Creating a Technology Competency Agreement between Colleges

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The teacher education program at Montana State University - Billings (MSU-Billings) is in a unique situation in the types of students it receives. Approximately 40% of the student population in the teacher preparation program are transfer students from the community colleges in the region. We have formalized partnership agreements with many of these colleges.

The partnerships formed with the neighboring community colleges allow students who have completed an Associate’s Degree to use this degree to show completion of the General Education requirements. Most of these students are ready to be formally admitted to the teacher preparation program.

One of the requirements to entry into the teacher education program is a basic computer competency. This competency can currently be met by either taking an introductory Educational Technology class, or by showing mastery of the skills taught in the introductory class.

The problem that has been occurring is that many of the students transferring from the partner schools have not been provided with an opportunity to meet the competencies prior to arrival at MSU-Billings. This puts them behind their colleagues who have had the chance to earn these competencies early in their college experience.

As part of the PT3 grant, the MSU-Billings educational technology faculty are working with faculty from the partnership schools to develop a plan to ensure that all students have the same competencies prior to applying to the teacher education program at MSU-Billings. The plan will include an agreement between faculty from the different institutions about what competencies need to be met by the students from the partner schools, and a plan for each institution, including MSU-Billings to institute policies to ensure these competencies are met. It will be up to each individual institution to determine the means by which the competencies are met by the students.

As competencies change, the faculties will need to continue to meet to update the competencies. Eventually, it is hoped that this process will be formalized and agreed upon by the administrations of the various institutions involved.

This presentation will discuss the process being used to reach an agreement between the partner institutions. It will include a discussion of the steps taken along the way by the various partners and the steps that need to be taken to formalize the agreement.