

## Student Focus Groups Summary of Results

In March 1998, the ASSIST Coordination Site sponsored a number of student focus groups at three community colleges in order to gain additional feedback about the usability of Web ASSIST.

This report provides a summary of the information collected during these events.

### Part I

#### Prior Knowledge

Students were asked to complete a short questionnaire concerning their familiarity with articulation and transfer.

1. *On a scale of 1-5 please indicate your familiarity with or knowledge of the following terms and concepts (1 meaning no familiarity or knowledge and 5 meaning a fluent command of the subject or concept):*
  - a) *Transferable Courses*
  - b) *Articulation*
  - c) *The Internet*
  - d) *Web Browsers*
  - e) *ASSIST*

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>a</b>	3	5	6	5	8
<b>b</b>	11	5	4	4	3
<b>c</b>	8	5	8	4	2
<b>d</b>	8	8	6	3	2
<b>e</b>	17	4	3	1	2

2. *How many times have you seen a counselor/advisor concerning transfer?*

	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
<b>Responses</b>	4	10	8	3	3

3. *How many times transferable credits do you have?*

	?	0-24	25-36	37-48	49+
<b>Responses</b>	5	4	6	5	7

4. *How many times have you used the Transfer Center?*

	0	1-2	3-4	5+
<b>Responses</b>	9	9	2	7

## **Part II.**

### **Using the Software**

Students were asked to go to the ASSIST web site and find three specific pieces of information:

1. A course at that community college which satisfies Area 5A of IGETC
2. The area of CSU GE-Breadth Certification satisfied by a course at that college
3. A specific instance of course to course articulation between that college and a university

All but 2 users found the assigned information. In most cases, the first report (IGETC by Area) was viewed within 3-4 minutes. The second report (CSU-GE by department) was viewed 2-3 minutes later. Finding the assigned articulation agreement took longer for most users, with most finding the assigned information within 5-6 minutes.

### **Points of Concern (as observed)**

#### **Articulation Agreement vs. Transfer Course Agreement**

Students were unfamiliar with the distinction made on the first page in ASSIST.

#### **Choosing an Institution**

Related to the previous issue, students were uncertain whether to choose their current campus or their intended campus.

#### **Terminology in IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth Certification Reports**

In IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth specific requirements are often referred to as “areas” but the reports use the term “code.”

#### **On Line Help**

None of the users knew there was online help available. They didn't notice the “Help” button on the screen.

#### **Bulleted Text**

The similar appearance of the active buttons and graphic bullets prompted several students to click repeatedly on the bullet next to an active link, expecting it to be a button.

## **Part III**

### **Evaluation of Software**

After using the software for 10 – 20 minutes and locating the assigned information the students were asked to respond to some questions about the software.

1. *Did you find the information you were looking for?*

Of the 27 participants 25 located the three assigned reports without substantial assistance. One participant located two of the assigned reports. One participant did not find any reports without direct assistance. All 27 reported that they were able to locate the information.

2. *Did you understand the language/terminology? Which phrases or terms, if any, were confusing or vague?*

Six participants reported confusion about the terms “Articulation Agreement” and “Transfer Course Agreement.” This was far fewer than the number of students who seemed, on observation, to be unsure

of these terms. One participant reported confusion about the term “CSU-GE/Breadth Certification.” None of the students reported confusion about the terms “code” and “area” in IGETC and CSU GE/Breadth Certification reports, although many asked about it.

3. *Was the software interface (the sequence of prompts, buttons, etc) clear?*

No participant reported problems with the user interface, but on observation several had some problem distinguishing between “clickable” and “non-clickable” graphics. Some graphic bullets appear to be buttons.

4. *Did the performance and speed of the system meet your expectations?*

The performance and speed of the system met or exceeded the expectations of all of the participants.

5. *How confident are you that the information you’ve seen is accurate, and will be honored by the university?* (rated on a scale 1 –5, 1 as low and 5 as high)

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Responses</b>	0	0	0	13	14

6. *When you compare ASSIST to more traditional information sources of transfer information (such as catalogs, transfer guides, or major prep sheets), would you use ASSIST:*

- a) *Instead of more traditional sources*
- b) *In addition to more traditional sources*
- c) *I wouldn’t use ASSIST again*

	a	b	c
<b>Responses</b>	15	12	0