning in all areas of the Waubensee community.*

## Featuring Faculty: Communications

TOP has been assisting faculty members from around the college with the development of Outcomes Strategies for their courses and departments. These Outcomes Strategies embrace the TOP MEASURE and the process of the Outcomes Cycle. During the summer, **Allison DeStefano**, Communications Instructor, suggested a project that would seek to assess and evaluate student learning in the Fundamentals of Speech Communication (COM 100) courses.

Allison was concerned about the level of anxiety that students

experienced when they had to give speeches in COM 100. Many people have a fear of public speaking and her goal was to find a way to alleviate that fear with practical tips and techniques. However, as class time is limited, it is almost impossible to address all those concerns consistently for each student. Therefore, she developed an idea for a speech clinic that would be conducted similarly to the more traditional tutoring that occurs at Waubensee. The clinic would be open at specific days and times and students would be able to visit a tutor who could assist them with speech techniques. Using CommuniCoach, students will be video taped and then will be able to critique their own speeches from class to see what mistakes they are making.

This project is in the early stages of development and will continue to grow throughout the year. For more information on Outcomes Strategies, visit the TOP web site at <http://top.waubensee.edu>.



## TOP Teaching Series Upcoming Events

Wednesday, November 2  
Developing Rubrics: Part 1  
2:00-3:00 pm, Collins 227

Friday, November 4  
Assessment & Grading  
10:00-11:00 am, Collins 227

Wednesday, November 9  
Developing Rubrics: Part 2  
2:00-3:00 pm, CTLT

Thursday, November 17  
Assessment and Grading  
2:00-3:00 pm, Collins 227

Wednesday, December 7:  
Developing a Learning-Centered  
Syllabus  
2:00-3:00 pm, Collins 227