Understanding and Evaluating Programs

Objectives
Student will:
- Learn how to use college materials for research
- Gain awareness of postsecondary options
- Be able to make informed decision about postsecondary options

Materials Needed
- Several copies of various college catalogs from universities, community colleges and technical schools
- Online or print information packets from military branches and career training programs
- Websites with college and job training program information (optional)
  - CareerOneStop: www.careerinfonet.org/edutraining/
  - GetReadyForCollege: www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/instSearch.cfm
  - ISEEK: www.iseek.org/education/educationSearch#
  - MCIS {subscription required}
  - Minnesota Programs of Study: www.mnprogramsofstudy.org

Instructions
1. In small groups, have students develop a criteria list for what they expect to find in the postsecondary opportunity materials.

2. Have each group research at least three programs at different postsecondary institutions. Ask them if they can find the information they were interest in, and what other information they find.

3. Have each group present or write a summary of the type of information typically found in program descriptions.

4. Lead a discussion about how institutions use marketing and advertising techniques to promote their programs. Discuss the importance of research and assessments in choosing the right program.
Evaluation of Learning

- Grade the group presentations or summaries.
- Evaluate each student’s participation in the group activity.
- Monitor students’ awareness of postsecondary options.

Enhanced Learning

- Discuss the differences between community colleges, technical colleges, and four-year schools.
- Have students use the “Program Evaluation Chart” to choose their own criteria for programs.
- Have students create an "opportunity" materials catalog of all the resources they reviewed, including a short description of each opportunity and a ratings chart of how the materials were evaluated.
- Have students use their list of components to brainstorm what their ideal program would be and discuss the importance of each criteria they selected.
- Student’s list of program criteria can be added to their Individualized Learning Plans or portfolios.
- Invite representatives from college and military programs to talk to the class.
- Organize campus visits based on the programs that most students were interested in.
- Have students create an education or career plan using the Minnesota Programs of Study website (www.mnprogramsofstudy.org).