

Los Medanos College

ENGLISH DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

2010-11

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

At the completion of the **English Developmental Education Program**, the student should:

1. Demonstrate the skills necessary for the first transfer level courses in English and Math or for the English and Math competencies for the Certificate of Achievement.
2. Think critically to construct meaning and solve problems.
3. Read with comprehension.
4. Communicate effectively both in writing and orally.
5. Demonstrate the characteristics, habits, and attitudes of an effective learner.

PSLO Assessment Report Summary

What we looked at:

The purpose of holistic scoring is to assess the developmental education program. The basic research question is: "To what extent are our students showing a proficiency in the writing skills that the developmental program is teaching?" Particularly, the assessment explores the Developmental Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) #1 and #4: (1.) Demonstrate the skills necessary for the first transfer level courses in English and Math or for the English and Math competencies for the Certificate of Achievement, (4.) Communicate effectively both in writing and orally.

Assessing the extent to which students effectively achieve these abilities assists the department to make adjustments as necessary to the focus of our developmental education curriculum.

The process of investigation was as follows:

- ▶ Copies of the argument/persuasive essays (essay 3 or 4) from 15 sections of English 90 were collected. From the 322 collected, 169 essays were chosen using a random sampling formula. [This sampling resulted in a standard deviation of less than 0.5.](#)
- ▶ At the beginning of the scoring session, we discussed 5 papers that we had all read, rating them based on the scoring rubric. This allowed us to norm our expectations of low, medium, and high level work.
- ▶ During FLEX of August 2010, we scored all 169 using a rubric we created built upon the SLO's we wanted to evaluate. There were 10 instructors scoring the essays.
- ▶ After scoring, faculty discussed the improvements and challenges evidenced by the essays.

What we found:

Quantitative Results:

- ▶ 12% High, 44% Medium, 44% Low
- ▶ The percentages reflected here were very similar to those of the holistic scoring from 2 years ago, and it seems that we have been getting fairly consistent quantitative results throughout our scoring history.

Qualitative Results:

- ▶ Effort in organization and synthesis is improved. The students were making an effort to include clear thesis statements and topic sentences. Whereas in past reading there has been the occasional essay which simply rambled, we did not see this during the Fall 2010 reading.
- ▶ The Lows had a lot to do with a lack of clear logical organization, unity and coherence of paragraphs as well as grammar mistakes. Although students were putting forth a good-faith effort to included thesis

statements, topic sentences, and supporting evidence, these essays showed that students had difficulty organizing their arguments from step to step and smoothly incorporating evidence and analysis that was meaningful and effective.

‣ There is concern about the range of difficulty of instructors' assignments.

What we are planning to work on:

We are planning to have more frequent conversations among the instructors in order to discuss our expectations of students work and to help maintain a consistent standard of grading and level of difficulty as regards essay assignments. We will continue to post helpful information on SharePoint (now InSite) as a way to help instructors gain access to helpful planning materials. Staff development and training sessions have been held to continually hone skills in teaching English 70 and 90. The DE Leads will continue to provide suggestions and examples for modeling strong essays, thesis statements, and synthesis techniques as well as for creating thematic units.

Recommendations for students:

English students should begin taking their English courses soon after enrolling at LMC, if possible in their first semester since both English 70 and 90 help students make better use of campus resources as well as gain foundation skills in reading and writing which they can use in their other classes. Students should meet with a counselor to discuss career goals and devise an Educational Plan early in their educational career at LMC so that students can complete classes with the achievement of those goals in mind. Also, students in English courses should always keep in mind the importance of attending class regularly and communicating with the instructor throughout the writing process when essays are assigned in order to get the needed assistance in improving their writing.

Los Medanos College

BIOLOGY PROGRAM

2010-11

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

At the completion of the **Biology Program**, a student will:

1. Be able to distinguish a scientific hypothesis from a nonscientific idea.
2. Be aware of the chemical nature of life and apply chemical principles to everyday concepts such as diet and health.
3. Be able to find common ground between the functions of their own bodies and the functions of other life forms on Earth.
4. Be able to use a microscope so they can see that the living world is full of life forms (such as cells and bacteria) that are too small for them to see with their unaided eyes.
5. Be able to describe a few different ways that humans or other living organisms maintain internal homeostasis.
6. Be able to describe the basic relationship between DNA, proteins, and the transmission and evolution of hereditary traits.

PSLO Assessment Report Summary

What we looked at

We focused on one PSLO, *Be aware of the chemical nature of life and apply chemical principles to everyday concepts such as diet and health*. This is an especially important PSLO, since chemistry underlies all of biological science. As set forth in the assessment guidelines that were in effect at the time, we selected one course, Biology 45 (Human Physiology) to serve as a pilot for this, our first-time PSLO assessment effort. To assess the PSLO, we looked at the Unit I exam scores of students in four sections of Bio 45. This exam assesses the mastery of the chemical principles that underlie human physiology, and indeed all of biological science.

What we found

We were heartened to discover that a majority of students scored at or above proficiency on the assessment that we looked at. Although we cannot generalize these results to all courses across our curriculum without more study, this was encouraging. It suggests that our particular combination of student effort and preparation, along with the instruction that we provide, is effective in achieving the learning objectives of the Biology Program.

What we are planning to work on

Since we did this program-level assessment, the definition of *program* has been clarified and the assessment guidelines themselves have changed. We are working on adapting to these changes, and are extensively revising our PSLOs, and devising a tenable methodology for assessing them.