Program / Discipline Assessment Report

Program/Discipline: Multimedia, Graphic Design and Illustration
Responsibility: Tom DeMoulin

Program/Discipline's Mission Statement:
The mission of the Multimedia, Graphic Design, and Illustration (MGDI) Department is two-fold. First, it must facilitate student learning in the field of professional visual communication using sound educational principles. Second, it must meet the needs of the business community by providing a relevant and current curriculum that educates competent graphic designers. MGDI is committed to using learner-centered strategies, making effective use of instructional resources, and continuously assessing student academic achievement for the purpose of ongoing improvement.

Program/Discipline's Assessment History:
By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, how has it previously affected your program's curricula and/or teaching strategies?
Through multiple years of assessment, we've noted that students consistently perform well technically, but do less well in terms of concept development and design. By identifying these outcome weaknesses, some changes have been made to include more concept-oriented projects and to emphasize project research and planning. In addition, we’ve begun grading for preparation, which we believe aids both the design and concept processes. Consequently, we began tracking preparation as an assessment outcome.

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, what changes to student learning have been noted?
Students now do appear to do better with a few outcomes previously identified as weaknesses, which coincides with the strategies noted above.

What unintended consequences, if any, have occurred because of the assessment process?
None have been noted thus far. Of course we're concerned that by focusing on weak outcomes, strong ones may weaken, but that has not been observed. NOTE: The plan for last year’s assessment called for the evaluation of Technical Quality. Due to time-constraints in writing the instrument for this outcome, it was not evaluated. However, the template did allow for a pass on an outcome that showed as a consistent program strength, so we’re exercising that right and omitting Technical Quality from the program report for 2007-08.

Who receives information about your department's assessment and why? (Please note if you plan on altering either of these items for the coming year.)
The advisory committee is informed annually of the program's assessment results. Faculty is informed during both the hiring process and during meetings. Knowing the departmental outcomes helps instructors focus on the big picture. Finally, students are usually informed of overall outcomes and how they've performed as a group during advising and occasionally during projects designed to address some of the weaker results.

Part 1: Previous Academic Year Assessment Summary

Previous Academic Year: 2007-08
**Outcome #: 1**  
**Outcome Title:** Technical Quality

**Outcome Type** (choose by bolding): **Discipline/Program; General Ed; Other**  
If **General Education** outcome (choose by bolding): Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork

**Outcome Description:**  
Use software programs and traditional production tools related to the design industry at a professional level.

**NOTE:** The plan for last year’s assessment called for the evaluation of Technical Quality. Due to time-constraints in writing the instrument for this outcome, it was not evaluated. However, the template did allow for a pass on an outcome that showed as a consistent program strength, so we’re exercising that right and omitting Technical Quality from the program report for 2007-08.

**Outcome #: 2**  
**Outcome Title:** Presentation Ability

**Outcome Type** (choose by bolding): **Discipline/Program; General Ed; Other**  
If **General Education** outcome (choose by bolding): Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork

**Outcome Description:**  
Prepare professional presentations of artwork to effectively market oneself.

**Benchmark for success**  
1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.  
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?

1) “80% of advanced students will score in the upper two ranges, with at least 33% rated Professional. Entry-level and intermediate student groups should show progressive curves toward these ratings. All groups should score less than 10% in the Not Competent range.” **NOTE:** This text is how the benchmark was written in last year’s plan. The math error existing in the statement was not caught until the time of this report. Namely, since there are now only three levels (Not Competent, Competent, and Professional), 10% of the population was ignored by the statement (“less than 10% in the Not Competent range” and “80%... in the upper two ranges”). The benchmark was adjusted by still maintaining the upper and lower ranges, with **90%** of the population scoring Competent or Professional.

2) Rationale: The benchmark expects longitudinal improvement and has stood the test of time. Its bar has been raised in the past because of previous good performance.

**Description of assessment process:**  
1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?  
2) How do these methods show students are learning?  
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?  
4) How many students made up the sample size?

1) Method 1: Instructors periodically assessed one specific outcome using a department-wide rubric with an applicable project. Students were polled to identify their level within the department: entry (0 – 2 courses), intermediate (3 – 10 courses), advanced (more than 10 courses.) Students were also polled as to occupation, in order to filter graphic designers who were only taking a class to update skills.

   Method 2: Both faculty independently assessed each portfolio of graduating students using a rubric similar to the one used for Method 1. However, the assessors rated the entire breadth and depth of the portfolios, rather than a single project.

2) By evaluating Entry level, Intermediate, and Advanced students as separate blocks, the department hopes to draw a comparison, showing improvement in each of the outcomes as students advance. The working theory is that the more time that is spent in the department, the higher the student success rate in each outcome.
A weak link using this methodology is that students are not tracked individually, which would provide a cleaner longitudinal study. Also, since students self-identify their own level, there could be possible errors in student classification in different classes. Finally, since the methods rely on projects rather than students, a few students submitting multiple projects in different classes could skew data. A really good student taking five classes could conceivably skew the statistics favorably compared to a poor student taking only one class (or vice versa).

The hope is that with large sample sizes, individual performance oddities wash out. Also, since Method 2 is a true snapshot of graduating student portfolios, the department gets to view a student’s best work during her time here, assessing whether it is professionally ready. All portfolios are assembled with this intent, so apples to oranges comparisons are less probable.

3) The intent was to measure projects across both semesters during the academic year. However, during this year, projects were only assessed during the spring 2008 term.

4) Sample size: 87 projects for Method 1; 16 projects for Method 2.

Results
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)
What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

1) Both methods exceeded the benchmark for Professional quality among advanced students. Unfortunately, more than 10% of advanced students received a Not Competent rating using the second method of measurement, while Entry and Intermediate students also scored above the 10% level using first method of measurement. There does appear to be a strong trend toward improvement as students advance through the program.
2) The program did change the way it measured this outcome, moving from four performance classifications to three. However, the Exemplary classification used in previous years was qualified as “professional level work” so a correlation may be drawn. Last year, no data existed for Entry level students for this outcome and while plenty of Advanced students scored just below the Exemplary level, none scored in it. (However, only nine projects were assessed among last year’s Advanced students, which could have skewed results.) All things considered though, it appears students did better this year with Presentation than last year.
3) The methods compare favorably. It is important to note that Method 2 is really a subset of Method 1, because the instructor’s report for the capstone class (MGD 289) was included in the statistics for Method 1. For Method 2 the evaluations by the two faculty members were averaged instead. Frankly, it was decided that it would be better to have a large pool of data for Method 1, although this might somewhat compromise the difference between the two methods.

Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Rating: Strong.
2) Student performance in this outcome has improved during the past few years, in part because we’ve concentrated on improving poor results from previous years. Previous curricular changes include instructors raising the grading weight for Presentation and the display of a filmed demonstration on how to cut and mount projects to department specifications. Instructors have also been asked to only display high-quality work for display on the walls. These changes obviously help and will be carried out again this year.
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<th>Outcome #: 4</th>
<th>Outcome Title: Design / Composition Quality</th>
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| **Outcome Type** (choose by bolding): **Discipline/Program**: General Ed; Other If **General Education** outcome (choose by bolding): Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork | **Outcome Description:**
Demonstrate an understanding of how the principles and elements of design work in concert to develop a unified design. |
| **Benchmark for success**
1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure? | 1) As mentioned with Outcome 2, the benchmark was adjusted by still maintaining the upper and lower ranges (33% Professional and less than 10% Not Competent), with 90% of the population scoring Competent or Professional.
2) Rationale: Same as Outcome 2. |
| **Description of assessment process:**
1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample size? | Answers 1), 2) and 3) are the same as listed for Outcome 2.
4) Sample size: 153 projects across all levels for Method 1; 16 advanced projects for Method 2. |
Results
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

1) Both methods exceeded the benchmark for Professional quality among advanced students. Unfortunately again, more than 10% of advanced students received a Not Competent rating using the second method of measurement, while Entry and Intermediate students also scored above the 10% level using first method of measurement. However, there again appears to be a strong trend toward improvement as students advance through the program.

2) As mentioned with Outcome 2, the program did change the way it measured this outcome, moving from four performance classifications to three. However, the Exemplary classification used in previous years was
qualified as “professional level work” so a correlation may be drawn. Last year there was consistent improvement in this area, as there was this year. The classification of professional level work increased for Advanced students this year, but so did the number of student projects being classified as Not Competent. However, I think it important to recognize that the rubric used last year was very restrictive in its classification of the lowest level, so I believe this might partially explain the increase of the lowest level this year.

3) The two methods almost overlap perfectly in Advanced student performance. While Method 2 was a subset of Method 1, there were more than twice as many Advanced projects in Method 1, evaluated by a third instructor. Also, since Method 2 is an average of faculty ratings, I believe this further validates these methods.

Student performance summary
1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Rating: Strong. Student performance in this outcome has again improved during the past few years. Last year, the department rated student performance for this outcome as Neutral, partly due to disparity between the two methods of measurement. With such a strong correlation between the two methods this year, as well as improvement to the previous year, a strong rating seems justified.

2) The department will continue emphasizing design principles highlighted last year. In addition, the department has hired more adjunct instructors with backgrounds in the field and in instruction, with the belief that design instruction will continue to improve.

Outcome Title: Concept / Effectiveness
Outcome Type (choose by bolding): Discipline/Program; General Ed; Other
1) If General Education outcome (choose by bolding): Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork
Outcome Description:
Develop concepts that address target audiences and fit within production constraints of the client.

Benchmark for success
1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?
1) As mentioned with Outcome 2, the benchmark was adjusted by still maintaining the upper and lower ranges (33% Professional and less than 10% Not Competent), with 90% of the population scoring Competent or Professional.
2) Rationale: Same as Outcome 2.

Description of assessment process:
1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?
2) How do these methods show students are learning?
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?
4) How many students made up the sample
Answers 1), 2) and 3) are the same as listed for Outcome 2.
4) Sample size: 137 projects across all levels for Method 1; 16 advanced projects for Method 2.
Results
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

What did the department learn?
1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?

1) Advanced students stayed within the 10% minimum for the Not Competent rating and exceeded the benchmark for the Professional rating. Only Intermediate students rated above the 10% minimum. In general there seems to be progress across the student levels.

2) Again, it is a little difficult making the comparison, because of the contraction of categories. However, a greater percentage of Advanced students did rank in the highest rating for 2006-07, compare to 2007-08.
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

As stated previously though, the amount of advanced students last year was minimal, so that data isn’t very telling. In both years, the rating level assigned to a project did positively correlate with the student’s experience level.

3) Advanced student performance didn’t correlate as well for this outcome across both methods. With Method 1, more Advanced projects scored Competent than Professional. With Method 2, it was the other way around.

**Student performance summary**

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

| Rating: Neutral. The disparity between the two methods as well as the performance compared to the previous year both create the need to examine this outcome with more vigor. |
| First, Method 1 will continue to be used to assess this outcome this year, so we can make some apples to apples comparisons. In terms of teaching and curriculum development. Faculty will again be encouraged to investigate and grade for concept, in addition to a student’s technical grasp of a particular piece of software. If after another neutral rating, the department may need to take a more active approach, such as distributing a few key projects that assess concept only. |

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<th>Outcome #: 5</th>
<th>Outcome Title: Evidence of Preparation</th>
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<td><strong>Outcome Type</strong> (choose by bolding): Discipline/Program; General Ed; Other</td>
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- **If General Education outcome (choose by bolding):** Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork

| **Outcome Description:** |
| Clearly render ideas by hand so that further verbal explanation is limited or unnecessary. |

| **Benchmark for success** |
| 1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark. |
| 2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure? |

1) Same benchmarks as the previous outcomes.
2) These benchmarks are somewhat generic in their construction, emphasizing improvement as students progress, with a goal of minimum poor ratings. At the time these projects were evaluated, it did not seem necessary to isolate this outcome with different benchmarks, though that will change.

| **Description of assessment process:** |
| 1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)? |
| 2) How do these methods show students are learning? |
| 3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why? |
| 4) How many students made up the sample size? |

1) Same benchmarks as the previous outcomes.
2) These benchmarks are somewhat generic in their construction, emphasizing improvement as students progress, with a goal of minimum poor ratings. At the time these projects were evaluated, it did not seem necessary to isolate this outcome with different benchmarks, though that will change.

Answers 1), 2) and 3) are the same as listed for Outcome 2.
4) Sample size: 98 projects across all levels for Method 1; this outcome was not assessed using Method 2 because of an oversight.
**Results**

What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

**What did the department learn?**

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

1) Students were all over the map with this outcome. All three student groups scored better than the Professional benchmark, but all three also exceeded the Not Competent minimum, with a very large number of Advanced being rated in that category (33%). Still, over 70% of Entry and Intermediate level students score in the top two tiers, but the same cannot be said of Advanced students.
2) Oddly, last year had a similar issue with Advanced students scoring poorly.
3) N/A

**Student performance summary**

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

1) Rating: Weak. Continued poor performance among Advanced students cannot be ignored. With the previous year’s report, there were only 5 Advanced students; this year there were nine. A poor sample size could be contributing to these poor statistics, so the department will need to do a better job obtaining data.
2) Instructors need to be on the same page with this outcome. Planning is critical to the success of a design, so all design-oriented projects should grade for preparation. Further, instructors should keep hammering on preparation among Advanced students, whose own confidence in design may be sabotaging the planning stage. Finally, in terms of assessment, the department must do a better job capturing the data in the first place, especially among Advanced students.

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<th>Outcome #: 6</th>
<th>Outcome Title: Oral Communication</th>
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<td><strong>Outcome Type</strong> (choose by bolding): <strong>Discipline/Program</strong>: General Ed; <strong>Other If General Education outcome (choose by bolding)</strong>: Communication; Critical Thinking; Quantitative Reasoning; Use of</td>
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<td><strong>Outcome Description</strong>: Students will be evaluated on the oral presentation of their work, specifically on how well they articulate design problems and describe their solutions using design terminology.</td>
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<td>Technology; Diversity and Global Awareness; Leadership and Teamwork</td>
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| **Benchmark for success**  
1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.  
2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?  |
| For some reason, there wasn’t a stated benchmark for this outcome in last year’s plan. For evaluation purposes, the department will use the benchmarks of the other outcomes. |
| **Description of assessment process:**  
1) What assessment methods were used to measure this outcome (i.e. pre/post test, portfolio review, etc.)?  
2) How do these methods show students are learning?  
3) What frequency is this outcome being measured (i.e.: each semester, yearly, every other year, etc.) and why?  
4) How many students made up the sample size?  |
| Answers 1), 2) and 3) are the same as listed for Outcome 2.  
4) Sample size: 119 projects across all levels for Method 1; 16 advanced projects for Method 2. |
| **Results**  
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.) |

![Method 1  
Department-wide Sample: Oral Communication  
(119 presentations: 41 e, 51 i, 27 a)](image)
### What did the department learn?

1) How did group performance compare to the benchmark?
2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

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<tr>
<th>Method 2</th>
<th>Portfolio Sample: Oral Communication</th>
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<td>(16 advanced projects evaluated; score is an average of 2 evaluators)</td>
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1) Advanced students fared a little better in the portfolio presentation (Method 2), than with the class presentation. This makes sense, since they are probably more keyed to present for the former rather than the latter. However, this doesn’t explain their relatively poor performance in the Not Competent range when compared to Intermediate students. Intermediate students progressed well, just nudging out of the minimum rating desired for Not Competent. Entry level students obviously had trouble with oral communication.

2) N/A. This is the first year the program assessed Oral Communication.

3) The two methods garnered similar output, though Method 2 reported generally better performance.

### Student performance summary

1) Based on the findings, how does the department rate student performance in regards to this outcome (strong, weak, or neutral)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods?

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<th></th>
<th>Rating: Neutral. Frankly, not enough history has been collected to rate this outcome differently. Time will tell.</th>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>Instructors should continue to recognize the need of a strong oral presentation. If a designer can’t back up their work, who will? With this in mind, instructors should plan on grading oral presentation for at least one design-oriented project.</td>
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**Part 2: Current Academic Year Assessment Plan**  
**Current Academic Year: 2008-09**

**Intended Learning Outcomes (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)**

Outcomes are similar to 2007-08, with the following changes:

- **Technical Ability:** Use software programs and traditional production tools related to the design industry at a professional level. (Added. This outcome returns, since it was not evaluated last year. It has previously rated strong, so this is considered a spot check.)

- **Leadership and Teamwork (Gen Ed):** Collaborate in a team environment to obtain a common goal. (Added. So much of graphic design involves meshing highly personal design idiosyncrasies with others in order to meet a client’s desires. The department has previously focused on individual strengths in assessment, so this outcome should provide balance.)

- **Skipped this year:** Presentation Ability and Design / Composition (These outcomes rated strong this year, so attention will be focused elsewhere.


**Assessment Method(s) (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)**

**Method 1, Department-wide Technical Exam (outcome 1)**

In order to better assess the outcome number 1, Technical Ability, an exam will be given to a large proportion of students during the spring term. The exam will cover a wide array of technical issues, from operating system knowledge, software use, and general production methods. To determine beginning, intermediate and advanced students, students will be asked to declare how many MGD courses they are taking and have taken when they are evaluated. Faculty involved with assessment will then divide the students based on the following credit levels: entry: 0 – 2 courses; intermediate: 3 – 10 courses; advanced: more than 10 courses. (Students will also be polled as to occupation, in order to filter graphic designers who are only taking a class here or there to update skills.)

**Method 1, Random Department-wide Project Assessment (outcomes 2 – 4)**

Same strategy as 2007-08. Instructors will periodically be asked to assess one specific outcome using their next applicable project. They will use a checklist of 4 or 5 items to evaluate a single outcome. Students will be designated into entry, intermediate, and advanced groups using the method described above.

Instructors will be asked to classify complex ideas such as project uniqueness into three ranks, Not Competent, Competent, and Professional. By pointedly asking instructors whether the work they are seeing is at a professional level, it is hoped they will hold the bar relatively high when marking the assessment and the department will truly find out what it needs to know, how much student work being generated is ready for the field. (Instructors will also be given the option to state that professional and competent are one and the same for a particular project, depending on the level of the course.) In addition, instructors may encounter a series of simple yes/no questions that can later be compiled by faculty into one of the three categories. For instance, asking whether the student cut the board squarely, used correct borders, etc can derive the rating for Presentation. Faculty will then average the data provided for each student to create
a data point within the continuum of Not Competent to Professional for a given project. For an outcome, these data points will be added up within each rank and divided by the total for the year to create a percentage for the rank.

**Method 1, Team Project (outcome 5)**
Using a similar rubric as is used for outcomes 2 through 4, each instructor will be asked to specifically create one team project for his or her class for the spring term.

**Benchmarks (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)**

**Outcome 1, Technical Ability**
90% of advanced students should score in the upper two ranges, with at least 33% rated Professional. Entry-level and intermediate student groups should show progressive curves toward these ratings.

**Outcome 2 - 4**
85% of advanced students should score in upper two ranges, with at least 33% rated Professional. Less than 15% of intermediate students will populate the Not Competent range. Entry-level students should show a progressive curve toward these ratings.

*Have you submitted a separate budget worksheet? (Choose by bolding; for information about this worksheet, please refer to the specific budgeting e-mail sent by the committee chairperson.)*

Yes  No

Please submit this report (including both last year's summary and this year's plan) in a Word document to the Program Assessment committee chairperson (Tom DeMoulin: tom.demoulin@arapahoe.edu). If you have any questions about the process, please contact the chairperson.