



Los Angeles Valley College

Student Learning Outcomes Newsletter

February 2009

What's Happening Now?

Writing SLOs

- Approved SLOs are on the Curriculum website (www.lavc.edu/vccc/courseoutlines.html).
- All faculty need to include approved SLOs in their syllabus (ACCJC requirement).
- ALL SLOs need to be written by the end of this semester.
- **Close to 80% of course SLOs have already been written!**

Assessing SLOs

- All disciplines need to assess at least one course this semester.
- A workshop on non-rubric SLO assessment methods will be held on Tuesday, March 24 (from 1-2:30 in BSc 103).
- A rubric workshops will be held on Wednesday, April 29 (from 1-2:30 in AH&S 143).

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Have SLO Questions?

Check out the SLO webpage (www.lavc.edu/slo) or contact the SLO Coordinator, Rebecca Stein (steinrl@lavc.edu, 818-947-2538).

Evidence of SLOAC Participation for Faculty Evaluation

The new faculty evaluation form (found in Appendix C of the contract) states, “(For All Faculty) Participates in the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (for classroom faculty, includes approved SLOs on class syllabi).” This is one of three items for which the form states “Evidence Provided” and the question has come up as to what would constitute evidence. This should be decided by the review committee as part of the evaluation plan. Possible items include, but are not limited to: syllabi, sign-in sheets from SLO-related professional development workshops, minutes from department meetings, statement from the department chair, minutes from the curriculum or SLO committee meetings, completed SLO forms, developed rubrics, or a statement from the instructor being evaluated.



STARS: The Dialogue Continues...

By Scott Weigand, Writing Center Director

STARS (Strategic Team for the Advancement and Retention of Students) hosted two workshops during the fall semester 2008 in support of the SLO theme year on communication. The first workshop in October was entitled “Coffeehouse: Up Close and Personal” and brought together faculty, students, and staff from a variety of disciplines. The aim of the workshop was to create an informal dialogue where participants could explore questions related to student success. Sitting in groups of four to seven, students and faculty shared the best advice they received as students, reflected on strategies for overcoming obstacles, and offered suggestions for how to make better use of faculty drop-in hours. With over forty people in attendance, the room buzzed as the walls between faculty and students dissolved, and participants found a common ground in communicating their own experiences as students. When the workshop came to a close, attendees commented on the importance of coming together to discuss learning outside of the classroom and the value of exploring learning from different perspectives.

The second STARS workshop was held in December and facilitated by four presenters who provided different perspectives on “The Value of Education.” With over forty people in attendance, Art professor Dale Fulkerson began the session, illustrating the monetary value of education through a formula that calculated how each unit of college credit earned would contribute to an individual’s lifetime earnings. The next presentation was by Deborah Kaye, Director of Professional Development, who explored the connections between education and health by providing some compelling statistics that reinforced the many benefits of attending college. Flushing out the relevancy between General Education courses, outcomes, and the workplace, Rebecca Stein, Professor of Anthropology, led participants through a discussion that helped students to see the purpose and significance of General Education requirements. And for the final presentation, director of the Dolores Huerta Institute John Delloro highlighted various historical social movements that were fueled by developments in education. As the hour and half workshop came to close, participants came away with a variety of viewpoints that reinforced the many reasons as to why we are all here.

Although the two workshops differed in focus and content, there was a common thread in terms of communication playing an integral part in the success of the workshops. Bringing together students, faculty, staff, and administrators—all the voices on the campus—for meaningful dialogue about learning continues to be a central goal and driving force of the STARS program. For the spring semester, we are looking forward to another series of engaging sessions as we continue to explore the theme of communication. We encourage all regular STARS participants to spread the word and embrace the motto “Each one bring one.”



TRIO Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

By Barbara Schneider, TRIO/Student Support Services Director

TRIO/Student Support Services, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help low-income, first generation college students or disabled students achieve a college education, has established the following student learning outcomes for the program.

- *Utilize necessary information and resources available to navigate through the educational system.
- *Identify & employ appropriate study skills/life management to be successful in higher education system.
- *Identify & articulate IGETC, CSU, UC and major transfer requirements via development of educational plan.
- *Identify and describe requirements necessary for various selected career opportunities.

In order to assess these outcomes, the TRIO/SSS program has developed a student survey used to help evaluate the levels students are at. This survey includes an informational questionnaire as to the students' awareness of campus resources, a study skills inventory, and a survey on transfer awareness and career opportunities awareness. Focus groups are also used.

The assessment results showed that the majority of students, after attending workshops, showed a capability of over 86% for three of the outcomes. The ability to identify resources was lower with 64% of the students showing a capability of 75% or higher.

With this information, we are able to help our students stay in college and graduate and/or transfer to the 4 year universities by providing them with the information they need.

For more information about TRiO, go to <http://www.lavc.edu/TRIO/index.html>.



Developing Rubrics

By Rebecca Stein, SLO Coordinator

SLO assessments have two components – the work that students will do to show that they have achieved the SLO and the faculty evaluation of that work. A useful tool for the evaluation and grading of student work in general is the rubric. A rubric sets out specific expectations for an assignment, helps students focus on the most important elements, and produces more consistent and reliable assessment that can be compared across time and across sections and instructors.

What exactly is a rubric? A rubric is a grid that contains the following elements:

- 1) A **task description** which explains what the student is supposed to do.
- 2) **Scale levels** which describe how well the student performed.
- 3) **Dimensions** which describe the criteria that will be used to evaluate the work.
- 4) **Performance descriptors** which describe what constitutes each level of performance in the rubric.

A basic rubric would look like this:

Task Description

	Scale Level 1	Scale Level 2	Scale Level 3
Dimension 1	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor
Dimension 2	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor
Dimension 3	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor
Dimension 4	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor	Performance Descriptor

Below is a more detailed description of each element.

Task Descriptions

The task description may be a student learning outcome or an assignment description.

Examples include:

- For a writing class – write a multiple-paragraph, in-class essay in response to a reading question.
- For a photography class – create a portfolio of 35 mm prints from original negatives based on course assignments.
- For a real estate class – prepare a real estate purchase contract representing the buyer in a residential transaction.

Scale

The scale describes how well (or not) a student has performed on the task. Three levels is a good place to start and five levels should be the absolute maximum. You can have fun with the terms used, but the descriptors should be tactful and clear.

Examples include:

- Exemplary, acceptable, unacceptable
- Proficient, developing, emerging
- High, average, low
- Good job, doing fine, what happened?

Dimensions

Dimensions show what criteria will be used to evaluate the student work. The dimensions help provide students with information that they can use when preparing their assignments.

Examples of dimensions:

- For a writing sample: introduction, body, conclusion, language
- For a math problem: understanding of problem, planning a solution, getting an answer

Levels of Performance

The levels of performance boxes are where you explain for each dimension what constitutes each level on your scale. For example, what constitutes an acceptable introduction as opposed to an unacceptable one?

Having Fun with Rubrics

An addition to be a grading tool, rubrics can be a teaching tool. Try having students use the rubric for self-assessment or peer assessment. Better yet, have the students develop the rubric themselves as part of a class assignment.

Online Rubric Resources

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>.

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html>

http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/Section_4_Assessment_Tools/Section4_6PTA.htm

Examples of Rubrics

On the following pages are sample rubrics.

Rubric for Evaluating the Writing Process (courtesy of Scott Weigand)

	1	2	3	4	Score
Invention	The student has not employed any invention techniques to generate ideas.	The student has tried at least one type of invention strategy to generate ideas and has demonstrated minimal reflection on why or why not the technique works.	The student has evidence of using at least two invention strategies to generate ideas and has demonstrated a sufficient level of reflection on why or why the technique works.	The student has tested numerous invention strategies, has chosen which strategy works best for his or her writing, and has demonstrated thoughtful reflection on why or why not the technique works.	
Drafting	The student has not provided any evidence of a rough draft.	The student has generated the beginnings of a rough draft and has demonstrated minimal reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the drafting stage.	The student has generated a sufficient rough draft, has demonstrated some awareness of audience and purpose, and has provided a sufficient level of reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the drafting stage.	The student has a generated a strong rough draft, has demonstrated a strong awareness of audience and purpose, and has provided thoughtful reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the drafting stage.	
Revision	The student has not provided any evidence of revising the essay.	The student has addressed few global and local concerns, and has demonstrated minimal reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the revision stage	The student has generated more than one draft, has addressed both global and local concerns, and has demonstrated sufficient reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the revision stage.	The student has generated multiple drafts, has made significant revision at both the global and local level, and has demonstrated thoughtful reflection regarding his or her strengths and weakness in the revision stage	
Editing	The student has provided minimal evidence of editing the essay; there are numerous problems at both the global and local level	The student has provided some evidence of editing the essay and has eliminated some grammatical and mechanical errors. The student has provided some reflection regarding his or her strength in the editing stage.	The student has provided sufficient evidence of editing the essay, has eliminated many grammatical and mechanical errors. The student has provided sufficient reflection regarding his or her strength in the editing stage.	The student has provided strong evidence of editing the essay, has eliminated most or all grammatical and mechanical errors, and has provided thoughtful reflection regarding his or her strength in the editing stage.	

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Directed Study (185/285/385) Rubric

Outcome: Student will be able to analyze a topic in the subject and effectively communicate the results of their analysis.

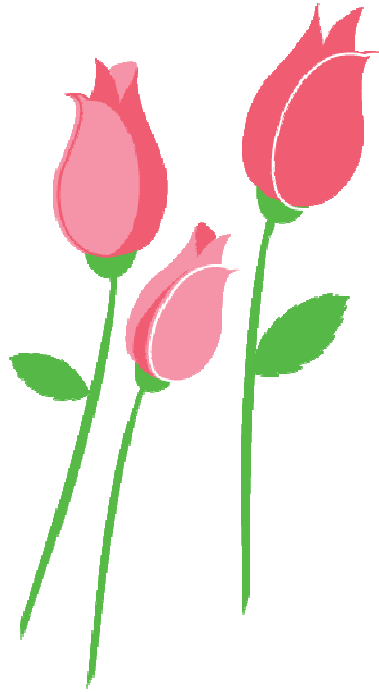
	Good	Ok	Poor
Purpose/focus and Audience	Clearly identifies the issue; establishes and maintains a clear focus and awareness of audience	Summarizes issue – key details may be missing; attempts to establish and maintain purpose and communicate with the audience	Fails to identify and summarize the issue accurately; has limited awareness of audience and/or purpose
Analysis	Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context; presents, assesses and analyzes supporting data/evidence	Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions regarding the issues, although in a limited way; demonstrates adequate skill in searching, selecting and evaluating, sources	Does not recognize context or surface assumptions, or does so superficially; insufficient evidence of search, selection or source evaluation skills; inadequate analysis
Subject content	Shows clear understanding of the context and perspectives of the field. Demonstrates disciplinary understanding and interconnection	Shows some understanding of the context and perspectives of the field	Shows little or no understanding of the context and perspectives of the field
Development of ideas/ organization	Logical sequencing of ideas; ideas supported by details Makes effective connections between ideas through appropriate use of transitions	Unelaborated idea development; some use of supporting details	Minimal idea development; limited and/or unrelated details
Language	Excellent language use; no errors in grammar, spelling Displays superior control of syntax, sentence variety, diction, and conventions of Standard English	Acceptable, effective language; few errors in grammar, spelling	Ineffective use of language; many errors in grammar, spelling
References, citation, and bibliography	Use of references indicate substantial research; all works cited in correct format, including bibliography	Use of references indicate sufficient research; most works cited with few errors, including bibliography	Use of references indicate insufficient research; few or no works cited; citation format contains many errors

Online Discussion Rubric – Anthropology (R. Stein)

After reading the posted modules and textbook for each week, students will engage in online discussions on issues related to the subject matter.

	Good job	Doing fine	What happened?
Knowledge of Subject Matter	Demonstrates clear understanding of course material, including use of appropriate vocabulary. Uses course materials to support important points.	Demonstrates some understanding of course material, including use of some vocabulary. Use of course material may be minimal or not well done.	Demonstrates little or no understanding of course material and uses little or none of the appropriate vocabulary. Use of course material may be not present or poorly done.
Communication of Ideas	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear manner with an obvious connection to the topic and to the ongoing conversation. Provides examples and supporting material.	Expresses opinions and ideas in a manner that is sufficient, but not completely clear. The connection to the topic or conversation may be unclear, examples may not be provided for clarification, or there may be issues with grammar and spelling.	Expresses opinions and ideas in an unclear manner. The connection to the topic or conversation is unclear, conclusions are not supported, and there may be issues with grammar and spelling.
Participation in the Conversation	Contributes to an ongoing conversation by reading and commenting on other posts, asking questions and responding to questions/ comments made by other students.	Contributes somewhat to ongoing conversation, but makes limited attempt to interact with other participants. May repeat what others have said rather than making an original contribution.	Makes little contribution to ongoing conversation. Does not respond to other posts or ask new questions or asks questions then does not return to comment on the reply.
Timeliness and Effort	First post is made by Wednesday of the discussion week; posts at least 3 more times.	First post is made by Friday of the discussion week; posts at least 2 more times.	First post is not made until the weekend of the discussion week; posts fewer than 3 times total.

Enjoy the Spring Semester!



Want more information? Read these interesting articles on assessment!

“Our Student’s Best Work: A Framework for Accountability Worthy of Our Mission”
(American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2008)

<http://www.aacu.org/publications/pdfs/StudentsBestReport.pdf>

“A Call for Assessment – Of the Right Kind” (Inside Higher Ed, 1/8/09)

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/01/08/aacu>