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## College Computers for Non-Computer Users

The college population is changing dramatically. The economy and changing technology have resulted in an influx of first-time, non-traditional (adult) students whose knowledge of the computer is very limited. They might be able to find airline tickets online, for example, but they lack the foundational knowledge of computer procedures that would enable them to succeed in college. Mott Community College created a preparatory-level class to support these students in their attempt to succeed in the college experience.

This one-credit-hour class assumes the student has only rudimentary computer skills or is intimidated by the computer. (A two-credit class would have been better, but we compromised at one.) The class uses only software that would be installed on every computer: Calculator, Paint, WordPad, and Internet Explorer (navigating a website, simple web search, using e-mail). Students also complete vocabulary-matching exercises using an introductory computer book.

These students must develop some unexpected additional skills:

- Translate mouse movements into movements on the screen;
- Multi-task: listen to the teacher while simultaneously typing or clicking on the individual PC;
- Multi-view: switch one's glance back and forth between the personal monitor and the instructor's projector view based on (or by listening to) the instructor's comments;
- Locate a position on the instructor's screen and find that same location on the student's own screen (a laser pointer helps until they learn to locate and follow the mouse visually);
- Ask for clarification using the proper technical terms.

Students report gaining both confidence and skill because of the slower, more gentle approach to learning used in this eight-week class. During the second eight weeks of the semester, we offer a second, one-credit hour Microsoft Office class with the same instructor and using the same gentle and highly assistive instructional method. This system enables the students to have a successful, introductory computer experience that prepares them for subsequent classes.

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