Course SLOs

All three Course SLOs were assessed:

1. Demonstrate the ability to read analytically, identify main and supporting ideas, and evaluate evidence.
2. Write a well-organized academic paper that presents a main idea supported by textual evidence that uses correct grammar and appropriate style and word choice.
3. Locate relevant information, evaluate it critically, and report it accurately in a logical, well-organized, documented research paper.

Program SLOs

All three Program SLOs were assessed.

1. Write at the appropriate level.
2. Read at the appropriate level.
3. Retain knowledge from course to course.

GE SLOs

Area IV. Language and Rationality (A. English Composition)

Both GE SLOs were assessed:

1. Write a well-organized paper in Standard English which presents a main idea supported by effective documentation and details.
2. Demonstrate the ability to write effectively for a variety of purposes, using correct grammar and appropriate style.

Background

An assessment project was created to evaluate students’ ability to meet the GE SLOs for English 101A. This assessment was a follow-up assessment to a previous English 101A assessment project which ran from Fall 2009 through Spring 2011. This earlier assessment focused primarily on the handling of citations and the Works Cited page on the final research paper from the end of the semester and was originally conceived to assess the effectiveness of the new online research skills lab program in Blackboard that was implemented in Spring 2010.

The assessment also evaluated the Course SLO relating to documentation and research skills (currently Course SLO #3), and the extent to which students were successfully demonstrating mastery of writing skills appropriate to their level (Program SLO #1).

The results of that assessment were satisfactory, so no adjustments were planned for the curriculum or for teaching methods, although the online lab program went through a few minor revisions during that
time, primarily to make instructions clearer in the module quiz relating to finding different types of sources and listing them in proper MLA format.

It was decided that the next time English 101A was to be assessed, we would create an assessment that would measure additional composition skills and which could assess all of the GE SLOs relating to the course. This new assessment created for Spring 2014 related to additional aspects of the students’ final research paper, including thesis, support and analysis, quotes, and documentation. These skills, which are integral to a well-written composition, relate directly to the Area IV.A. GE SLOs listed above.

Once the department approved the new rubric, a cover sheet briefly explaining the project, along with instructions and the new rubric, were provided to instructors towards the middle of the semester and again near the end. (See attached.) Instructors submitted their completed rubrics to the assessment coordinator soon after gathering their data, at the end of the Spring 2014 semester. Data was later compiled and a report created, which was distributed at the beginning of the Fall 2014 semester. Discussion of the results and future action plans to follow (tentatively scheduled for the first department meeting of the Fall 2014 semester).

Assessment Data

Participants:
Guy Aengus, Kristen Brosamer, Mark Brosamer, Nicole Brown, Greg Christensen, Jeff Dean, Gavin Deare, Perri Gallagher, Amy Glasenapp, Corey Gruber, Scott Koppel, Marcel Kristel, David Marroquin, Robert Mitchell, Pejman Omidi, Anthony Pino, Sara Rossini, Ruth Schenk, Yvonne Schwartz, Rachel Sherman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 (A/B) Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>2 (C) Meets Expectations</th>
<th>1 (D/F) Below Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>257 (60%)</td>
<td>111 (26%)</td>
<td>59 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>227 (53%)</td>
<td>129 (30%)</td>
<td>71 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td>220 (52%)</td>
<td>125 (29%)</td>
<td>82 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>206 (48%)</td>
<td>110 (26%)</td>
<td>111 (26%)</td>
</tr>
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Analysis of Data

Overview of Results

Overall, results were good in all areas, with success rates in the various skills ranging from 86% to 74% (with “success” defined as either meeting or exceeding expectations, in levels 2 or 3). The highest areas of achievement were in the areas relating to Thesis (86%) and Support & Analysis (83%), followed by
Quotes (81%), and then Documentation (74%), which was the weakest area and had the highest failure rate of 26%. (The Documentation rate of 74% falls within the average of the previous rate for these skills when they were last measured F09-SP11, which fluctuated over the two-year period, ranging from a high of 79% to a low of 71%).

Overall, taken together—in spite of the lower-performing area relating to proper handling of sources in MLA format (Documentation)—these skills demonstrate the ability of students to successfully meet the GE SLOs for Area IV.A. listed above, as students must demonstrate an ability to write a well-organized paper in Standard English which presents a main idea supported by effective documentation and details, using correct grammar and appropriate style, when writing a successful research paper. The skills measured all relate to the two expected GE SLOs.

Program SLO#1 (demonstrate an ability to write at the appropriate level) is also achieved, as evidenced by the success rates in all skill areas which were assessed in papers at the end of the class.

Program SLOs #2 and #3 are also achieved, though the relationship is not as overt in the assessment rubric. Students must think logically and critically about what they are reading and effectively evaluate evidence from what they are reading, and must draw logical conclusions from what they are reading, in order to write an effective paper which also demonstrates these reading skills (PSLO#2).

And success in all skill areas shows retention of skills from previous courses (PSLO #3), both English 151B (Fundamentals of Composition) and 163 (College Level Reading), although it is possible that students gained and/or continued practicing these skills throughout their English 101A course, demonstrating success by their final papers, and may not have retained these skills from their previous course.

Future Action in Response to the Assessment

Course SLOs were recently revised in Spring 2013 as part of 6-year Course Review, with an eye towards reducing the total number of SLOs, simplifying the language for students, and making sure course SLOs align with the GE area IV.A. SLOs. The main focus of the course will not change, however.

The department has begun working on creating a department-wide grading standards rubric for all levels of composition courses to distribute to all instructors and to post on the department website for public consumption. We also are starting to collect sample assignments and sample papers with commentary, along with sample syllabi, to post on the website. We also plan to hold regular norming sessions for paper grading for instructors in each level of composition. All these activities were decided upon by the department at Get it Done Day in August 2014, in response to ongoing concern with maintaining consistent standards, as students have been repeatedly turning up in higher level courses unprepared or without the basic writing skills needed to succeed. We hope to work on standardizing and coming to clearer consensus on grading standards and practices and hope to make clearer to potential and current students what the expectations are at each level.

Initial goals include drafting a grading standards rubric for department review at a department meeting early in Fall 2014, and collection of sample assignments and papers throughout Fall 2014, and in following semesters. We hope to approve and post the new grading standards rubric by the end of the fall semester, along with an initial collection of sample assignments and papers.
The online research skills lab program in Blackboard was also revised for Summer/Fall 2014, with three of the seven modules (on Plagiarism, Finding Sources, and Evaluating Sources) shifting to the LibGuides format, as developed by the Ohlone librarians. These pages now include new videos and quick check quiz questions embedded into the content pages. And one of the modules relating to Integrating Quotes was also updated with new examples. The program still runs through Blackboard, and Instructor Guidelines are revised each year and distributed and posted on the ELC website. Lab Orientation for the English 101A research skills lab is also provided at the beginning of each semester as part of the ELC lab orientation for the Basic Skills reading and writing lab components during Flex Week. One-on-one orientation is provided throughout the semester for instructors, as well. Instructors now upload their syllabi into their Blackboard shells, and more instructors are customizing their lab shells to include other course materials, as well.

The lab portion of English 101A will most likely continue to focus on research skills and will continue to support the preparation for the research paper that instructors assign in their classes. It will also most likely continue to be an online program. Although attempts were made in the past to either make English 101A a 3-unit lecture-only class without a lab or a 4-unit lecture-only class, or to consider developing a 1-unit Learning Resource (library) research skills course to attach to a 3-unit 101A class, none of these options was ever considered viable, so no recent attempts have been made to develop pilot programs to determine if these formats would be preferable or more successful. More concern has been expressed relating to maintaining standards and expectations regarding grammar and sentence-level skills.

(See Rubric below.)
English 101A Assessment Rubric  
Spring 2014

Instructor ________________________________  Section # _____________

Number of students in the section __________

Number of students who completed the assignment __________

Please rate each student’s final research paper based on the criteria listed below. Put a hash mark in the box closest to the skill level demonstrated in the paper for each of the paper's elements. Please use one of the final papers that is assigned towards the end of the semester that includes documentation of sources.

Boxes should show total number of students who performed at each of the levels for each skill set. Please submit completed form(s) to Rachel Sherman’s mailbox, or email to rsherman@ohlone.edu.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper has a clear, arguable point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support &amp; Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis is well supported using logical reasoning and textual evidence from a variety of sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quotations are well chosen and integrated effectively with the student’s own writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citations and Works Cited page are handled properly and are presented correctly in MLA format.</td>
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