

Information for Students

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING **Mesa Community College Student Outcomes Assessment Program**

What is the MCC student assessment program?

Student outcomes assessment is a term used to describe measuring and documenting what MCC students are achieving overall in their studies at the college. Faculty members define the outcomes of college programs and develop measures to assess them. The program includes three primary assessment areas - general education, career and technical education, and developmental education.

What is assessed?

For students pursuing their general education studies at the college, seven areas are assessed: Written and Oral Communication, Arts and Humanities, Cultural Diversity, Information Literacy, Scientific Inquiry, Numeracy, Problem Solving/Critical Thinking.

For students enrolled in a career or technical program, seven workplace skills are assessed: Ethics, Interpersonal Communication, Critical Thinking, Organization, Team Work, Technology Literacy, Personal and Professional Responsibilities.

Who is assessed?

For general education, the performance of groups of students who are beginning their general studies is compared to that of groups of students who are completing their general education. For career and technical programs, students who are beginning and completing specific programs leading to AAS degrees or certificates are assessed on their workplace skills.

Assessment Week 2005: February 14-February 18

MCC's Eighth Annual Assessment Week is scheduled for February 14 through February 18, 2005. A sample of classes will participate in one of the general education or workplace skills assessments.

What can students expect?

Students in approximately 200 class sections are asked to take one of the assessments during one class period.

- It is important for students to make an honest effort to complete the assessments to the best of their ability so that the information collected is meaningful.
- Individual student scores are not reported, and a student's grade or class standing is not affected by his or her performance.
- Students are asked to provide background information about themselves so that the assessment data can be analyzed to be sure that the students who participated are representative of the whole student population.

What do the results show?

The Mesa Community College Student Outcomes Assessment Program provides clear evidence of student learning at the college! The assessment program has been in place for the past eight years. Evidence of student learning is clear across both general education and career and technical areas based upon assessment results over the past several years.

During Assessment Week 2004 four of the general education assessments (Information Literacy, Numeracy, Problem Solving, and Scientific Inquiry) were administered to approximately 3,000 general education students. Oral communication, Writing, Cultural Diversity and Arts and Humanities were assessed in 2003. Students enrolled in Career and Technical programs participated in a workplace skills assessment in both years.

Highlights from the 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).
- Critical thinking scores are significantly higher for completing students but lag the community college comparison cohort.
- When examining results across measures over the past four 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 findings are published in an annual report each fall and used by MCC faculty to document student success and to determine how programs can be improved. Summaries of results are posted on the assessment web site. www.mc.maricopa.edu/orp/