

Final Report for Mini-Grant Projects

Write a brief report that responds to the following questions at the completion of your project.

Name: Chris Cox

Project Title: Internet Math 115 College Algebra

- A. Summarize your project, comparing your final product to your proposal.

The final product achieved all of the goals in the original proposal, including a series of online lecture notes in a three unit outline of the course, a collection of documents explaining the administration of the course, a series of online assignments, a practice final in the Blackboard assessment manager, and active discussion boards filled in over the course of the semester by the instructor and students.

- B. Evaluate the effectiveness of the project, what you learned, and how you will integrate this knowledge with your teaching practices.

Overall the project proved to be an effective way for some people to complete College Algebra without the need to commute to the college several

times a week. One of the main things I learned from the project is how students respond to an online learning process. Based on my experience, about forty percent of the students have sufficient self-motivation to thrive working relatively independently. I believe that these students may even do better than in a traditional classroom setting, based on the quality of work from the top students in the class. For these students it is only necessary to provide course content (tell them what they need to learn) and assessment (grade and evaluate their work.) However, there are also a significant number of students who tend to fall behind where they would be in a traditional classroom. For these students, it is necessary to provide engagement as well as content and assessment. The biggest change in my future teaching practices will be efforts to make sure that these students keep working steadily or at the very least let them know early if they are not going to be able to succeed in an online environment. Two specific possibilities are using online exams in addition to the proctored exams for more frequent testing and required online conferences.

C. What advice would you give to other faculty proposing similar projects?

To other faculty starting an online version of a course, I would recommend using the first week of the schedule to familiarize everyone with the online system. Most students are enthusiastic and curious at least for a few days at the start of the semester; my mistake the first time through was not starting soon enough and as a result not quite finishing all the topics I hoped to get through. My second piece of advice would be to find a textbook with a useful website. The textbook companion site was a valuable addition to this course, providing interactive worked problems and practice quizzes.

E. Indicate what additional training, assistance or service you received to complete this project.

Most of the additional training I received to complete this project was online learning through the ICC support sites and external help sites. Additional assistance was provided by fellow members of the math department who had previously taught online courses.