NE Higher Education Instructional Learning Project
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Executive Summary

Conduct an investigation and analyses of opportunities and areas for improvement that exist in instructional technology throughout the Northeast Higher Education District.

The team utilized Action Learning principles as an approach to problem-solving. The overall process includes the following steps: formation of the group, presentation of problem or task, reframing the problem, determining goals, developing action strategies, taking action, online collaboration tools, and capturing learning. The Action Learning Team spent considerable time framing and reframing the scope of this project. Because "analyses of opportunities and areas for improvement" regarding instructional technology is such a broad charge, the team chose specific strategies and approaches in order to summarize findings and to formulate reasonable recommendations. Considerations included:

- Cost vs Technology Opportunities
- Current Assets: use existing, proven tools
- Philosophy/Policies/Plans for each campus
- Campus autonomy vs collaboration
- Resources Needed: staff development/support hours versus purchase price

Our strategies included: examining current technology and resources (college-by-college), identifying needed resources, and formulating recommendations. The following sections briefly summarize specific methods used to assemble a profile of the Northeast Higher Education District's current resources and use of instructional technology.

Opportunities to improve and enhance the use of instructional technologies include addressing perceived barriers such as:
- Faculty – need resources/time/training to incorporate technology appropriately to serve their content area needs
- IT - $$$ and time
- Collaboration among District and MnSCU
- Administration – commitment to use/determine policies/requirements for use of IT/$$ and resource dedication
- Students – access, ease of finding and registering for courses, resource center if have trouble (hotline/email/in person) courses transfer/common curriculum
- Clarification of roles of faculty vs IT staff

Overall, enhanced communication and collaboration among all campuses within the District is a key to success to become effective, and would assist the region to combine their personnel and fiscal resources. The Northeast Higher Education District already has a strong IT infrastructure in place. Research indicates that there are many technologies that are effective in the classroom. As a matter of fact, the possibilities seem limitless. However, the culture of the college and acceptance/implementation of the use of these technologies is where the challenge lies. The District is well positioned for incorporating instructional technology more broadly than ever before. Moving forward with expanding the use of current technologies, and exploring new ways to deliver curriculum, students within the NE District will have a broader spectrum of coursework and delivery methods from which to choose.