

Project for Putting Learning at the Core Assessment Report, 1998-1999

Department: Information Studies

Submitted by: Thomas Eland, Department Coordinator

Minneapolis Community & Technical College Mission Statement:

Minneapolis Community and Technical College is a two-year college located in downtown Minneapolis, serving the diverse, multicultural communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. We provide a comprehensive offering of developmental, liberal arts, pre-professional, professional, and technical programs to prepare students to live and work in a democratic society within a changing global community. Our student-centered learning environment is designed to serve students with differing abilities, interests, and goals to promote lifelong learning and the development of each student's potential.

The spirit in which the faculty, staff and administration of Minneapolis Community and Technical College fulfill this mission reflects our commitment to opening doors of opportunity, creating a respectful environment, providing dynamic, high quality educational programs, serving students, and building bridges to the community.

I. Department Mission Statement:

The Information Studies program assists students in becoming lifelong learners by teaching them information literacy and research skills. It also provides students with the opportunity to explore how information and knowledge shapes their lives, their community, and the world. Students become critical users of information, learning how to situate information and knowledge in a diverse global environment.

II. Department Vision Statement and/or Proposed Changes:

No vision statement at this time.

III. Student Outcomes (at the departmental/program level):

Students will gain:

- The ability to critically examine information and determine its authenticity, credibility, intellectual content, bias, etc.
- The ability to determine the proper tool needed to locate desired information
- The ability to use print, electronic, and Internet indexes in the various academic disciplines to locate information
- The ability to use and understand library reference tools and classification systems

Students will:

- Understand how knowledge is produced and organized in society
- Understand how information and knowledge is affected by cultural, political and economic factors

- Understand issues related to copyright, intellectual freedom, and the public vs. private ownership of information

IV. Department Assessment Plan of Student Learning:

The department uses in-class exercises, out-of class exercises, writing exercises, and mid-term and final examinations to assess student learning. The final exam in INFS 1000 is a competency exam that evaluates how well students have integrated all the skills they learned in class.

In addition to the class exercises and exams the department uses course evaluation tools to allow students to provide critical evaluations of the instructors' teaching abilities as well as the usefulness of the course.

Instructors in the department come together twice each semester to assess student progress. Faculty develop new course content based on this data as well as data collected from course assignments. During the program meetings faculty also review course readings and make recommendations for new course readings and texts.

V. Assess Student Learning at the Program/Division Level:

The department uses evaluation forms to grade exams and uses copies of these evaluation forms to compare and assess student performance at the program level. Faculty make copies of exams that represent students performing in the highest, the middle, and at the lowest skill levels. The faculty use the student course evaluations to assess the effectiveness of course and program quality and content.

VI. Compile, Analyze, and Summarize the Results

Each faculty member in the program is responsible for gathering the appropriate data for their course. The faculty will come together twice per semester to analyze the data, and the program coordinator will summarize and report the results.

This is the first full year of the Information Studies program. For evaluation purposes we used data from spring semester 1999. This was the first semester that we had all our evaluation tools in place and applied consistently across the program. For the purposes of this assessment report we focused on our core INFS 1000, Information Literacy and Research Skills course.

Number of student exam forms used in the assessment sample: 12

Number of complete exams evaluated:

Examples of highest grades: 4

Examples of middle grades: 5

Examples of lowest grades: 4

Number of student course evaluations reviewed: 20

Summary of Results:

We evaluated competency examinations and course evaluations from students in our INFS 1000 course from the first half of spring semester 1999.

Competency Examination Results:

We evaluated exams from students performing at the highest, middle and lowest skill levels. Each instructor presented examples from each category and we discussed grading criteria and processes. We all used a common competency examination and exam grade sheet to score the competency exam. We made suggestions to add additional grading criteria. We also discussed and decided to add more in class group exercises so that students have more opportunities to learn the material. These additional exercises were suggested as a result of our identifying common mistakes that students made on their competency examination. We also decided to have students print out the citations from the electronic resources that they find for the competency examination. We found that students consistently made inappropriate citations to electronic resources.

Evaluation Results:

Many students felt that the course was appropriate and valuable. They felt the course helped prepare them to do research and use libraries and information sources more effectively. Most students commented that they felt the course should be increased to 2 credits. They felt that there was too much content to cover and they were not able to spend enough time on various parts of the course.

VII. Proposed Program Changes to Improve Student Learning:

(Based on the assessment results, what changes will the program/division make in order to improve student learning? Will a specific topic be given more time? Will you change the sequence in which topics are presented? Will you make changes to methods used to teach a specific topic? Will courses be changed? Prerequisites added or changed? Cut-scores in English or Math changed? Do you need additional equipment, training or materials in order to increase the effectiveness?)

As listed above, we will add additional in-class group exercises to reinforce material covered in lectures and demonstrations. These group exercises aid students in their individual out-of-class exercises and help prepare them for the competency examination.

We will also add more specific criteria to the competency examination grading form so that our evaluation of student achievement can be more precise and objective.

Starting with the 1999-2000 academic year the department will begin using assessment tools designed to gather feedback from and about INFS 1000 students who are enrolled in ENGL 1111. One assessment tool will be given to students and will gather information on the usefulness of INFS 1000 in preparing them to do research. We will also have an assessment tool developed for ENGL 1111 faculty to complete. Results from these tools will provide INFS 1000 faculty with additional data to enhance and improve the course.