

El Camino College

Institutional Learning Outcome #2: Communication

Spring 2019

Executive Summary

- El Camino College assessed the Communication Institutional Learning Outcome during the Spring 2019 semester.
- The learning outcome goal of 75% of students achieving the outcome was met. More than 77% of students scored at least a 3 out of 5 on all three areas of communication: Organization, Delivery, and Substantive Content.
- The college has not closed the equity gap in outcomes for African-American students. The college should consider the reasons for why this is and determine the resources needed to address it.

Introduction

Every year, the Assessment of Learning Committee assesses one of El Camino College's four Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO). Each learning outcome is assessed every four years. El Camino College assessed its second Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO): Communication, during the Spring 2019 semester. Communication was previously assessed Spring 2015. The Communication ILO reads:

ILO #2 - COMMUNICATION

Students effectively communicate with and respond to varied audiences in written, spoken or signed, and artistic forms.

- **Comprehend, analyze and respond appropriately to oral, written, and visual information. Effectively communicate/express information through speaking, writing, visual, and other appropriate modes of communication/expression.**
- **Effectively communicate ideas and opinions to a varied audience, including peers, faculty, staff and community.**
- **Respond to audiences from different arenas either in written, spoken or signed, and artistic forms to express ideas and opinions.**

The standard established for measuring this ILO is:

75% of students assessed will achieve a 3 or higher in each area.

Communication takes multiple forms. The ILO considers written communication, spoken and signed communication, as well as artistic communication and the committee tried to ensure that representation from each of these modalities was included in the assessment.

Methodology

The Communication ILO was assessed in a sample of courses during the Spring 2019 term. The selected courses all had Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) slated to be assessed during the Spring 2019 term. The SLO's to be assessed are also mapped to the Communication ILO. Selected instructors rated each student in the section according to a rubric (Appendix A) the Assessment of Learning Committee provided using an assessment method chosen by the instructor. Examples of assessment methods include writings, presentations, and graphic works.

Sample

Forty course sections were randomly selected for participation from the list of sections slated to undergo Student Learning Outcome assessment during the Spring 2019 term. Only sections with SLO's that were mapped to the Communication ILO were included. Sections with adjunct Part-time and Full-time faculty were part of the selection group. Twenty-two sections completed the rubric for their sections for a response rate of 55%. When Communication was last assessed, over 70 sections were contacted, with 22 returning completed assessments (31% response rate). The ratings of the 421 students included in this sample give a margin of error of $\pm 4.73\%$.

The sampled sections included, but were not limited to English, Art, Computer Information Systems, Sign Language, Human Development, Business, and Sociology. Each instructional division was represented in the sample.

Method of Assessment

Faculty were given the Synoptic Communication Rubric created by the Assessment of Learning Committee which directed faculty to rate students' communication in terms of organization, delivery, and substantive content (see Appendix A). A rating scale of 1-5 was established with 1 being "Poor" and 5 being "Excellent" for each of the three facets for effective communication. A student needed to score three or higher in each facet to be considered passing the ILO. Faculty were asked to use the same activity they would have used to perform the course level learning outcome (SLO) assessment, so assessment activities varied.

Most of the 22 sections that returned completed assessments were based off written assignments, such as research papers. Other assessment methods included laboratory assignments, classroom presentations and discussions, signing, and graphic design projects. See Table 1.

Table 1: ILO Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Number of Sections
Class Interaction/Presentation	6
Graphic Design	3
Laboratory	1
Signed Expression	1
Written Assignment	11

Results: ILO Standard is MET

The results of the 421 completed assessments indicate more than 75% of students met the standard, meaning they were scored a three or higher in all three facets of the ILO rubric. The overall standard rate increased by 4.8% compared to the last Communication ILO assessment. Furthermore, each component of the Communication ILO (Organization, Delivery, Substantive Content) each showed increases compared to the 2015 assessment.

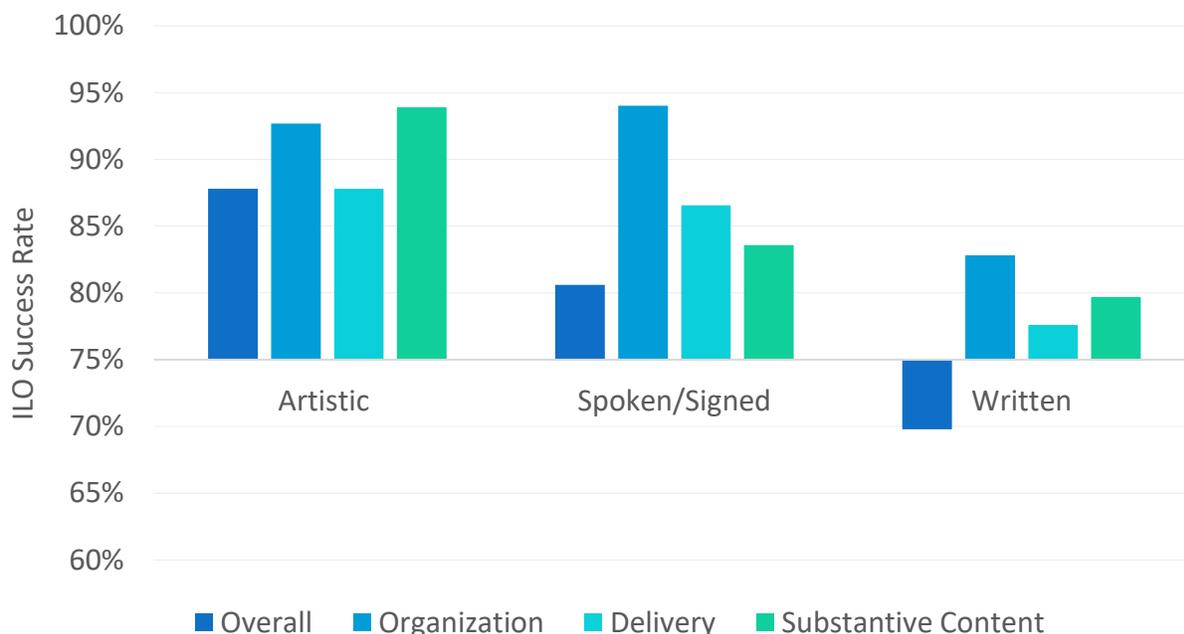
Table 2: Communication Segments Success Rate

ILO Outcome	2019 Rate (N=421)	2015 Rate (N=610)	Change
Overall	77.3%	72.5%	↑
Organization	86.9%	83.3%	↑
Delivery	82.4%	81.7%	↑
Substantive Content	84.0%	79.7%	↑

Disaggregating ILO outcomes by communication type reveals students performed above the standard of 75% with a three or higher in both artistic and spoken/signed communication methods. Students performed below the standard in written communication. There were 82 students who were assessed based on Artistic Communication and almost 88% of these students achieved the standard. Artistic students performed very well on all three facets of communication with only Delivery performing below 90%. There were 67 Spoken/Signed Communication student assessments with 81% achieving the standard. Spoken/Signed

students performed high on Organization and performed lowest on Substantive Content where 84% passed. There were 192 students assessed in Written Communication. This method of communication did not meet the institutional standard with only 70% passing all three facets of communication, even though more than 75% were able to pass each individual facet. Writing students scored lowest on Delivery of their written communication. In Figure 1 below, the axis is set to the standard of 75%. Bars above the axis indicate an outcome that achieved the standard, while the bar below the axis indicates the standard was not achieved.

Figure 1: ILO Pass Rate by Communication Type



Equity Outcomes

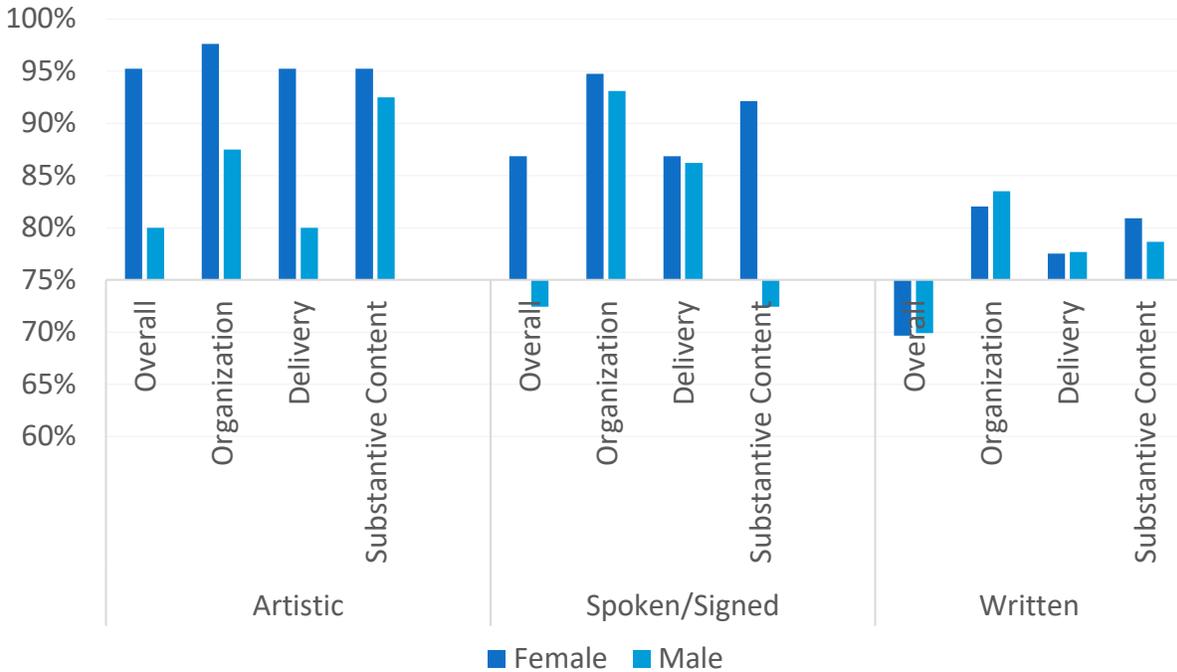
ILO results were disaggregated by demographic categories to determine if certain groups are performing differently than their peers. El Camino College emphasizes certain groups as part of its [Equity Plan](#). These demographics include gender, race/ethnicity, disabled status, Foster Youth, LGBTQIA+, and veteran status¹.

Female and male students demonstrated similar outcomes for Written Communication. Both groups were able to pass each individual component, but fell below the standard in passing all three. There were considerable differences in outcomes for Artistic and Spoken/Signed Communication with females outperforming males. Males performed 15% lower than females in Artistic Communication, largely due to lower ratings in organization and delivery. Males

¹ The LGBTQIA+ and Foster Youth populations are omitted from this analysis. These demographic groups have too few representatives in the sample to make meaningful inferences. Similarly, many groups will only be reviewed on overall ILO passage rates and will not be reviewed by type of communication because of sample size.

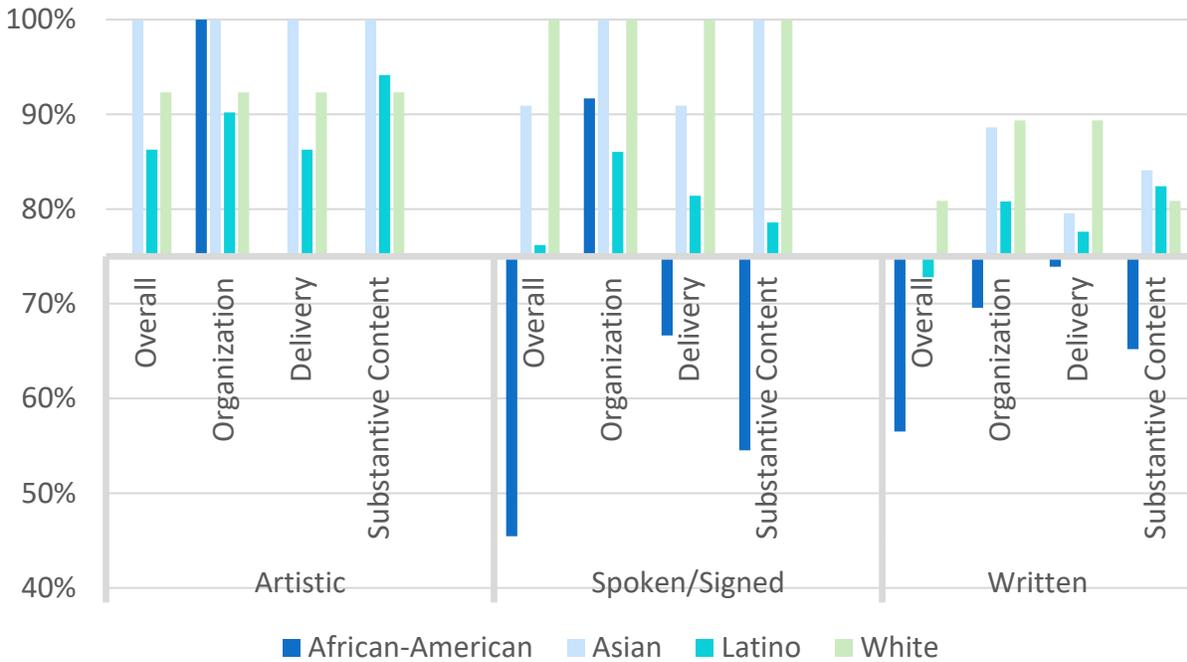
performed 14% lower than females in Spoken/Signed Communication due to lower ratings in Substantive Content. This caused males to achieve below the standard for Spoken/Signed Communication.

Figure 2: ILO Pass Rate by Gender



When ILO passage rates are disaggregated by race and ethnicity, we see African-Americans are below the standard in achievement overall, completing the ILO at 55%. This is a decline of 10% from 2015. While this group is at the standard for Artistic communication, Spoken/Signed and Written communication rates are more than 15% below the standard. Addressing the Substantive Content continues to be the greatest area of need for African-Americans, but delivery was in issue for both types of communication, and organization was a concern in Written communication. Latinos also fell just below the standard in Written communication, with delivery being the area of lowest performance.

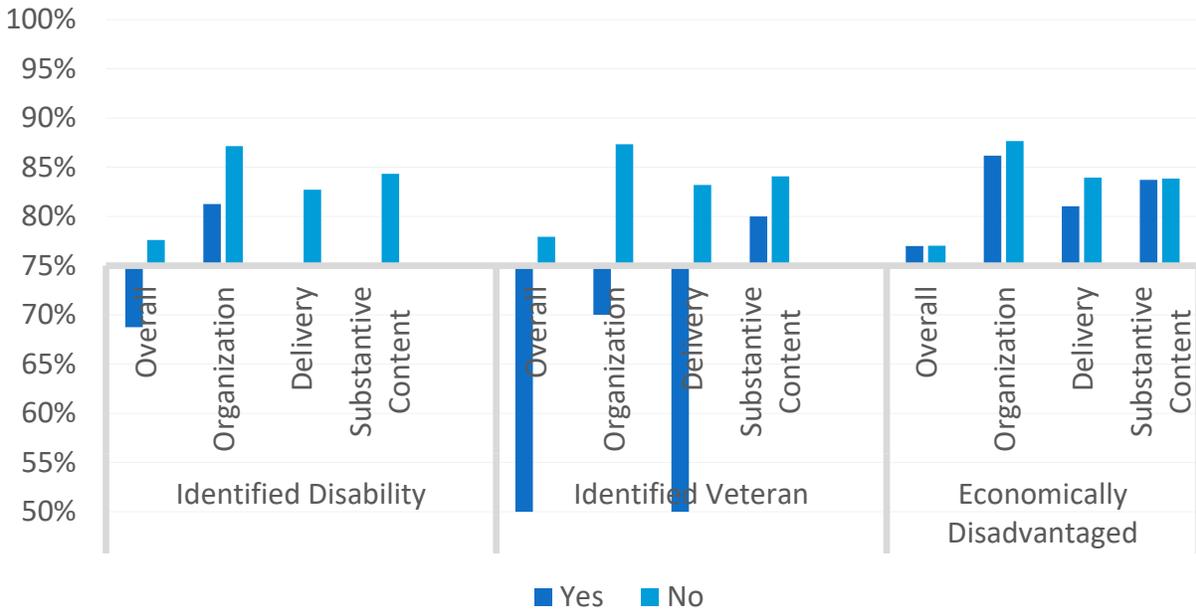
Figure 3: ILO Pass Rate by Race/Ethnicity



We disaggregated data for disability status, Veterans, and economically disadvantaged students, as well. However, there were not enough cases of these students to break out the ILO by type of communication. Students with an identified disability did not meet the ILO standard, even though they were at or above the standard for each communication component. These students scored lowest in terms of Delivery and Substantive Content. Veterans also fell below the overall standard. Half were not able to meet the delivery portion of the rubric, but organization was an issue, as well. Economically disadvantaged students did meet the ILO and demonstrated no appreciable difference from non-economically disadvantaged students.

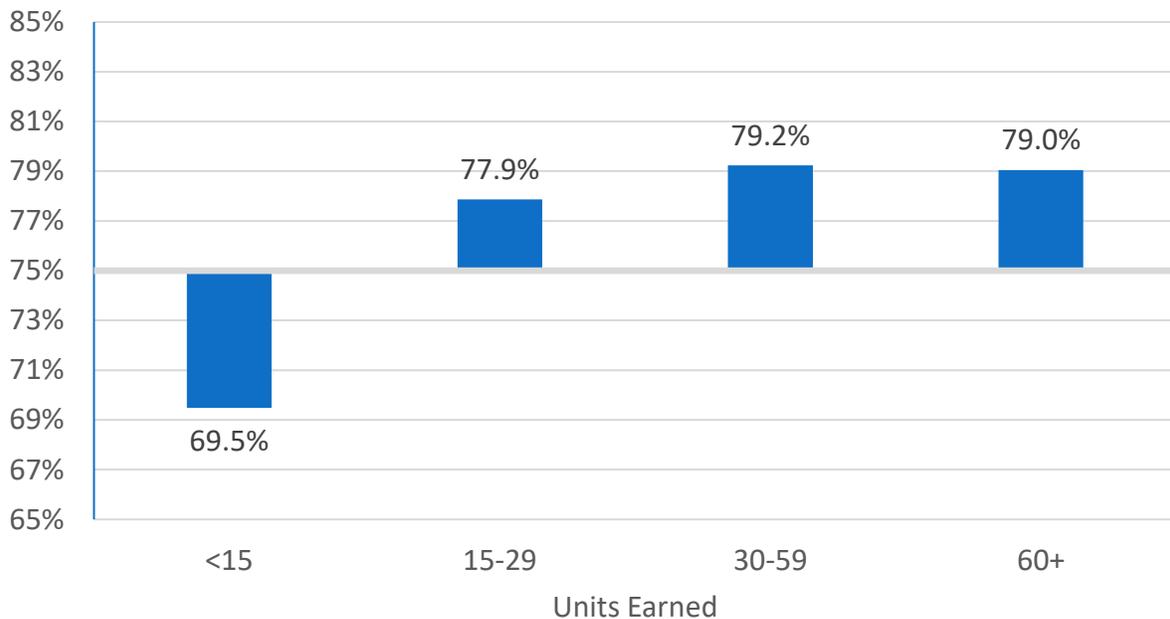
Other equity groups such as Foster youth and LGBTQ+ could not be included in the analysis due to low counts.

Figure 4: ILO Pass Rate by Special Population



The ILO was also disaggregated by units completed before the Spring '19 semester. Overall, students who had already completed at least 15 units met the standard, while those with less than 15 completed units fell below the standard. Less than 70% of the students who had previously completed 15 units were able to meet the standard.

Figure 5: ILO Pass Rate by Units Completed



Instructor Analysis

Just as we did in 2015, we asked instructors to discuss some of the issues they could identify in each communication component. As was the case then, the biggest issue instructors saw was in terms of *Organization* was the development of ideas. This included the development of thesis statements, transitions and the flow of ideas, and general construction. These issues were indicated by more than 25% of the comments.

In terms of *Delivery*, the biggest issue instructors mentioned was technical skills. Students lacked the skills to produce their vision. This included oratory, artistic and, and research skills. This was the case for almost half of the instructor comments. A second issue, indicated by one quarter of the comments, is the preparation involved in the final production. Preparation included practicing, editing, and revising for the final presentation. In 2015, grammar was one of the biggest issues, but two instructors only mentioned it this time.

The issues with *Substantive Content* continue to center around research skills and a lack of evidence to support reasoning. Students had trouble navigating the sources and evidence to support their idea. Furthermore, there were comments that students had a difficult time distinguishing academic resources from “internet falsehoods.”

Conclusions

El Camino College met its goal of 75% success for the 2019 administration of the Communication ILO. Though the ILO goal was met, there are still some areas where the college can improve. Most notably, African-American students are being assessed well below their counterparts, especially in spoken/signed and written communication. The college is making efforts to address these equity gaps through initiatives such as Guided Pathways and the Student Equity Plan, but this data continues to illustrate the urgency with which these achievement gaps should be addressed. The college should explore greater integration of training efforts to help faculty and staff assist African-American students.

The outcomes of this ILO tie into the Information Literacy ILO. More comments referred to issues with research skills and development of supporting evidence than any other issue. In the [2018 Information Literacy ILO report](#), we found more faculty were requiring research skills, but were providing less time to teach those skills. Increased and creative partnerships with library faculty and staff can help the college move forward on both ILO measures.

Appendix A: Synoptic Communication Rubric: Assessment of ILO #2 – Spring 2019

Standard: 3 or higher in all areas is considered successful

Communication Trait	1 Poor	2 Below Average	3 Satisfactory	4 Above Average	5 Excellent
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis/purpose • Flow of ideas • Intro/body/conclusion • Artistic composition • Grammatical structure/linguistics 	Not executed; does not have clear structure or organization	Somewhat executed; some portions have clear structure and organization	Mostly executed; most portions have clear structure and organization	Majorly executed; majority of portions have clear structure and organization	Fully executed; all portions have clear structure and organization
Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal, Syntax • Non-verbal • Shows awareness of audience • Technical skill • Phonology, correct pronunciation, non-manual signs, parameter 	Not executed; does not use appropriate syntax, technique, non-verbal cues, etc...	Somewhat executed; some use of appropriate syntax, technique, non-verbal cues, etc...	Mostly executed; mostly used appropriate syntax, technique, non-verbal cues, etc...	Majorly executed; majority use of appropriate syntax, technique, non-verbal cues, etc...	Fully executed; full use of appropriate syntax, technique, non-verbal cues, etc... throughout
Substantive Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate and appropriate data • Research/support/ evidence • Accuracy of content • Artistic creativity/ originality • Lexicon, vocabulary 	Not executed; does not demonstrate sufficient research, sound data, or original thought	Somewhat executed; Some demonstration of sufficient research, sound data, or original thought	Mostly executed; mostly demonstrated sufficient research, sound data, or original thought	Majorly executed; majority demonstration of sufficient research, sound data, or original thought	Fully executed; full demonstration of sufficient research, sound data, or original thought throughout