

English 1A Consistency Project Meeting: 1A SLO REPORT DISCUSSION June 21, 2013

- Moderated by Elise Geraghty, Rachel Williams, and Stephanie Merz
- Special acknowledgement to Erica Soohoo, who collated the data and created a PowerPoint

A packet was created based on Erica's PowerPoint; the packet contains the following items:

- First page= Data Reporting Sheet
- Second page = spreadsheet with everyone's data
 - It's important for us to see everyone's numbers in order to think of ourselves as a department: What the rest of the department is doing.
- Third page = Compton numbers
- Fourth page on = the PowerPoint presentation
 - Back side of each grade distribution page= chart with the rest of the SLO assessment data answered

El Camino had 46 instructors participating in the consistency project.

- 64 sections taught
- 2270 papers graded

Compton had eight instructors participating in the consistency project.

- 11 sections taught
- 208 papers graded

ECC had 19% As, 32% Bs, 32% Cs, and 28% Ds and Fs

Compton had 13% As, 22% Bs, 33% Cs, and 37% Ds and Fs

- One faculty member noted that there was no space on the SLO Assessment Data form to mark students who were enrolled in the class but did not turn in a research essay.
- ECC: Why students earned Ds and Fs:
 - 29% had source and documentation errors
 - 22% had language issues
 - 20% had issues with organization
 - 15% did not have a clear thesis
 - 14% did not meet the length requirement
- CEC: Why students earned Ds and Fs:
 - 27% had source and documentation errors
 - 20% had language issues
 - 21% did not have a clear thesis
 - 19% had organization issues
 - 12% did not meet the length requirement

Observations/Patterns and Trends for ECC—from the SLO Assessment Data (number of respondents)

- Analysis and source integration problems (14)
- Documentation and citation problems (14)
- Grammar issues (8)
- Connection between using resources/not using resources and performance (8)
- Reading comprehension problems (7)
- Lack of preparation for 1A (7)
- Failure to meet minimum requirements (6)
- Lack of organization—especially in D/F papers (5)
- Students taking advantage of resources/help performed better (4)

Faculty who were present were asked to evaluate in their groups these observations/patterns and trends, especially the first three trends.

Results of faculty group discussion:

Observations/Patterns and Trends

- Analysis and source integration is a major problem.
- Quote does not match the argument.
- Teaching grammar takes away from numbers 1 and 2 on the above Trends list.
- Since most students do not read regularly, they lack facility with the English language.
 - Lack of reading affects reading comprehension and leads to problems with grammar.
- Data analysis and/or general knowledge are issues—e.g., some students mistook Abraham Lincoln for Thomas Jefferson.
- One faculty member who's taught here for 20 years noticed that her students this semester were particularly ill-prepared for 1A; a discussion ensued on why this might be the case.
 - Perhaps there's been a demographic shift on campus within the past ten years?
 - Students who were enrolled in 1A should've really been in A.
 - Students want to succeed, but seem to not have the preparation or skills to do so.
 - One faculty member noted that perhaps the lack of preparation is due to the fact that spring semester students tend not to be as "strong" as fall semester students.
 - Another faculty member noted that the Assessment Test for placing into 1A should be re-evaluated.
 - Perhaps ECC should re-evaluate the cut-off numbers it uses for placement into 1A, A, etc.
 - Perhaps there should be a standard exit exam for A students wanting to move on to 1A.
 - Should literature be taught in English 1A? Should 1A just consist of non-fiction?
 - ESL students who take the equivalent of A have different standards—they are not as prepared. One faculty member noted, "The ESL path to 1A makes no sense at all."

We need to address the above issues during the 1A Course Review next semester!

Implications and future Direction: Teaching Strategies—from the SLO Assessment Data

- Focus on MLA/Works Cited/Sources (13)
- More examples/exercises and repetition (9)
- Emphasis on basic requirements (8)
- More time and/or earlier start for research essays (7)
- Prepare students for research (5)
- One-on-one draft conferencing (4)
- In-class projects and student presentations (4)
- Work on reading comprehension (3)
- Work on basics (grammar, sentence structure, etc.) (3)
- Research paper as requirement to pass class

Results of discussion about the top three findings above:

- Since there is such a gap in literacy and language use between the A student and the 1A student, perhaps we should have a two-semester A course.
 - First semester =focus on writing, grammar, reading
 - Second semester = focus on how to write a good solid research essay

1A Action Plan: What to do next for the next semester or two:

- Have brown bags during the fall semester where faculty share best practices for research essays.
- Have an informal norming session where instructors share what is an A paper, B paper, etc.
- Figure out how much to weight the research paper and take a vote on it.
- Ask faculty members to pair up with another faculty member they trust in order to norm and compare what is an A, B, etc.
- Have more peer classroom observations where faculty can see best practices in action.
 - Perhaps faculty can get flex credit for peer observations?
- Explore the creation of an Academic Strategies course that runs concurrently with English 1A.
- Reboot the Writing Center workshop.
- Make sure that English A course objectives align with English 1A course objectives.
- Request funding for readers/graders.

Changes to curriculum

- English A needs to be consistent with 1A.
- Investigate our equivalency with four-year schools.
- Two-semester A course?
- COR reflects consistency standard?
- Students should learn MLA in English A, not 1A.
- Get consistency in readings assigned in terms of fiction, non-fiction, etc.
- Require the two book-length works for 1A to be research-based.
- Perhaps we need a full year of Freshman Composition—two semesters of 1A instead of one.
- Make English 1A five units (or more).

- Require one of the two book-length works to be a choice that each individual student chooses for her/his research essay.
- Require an entrance grammar exam for 1A.
- Emphasis on MLA might be misplaced—other disciplines use APA.
- The process of learning how to conduct research is more important than mastering MLA format.
- Perhaps 1A should cover both MLA and APA.
- There are three sections of AX this summer: one faculty member doesn't think these students can be prepared for 1A in a mere six weeks.
- De-emphasizing reading is not a good idea: if anything, students need to read more!
- Develop an Academic Strategies course that could run concurrently with 1A—one that focuses on writing annotated bibliographies, etc.

Teaching Strategies

- Required and graded annotations
- More steps/strategies in the research essay writing process—graded and with instructor feedback
 - Also starting the research essay process earlier
- PASS mentor in the 1A classroom
 - For example: tutors in the classroom can help the instructor evaluate sources to make sure they are credible, reliable
- Collaborative learning/writing: have students write group papers
- Fewer required sources—two or three instead of five—in order to ensure that students understand their sources
- Bibliography due before the research essay is due
- More heavily weighted research essay
- More grammar, given that 20% of 1A papers had language issues

Program/College-level changes

- Require an exit exam (for English A?).
- Change the assessment/placement test cut-off scores.
- Require a writing sample for placement into English 1A.
- Fund a reader/grader for English 1A.
- Require a lab component for English 1A.
- Perhaps have a 1A plus course for placement acceleration.
- Have the Writing Center conduct more workshops on MLA Citations, how to write annotated bibliographies, etc.

Implication and Future Direction—from the SLO Assessment Data

- Stricter requirements for English A students to get into English 1A (9)
- More time for research papers and have multiple drafts (7)
- More student practice to work with evidence, support, and MLA (6)
- Add a “mini-research essay” for more practice (5)
- Research paper worth more (4)

- Greater focus on reading/writing (4)
- Difficult for students jumping straight into 1A (3)
- Less lecture, more in-class group work (2)
- No changes (2)

Implications and Future Direction: Support from Program/College—from SLO Assessment Data

- More library collaboration including more help with MLA, works cited (9)
- Continue norming workshops/consistency (7)
- Additional preparation before 1A (7)
- Make English A harder or increase the requirements for English 1A (6)
- Greater emphasis on drafts/writing, less reading (5)
- Tutors in English 1A (4)
- Smaller class sizes (4)
- More contact hours for 1A (2)

What comes next:

- Rachel Williams and Stephanie Merz will work on a report based on today's discussion.
- A draft of the report will be available on Thursday, July 11.
- Rachel and Stephanie will hold an optional meeting to discuss the draft on July 18, 1:30pm.