

A REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING COBOL IN AN IS PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Academic programs undergo periodic review and assessment. Reasons include requirements of accrediting agencies and a need to maintain competitive advantage in attracting students. In addition, IS programs face a rapidly changing environment. One area of interest in IS programs is the set of programming languages offered. These languages should be in step with the IS environment, other computer programs at the institution and the student audience. In particular, the offering of Cobol as a required language must be reviewed carefully.

This study of an IS program's Cobol requirement at a small private liberal arts college examines the background described above. The IS environment is investigated through a survey of job advertisements in a selection of on-line newspapers and employment services. In addition, a brief survey of language offerings in over 90 IS programs throughout the world is presented. An informal review of technical book offerings at a mega bookstore is also presented. Finally, the student body is described and an assessment of Cobol is given.