

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS REPORTING FORM

Name of Program: General Education Program

Name of Program Leader (s): Student Learning Outcomes
Committee Members

Date: July 8, 2006 (Revised 8/7/2006)

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LEARNING OUTCOME(S)

The College Learning Outcome that has been identified in this project is as follows:

Communication: To communicate (read, write, speak, listen) effectively using Standard American English.

ASSESSMENT PLAN:

In December, 2005, the Edison College Student Learning Outcomes Committee met to design a pilot assessment for the “Communication” general education competency. During spring semester, 2006, they agreed to administer a summary-response final essay in five courses representing each of the academic discipline areas, as well as a course from the AS program (see Appendix A). The committee developed the guidelines for the essay and asked for faculty volunteers to participate in the pilot; the committee also developed a rubric (see Appendices B and C) that would be used to score the essays.

Three sections of each course, representing the Lee, Collier, and Charlotte campuses, administered the essay at the end of spring semester, 2006. Participating faculty chose a short reading or work of art to which the students were asked to respond in a summary-response format. Students had to apply critical, analytical, and creative thinking in order to complete the assignment, as well as demonstrate their ability to write a thesis and develop main points in an essay. The essays were submitted, compiled, and forwarded to the committee for scoring.

During the summer, an evaluation committee comprised of all the academic areas convened twice, on May 22, 2006 and June 12, 2006, to assess a random sampling of the essays; they used a four-point rubric to determine whether students demonstrated the ability to construct and execute an effective essay. The essays, with student IDs and paired scores, were then analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for scorer reliability and student performance.

Scoring Rubric:

Since the Student Learning Outcomes Committee was evaluating the “Communication” general education competency across the disciplines, they chose a rubric that was broad enough to be applied to a variety of courses. They identified the qualities that need to be displayed in a student’s work to demonstrate proficient performance. Those qualities formed the top level of the scoring criteria for the scoring rubric. They then defined the criteria for the lowest level of performance. The contrast between the criteria for top-level performance and bottom-level performance suggested appropriate criteria for middle level performance, which was divided into two categories. Thus, they developed a four-point scale, similar to the one used by Dr. Larry Kelley, who gave permission to adapt his rubric. The essays were scored on a 4-point scale, as follows: Upper-Range Essays (4), Middle-Range Essays (3-2), and Lower-Range Essays (1). This rubric was given to the students along with the writing assignment, so they had a clear idea about how they were going to be assessed.

Steps Prior to the Scoring Session:

Establishing Criteria for Scoring

Prior to the holistic scoring session, a sub-committee from the Student Learning Outcomes Committee determined the criteria to guide the participants in the assessment of student writing. Using the predetermined rubric, they read, discussed and ranked four sample papers from all the disciplines to illustrate each part of the four-point scale. The model papers were marked 1-4, and copies were made for the participants. Copies of the rubric, summary-response guidelines and four “anchor” papers were made for the participants to prepare for the holistic grading session. These “anchor” papers exemplified each of the categories/levels and would be used for the group to make its own determination of what essays constitute each level or category in the “norming” session of the holistic scoring day (see Appendix D).

DATA ANALYSIS:

Summary-Response Essay Assignment (direct measure)

In interpreting correlation analysis, a high correlation is between .7 and 1.0. A moderate correlation is between .4 and .69. A low correlation is between .2 and .39. No correlation is less than .2. *Reliability* of paired scores is defined as the *correlation* between them. Where reliability is low, either the rubric may require refinement or the scorers may wish to spend more time developing a consensus on how to apply the rubric to samples of student work.

A passing score is defined as 2.75 on a 4-point scale. This score approximates 70%, considered a passing score on a college-level writing assignment.

Analysis of Paired Scores

The analysis of paired scores from the BAS sample revealed especially high reliability. That is, each of the scorers applied the rubric to the writing samples in a very consistent way. Two of three pairs of scores for Sample 1 correlated well, as did one of three pairs of scores for Sample 2. Although some scorers applied the rubric with more rigor than others, there did not appear to be vast differences of opinion among scorers.

Analysis of Student Learning Outcomes

Sample 1, consisting of 40 essays selected at random from 150 written assignments, had the highest average overall score (2.81). *Twenty-one essays (52.5%) received passing scores (2.75 or higher)*. Nine students out of this sample had been previously placed into college preparatory reading or writing. Only one of these had not yet exited prep writing. Eight of these nine college prep students (89%) did not pass this assessment. There were no correlations between scores and earned hours or between scores and GPA. Further, there appeared to be little relationship between scores and grades in ENC1101/ ENC1102 or between scores and degree goal. The lack of relationship between scores and earned hours is illustrated in Table 1 below. For example, while the 12 students with 15 to 29 hours had an average score of 2.94, the 20 students with 30+ hours had a lower average score (2.78).

<i>Earned Hours</i>	<i>Sample 1 Essays</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>	<i>Number Passing</i>	<i>Passing %</i>
Invalid ID	5	12.5%	2.76	3	60.0%
< 15	3	7.5%	2.67	2	66.7%
15-29	12	30.0%	2.94	6	50.0%
30+	20	50.0%	2.78	10	50.0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>2.81</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>52.5%</i>

Sample 2, consisting of 44 essays selected at random, received an average score of 2.6. *Only 38.6% of students received passing scores on the essays*. Nine of these (20%) had been previously placed into college prep reading, writing, or English for Academic Purposes. Six of these nine prep students (67%) did not pass the assessment. One such student was enrolled in REA9003 that term and one had previously enrolled in EAP1461. There appeared to be little relationship between scores and grades in ENC1101/ENC1102 or between scores and degree goal. However, there were positive relationships between scores and earned hours (.4) and between scores and GPA (.2). This is illustrated in Table 2, which shows that the average scores increased with earned hours.

<i>Earned Hours</i>	<i>Sample 2 Essays</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>		<i>Number Passing</i>	<i>Passing %</i>
Invalid ID	5	11.4%	2.34		1	20.0%
< 15	5	11.4%	2.34		2	40.0%
15-29	9	20.5%	2.53		2	22.2%
30+	25	56.8%	2.72		12	48.0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>2.59</i>		<i>17</i>	<i>38.6%</i>

The sample from courses in the feeder programs for the Bachelor of Applied Science consisted of 25 essays with an average score of 2.38. *Forty percent of students received passing scores (2.75 or higher).* There were five students who had previously been placed into college prep reading or writing in this sample, one of whom had not yet completed writing prep. All five failed to pass the assessment. There was a small correlation (.3) between scores and earned hours and a moderate correlation (.5) between scores and GPA. On the other hand, there appeared to be little relationship between scores and grades in ENC1101/ENC1102 or between scores and degree goal. The relationship between scores and earned hours is illustrated in Table 3. It shows that average scores on the essays increased along with earned hours.

<i>Earned Hours</i>	<i>BAS Essays</i>	<i>% of Total</i>	<i>Average Score</i>		<i>Number Passing</i>	<i>Passing %</i>
< 15	3	12.0%	1.67		1	33.3%
15-29	6	24.0%	2.17		1	16.7%
30+	16	64.0%	2.75		8	50.0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>2.38</i>		<i>10</i>	<i>40.0%</i>

USE OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING: Recommended Changes Based on Assessment Findings

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this assessment project indicate that students had a moderate to low percentage of passing scores (52.5% in the first scoring; 38.6% in the second scoring, including 40% in the BAS group). This variation in passing scores, along with the generally low inter-rater reliability (correlation) between the scoring pairs, indicates that following actions need to be taken when assessing the “Communication” general education competency through summary-response essay:

1. It would be more reliable to have the students respond to the same reading, using one-two prompts. The single reading could be reviewed by all scorers prior to the scoring session, thus giving them more common understanding as to what needs

- to be included in the summary section. Also, the response section would have greater uniformity and consistency.
2. It would be more effective to have scorers paired by discipline, evaluating essays written within their discipline. The high inter-rater reliability of the scorers from the BAS program indicates that this approach would yield more reliable results.
 3. It would be more effective to train scorers in holistic-scoring sessions conducted by members of the English department during the academic year. Thus, evaluators would have more experience in holistic scoring and demonstrate more consistency in their use of the rubric.

Action Plan:

- Develop a “summary-response” essay assignment that could be used across the disciplines, regardless of the course. This assignment will be developed by the Communications faculty and tested through course assessment in ENC 1101, during Fall, 2006.
- Create a “Communication” rubric to be used across the disciplines when assessing the summary-response essays.
- Initiate training workshops in holistic scoring, to be given by the English faculty throughout the academic year.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The data indicates that the one common factor in lower-scoring students is they began their College careers taking writing or reading courses in the Department of Learning Assistance (College Prep). Creating a “bridge” between ENC 9020 and ENC 1101 through a Writing Center could ease the transition for these students from College Prep to college-level classes.

Action Plan:

- Design, develop, and initiate a Writing Center.
- Administer a diagnostic writing sample at the beginning of ENC 1101; students who demonstrate weak writing skills will be referred to the Writing Center for additional help.
- Refer all students who demonstrate weak writing skills in other writing intensive classes to the Writing Center.

DESCRIBE HOW DATA AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE SHARED WITH FACULTY:

This report will be shared with faculty in the following ways:

- Distribution to the Student Learning Outcomes Committee in July, 2006
- Presentation to all faculty during duty days in August, 2006
- Placement on Edison College website