

MCC to take part in study of testing

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MANCHESTER — Manchester Community College has been selected as one of six colleges in the state and nearly 50 nationwide to join a multistate collaborative aimed at improving the effectiveness of student testing.

Higher education leaders and faculty from nine states are working together to see how to better measure student achievement, college officials said.

Existing assessment methods often rely upon grades, standardized testing, and student surveys, which are inadequate to accurately gauge and compare important information about what students know, understand, and how they apply knowledge, the college said.

The nine states that have formed the multistate collaborative will design and pilot a testing program that builds on assessment linked to instruction, curriculum, and "real student work," educators said.

This semester, MCC faculty will create assignments that can

be assessed using a common assessment tool.

During the fall semester, actual student work will be collected and submitted to the collaborative database for assessment.

The work of the Multistate Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment supports improvements at the campus level, while also giving state educators a better idea of how students are performing, college officials said.

Results can be compared to the results for similar institutions across the country, in effect establishing nationwide benchmarks for student learning at the community college and university levels, MCC officials said.

The work of the collaborative is based on the idea that by working together and by focusing attention on the quality of student learning, campuses and states can bring about much needed change in higher education.

Funding for the collaborative comes from a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

