

Executive Summary

Student Outcomes Assessment Update: AY2002-2003

Student outcomes assessment is one important part of the college-wide effort to measure institutional effectiveness. In its seventh year, the MCC program to assess student learning continues to evolve and become stronger through the efforts of faculty, staff and administration. The Faculty Senate Student Outcomes Committee, the outcomes clusters and ad-hoc committees continue to fine-tune the assessment measures and process. During the past academic year, an ad-hoc committee met to explore the possible assessment of student outcomes related to the college technology literacy goals.

During Assessment Week 2003 four of the general education assessments (arts and humanities, cultural diversity, oral communication, written communication, as well as a baseline technology survey) were administered to more than 3,400 general education students. Approximately 600 students enrolled in career and technical programs participated in a workplace skills assessment. More than one hundred faculty members representing nearly all disciplines, both campuses, and extended campus sites administered assessments in 218 regular class sessions. Highlights from Spring 2003 results include the following:

- In all assessment areas the mean scores of completing students (post-group) are significantly higher than the scores of beginning students (pre-group) for Spring 2003.
- Evidence of student learning is clear across both general education and career and technical areas based upon assessment results over the past several years.
- When examining results across measures over the past three years, students had the most difficulty with skills involving the use, application and/or evaluation of knowledge.
- In general, all students are relatively more skilled in making and supporting personal observations than in recognizing opposing positions and seeing topics in a broad perspective.
- Compared to beginning students, completing students show a stronger sense of social obligation, are more likely to engage in social action, have more appreciation for cultural differences, and show more knowledge of cultural differences.

The focus of assessment efforts has grown from the initial phases of defining outcomes, data collection methods and measures to using results for improvement. As the assessment program has matured, assessment results have been integrated into departmental and college planning, and faculty have focused on using results to improve curriculum and instruction. This shift is evident in several activities undertaken during the 2002-2003 academic year:

- A sub-committee of the Student Outcomes Committee, the Results Outreach Committee, was formed to discuss ways to support the use of assessment results.
- The use of assessment results was formally incorporated into the departmental planning process.
- Two faculty dialogues were held for faculty to review results and share ideas about incorporating outcomes into courses, and an assessment workshop was presented as a part of the New Faculty Experience.

Summary of Results from Student Outcomes Assessment Spring 2002 and 2003

Outcome and Year Assessed	Results
Arts and Humanities – Assessed 2003	Significant differences were observed overall and in three of four outcome areas: Demonstrate an awareness that different contexts and/or world views produce different human creations; an understanding and awareness of the impact that a piece has on the relationship and perspective of the audience; an ability to evaluate human creations.
Cultural Diversity – Piloted 2002, Administered 2003	Students in the completing (post) group had significantly higher scores on direct measures of knowledge and on several diversity and democracy outcomes in both years. Completing students agreed more often that they have an “obligation to give back to the community.” In the most recent administration completing students rated themselves more highly than beginning students on having a pluralistic orientation, being able to see both sides of an issue and their own knowledge of cultures. Further, they agreed more strongly with statements that support the value of diversity, reflect tolerance for differences related to gender, and indicate that they engage in social action more often.
Information Literacy – Assessed 2002	The percent correct was significantly higher for the post-group overall and for three of five outcome areas: evaluating currency and relevance of information, identifying sources, and locating information. Students were most successful in evaluating information for currency and relevance, followed by defining information needed to solve a problem and identifying appropriate sources. Locating information was relatively more difficult. Students were least successful in using information effectively.
Numeracy – Assessed 2002	The average percent correct was significantly higher for the post-group overall and for outcomes related to identifying and extracting relevant data, using models to organize data, obtaining results, and stating results with qualifiers. Patterns of performance have remained consistent over several years. Use of models is the strongest area and use of results is the weakest area.

Outcome and Year Assessed	Results
Oral Communication – Assessed 2003	Significant differences between beginning students and completing students were shown in the total percentage correct for the assessment overall and for each of the subscales: knowledge about effective interpersonal interchanges, small group interaction and conducting oral presentations.
Problem Solving/Critical Thinking – Assessed 2002	The average total score was significantly higher for the post-group (completing), overall and for two sub-scales: Interpretation and Evaluation of Arguments. The post-group score was at the 45 th percentile when compared to a national sample. Average student scores have been consistently highest for the Interpretation and Evaluation of Arguments sections and lowest for Inference.
Scientific Inquiry – Assessed 2002	There was no significant difference in the average percent correct between groups in the 2002 administration; however, significant differences were noted, overall, in prior years. Students have been most successful in recognizing possible reasons for a problem. Making a conclusion based upon information presented has had the lowest percent correct for the past three years of administration.
Workplace Skills – Assessed 2002, 2003	In both 2002 and 2003 post-group students performed significantly better than pre-group students overall, on organizational skills and on technology literacy. Significant differences were also seen for ethics and personal and professional responsibility in the most recent assessment. In 2003 teamwork and organization ranked lowest when compared to the other outcome areas (ethics, interpersonal communication, personal and professional responsibility and technology literacy).
Written Communication – Assessed 2003	The mean score for the post-group was significantly higher overall and on the scales for content, organization and mechanics/style. When each skill is considered separately, students showed relative strength in stating their own position, addressing the prompt, using appropriate voice and style and sentence structure. Students have consistently rated below the overall average on acknowledging the opposing position, developing each point with appropriate detail and commentary, progressing logically and smoothly, and using transitions and orienting statements.