

Rethinking the Liberal Arts in the Digital Age

September 21-21, 2002

Breakout Sessions Flip Chart Notes

Notes from different breakout groups are separated by a double asterisk.

Day 1

A. What are related student outcomes?

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1. We want our students to be technologically proficient as means to developing skills of critical thinking and analysis.

2. Although digital information can be acquired quickly, it must be evaluated / analyzed carefully

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Desirable related student outcomes:

1. Match audience with technology.
2. Understand appropriate use of technology.
3. Use technology to become more efficient and effective in research and scholarship
4. Understand the importance of professionalism and etiquette

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Recognize/Articulate:

1. Data, Information, knowledge
2. Filter data, information, and knowledge
3. Understand uses and limitations in order to improve process
4. Presentation

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What are desirable student outcomes related to:

1. Interactive information -
- 2 student ability to produce (not only receive information)
- 3 Standards of technical competency
- 4 Ability to screen/ evaluate/ categorize information
5. What impact does technology have on evaluating students' critical thinking ability?
6. How can technology be used to evaluate critical thinking?
7. Focus on process and evaluation as you are doing it.
8. Filtering
9. Approaches to Knowledge, Relativism
10. Information vs knowledge

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Position of Instructor, vis-a-vis IT
Students' objectives
 relative importance
Any view as good as any other?

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Outcomes:
 Critical thinking
 Filtering
 knowledge vs information

B. Are we achieving them?

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On a 10-point scale we are:
outcome 1 --- 2
outcome 2---- 5
outcome 3-----6
outcome 4-----4

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How are we achieving these outcomes?
 accidentally
 without a coherent plan
 introduced in LS 1000 with follow-through in some departments.

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Obstacles:
1. money
2. time
3. interest/ability
4. staffing/support
5. ever-advancing technology

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Students do multi-processing
Challenge is to respond to fragmentation with synthesis
Need more sustained focus as opposed to short attention span and speed

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How can we turn students from undesirable to desirable outcomes?

Have to overcome undesirable habits and practices.

How can we use the tool against the tool?
Is this possible?

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How can we use the tool to evaluate ability to synthesize?

Using technology to encourage group conversation, questions, etc.

Deal with rapid changes in technology

Outcomes are what are important - technology is a path

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Steps to achievement:

- Faculty/Staff Development
 - Equipment
 - Software
 - Staff/support
- Multimedia Support Center
- Standards of Competency
 - Discipline - specific
 - not "TAC"

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New Ways to Achieve this:

- Student/faculty access to a multimedia tech center
- Formalized training
- Proficiency portfolio

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Achieving?

- Disciplinary
- Differences

Challenges

- Aversion to print material?

C. Roles for various groups.

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Students should criticize each other's work
Integrating media including print and others

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Departmental standards set
Current levels identified
Need for instructional staff

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Librarians
 Evaluation of sources

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New ways to achieve the outcomes:
 faculty development
 technology across the curriculum
 equip all classrooms

Day 2

D. Prioritize student outcomes.

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1. Use of technical skills to facilitate critical thinking. Pre-req: courses that require use of skills; standardized tests for verbal reasoning.
2. Able to recognize and articulate difference between data, information and knowledge; filtering data, information and knowledge
3. Understand potential uses and limitations.
4. Combine skills to improve...
5. Use technology to present results

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To facilitate and sharpen critical thinking skills students should:

1. know potential uses and limitations of technology
2. know how to filter and evaluate data, information, and knowledge
3. implement technological resources to improve their scholarly work.
4. present their scholarly work using technology appropriately.

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- 1) Understand both potential uses...
 - a) realize...
 - b) appreciate the role...
- 2) Be able to recognize...
 - a) know how to filter..
 - 1) to decide what is relevant...
 - 2) to validate the reliability...

E. Prioritize ideas for achieving outcomes.

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1. Create environment to exchange info; atmosphere of trust; strata of opportunities for risk taking -- mentoring; hand-holding; risk-free
2. More investment in fac/staff development -- identify what peer institutions are doing.
3. Evolving, organic portfolio requirement: writing, technical skills, speaking.
4. Better collaboration and integration of library and other academic support services.

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To achieve comprehensive and cohesive integration of technology across the curriculum, Millsaps should

1. invest further in faculty, staff, and facility development.
2. adopt both general and discipline-specific standards of technological literacy.
3. investigate alternate uses of technology which could enhance delivery of information and use of class time.

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Develop and facilitate critical thinking

- 1 to be able to recognize...
- 2 understand the potential of all information technology
- 3 realize that collecting data...
- 4 know how to filter data
 - a decide what is relevant.
 - b to validate the reliability
- 5 combine the above skills...
- 6 creatively and effectively...
presentations
formats

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Technology across the curriculum

- A Multimedia support center
 - a director/cheerleader
 - b staff
 - c student peer tutors
- B Equip classrooms