

## Assessment Trend Report Student Learning Outcomes in IN250

October 2009

The goal of this report is to evaluate the assessment of student learning outcomes in the IN250 program. The report addresses four key questions to evaluate the quality of our assessment processes.

### (1) How have we sustained the assessment effort over a multi-year period of time?

How many years have you completed an annual assessment report?

2006     2007     2008     2009

As one of the sequential elements of the MPSL, IN250 is not housed in a single department, and faculty members teaching IN250 courses come from all areas of the university. Anne Matthews developed the plan and first assessment report in 2006. Since 2007, Larry Troy, as IN250 Coordinator, has lead the ongoing assessment in this program.

### (2) How do we systematically and comprehensively collect and analyze data about student learning?

Instructors from many departments are involved in teaching these courses. The risk of wide discrepancies in the delivery of these courses is great. Assessment has shown us that communication with faculty on learning goals has been relatively successful and that these courses are indeed teaching to the learning goals, despite their heterogeneity.

All faculty members teaching IN250—and now, IN251—courses collect direct and indirect data, in the form of papers and exams, respectively. A committee called by the IN250 Coordinator analyzes the data, and they share their findings with other faculty members in workshops held throughout the academic year. The annual reports are posted on the university website and sent to faculty via email.

The IN250 Coordinator collect artifacts at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. The IN250 self-study committees (two rotating faculty who teach in the program) randomly select 5 artifacts each from approximately 50% of the classes. The artifacts include term papers, essay exams, and assignments. The committee developed and uses a single rubric to assess all artifacts on a 1-5 scale (1 indicating Nominal, 5 indicating Excellent) on each of the three goals. They then calculate average scores for each learning goal, for all artifacts in total and for each specific class. The following table shows the range of possible scores and interpretation.

Green	Excellent	3.67-5.00
Yellow	Adequate	2.34-3.66
Red	Nominal	1.00-2.33

The following table shows trends in student learning outcome goals for the past three years:

	Student Learning Outcome 1	Student Learning Outcome 2	Student Learning Outcome 3
AY 2006-07	GREEN	GREEN	YELLOW
AY 2007-08	YELLOW	YELLOW	YELLOW
AY 2008-09	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

### (3) How do we use the analysis to improve curriculum and pedagogy and to inform decisions about budgets and strategic priorities?

In 2007, funds were made available to appoint a Coordinator to oversee the program's curriculum and pedagogy. Since the 2007 self-study, the IN250 Coordinator has worked with small teams of faculty to develop and revise the student learning outcome goals.

A curriculum map of the learning goals for the MPSL during the 2006-2007 academic year, based on the three elements of the University Mission, displayed deficiencies in IN250 curriculum that were addressed in a funded Nyberg faculty study group during the summer 2007. In particular, this analysis showed that the curriculum was weak on oral communication, ethical decision-making, and preparation for active democratic citizenship. This analysis showed the University in general and IN250 faculty in particular that they needed to revise the IN250 curriculum and reform the pedagogy so that the curriculum better matched the University Mission. Accordingly, the student learning outcomes were revised during the 2007-2008 academic year.

Furthermore, IN250 U.S. Studies was split into two courses: IN250 U.S. Cultural Studies and IN251 U.S. Structural Studies to better prepare students for the democratic citizenship learning goals in the University curriculum. Through a series of workshops during AY 2008-09, the IN250 Coordinator introduced faculty to the new learning outcomes and led discussion about best ways to deliver these new outcomes. Along with the other IN Coordinators, the IN250 Coordinator led workshops on the integration of the MPSL's three new threads—reflection, ethical reasoning, and writing—into all IN courses.

**(4) How do we evaluate, modify, and continue to improve the student learning assessment process in this program?**

Analysis has also shown that the revised student learning outcome goals are the right ones for Millikin students. To collect better evidence to support this claim, the IN250 Coordinator is working on improving data collection, moving away from collecting exams and toward papers, which demonstrate learning better than exams. In addition, the IN250 Coordinator is revising the rubrics to better align them with the learning goals.

There is clear evidence that assessment in the IN250 element of the MPSL undergoes regular review, and the program is revised as a result of assessment analysis. Currently, the faculty in charge of the program know they need to change the assessment process; one option being explored is creating a common assignment that meets all of the learning goals so that comparable student artifacts can be collected from all sections of IN250. This idea will have to be brought before the faculty's governing bodies and voted on by all faculty before it is implemented. Regardless of which measure the faculty adopt to deliver the IN250 curriculum, it is clear that the process is sustained, systematic, and comprehensive. Curricular and pedagogical changes are directly connected to assessment findings, resulting in a dynamic and evolving program.

**Evaluation from Focus Visit Leadership Team (includes Academic Deans, Program Leaders, and Focus Visit Report Writers)**

**FVLT Rating: Green**

Academic program	Goal 1 (multi-year)	Goal 2 (data collection)	Goal 3 (Use assessment to improve)	Goal 4 (improve assessment)	Total
IN20	3	3	3	3	12

Based on the four questions/criteria, the Focus Visit Leadership Team rates IN250 as green and concludes that the program can sustain systematic and comprehensive data collection and analysis over multiple years. The IN250 Coordinator uses assessment to make pedagogical initiatives, curricular changes, and budget priority decisions, and continues to modify the assessment process, as needed. Most significantly, Millikin faculty have revised the curriculum, adding IN251, U.S. Structural Studies, and redefining IN250 as U.S. Cultural Studies. In addition, resources have been allotted to support the leadership of the program.