Project for Putting Learning at the Core
Information Literacy Assessment Report, 2001-2002

Department: Information Studies
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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. Information Studies Student Demographics:
Like the college as a whole, the Information Studies program is composed of a very diverse student population. During the 2000-2001 academic year (the most current year for program data), the Information Studies Department served 363 unduplicated students. Of those students 128 were men, and 225 were women; 133 were listed as academically disadvantaged, and 171 were listed as economically disadvantaged. Of the 363 unduplicated students, Information Studies served the following student population by program FYE: 182.33 Liberal Arts, 28.07 Occupational, 13.70 Technical, and 39.43 Developmental. The average age of students in the program was 26.1 years. We had 2 students in the 0-16 age range; 113, 17-21 year olds; 99, 22-25 year olds; 77, 26-34 year olds; 40, 35-45 year olds; 12, 46-54 year olds; and 20 listed in the miscellaneous category.

The Information Studies faculty require students to fill out a questionnaire on the first day of INFS 1000 to determine student placement in the English Composition Program. MCTC offers three English Composition courses: ENGL 0900, Fundamentals of Written English; ENGL 1110, College English I; and ENGL 1111, College English II. Students

are placed into English composition based on their scores on the college assessment and placement examination. Students must complete both ENGL 1110 and ENGL 1111 to graduate with and Associates of Arts degree. INFS 1000, Information Literacy and Research Skills, requires ENGL 0900 as a prerequisite to the course.

The Information Studies faculty gathered student data from Spring Semester INFS 1000 course sections (seven course sections running weeks 1-8). The data is not a precise head count for the sections, as some students do not show up the first day of class, and some students drop the course after the first week. However, the data does provide a valid sample of student placement in the English Composition program as it relates to enrollment in INFS 1000.

The sample below represents the responses of 161 students in the first eight-week sections of INFS 1000. The numbers in all categories do not add up to 161 since students are requested to list completion or current enrollment status of each English composition course.

Completed ENGL 0900	Tested out of ENGL 0900
60	101
Completed ENGL 1110	Enrolled ENGL 1110 this semester
74	58
Completed ENGL 1111	Enrolled ENGL 1111 this semester
22	17

The department also asks students if they have access to the Internet at home. 134 students told us that they have a home Internet connection, while 21 students said that they did not have access to the Internet from home.

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, multiple-choice quizzes, and a mid-term and final competency examination to assess student learning. The final competency exam is comprehensive and assesses students based upon the ACRL Information Literacy Standards, Objectives and Performance Indicators.

In addition to the class exercises and exams, the department uses a course evaluation tool that allows students to provide critical evaluations of the instructors' teaching abilities as well as the usefulness of the course.

Instructors in the department come together once 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 standard grading forms to score the exams. Data from these grading forms are used to assess student performance at the program level. Faculty discuss exams that represent students performing in the highest, the middle, and at the lowest skill levels. The faculty use student course evaluations to assess the effectiveness of course and program quality and content.

VI. Compile, Analyze, and Summarize the Results
The Information Studies Department taught a total of 23 sections of INFS 1000 over three semesters in the 2001-2002 academic year. (Final enrollment numbers are not in for the 2001-2002 academic year, but we estimate that 552 students were enrolled in the course.)

Each faculty member in the program is responsible for gathering the appropriate data for their course sections. The faculty comes together once per semester to analyze the data, and the program coordinator summarizes and reports the results to the administration.

Summary of Results:
We evaluated competency examinations and course evaluations from students in our INFS 1000 course from the first half of Spring Semester 2002.

Competency Examination Results:
        We evaluated exam results from the 102 students who completed the exam during Spring Semester, 2002 (seven sections running weeks 1-8). We complied data for five of the major information literacy competency areas that are assessed on the exam. Students in INFS 1000 are assessed by all instructors using a common examination grading sheet. The total number of points possible for the exam is fifty.

Area 1: Did the student specify the dimensions of the topic? Clearly state the scope of the topic? Develop an appropriate working thesis statement? Take appropriate steps to narrow the topic? (10 points possible)

Number of points	Number of students receiving points	Percentage
10	20	19.6%
9–9.5	26	25.5%
8–8.5	47	46%
7–7.5	9	8.8%
6–6.5	0	
5–5.5	0	
4–4.5	0	
3–3.5	0	
2–2.5	0	
1–1.5	0	
0–.5	0	

Area 2: Was there a clear research strategy? Did the student clearly articulate the process used to locate and identify resources on the topic? (10 points possible)

Number of points	Number of students receiving points	Percentage
10	36	35.3%
9–9.5	31	30.4%
8–8.5	21	20.6%
7–7.5	11	10.8%
6–6.5	2	1.9%
5–5.5	0	
4–4.5	0	
3–3.5	0	
2–2.5	1	1%
1–1.5	0	
0–.5	0	

Area 3: Did the student write down and use keywords and subject headings appropriate to the topic? (6 points possible)

Number of points	Number of students receiving points	Percentage
6	48	47.1%
5–5.5	31	30.4%
4–4.5	16	15.7%
3–3.5	6	5.8%
2–2.5	0	
1–1.5	0	
0–.5	1	1%

Area 4: Did the student select resources that were appropriate for the topic and demonstrate why these were good choices? (9 points possible)

Number of points	Number of students receiving points	Percentage
9	25	24.5%
8–8.5	37	36.3%
7–7.5	29	28.4%
6–6.5	6	5.8%
5–5.5	3	2.9%
4–4.5	1	1%
3–3.5	0	
2–2.5	1	1%
1–1.5	0	
0–.5	0	

Area 5: Did the student evaluate the resources according to specific criteria? (i.e., credibility, authority, accuracy, reliability) (6 points possible)

Number of points	Number of students receiving points	Percentage
6	12	11.8%
5–5.5	25	24.5%
4–4.5	36	35.3%
3–3.5	24	23.5%
2–2.5	3	2.9%
1–1.5	1	1%
0-.5	1	1%

<u>Student Course Evaluation Results</u>:

The department tallied the results of 94 student course evaluations from Spring Semester 2002. We focused on three questions that give us a sense of student feelings about course workload and difficulty.

For me, the pace at which the instructor covered the material was:
1. very slow   2   (2.1%)
2. somewhat slow   8   (8.5%)
3. just about right   70   (74.5%)
4. somewhat fast   11   (11.7%)
5. very fast   3   (3.2%)

The level of difficulty of this course was:
1. very elementary   6   (6.4%)
2. somewhat elementary   17   (18.1%)
3. about right   49   (52.1%)
4. somewhat difficult   20   (21.3%)
5. very difficult   2   (2.1%)

The workload for this course was:
1. much too light   0   (0%)
2. a little too light   7   (7.4%)
3. about right   62   (66%)
4. a little too heavy   22   (23.4%)
5. much too heavy   3   (3.2%)

Your classification:
1. first year   47   (50%)
2. second year   47   (50%)
3. community member

Some students felt that the course would be more helpful if it was spread out over more of the semester. A number of students also said that the course should be required earlier in the college curriculum.

VIII. 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?)

Beginning next academic year INFS 1000, Information Literacy & Research Skills will be required to be taken within the first 24 credits of the Associate of Arts Degree along with ENGL 1110, College English I. Also, the Information Studies faculty has added placement into READ 1300, College Textbook Reading, or completion of READ 0200, Reading II, as a prerequisite to INFS 1000. Both of these new requirements were created to help enhance student success in the course and to help guarantee that students take INFS 1000 at the appropriate time in their college career.

Beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year, INFS 1000 will be taught over ten-weeks, as opposed to eight-weeks in the past. All course sections will begin the first week of the semester and will run ten weeks in length. Each course section will consist of 150 minutes of instruction per week, either in two 75-minute class periods, or in one 150-minute class period. The department has made this modification as a result of student and counselor requests that the course be spread out over more weeks to give students more time to digest the material. After evaluating student input and determining that the department had the required faculty to teach all eleven sections concurrently, the department decided to adopt the new model beginning fall semester 2002.

The change to the ten-week format will allow the faculty to cover a few additional topics. Additional time will be spent on evaluating periodicals and books, and we will be able to add a course period devoted to electronic and web based reference material.

The Information Studies department will develop an evaluation instrument that will be used Spring Semester 2003 to assess INFS 1000 graduates success in the college research paper course (ENGL 1111). The evaluation instrument will compare the grade that INFS 1000 students received with their grade in ENGL 1111. The instrument will also assess faculty perceptions of INFS 1000 students' research skills as compared to students in ENGL 1111 that have not completed INFS 1000. The instrument will also track the amount of time that has elapsed between when a student completed INFS 1000 and when she/he enrolled in ENGL 1111 and if the time delay has any effect on student success in ENGL 1111.