1998

Programs for Higher Educations Outstanding Practicum and Major Applied Research Projects
1998-1999

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PROGRAMS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Outstanding Practicum and Major Applied Research Projects
1999-2000
PREFACE

The Programs for Higher Education (PHE) annually publish the abstracts of students' outstanding applied research projects in *Outstanding Practicum and Major Applied Research Projects (OPM)*. This publication is a collection of the outstanding PHE practicum and major applied research projects (MARPS) of the previous year as determined by the faculty members who evaluated the reports. The intent is to recognize research excellence, offer models of quality work to others, and contribute to the development and dissemination of significant applied research in the following specializations offered by PHE: adult education; computing and information technology education; health care education; higher education; and vocational, technical and occupational education.

Each PHE student completes four practicum reports during the course of the doctoral program. The practicum is an applied research project that addresses an educational problem or issue in the student's institution or organization. In addition, practicum projects must be related to the student's PHE specialization and to an appropriate program seminar. The student develops a proposal for conducting the project by using the research, development, and evaluation research methodologies, or a combination of them. Students may employ qualitative and quantitative research methods. The proposal is evaluated against agreed-upon criteria and, once approved, the student conducts the practicum in the work setting. A report is then written detailing how the problem was addressed, what outcomes or results emerged, and what educational alternatives or improvements have or will result. This report is then evaluated by a practicum evaluator.

The major applied research project is the culminating experience for doctoral students in PHE. A MARP is similar to a traditional dissertation in that it is a complex and so-
phisticated work of quality. The MARP is expected to have a practical and useful application for the individual, the employing institution or organization, and the field of practice. In that sense, the MARP activity is consistent with the overall mission of PHE in the improvement of educational practice.

Each of the practicum and MARP abstracts appearing in this volume has been designated as "outstanding" by either a practicum evaluator or MARP committee. Such designation means that the evaluators believe that the project addresses a significant topic, is likely to make an important contribution to educational practice in the student's institution or organization, and represents excellence in applied research and scholarly writing. From these outstanding practicum and MARP projects, six were selected for Practicum Excellence Awards, six for MARP Excellence Awards, and one each was designated as the Distinguished Research Award recipient for 1998-1999. Projects selected for the Research Excellence Awards are identified in this volume by a printed banner in the upper right-hand corner of the abstract. Full text of the projects is available online at http://www.nova.edu/phe/research or on microfiche through Distance Library Services at Nova Southeastern University (800-541-6682, ext. 4602).

Martin B. Parks
Associate Dean for Research
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OUTSTANDING PRACTICUM PROJECTS
Development of a Faculty Workload Plan for the College of Nursing

Descriptors: Clinical; Faculty; Workload

The purpose of this study was to develop a faculty workload plan for the College of Nursing (CON) that would provide equity in teaching assignments and ensure accountability of the faculty to the institution and society. The nature of the problem for the CON was that there was not a SUNY faculty workload policy.

Procedures for this study included a review of the literature to obtain information on different workload models at colleges and universities; activities such as teaching, advisement, and research included in the workload; workload models in health professions programs compared with other educational programs; and institutions that have faculty workloads as part of the union contract compared to those that do not. Copies of contract-defined workload models were obtained from senior colleges and colleges with allied health and nursing programs. These workload models were reviewed for possible adaptation. In addition, verbal reports were obtained from colleges that do not have
a defined workload policy. Current patterns of teaching assignments at the CON were also reviewed for comparison.

A formative committee was established, and it developed the criteria for the CON workload plan. In addition, a summative committee was formed. This committee validated the criteria and evaluated the completed workload plan using the previously established criteria.

The conclusion of the study resulted in the development of a workload plan for the CON. The workload plan was presented to the dean and faculty with recommendations for implementation. The workload plan provides guidelines for equitable teaching assignments for the CON faculty with varying ranks and has taken into consideration the overall reduced faculty size.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Linda R. Markstein, Ed.D.
Cluster: Philadelphia
Evaluation of the Continuous Improvement Handbook of Providence Hospital

Descriptors: Evaluation; Instructional Materials; Questionnaire

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Handbook of Tools to Use in The Continuous Improvement Process at Providence Hospital (1996) met established criteria for usefulness, content, and design. The study’s six research questions asked what were the valid criteria for handbook usefulness, content, and design, and asked if the handbook met the criteria for usefulness, content, and design. The procedures specifically developed criteria against which the evaluation study was measured. A steering committee contributed to the study’s procedures. Questionnaire selection was administered in a single group setting to a random sample of 30 employees who had used the handbook between February 1996 and May 1997. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage responses. Tabulations and data calculations were verified by a qualified hospital employee and peer.

The major findings were that the criteria for usefulness, content, and design were valid and that the handbook...
met the criteria for usefulness, content, and design. The steering committee concluded that the study was valid, appropriate, and true to the study’s identified purpose and objectives. The evaluation data were deemed reliable.

Recommendations included distribution of additional handbooks, integration of the handbook in continuous improvement and problem-solving training programs, and discontinuation of the handbook’s tool pouch. Repeating the questionnaire with new handbook users one year after the handbook’s modification and distribution was recommended.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Stephen G. McLeod, Ed.D.
Cluster: West Florida
Blenkiron, a student in the health care education specialization, is the manager of health education and nutrition at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of New England. This was a practicum for the research seminar.

A Comparison of One-to-One and Group Counseling on Weight Outcomes at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of New England

Descriptors: Weight Control; Weight Outcome; Nutrition Counseling; Nutrition and Managed Care

The purpose of this quasi-experimental ex post facto study was the comparison of the weight outcomes of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care of New England (HPHC/NE) members receiving different nutrition counseling methods at intake. The research hypothesis was: "there will be a statistically significant difference in the weight outcomes of HPHC/NE members after individual versus group counseling."

The two-tailed independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of the weight changes of each group. The null significant difference in the weight outcomes for either intake method was set at the .05 level of significance.

The resulting recommendation was that the group intake method become the standard method for weight control counseling at intake in the Nutrition Department. It was also recommended that a multidisciplinary team be
formed to plan future weight-control programming at HPHC/NE. Further, it was suggested that a functional goal for the next fiscal year be established in relation to this challenge.

Practicum Evaluator: Gary E. Rankin, Ph.D.
Local Research Associate: Hyman S. Edelstein, Ed.D.
Cluster: Massachusetts
Evaluation of Student Satisfaction at Vincennes University

Descriptors: Academic Administration, Enrollment, Student Affairs, Community College

The purpose of this evaluation study was to measure students' satisfaction with the services of a state-funded community college during the spring of 1998. Using the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), a nationally normed survey instrument, the results were compared with the results from the same evaluation instrument administered in 1996.

The first research hypothesis was that the institutional mean scores for importance and satisfaction on the 11 scales of the SSI would be higher for the 1998 survey than for the 1996 survey. The second research hypothesis was that the institutional mean scores for the institution on the satisfaction scores would be higher when compared to national averages in 1998, in comparison to the scores for 1996.
A t-test for two sample means was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the results of the survey administered in 1996, and the survey areas were determined to be insignificant. Although five of the 11 categories showed slight improvement in students' levels of satisfaction, four categories showed a decline in satisfaction. It was concluded that efforts to improve services to students over the past two years had not been essentially ineffective.

The results of this study indicated that more specific evaluation, analysis, and planning were required to address students' levels of expectations and satisfaction. It was recommended that these activities occur during the next academic year.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard Conrath, Ph.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Susan Torbenson, Ed.D.
Cluster: Chicago
THOMAS N. DAVIS

Davis, a student in the computer and information technology specialization, is academic dean and professor of biblical studies at Word of Life Bible Institute in Schroon Lake, New York. This was a practicum for the Database Management Systems Seminar.

Evaluation of Internet Technology for Implementation at Word of Life Bible Institute

Descriptors: Computer Technology; Computer Instruction; Database Management; Instructional Technology; Emerging Technologies; Internet; Evaluation

The problem under investigation was the best upgrade path for the aging Word of Life Bible Institute (WOLBI) Novell network. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the capabilities and relative cost-effectiveness of Internet technology for use on the WOLBI computer network. There was one research question for this study: Is Internet technology sufficiently cost-effective and efficient to pursue as the information systems main technology in the reengineering of the WOLBI computer network?

Data from the literature review, tabulation of the results from student and staff questionnaires and interviews, and input from the formative and summative committee members, led to the conclusion that Internet tech-
Technology is cost-effective and is an efficient means of communication, presentation, and dissemination of information. Many helpful discussions on needs assessment, reengineering, design, layout, content, and hardware/software selection were located. A formative committee was established to create the criteria for the evaluation questionnaires and interview questions. A summative committee approved the criteria and then validated the accuracy and helpfulness of the evaluation based on the criteria.

Three software suggestions were made as follows: (a) the need for integration of database functions with concurrent use capability; (b) more Bible study and research programs, including more Internet connections; and (c) a desire for more training in the various programs. It was recommended that WOLBI establish an experimental intranet, with the thought that incorporating browser access to information contained on the WOLBI network would be more user-friendly, efficient, and less expensive.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: James E. Pietrovito, Ed.D.
Cluster: Massachusetts
Development and Validation of a Competency-Based Career Skills Measure for a Medium-Sized Manufacturing Facility

Descriptors: Competency-Based Instruction; Workforce Development; Community College; Partnerships with Business and Industry; Program Evaluation; School-to-Work; Workforce Skills Assessment in Reading and Mathematics; Curriculum Development; Human Resources Development

The purpose of this project was to develop and validate a set of competency-based career skills measures in reading and mathematics for a medium-sized manufacturing facility. The problem under investigation was the opinion by personnel managers in this workplace that many of their employees lacked essential math and reading skills, and therefore productivity on the assembly floor could be improved. The research questions asked whether improvement of employees in reading and math skills could be measured objectively using materials developed from ac-
tual in-plant materials and scenarios, and whether the tests developed were valid and reliable for employee testing for purposes of personnel action. Thus, equal employment opportunity legislation demanded rigorous evaluation of the instrument.

The methodologies selected combined the development of a measurement instrument with the evaluation of the criteria, the instrument items, and the preliminary or formative instrument results. Procedures involved a review of literature, the use of ACT Work Keys criteria to define the skills levels, development of test items based on these criteria, extensive pilot testing of each item developed, use of formative and summative committees to guide and evaluate each step of the process, and extensive statistical analysis of the data to establish validity of test items and reliability of the tests.

The research project supported the conclusion that the tests developed were reliable and valid for the purposes intended. The tests are being used currently. Recommendations for further study recognized the constantly changing nature of the modern workplace and thus the need for constant evaluation of the test instruments for currency. Also, the study concluded that long-range evaluation of the process should be initiated.

Practicum Evaluator: Faith N. Burke, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Paula A. Calabrese, Ph.D.
Cluster: Western Pennsylvania
KATHRYN A. GREEN

Green, a student in the computer information technology specialization, is a program facilitator for the Santa Ana College Assessment and Employment Center, Santa Ana, California. This was a practicum for the Computer Information Networks Seminar.

Development of a Procedure to Access Online Instructional Materials for Santa Ana College Assessment and Employment Center Programs

Descriptors: Online Instructional Materials; Online Employment Services; Assessment and Employment Center Web Storefront

The purpose of this study was to develop operational procedures for online access of AEC instructional materials. Online access of instructional materials would allow for obtaining text and other course materials anytime, anywhere.

The procedures in this development practicum included: (a) a literature review; (b) the creation of a draft of criteria to follow in developing the operational procedures with the assistance of a formative committee; (c) review, revision, and validation by the summative committee; (d) analysis of sample Web storefronts and Web storefront development programs; (e) development, review, and validation of draft of operational procedures document; and (f) revision and distribution of the final product.
Two conclusions were reached. First, the vehicle for accessing online instructional materials would be a Web storefront that contained five common features to the online bookstores reviewed and two features specific to the needs of the AEC. Second, the Web storefront developed could provide online access for instructional materials to the One-Stop Center participants and set a precedence for other departments at the college to provide online materials.

The project produced The Santa Ana College Assessment and Employment Center’s instructional materials access operational procedures document. The document uses and enhances guidelines developed by Dunn and Mitchell (1998) for state-of-the-art features provided in today’s basic Web storefront software, and Sharp’s (1998) list of “must-haves” for an effective electronic commerce framework as a foundation for the center’s instructional materials access operational procedures document.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Donald L. Busche, Ed.D.
Cluster: Orange County
B. JOE GUNN

Gunn, a student in the health care education specialization, is the chief executive officer of the Craig General Hospital System in Vinita, Oklahoma. This was a practicum for the leadership seminar.

**Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Course on Leadership Skill-Building at Craig General Hospital**

Descriptors: *Leadership Training; Leadership Skill-Building; Training; Teaching Leadership Skills; Learning and Team Participation; Coaching and Leadership Training; Manager Leadership Training*

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the training course on leadership skill-building for department managers at the Craig Hospital System. The four research questions that guided the study were as follows: Were expected learning outcomes achieved? What was the level of achievement for each learning outcome? What was the opinion of the managers of the appropriateness of the course? What was the level of effectiveness of the course as expressed by the managers?

After completion of the course, opinion surveys and personal interviews were administered to course participants to determine and measure course effectiveness. The data were collected, analyzed, and displayed. The conclusions developed revealed that the course met the estab-
lished goals and manager expectations. The most effective elements of the course expressed by the managers were the "real-time" projects promoting team-building activities, assigned coaches for each team, and hands-on leadership learning activities. The project exercise demonstrated that leadership skills can best be taught when the learner is not threatened, the risks are low, a coach is involved, the learner functions in a team environment, and opportunity exists for hands-on experience.

As a result of the study, it was recommended that the course be continued and offered to other managers. It was also recommended that the course be split into three modules when offered to other managers.

Practicum Evaluator: James E. Lorion, Ph.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Turner Collins, Ph.D.
Cluster: Springfield
Development of a Leadership Seminar to be Offered as a Required Capstone Course for the Women in Management Certificate

Descriptors: Curriculum/Instruction; College; Program Development; Leadership; Management

The purpose of this study was to identify essential core concepts for a capstone course in leadership and management for undergraduate college women. Research questions addressed the key core concepts and corresponding instructional objectives for student learning outcomes.

The review of literature validated the need for a capstone leadership seminar. Five criteria were developed for the selection of the essential core concepts, which provided the foundation for the instructional objectives and the syllabus for the course. The formative committee was responsible for the development of an organizational framework, and the summative committee utilizing the established criteria validated the course materials.

The study concluded that the capstone course identified a format for studying women and leadership with proactive reading assignments and personal interviews with women leaders. It was recommended that the course be included in the
certificate requirements and that future consideration should address the possibility of a minor in leadership in the College for Women at Chestnut Hill College.

Practicum Evaluator: Lois J. Zachary, Ed.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Linda R. Markstein, Ed.D.
Cluster: Philadelphia
MARGARET A. HAMSTEAD

Hamstead, a student in the adult education specialization, founded Opequon Associates to facilitate as people align their work processes and learning needs with strategic objectives of their workplaces. This was a practicum for the Human Resources Development Seminar.

Development of a Needs Assessment Process for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Descriptors: Needs; Needs Assessment; Group Processes; School Reform; Staff Development

The programs of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) provide a range of services to 42 school districts in southwestern Pennsylvania. Diminished state funding was making it imperative for districts to share the costs of AIU services. Consequently, it became necessary for the AIU to offer services that were top priorities in the districts. The problem addressed by this study was that there was no valid and reliable process in place for assessing needs.

The purpose of this project was to develop a single needs assessment process that could be used by all AIU programs as a means to identify district needs, efficiently allocate resources, and continuously improve services. The process would be used as the basis for designing staff development programs as well.

A review of the literature revealed that a simple survey does not constitute a needs assessment. In fact,
identifying gaps between what is and what ought to be, ("need") is a value-laden concept. Therefore, the process developed was designed to invite various stakeholder perspectives and gather data from a variety of sources using different methods. Benchmarking was built into the process as a means for defining a shared understanding of best practices and services.

The three recommendations that resulted from this study were to: (a) pilot the process in several different programs and modify it as warranted; (b) train the AIU staff development team to provide technical assistance for programs implementing the process; and (c) assist school districts served by the AIU in implementing the process.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Paula A. Calabrese, Ph.D.
Cluster: Western Pennsylvania
The Development of a Tool for Evaluating Critical Thinking Skills in Nursing

Descriptors: Critical Thinking; Nursing Process; Critical Thinking/Clinical Decision Making Assessment Tool Development; Critical Thinking/Clinical Decision Making Developmental Levels

The purpose of this study was to develop a tool for faculty to utilize at the end of each semester to evaluate any changes that occur in the critical thinking/clinical decision making abilities of nursing students at Edinboro University. The research question was: What are the appropriate content and format of a tool designed to evaluate critical thinking/clinical decision-making skills of students at each level of the nursing programs at Edinboro University? Data from the literature review was used to develop criteria. A formative committee critiqued the criteria which were used to develop a model. Face validity was confirmed through faculty use of the tool, and revisions were made upon the recommendations of the summative committee and faculty.

Results are presented for each of the seven procedures used in this development process. Key results included: (a) concepts and findings from the review of the
literature provided the foundation for the establishment of the criteria; (b) results of the draft of the model provided the foundation for the final product; and (c) results from the input from the formative and summative committee members, as well as nursing faculty from the Department of Nursing at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. The resultant Critical Thinking/Clinical Decision-Making Evaluation Tool also addresses the requirements of the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission.

As a result of this study, three recommendations were made. First, the faculty in the Department of Nursing at Edinboro University recommended that the Critical Thinking/Clinical Decision-Making Evaluation Tool be implemented within this department in order to provide evidence of the evaluation processes necessary to maintain accreditation, and to assure students of a quality nursing program. Second, recommendations were offered for dissemination of results, and third, recommendations were offered for further research.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Edward J. Sarver, Ph.D.
Cluster: Western Pennsylvania
Evaluation of Program Productivity Standards for Maryland Private Career Schools

Descriptors: Higher Education; Vocational and Technical Education; Education Policy; Private Career Schools; Education Performance Outcomes

The problem under investigation was that proprietary, for-profit schools (also referred to as private career schools) in Maryland, unlike collegiate institutions, did not have outcomes accountability requirements. As a result, private career schools were able to offer and graduate students from programs with abysmal completion and placement rates. Although Maryland had very extensive laws to regulate the private career school industry, there were no provisions to deal the schools with poor outcomes.

This study examined the performance history of private career schools in Maryland from 1993-1996 to define where the minimum threshold of withdrawal, graduation, or placement were, and what consequences could be imposed for schools that fell below those thresholds. There were five research questions for this study. First, what are the criteria by which the programs will be measured? Sec-
ond, what data are required to be collected to determine the criteria? Third, what are the appropriate thresholds of graduation and placement for program productivity at PCS in Maryland? Fourth, what programs in which schools would be affected? Fifth, what actions (revise the program, replace the program, or retire the program) would be suitable for those programs that were identified as not meeting minimum standards?

Using the decision-oriented evaluation methodology, the study determined that a minimum program performance level of 30 percent completion and 30 percent placement with a maximum of 30 percent withdrawal rate would be the thresholds for acceptable program performance. Further, this study determined that had these thresholds been in place from 1993-1996, 88-95 percent of the programs would have met standards. The study resulted in a recommendation to the secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission to implement changes to the Code of Maryland Regulations to include minimum program performance standards for private career schools in Maryland.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard C. Conrath, Ph.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Linda R. Markstein, Ed.D.
Cluster: Philadelphia
Evaluation of Certificate Programming at Fox Valley Technical College

Descriptors: Certificate Programs; Program Evaluation; Student Satisfaction; Employer Satisfaction; Short-Term Programming; Curriculum Repackaging

The purpose of this study was to evaluate certificate offerings from the perspective of certificate completers and from key local employers. The research questions were: What are the criteria upon which judgments about the effectiveness of certificate programming are to be based? and What modification, additions or deletions should be made in certificate programming based upon the evaluation study?

Procedures involved a review of literature, establishment of criteria and instruments, setting of evaluation ideals by a validation committee, and collection and analysis of data. A focus group of employers and a telephone
survey of certificate completers were completed. Findings from the survey were compared with evaluation ideals.

Results revealed that 13 criteria worked appropriately as the basis of the focus group questions and the survey items. The study concluded that, because certificate completers and employers held a positive view of certificates offered by the college, radical change in certificate programming was not warranted. However, some modifications were indicated, particularly to increase the appeal of certificates to employers. Thus, the study produced useful direction for improvement of certificate offerings, while at the same time reaffirming their value.

It was recommended that additions be made to the current array of certificates. It was also recommended that more employer focus groups be conducted and that the survey of certificate completers be replicated when newer certificates produce completers.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard C. Conrath, Ph.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Mary-Louise Holloway, Ph.D.
Cluster: Wausau
The Effect of Sensory and Factual Information on Anxiety in Women Prior to Needle Wire Localization

Descriptors: Anxiety; Patient Education; Needle Wire Localization; Breast Biopsy; Research Methodology

Needle wire localization (NWL) is performed prior to breast biopsy and is highly stressful experience for the women who faces potential diagnosis of breast cancer. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of pre-procedural education that included factual and sensory information, and to compare the anxiety levels of two groups of women scheduled for NWL of the breast. The research hypothesis was that women who received factual and sensory information the evening before the NWL would be significantly less anxious than those women who did not receive the information.

The research sample was limited to a convenience sample of 40 female patients who were scheduled for
NWL. Twenty women were assigned to the experimental group, and 20 were assigned to the control group. The experimental group was contacted the evening before the procedure and received factual and sensory information. Anxiety levels were measured after the patient arrived in the center using the state version of the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory.

The data were analyzed, and interpretation was based upon the mean anxiety scores from the experimental group and control group using a small group, one-tailed directional $t$-test to provide a statistical basis for testing the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of confidence. The results failed to reject the null hypothesis, as there was insufficient evidence to support the research hypothesis.

Although it was concluded that the results of the study did not support the findings in the literature, the feedback from the subjects in the experimental group suggests that women value information and emotional support during this stressful event. Recommendations from this study included: (a) replication of the study with a larger sample size; (b) further research on women’s understanding of breast procedures used for diagnosis, and the risk of breast cancer; and (c) implementation of a system to contact the patient the night before the procedure.
An Evaluation of Customer Satisfaction with the Information Technology Department at Nichols College

Descriptors: Higher Education; Improvement Procedures; Administrators; Academic Administration; Computer Service; General Administration; Computer Technology; Computers; Student Behavior

The problem addressed by this practicum was that student, staff, and faculty expectations and perceptions with regard to the information technology department at Nichols College were not fully known. The purpose of this study was to evaluate customer satisfaction with the information technology department at Nichols College. The three research questions for the study were: What are the user expectations that define customer satisfaction with the information technology department at Nichols College?; What is the level of customer satisfaction with the information technology department at Nichols College?; and What is the appropriate method of data analysis of survey data intended to reveal customer satisfaction with the information technology department at Nichols College?
An evaluation methodology was used to answer the three research questions. The following five procedures were implemented: (a) a literature review; (b) the establishment of criteria for what was considered to be an acceptable method to measure customer satisfaction; (c) the administration of a survey instrument to all students, faculty, and staff; (d) the analysis of the data collected from the surveys; and (e) the submission of recommendations that were sensitive to the issue of customer satisfaction with the information technology department.

Conclusions of the study were that: (a) a meaningful evaluation of customer satisfaction survey responses was achieved; (b) the use of internal committees is both prudent and beneficial in studies of this type; (c) any study that has institution-wide implications should involve representatives from all functional areas; (d) all users possess some level or degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the information technology department; and (e) each group of respondents reported a different level of customer satisfaction with the information technology department based on different sets of expectations.

Recommendations as a result of the study were that Nichols College should: (a) conduct an annual customer satisfaction survey; (b) review the survey instrument for possible revision; (c) make survey results available to the entire campus; and (d) seek to define an acceptable overall level of customer satisfaction with the information technology department.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Stephen G. McLeod, Ed.D.
Cluster: West Florida
Evaluation of a Questionnaire to Graduate Students Relative to Fiber-Optic Distance Learning at New York Institution of Technology

Descriptors: Higher Education; Distance Learning; Educational Technology; Education/Teaching; Business/Industry

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the opinions from a questionnaire administered to graduate students seeking a master's degree in instructional technology at New York Institute of Technology's (NYIT) School of Education about the effectiveness of the fiber-optic distance learning (DL) method. There were four research questions for this project as follows: a) What are the standards of a good DL program?; b) What are the standards of the DL program at NYIT based on the opinions of the adult learners?; c) How do the standards compare between a good DL program and the DL program at NYIT?; and d)
What changes need to be recommended in the use of DL to bring the program up to standards?

An evaluation problem-solving methodology was utilized in this study. Through the involvement of the formative and summative committees and the review of literature, criteria were established for the questionnaire and standards were established for a good DL program. It was concluded that, although NYIT met the standards of a good DL program, learning was the same as in the traditional methods of instruction.

It was recommended the School of Education at NYIT thoroughly train every instructor in the use of DL and its equipment. In addition, since participating in a DL class is greatly different than participating in a traditional class, students need to attend an orientation class that will give them the experience of a DL class. This way, a student upon attending a DL class can concentrate on the material of the class and not be hindered by the new technology of DL.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard C. Conrath, Ph.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: Linda R. Markstein, Ed.D.
Cluster: Philadelphia
Development and Implementation of a Survey to Identify Employers’ Needs of Accounting Graduates

Descriptos:  Vocational, Technical, and Occupational Education; Postsecondary Education; Accounting; Staff Development; Business/Industry

The problem under investigation was the relevance of the accounting curriculum in meeting the needs of employers. Thus, the purpose of the study was to develop and implement an employers’ needs survey to evaluate this relevance issue. The research questions were: What are the appropriate and valid contents of a survey that would lead the accounting team to understanding the needs of employers?; What would a valid and appropriate instrument contain which would be used to determine employers’ perception of desired characteristics of accounting graduates?; and, How would a valid and appropriate survey instrument be implemented?

Criteria were established using data from a literature review and information gathered from the accounting
instructors by the formative committee and validated by the summative committee. Using the criteria, the survey was designed by the formative committee, beginning with a three-question, open-ended survey provided by the Research and Development Department of the college. One question was retained, but was slightly reworded. To meet the criteria, the other two questions were discarded for alternative questions asking the employers to check or circle choices.

The results of the development process included a validated and appropriate survey instrument, which was sent to local businesses who had previously hired accounting graduates. A conclusion of the study was that it was an effective survey instrument for gathering information concerning employers' needs. The findings revealed to be of major importance to the employers regarding characteristics of accounting students were: a) oral and written communication skills; b) teamwork; and c) efficient use of computers.

Recommendations of the study were that: a) the survey results should be analyzed more closely by the accounting team, with discussion of ways to redesign curriculum to meet the identified needs; b) future research should be done to determine more fully how the employers are using the various software identified; and c) the dissemination of the results to accounting instructors at the other technical colleges in Wisconsin for their review.

Practicum Evaluator: Kenneth E. Varcoe, Ph.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Mary Louise Holloway, Ph.D.
Cluster: Wausau
Development of an Orientation Unit for Accounting Enrollees

Descriptors: Vocational, Technical, and Occupational Education; Postsecondary Education; Accounting; Program Development

The problem under consideration was the enrolling accounting students' lack of understanding of what they were going to encounter in the accounting program and the work they would be doing upon graduation. The purpose of this study was to develop a unit of orientation to be offered to students who have recently applied to the accounting program but have not yet registered for classes. The research questions were: What are the appropriate and valid components that students entering the accounting program need to be aware of and need to be able to handle? and What would a valid and appropriate orientation unit contain if it were to be used to help a student determine what is needed in order to become a successful accounting graduate?

Data from the literature review and information assembled with input from the formative committee and the
summative committees were used to develop the orientation unit. The unit was then given to a group of accounting students entering the program for the first time.

The result of the process was the orientation unit. The conclusion reached was that the orientation unit should be given to students entering the accounting program soon after they have applied and before they have completed the registration process.

It was recommended that the orientation unit continue to be offered to all incoming accounting students on both the Appleton and Oshkosh campuses. It was further recommended that research be done to determine whether this orientation unit significantly affects the retention of accounting students and significantly affects the grades earned in the original accounting course in the program.

Practicum Evaluator: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Mary Louise Holloway, Ph.D.
Cluster: Wausau
Saunders, a student in the higher education specialization, is the director of nursing programs at the Medical Careers Institute in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This was a practicum for the Politics, Law and Economics of Higher Education Seminar.

Evaluation of the Cost-Effectiveness of the School of Nursing Related to the Needs of the Bon Secours Health System

Descriptors: Higher Education; Academic Administration; Evaluation/Research; Nursing School; Nursing; Reorganization; Business/Industry

The cost of educating student nurses at Bon Secours DePaul Medical Center had escalated over the past few years. The hospital subsidized annual operating expenses over tuition revenues to maintain the school. The purpose of this study was to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the DePaul Medical Center School of Nursing in relation to the current future needs of the Bon Secours Health System. The research questions for this study were: What are the appropriate design and key elements for evaluation of this problem? and What decision should be made about the operations of the school of nursing based on the established criteria?

Procedures included a literature review, establishment of formative and summative committees, surveys of
other schools of nursing who went through the same process, development and validation of criteria for evaluation, and collection and analysis of data to make a decision about the future operation of the school of nursing.

Nine criteria were developed to measure the effectiveness of the school of nursing related to the current and future needs to the Bon Secours Health System. The criteria were examined in relation to each of five options. The final recommendation was to close the school of nursing and use the resources for education of staff in areas of identified need within the Health System.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard C. Conrath, Ph.D.  
Cluster Coordinator: Richard E. Hoehlein, Ed.D.  
Cluster: Richmond
Development and Validation of a Handbook on Job Placement Strategies for Graduates of the Pasco Hernando Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program

Descriptors:  Job Placement; Nursing; Community College; Graduates; Handbook

The purpose of this project was to develop and validate a handbook on job placement strategies for the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program graduates. Research questions for the project were: What specific job placement strategies should be included in the handbook? and What is an appropriate handbook for ADN graduates at PHCC?

The development problem-solving methodology was used to answer the research questions. Procedures for the project were guided by the research questions. Data were collected to answer the research questions. A formative committee assisted with the development of the handbook. A summative committee validated the handbook.

In answer to the first research question, it was determined that ADN graduates need knowledge of: (a) how
to design a resume; (b) how to write a cover letter; (c) how to search for a nursing position; (d) how to survive the interview process; (e) the area health care agencies; (f) questions the interviewer may ask; and (g) questions to ask the interviewer. The answer to the second research question was that the handbook needs to contain important, useful, and relevant information that is written in a conversational tone.

Upon completion of this project, it was recommended that the *Handbook on Job Placement Strategies for Graduates of Pasco Hernando Community College Associate Degree Nursing Program* be implemented with nursing students enrolled in the Nursing Role and Scope course. Further assessment of the handbook for possible revisions was also recommended.

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**Practicum Evaluator:** Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.  
**Associate Cluster Coordinator:** R. Andrew Niesiobedzki, Ed.D.  
**Cluster:** Tampa
KATHLEEN L. SKRABUT

Skrabut, a student in the health care education specialization, is an associate professor at Salem State College School of Nursing in Salem, Massachusetts. This was a practicum for the Governance and Management Seminar.

Development of a Part-Time Clinical Faculty Orientation Handbook for Salem State College School of Nursing

Descriptors: Staff Development; College; Nursing School; Beginning Teachers; Instructional Practices; Teachers

The purpose of this practicum was to develop an orientation handbook for part-time clinical faculty that would present an introduction to college resources; supply and explain relevant policies and procedures; furnish a vehicle for conveying curriculum concepts; and provide guidelines for instructional clinical practice. The research questions were: What are the appropriate design elements of an orientation handbook? and What specific content should be included in a handbook designed for part-time clinical nursing faculty at Salem State College School of Nursing?

The development problem-solving methodology was used to address the research questions. Procedures included: (a) review of literature; (b) establishment of formative and summative committees; (c) formulation of criteria;
(d) review of sample faculty orientation handbooks from three schools of nursing; (e) development of an orientation handbook with guidance from the formative committee; and (f) validation of criteria, content, and handbook design by the summative committee.

A part-time clinical nursing faculty handbook for Salem State College School of Nursing was the product/outcome of this practicum. Positive elements of its development include contribution to the formalization of the school's faculty orientation program, increased understanding by full-time faculty of the needs of their part-time colleagues, greater consistency with regard to clinical instruction expectations, and strengthened alliances between the school and its associated clinical agencies. It was recommended that the handbook be evaluated and updated on an annual basis and that a regional group of schools of nursing be formed to explore the general needs of part-time clinical nursing faculty.

Practicum Evaluator: James E. Lorion, Ph.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: James A. Pietrovito, Ed.D.
Cluster: Massachusetts
Evaluation of the Perceived Effectiveness of a Rehabilitation Nurse Training Program at Ledgewood Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center

Descriptors: Staff Development; Health Care; Hospital/Health Care Facility; Nursing

In response to increased patient acuity and the necessity to comply with national accreditation standards, Ledgewood Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center developed and implemented a 16-week rehabilitation nurse training program. The purpose of this practicum was to evaluate participants’ perceptions of effectiveness of that program.

Development and evaluation problem-solving methodologies were used to address the two research ques-
tions, which focused on instrument design elements and specific content necessary to measure perceptions of effectiveness. Procedures included a review of literature, establishment of formative and summative committees, formulation of instrument criteria, development of a mixed format evaluation instrument, summative committee validation of the criteria and instrument, administration of instrument to program participants, data collection and analysis, and dissemination of findings to key facility personnel.

Based on Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model, the study results corroborated observations that determination of participant reaction is an integral dimension of educational program assessment. Data can influence future course designs as well as revisions to extant programs. The inclusion of stakeholders in development and evaluation phases increases the potential for creation of programs that are timely, enriching for attendees, and supportive of organizational goals.

Implications resulting from the study led to recommendations for an expansion of the facility’s educational program evaluation procedures. It was recommended that there be continued administration and revision of the instrument, provision of teaching methods guidance for program faculty, exploration of the awarding of continuing education units, and the selection of more opportune times for program presentation.

Practicum Evaluator: Eileen E. Morrison, Ed.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: James A. Pietrovito, Ed.D.
Cluster: Massachusetts
KATHLEEN L. SKRABUT

Skrabut, a student in the health care education specialization, is an associate professor at Salem State College School of Nursing in Salem, Massachusetts and a part-time clinical nursing supervisor at Ledgewood Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center in Beverly, Massachusetts. This was a practicum for the Research Methodology Seminar.

Comparison of Cumulative Grade Point Averages Between Salem State College School of Nursing Graduates With High Versus Low Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores

Descriptors: Evaluation/Research; Health Care Education; College Admissions Policies; Nursing

In response to the faculty’s perceptions of a decline in undergraduate students’ capabilities to meet the rigors of the nursing curriculum and the implementations of new admissions criteria for all public higher-education institutions in Massachusetts, this study was undertaken to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of nursing program graduates who had high Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores as compared to those who had low SAT scores.
An ex post facto research design was used to conduct the study, with data compiled from the college's information database. The sample, inclusive of eight years of program graduates, consisted of 323 subjects. A parametric test of independent means, the z-test, was used to determine the level of significance between the CGPAs of high-scoring graduates as compared to low-scoring graduates. Comparison of the sample means yielded a calculated $z$ statistic of 6.88 and a critical $z$ value of 1.96. Based on the test results, the null hypothesis, stating no difference between the means, was rejected at the .05 level of significance.

A number of conclusions were drawn from the study results. The level of significance demonstrated a strong relationship between the scoring level of the pre-admission SAT and graduates' CGPA. The results supported the importance of the SAT in explaining a relationship between pre-entrance abilities and eventual academic achievement.

As a result of the investigation, it was recommended that further studies be conducted to examine comparative and predictive components of academic achievement. In addition, the impact of the revised statewide admissions policy on diversity issues and access to public higher education should be monitored.

Practicum Evaluator: Gary E. Rankin, Ph.D.
Associate Cluster Coordinator: James A. Pietrovito, Ed.D.
Clusters: Massachusetts
An Assessment of the Educational Transition Needs of American Indian Students

Descriptors: At-Risk; Equality of Opportunity; Community Members; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Strategic Planning; Transition; Minority; Students/Teachers

The problem under investigation was that the educational transition needs of the American Indian students currently enrolled in local high school systems had not been addressed. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the educational transition needs of American Indian youth who plan to attend a postsecondary institution, including those who intend to enter the labor force prior to, or upon completion of high school. The research question for this study was: What are the educational transition needs of American Indian students in the NW-SCC service area?

Seven procedures were used to complete the evaluation. After a literature review was conducted, an evaluation steering committee determined the criteria for identifying an
actionable need. The survey instrument used for the evaluation had been developed and validated in a previous study. Data were collected from 150 American Indian students. The survey data were reported by frequency and percentages. The evaluation steering committee validated each recommendation supported by the survey data. Recommendations were then made to the Indian Education Program director in Lawrence County, Alabama, and the president of NW-SCC.

The final result of the needs assessment was that the secondary-to-postsecondary transition needs of the American Indian students were identified. Student transitional needs included concerns about postsecondary education, native scholarship programs, academic preparation, and career development, and recommendations included meeting the secondary-to-postsecondary transition needs of Native students living in the NW-SCC service area. Furthermore, NW-SCC should attempt to plan and implement a postsecondary Indian Education Program to further assist Indian students.

Practicum Evaluator: Richard C. Conrath, Ph.D.
Cluster Coordinator: Stephen G. McLeod, Ed.D.
Cluster: West Florida
OUTSTANDING MAJOR APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS
Development of a Community College Honors Mathematical Statistics Course Curriculum with an Implementation and Evaluation Plan

Descriptors: Curriculum Development; Honors Mathematical Statistics Curriculum; Mathematics Education; Community College

The purpose of this project was to develop a community-college honors mathematical statistics course curriculum with an implementation and evaluation plan. The research questions addressed included: (a) What are the statistical skills needed by honors students seeking to transfer to four year institutions?; (b) What is the appropriate content of an honors mathematical statistics course that of probability theory and mathematical statistics?; (c) What is the appropriate content for the course online?; (d) What pedagogical principles of teaching in the segment of higher education should be employed in the development and delivery of the course?; (e) How should an honors mathematical statistics course curriculum designed for community-college students be implemented?; (f) How should an
honors mathematical statistics course curriculum designed for community college students be evaluated?; and (g) What should be the sequence of topics, core content, and presentation of the syllabus or professor’s lecture notes for a community-college honors mathematical statistics course curriculum?

The development problem-solving methodology was used. The results of the study indicated that honors students need to have higher levels of cognition in statistics; the course content needs to provide a balance between theory and applications while placing emphasis on probability theory; the lecture method is the primary pedagogical approach that should be used in the course; the implementation and evaluation plans should be participative and adhere to the college procedures; and the lecture notes should only contain essential topics. It was concluded that the course curriculum should include advanced statistical topics and provide both theory and applications of the mathematical statistics. It was recommended that the results of the study be published and disseminated at professional conferences.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Ronald A. Newell, Ed.D.
Local Member: Donald L. Busche, Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Ervin E. Padgett, Ed.D.
Development of a Curriculum for Teaching Electronic Commerce Within Existing Marketing Education Courses for the Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Descriptors: Electronic Commerce; Internet; Online Business; Selling on the Web; Marketing; Curriculum; Information Technology; Training; Distance Education; Telecommunications; Industry Certifications; Malcolm Baldrige; Total Quality Management

The MARP sought to determine: (a) the concepts, competencies, and skills that need to be included in a curriculum that teaches the students about electronic commerce; (b) the appropriate format for a curriculum that teaches students about electronic commerce; (c) the criteria needed to evaluate a curriculum that teaches students about electronic commerce; and (d) the evaluation methods, processes, and timeline should be followed in order to assess the future implementation of this curriculum.
The procedures used to conduct this project included a review of literature related to electronic commerce, continuous quality improvement, and industry certification of skills. A panel of subject matter experts met during the fall of 1997 to review the literature and identify the concepts, competencies, and skills that became the criteria for a curriculum that teaches students about electronic commerce. Using these criteria, a curriculum was drafted that was submitted to an international summative committee for validation and approval.

Six recommendations resulted from this project. First, the school divisions planning to implement this curriculum should insure that guidelines for the access and usage of computer technology are in place prior to the implementation of this curriculum. Second, the Virginia Beach City Public Schools should implement this curriculum during the 1998-99 school year. Third, a public domain World Wide Web site should be established to distribute this curriculum. Fourth, the alignment of this curriculum with industry certification programs should be explored further. Fifth, the use of software to restrict student access to questionable materials on the Internet should be researched in more detail. Sixth, a follow-up program evaluation should be conducted following the implementation of the curriculum in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Warren H. Groff, Ed.D.
Local Member: Richard E. Hoehlein, Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Stan A. Hannah, Ph.D.
The Development of a Graduate-Level Continuing Education Course With Pilot Implementation and Evaluation During the 1998 Connecting Link Summer Session

Descriptors: Adult Education; Curriculum and Instruction; Professional Development; Continuing Education; Staff Development; Program Development; Instructional Practices

The Connecting Link provides graduate-level, continuing education courses for teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 in conjunction with institutions of higher education in six states. This project was developed in response to an unexpected decline in the number of registrants for Connecting Link courses during the summer of 1997. The purpose of the study was to develop a graduate-level, continuing education course with pilot implementation and evaluation during the 1998 Connecting Link summer session that would successfully address the financial problems resulting from this decline.

Using a combination of the development, evaluation, and research problem-solving methodologies during
the implementation of four sets of procedures, a new course for The Connecting Link was produced—Making A Difference: Essential Practices of Highly Effective Educators. Plans were also developed for full implementation and evaluation of the new course during the 1999 summer session.

A review of the findings and outcomes relating to each of the research questions supported the conclusion that the financial problems that prompted this project may have been addressed in the following three fundamental ways by the development of this course: (a) by responding to consumer demand; (b) by providing for short- and long-term revenue generation; and (c) by strengthening the relationship between the organization and its higher education co-sponsors.

Recommendations from the study included: (a) implementing and evaluating the new course during the 1999 Connecting Link summer session; (b) writing articles that focus on curricular, adult education, and professional development aspects of the product development process; and (c) researching the feasibility of The Connecting Link as a provider of personal growth courses for its consumer population.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Kenneth E. Varcoe, Ph.D.
Local Member: John A. Morgan, Jr., Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Daniel L. Austin, Ph.D.
Development of a Process for the Production of Interactive Video-Based Distance Education Courses Based on Situated Cognition and Learning

Descriptors: Situated Cognition; Situated Learning; Anchored Instruction; Distance Education; Video Instruction; Interactive Instruction; Needs Analysis, Formative Evaluation

The LeCroy Center is an international producer of video-based distance education college-credit courses. The recent advances in telecommunications and distance education have resulted in increased demands by students and faculty for more student interactivity and use of technology in distance education courses.

The purpose of this project was to develop a new process for the production of interactive video-based distance education courses in response to client needs, technological innovations, and advances in the field of situated cognition and learning. The development problem-solving methodology was used. A client-needs analysis process was
derived through input and review by personnel from a cross section of the LeCroy Center departments. A literature review on situated cognition and learning was conducted to identify the criteria for the development of video-based situations and interactive activities. Research on technology was conducted to identify guidelines for technology utilization.

The findings of this study established processes for identifying client needs, for determining the designs for video-based situations and interactive activities, and for the formative evaluation of the design decisions before full production begins. The processes were developed and refined by being applied to an U. S. Government telecourse that was under development at the time of this study. This resulted in a detailed elucidation of the steps of each process and the development of examples of the output of each process.

Based on the study results, it was recommended that the new process be implemented and evaluated during the next production cycle. Also, it was recommended that research into advances in educational theory and practice be conducted with each new course production.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Ronald A. Newell, Ed.D.
Local Member: Anita G. Barrett, Ph.D.
Central Staff Member: Diane L. Moreton, Ed.D.
The Development of a Strategic Plan for Performance-Improvement Services at the British Columbia Institute of Technology

Descriptors: Performance Consulting; Human Performance Technology; Strategic Planning; Post-secondary Education Reform; Learning Organizations

The purpose of this major applied research project was to develop a strategic plan for the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) to provide performance improvement consulting services to business and industry. The strategic plan included the contextual framework currently in place at BCIT to provide performance improvement services; the major causes and variables affecting successful implementation of the strategic plan; six specific intervention strategies for BCIT to successfully enter the performance improvement business; and a process for continually assessing and improving the performance improvement business.
This study based the strategic plan on input from key BCIT stakeholders, British Columbia businesses, major North American consulting companies currently in the performance improvement business, and a comprehensive review of best practices and research related to business-performance-improvement consulting. A synthesis of data collected from all sources resulted in a list of seven essential approaches that increase the likelihood of success in starting up and running a performance-improvement business.

It was concluded that a business-performance-improvement consulting operation was significantly different in many ways than the normal full-time and part-time course offerings, and the existing industry services support provided to business. To be successful, BCIT had to make major organizational, training and resource decisions within a long-term, highly structured change process. The summative committee agreed with the need for a closer alignment with business via the business performance improvement consulting approach, and agreed with the strategies outlined in the strategic plan.

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Hill, a graduate of the South Florida cluster with a specialization in higher education, is a full-time faculty member at The Union Institute's undergraduate center in Miami, Florida, and is also an adjunct instructor for Nova Southeastern University's Graduate Teacher Education Program.

Development and Validation of a Plan to Improve Writing Skills for the Union Institute’s College of Undergraduate Studies Miami Center Learners

Descriptors: Teacher Education; Remedial Education; Adult Education; Writing Assessment; Writing Instruction

The nature of the problem in this study was that some of The Union Institute's (TUI) College of Undergraduate Studies learners at the Miami Center were lacking in some of the basic writing skills necessary to be successful academically at the college level without further assistance. Furthermore, there was no organizational procedure to assess and help improve the writing ability of the Miami Center's learners. The purpose of this study was to develop a plan that would improve the writing skills of learners with weaker writing ability and assist both the full-time and adjunct faculty in effectively dealing with this fundamental problem.
A development problem-solving methodology was used to address the five research questions for this study. Data was collected from questionnaires that were mailed to the following three separate Miami Center populations: the learners, the full-time faculty/advisors, and the adjunct faculty members. Information was collected from the informal interviews with representatives of professional associations and other nontraditional institutions throughout the United States and from networking with other higher-education practitioners involved in adult education, distance education, placement testing, remedial education and the teaching of composition.

As a result of the study, a validated Plan to Improve Writing Skills was developed to assist the center’s learners and faculty. The content of the plan consisted of six sections, with each one leading to a general recommendation for the center’s consideration for adoption for the 1998-1999 academic year.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Anne E. Mulder, Ph.D.
Local Member: Linda Lopez, Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Kathryn G. Hollywood, Ph.D.
Evaluation of Faculty Competencies in the Delivery of Contracted Workforce Training With Recommendations for Faculty Development at Fox Valley Technical College

Descriptors: Faculty Competencies; Workforce Training; Contract Training; Customized Training; Workforce Development; Economic Development; Faculty Development; Professional Development; Community College

The purpose of this project was twofold: (a) to evaluate the competency levels of Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) faculty members who deliver contracted workforce training to incumbent workers in business and industry against the industry standards for trainers, and (b) to generate recommendations for faculty development at FVTC to address any performance gaps and in-service training needs identified through the evaluation.

The study involved both the evaluation and development problem-solving methodologies. The procedures included a comprehensive review of the literature, establishment of criteria (competencies), development of
assessment instruments, administration of a faculty self-assessment instrument, administration of an employer/client evaluation instrument, data collection, data analysis, identification of performance gaps and corresponding recommendations, validation of the evaluation and its recommendations, and development of final recommendations.

The study identified the competencies (knowledge and skills) most directly applicable to the role of instructor/trainer in the delivery of workforce training at FVTC. The faculty assessment and the employer evaluation resulted in the identification of specific areas of performance gap. The gap analysis data was used to develop 10 recommendations for faculty development at FVTC.

Recommendations from the study included using the evaluation data to make improvements in workforce training, implementing the proposed plan for faculty development, internal and external dissemination of the results of the study, and further research related to workforce training and faculty development in community colleges.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Martin B. Parks, Ph.D.
Local Member: Susan A. Torbenson, Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Donna R. Starr, Ed.D.
Musolino, a graduate of the Tampa cluster with a specialization in health care education, and concentration in curriculum development and evaluation, is an assistant professor with Florida Gulf Coast University, College of Health Professions, Fort Myers, Florida.

Sitting Beside Oneself: Development and Validation of a Self-Assessment Process for Physical Therapy Students and Graduates at Nova Southeastern University

Descriptors: Health Care Education; Physical Therapy; Self-Assessment; Curriculum Development; Clinical Performance Instrument; Reflective Practitioner; Evaluation; Qualitative Research

The philosophy and mission statements of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Nova Southeastern University Physical Therapy (NSU PT) Program state that PT learners will be reflective practitioners (RP) with a dual ability to assess and reflect. NSU PT adopted the APTA standardized clinical performance instrument, requiring PT learners to self-assess, hence the potential need for development of self-assessment abilities.
The purpose of this project was twofold: to evaluate the self-assessment abilities of PT learners, and develop a plan for implementation and evaluation to incorporate self-assessment. A qualitative development methodology was implemented to collect data. The development plan for self-assessment was derived from the following six conceptual areas: (a) qualitative research methodologies; (b) RP theory; (c) curriculum practices that foster reflection; (d) program evaluation processes; (e) self-assessment and practice considerations; and (f) PT generic outcome abilities.

The major conclusions from this study were drawn from semi-structured interview data examined for emerging codes and themes, synthesized and recontextualized with FolioViews® analysis package. The PT learners exhibited self-assessment abilities, but met with obstacles, in the form of both internal and external influences. As a result of the development project, a curriculum program and plan for evaluation was developed to address the self-assessment needs of PT learners.

Recommendations included the following: (a) plan implementation; (b) plan dissemination to NSU PT program, graduates, APTA and others; (c) curriculum review; and (d) ongoing research in self-assessment and evaluation to remain au courant of learning outcomes.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Linda M. Howard, Ed.D.
Local Member: Rene E. Villa, Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Alan K. Cohen, Ed.D.
The Development of a Plan to Improve the Student Financial Aid Delivery System at Niagara County Community College

Descriptors: Student Financial Aid; Student Service; Customer Service; Quality Improvement; Evaluation; Assessment; Planning; Change; Enrollment Management; Training; Professional Development

Student financial aid provides access to higher education by reducing the financial barriers. The problem researched stems from a highly complicated delivery system that challenges this access for students and concerns college administrators responsible for enrollment management.

The purpose of the project was to identify potential financial barriers to higher education, to develop an action plan to address the identified barriers, and to propose an evaluation process that encouraged continuous evaluation and improvement. Five research questions focusing on student service issues were answered through an eight-phase process. Committees representing students, faculty, admini-
stration, staff, and alumni, along with members of the New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association identified student-service issues contributing to the perceived barriers at Niagara County Community College. The committees also offered suggestions for alleviating the barriers and a process for continuous evaluation.

An action plan and proposed evaluation process resulted directly from the established development problem-solving and evaluation methodologies and procedures. Conclusions drawn from this major applied research project stressed that consumer information was a critical aspect of quality student service, that more involvement with planning and quality-improvement activities was needed, and that the current operations of the financial aid office must improve to fully support the student-centered philosophy stated in the college’s mission statement. It was recommended that this study be considered as the beginning of a process for continuous quality improvement.

**Major Applied Research Project Committee**

MARP Advisor:  
Cornelius V. Robbins, Ed.D.

Local Member:  
Charles R. Heck, Jr., Ed.D.

Central Staff Member:  
Ross E. Moreton, Ed.D.
JOHN-JOHN SPOLSDOFF

Spolsdoff, a graduate of the Bay-area cluster with a specialization in higher education, is a lead instructor for the History of Modern Civilization at Fresno City College in Fresno, California.

Development and Validation of a Course Guide for the History of Modern Western Civilization Integrating Instructional Guidelines and Learning Technology

Descriptors: Higher Education; Curriculum/Instructor; Educational Technology; Community College; Instructional Practices; Improvement Procedures; Audiovisual Aids; Computer Technology; History; Faculty

The purpose of this project was to develop and validate instructional guidelines, including learning objectives, course outlines, and applications for learning technology and to integrate those elements into a comprehensive course guide for the History of Modern Western Civilization (History 2) at Fresno City College.

 Procedures included a review of literature on course design, curriculum development, and impact and applications of technology in higher education; research interviews of all 15 course instructors and administrators experienced in applying learning technologies in course design; and review of curriculum documents and media materials. Three
stages of fact-finding discussions among the course faculty were utilized, in which needs, criteria, guidelines for selection and application of technology, and specific products were identified. A formative committee composed of internal subject-matter experts and internal specialists in instructional technology was appointed, accompanied by the formulation of a preliminary draft, review by a summative committee composed of external subject-matter experts and specialists in instructional technology, preliminary evaluation interviews of all 15 History 2 instructors, revision, and plans for implementation and evaluation.

Conclusions were that the guide establishes and communicates instructional guidelines for History 2 and integrates learning technology applications into the course plan. Recommendations included timely revision of the guide's policy, mandates, and surveying of the faculty and students in order to determine satisfaction levels resulting from implementation.

Major Applied Research Project Committee

MARP Advisor: Frederick C. Kintzer, Ed.D.
Local Member: H. Ralph Todd, Jr., Ed.D.
Central Staff Member: Martin B. Parks, Ph.D.