

PROGRAM REVIEW
ENGLISH
EL CAMINO COLLEGE, COMPTON CENTER
2012-13

Program Level SLO Assessment Results:

Institutional Research also completed a survey of students who have taken an Academic Strategies course and pass rates for other writing classes. The pass rates for writing were 13% for English C, 41% for English B, and 56% for English A. On the other hand, the pass rates were substantially higher for reading with English 80 at 54%, English 82 at 63% and English 84 at 77%. A student survey (Appendix 1) was created to assess students enrolled in Academic Strategies courses. The results indicate that most were satisfied with the course content and instruction. A more extensive data plan is being developed at this time by Institutional Research in terms of pass rates with those who take Academic Strategies courses versus those who don't. It is unclear how the Academic Strategies course data would be helpful in terms of an overall review of the Program SLO for the Basic Writing Program.

Institutional Research completed a survey of English A students with pass rates, and completion rates in English 1A. It appears that although there is a high attrition rate in the English A courses, student success in English 1A appears to be much better than expected. Almost 70% of the students would complete English 1A as a result of passing English A. This data was hard to incorporate into a Basic Writing Program SLO review because Academic Strategies is more of a generalized program for all of the courses offered by the college.

c. Analysis of Writing Assessments

The English faculty have assessed that English C students lack rudimentary basic skills. They are unable to write a simple sentence and they are reading at the 4th grade level. Our overall student population comes from school districts with low test scores and low success rates. Because of the open enrollment nature of the community college system, we struggle to try to get students enrolled in English courses to master necessary skills to succeed at the college level. This makes accomplishing our goals difficult, especially in terms of retention, persistence and student success. The open enrollment system creates problems when measuring retention, persistence and student success.

Hence, SLO assessment results are also being used for improving teaching and student learning in the Compton Center. The English Department has assessed that students who test into English C appear to lack grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills to successfully pass the course with a semester. They frequently repeat the course as they work to acquire skills that they should have acquired at the K-12 level. This suggests that when students test into English C, they do not move through the pipeline to English A within three semesters. To assist these students, it

was determined that the Writing Center would be a resource that could be used to provide these students the skills that they would need to successfully move into English B and subsequently into English A within three semesters. Additional grammar and writing workshops have been scheduled during the semester to help students acquire more practice and reinforcement of skills taught in the classes. Additionally, a writing center specialist was hired in fall 2012 to develop additional support services for the writing courses. Also, Compton's English faculty share a variety of teaching strategies to aid students to become better writers. An example of a strategy that they have shared is the "Quick Write" thesis where students are required to write a thesis using a "list" of words from their course reader. Students may or may not be given a topic for writing. As the roll sheet is passed around, students write their thesis down. Then, the instructor picks a thesis or two and the class works on them together to develop clear theses. A follow-up assessment will be conducted to document changes in success rates with English C students.

Those who complete the Basic Skills Writing Program appear to do well. Some problems do exist. Pass rates in English B are lower than the pass rate in English A, in terms of the SLO assessment tool, but their pass rates in English A are much lower. We may have to revisit the alignment of these two courses to better prepare the students to pass English A. It was discussed that a belief in one assessment tool as a measure of possible student success is flawed versus a more holistic assessment of the student. Holistic assessment through norming student writing in English C, B, and A was an option that was considered for the future.

d. Recommendations

- English C needs to be assessed to assess if new measures that were implemented have improved success rates.
- In order to see if we can improve the overall pass rate for English A, we need to continue to utilize tutors in the classroom. We also need to make sure that student services like the Writing Center are properly supported and managed. The Writing Center will need to update its computers and the various software that required to support writing. When English A is reassessment, the effectiveness of in-class tutors too will be considered during the assessment.
- We need to maximize the use of the writing lab by also including workshops on keyboarding, formatting, word document, and general computer skills. Access to language lab tutors must improve beyond having only one tutor during lab hours. The estimated cost per semester for this augmentation would be approximately \$25,000.
- As part of an overall consensus, the placement system needs to be revisited and revised. The preference would be to have a brief written component included in the assessment process. Faculty could be provided flex credit for the hours worked grading the writing component to the placement test.

- There are also a number of ESL students who may not have been placed correctly into English C, B, or A. They need to be channeled into more appropriate for-credit ESL classes. A designated counselor could be made available to provide this service.
- There is a need for a Summer Bridge program. Some of the students lack such basic skills as keyboarding and general computer skills. There were cases of students not knowing how to use a tab button. The estimated cost would be approximately \$40,000.
- Remove Academic Strategies courses that are not related to the Basic Writing program (i.e. Math Anxiety should be housed in the Math Department.)

e. Analysis of Reading Assessment

All the reading courses were assessed in the fall of 2010. Only post assessment scores were used, and all the reports suggest utilizing pre-assessment scores, along with post assessment scores, in the future for more accurate statistics.

English 80 was also assessed in the fall of 2010 by 1 full-time instructor and one adjunct instructor. Forty-five students took the test: twenty-nine passed, sixteen did not pass. The post-assessment showed that approximately 64 percent of the students passed.

English 82 was assessed by one of the full time faculty who had all instructors who were teaching an 82 course report their post-assessment scores. The data shows that of the two tests being used, Townsend Press and DRP, the former is a more accurate assessment tool since the questions asked in the Townsend Press test address the skills that are taught in the reading courses. That said, however, the scores average about seventy percent. Although this is not a bad average, there is much room for improvement. Most instructors who participated in the assessment think the reason way the average score is at around seventy percent is because the test used, even though it is the better of the two, is not reliable because it does not match the skill level of the text used in the classroom. The report concludes that a change of texts or assessments or both would improve the student outcomes, and augmenting the reading texts with multi-paragraph selections with more challenging topics.

English 84: English 84 was assessed in the same way as 82 by another full-time instructor. The report finds low averages for the post assessment. Although the success numbers for English 84 are slightly better than for English 82 for 2007-09, the retention rates are alarmingly low. The report concludes that the reason for the disappointing scores is mainly due to the test used: the DRP. The SLO reflection concludes that the Townsend is a better assessment tool; the DRP is very inaccurate and that the DRP should no longer be used –this opinion concurs with the opinion in SLO report of English 82. Again, as in English 82 and 84, the report concludes that the text currently used does not correlate with the post-assessment test used to measure the SLO –the DRP-J6. The report concludes that the text currently used does not correlate well with the post-assessment test used –the DRP-J6. Finally, the report also suggests we need better diagnostic measurements to assess all skills taught in the course: vocabulary, reading comprehension, identification of main ideas and support, and summarizing. Reading faculty could design a test that measures the skills taught in the course.

Recommendations:

- Switch to another text book that provides more vocabulary and critical reading lessons, lessons that utilize CLOZE exercises to help students better prepare to handle inference questions.
- While the DRP test has proven to be an accurate appraisal of student comprehension, it is imperative that two tests be given –a pre and a post test, so that the instructor can better evaluate success and growth from the beginning of the course to the end.
- English 80 students should be concurrently enrolled in an academic strategies vocabulary course which is tailored to their needs. Concurrent enrollment in these courses will improve student retention and success.
- Reading assessment test requirements must be published so all reading instructors are aware of the assessment requirements.
- All reading assessment tests and answer keys should be accessible to all day and evening faculty and must be housed in a central location.
- Instruction needs to be structured through modeling and scaffolding assignments to strengthen comprehension skills that are measured in the DRP testing but not a part of the content in the Townsend Press texts that are used regularly in these courses.
- SLO could be better assessed next time if we take into account pre-assessment and post-assessment scores.
- Provide in-class supplemental instruction (SI) for all reading classes. The approximate cost would be \$20,000.