

Summary of SLO Assessment Projects August 2007 through May 2008

English – Writing Program Pilot

1. The English division has created a uniform “across-the-board” Entrance Essay for all English 102 sections that holistically identifies how well students demonstrate the outcomes that they should have achieved having a) completed English 101 or b) by placing out of prior English courses due to ACT, COMPASS, or SAT scores.
2. In addition, the division created a uniform “across-the-board” Exit Essay for all English 102 sections that will inform how well students are achieving the required course outcomes.
3. A rubric for the Entrance and Exit Essays that tie in with both regional and national trends in writing assessment is used.
4. Each semester, a random sample is taken by instructors from students’ Entrance and Exit Essays.
5. During fall 2007, the division has participated in retreats to score the essays using the rubrics. In order to prepare for this assessment, “norming” sessions occurred to train in use of the rubric.
6. Each random sample has been evaluated and scored this fall, the division has determined percentages: what percentage of the random samples achieved the minimum outcomes for English 102, and what percentage failed to achieve those outcomes (and why).
7. The data shows interesting results. Explanations of the difference in results from entrance to exit have many possibilities. There was some variation in the way individual instructors included the exercise in their courses. The Exit Essay rubric was brand new in spring 2007 and has since been refined. In general, the division feels discussing and fine-tuning the outcomes-assessment process has been and will continue to be more important than the results. Moreover, the percentages of students passing and failing the exit essay show room for improvement, and the division is looking forward to seeing the results from the next pilot. (*See attached Report for data*).

Communications (Oral – pilot fall 07)

1. All instructors, full- and part-time, operate as a unit motivated to insure each and every student at North Idaho College who takes Communication 101 has the most consistent experience possible. Through the years, instructors developed a handbook which is now published through McGraw-Hill.
2. Each speaking assignment is tied to course outcome(s); each speaking assignment ties the teacher evaluation to the outcomes; each speaking assignment ties the peer evaluations to the outcomes.
3. Students peer and self-evaluate for each speaking assignment.
4. Common rubrics are used to evaluate student speeches in all sections.

5. Students practice using the same rubrics and participate in peer- and self-evaluation.
6. The department developed a pre- and post-test to compare “raw” theory knowledge to acquired knowledge. The post-test will be administered at mid-term as most of the content in the text has been covered by this point in the semester. The goal is to identify competencies which are not fully understood by students so as to adjust teaching accordingly. The timing of the exercise is desirable in that a mid-term assessment of content outcomes will allow the department to “fix” areas of concern prior to students exiting the course.
7. Through a grant process, the department has purchased software which will be used to create and score the pre- and post-test. Training will occur in February 08 and a mini-pilot will run in a few late-start sections spring 08. A pre- and post-test will then be introduced fall 2008.

Mathematics (developed during spring and fall 07 – pilot spring 08)

1. The department created a homegrown instrument to assess student learning outcomes in the Mathematical, Scientific, and Symbolic Reasoning General Education ability.
2. The department developed a rubric to score the assessment instrument.
3. The assessment instrument and rubric focuses on four areas of quantitative reasoning skills: extracting relevant data from given mathematical or contextual situations; selecting known models to organize the data into table, spreadsheet, graphical or equation formats; obtaining correct mathematical results; and stating those results appropriately.
4. The assessment instrument and rubric are in draft form and the division plans to pilot it spring 2008 and then fine tune both.
5. As assessment data is gathered, it will be analyzed and discussed as a mechanism for identifying strengths and challenges and as a means for implementing positive changes in Math courses.

Information Literacy (research instruments fall 07; select instrument spring 07; pilot instrument fall 08)

1. Research has been conducted working closely with library staff and the English department, and includes dispersing introductory materials, solicitation of materials from other institutions, review of existing models, and a presentation by library staff of a website and materials.
2. A subcommittee is working on an instrument. Librarians are developing a set of questions that tie the research process to use of a website tutorial. Upon completion of the tutorial and a research project, a survey will be administered which documents the research process. The assessment will align with the ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education. The committee’s goal is to establish a tool by early spring, and implement a pilot of the model and instrument fall 2008.

3. Additional discussion centered on the possibility of developing an Information Literacy online class component that could be used by any instructor in the future. The committee's goal is to develop a model that can eventually be used in many disciplines.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

1. The SLOA Committee is currently conducting research and discussing how to assess Critical Thinking.
2. Committee goals and timeline:
 - a. Review materials and propose a model spring 08.
 - b. SLOA Committee, working with appropriate departments, will develop an instrument. The committee will review the model/instrument fall 08.
 - c. The committee's goal is to pilot a Critical Thinking instrument by spring 2009.

Other:

1. Preliminary discussion and work is occurring on a method for yearly reporting of assessment results in Professional-Technical education using a model which aligns program outcomes with methods of assessment.