

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Assessment Report for (Department or Program): ALP

Academic Chair: Professor Bill Jiang

Assessment Period: 2010 - 2012

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1. Intended Outcome (Goal):

The purpose of this project was to see if having students maintain portfolios of their work can help us assess the ALP writing goals that were formulated during the program review of 2010.

Goals:

Students who keep portfolios of their writing will communicate and express their ideas clearly in sophisticated and level appropriate language and will demonstrate grammatical control in their writing.

Self-reflection and self-awareness, key components of the portfolio process, lead to better writing and help students gain confidence of themselves as writers.

2. a) Program goal(s) to which the intended outcome is related.

1. Use the writing process to write essays using academic rhetorical patterns.
2. Understand and use the grammar of the English language correctly in written and oral production.
3. Generate ideas in writing based on readings and discussions, and formulate a plan for expressing them cognizant of audience, purpose, and voice.
4. Demonstrate a blend of basic and sophisticated language that is level appropriate.

b) General Education Requirement(s) to which the intended outcome relates:

1. Written and Oral Communication - (Communication)

Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

8. Global and Cultural Awareness - (Diversity Courses)

Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

9. Ethical Reasoning and Action

Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

c) Section(s) of the Strategic Plan to which the intended outcomes relates:

Goal 1: We will improve student engagement and student success.

1.1 Take steps to increase student retention and student progression through academic programs.

1.2 Improve students' success in college level classes.

3. a) Means of assessment:

Students will keep a portfolio of four in-class writing assignments.

The portfolio will be read by the teacher and a second reader.

The essay assignments will be graded using a rubric by level (see attached rubrics).

Students will write a reflection paper at the end of the semester which focuses on their self-awareness of their writing process including control of grammar, getting started, organizing ideas, and vocabulary.

b) Sources of data:

Ten level two classes will participate in the study and five level 3 classes in two semesters.

Approximately 150 portfolios will be analyzed.

c) Desired result:

(Direct measure)

50% of students will score at least 70 points or higher on the rubric total.

80% of students will score 70 points or higher on the rubric total on their last in-class writing assignment.

(Indirect Measure)

Reflection papers will provide collaborating evidence that portfolios helped raise student self-awareness of themselves as writers.

4. Summary of Results:

Level 2:

Students in the level 2 sections in both semesters have demonstrated a steady improvement in most components on the rubric between the first and the last portfolio writing assignments. The most significant improvement in the overall quality of writing was achieved on the second essay (cause- effect) followed by the third essay (opinion).

The scores were consistently lower on the final (exit) writing assignment. This can be explained by psychological factors such as nervousness, pressure to perform, time constraints, and others.

Analysis of the data demonstrates that the majority of students scored consistently higher on organization, content, and development of ideas throughout the semester in two consecutive semesters.

Students also demonstrated overall improvement in grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and formatting between the beginning and end of the semester.

The least improvement was seen in the use of appropriate academic vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and collocations.

Level 3:

The majority of students in participating sections demonstrated definite improvement in content, organization, grammar, and use of vocabulary between the first and the last writing assignment in two consecutive semesters.

Students in level 3 experienced less difficulty than students in level 2 when developing an introduction and formulating a thesis.

The highest scores were achieved by the majority of students on the second essay (cause-effect) followed by the third essay (opinion).

Analysis of the data indicates less consistency in the improvement on grammar and format between the first and last writing assignments in both semesters.

Most level 3 students scored somewhat lower on the final (exit) writing assignment which was expected.

General Results:

Analysis of the data indicates that there is definite overall improvement between the first and last portfolio assignments. There is also more consistent writing improvement in level 3 than in level 2.

In both levels, the standard deviation is narrowing and declining, clearly showing improvement. In addition, the median is less affected by outliers, again confirming overall student gains. Lastly, the raters' consistency is increasing throughout the process. (See attached graphs) Portfolios provided evidence that students reduced grammar errors and improved overall control of their language in essay writing.

Final data confirms the desired outcomes of 50% of students in both levels scoring at least 70 points or higher on the rubric total on their first in-class writing assignment, and 80% of students scoring 70 points or higher on the rubric total on their last in-class assignment.

Keeping portfolios allowed students to demonstrate a greater understanding of the requirements of an essay and enabled them to prove that they are learning.

Including the reflection piece in the portfolios allowed the instructors to gain an insight into students' reflective processes and helped students practice self-assessment by explaining to their evaluators what they have learned and why they included certain writing pieces in their portfolio.

5. Recommendations for modifications:

We recommend that level two and level three writing classes use the attached rubric on all in-class writing.

We recommend that all writing teachers participate in a norming session at the beginning and at the end of semester.

We recommend that all writing teachers have students keep portfolios of their work.

We recommend using portfolios instead of a retest for students who fail the writing exit test.

6. Actions taken based on recommendations:

Based on student comments in the reflection papers, the next assessment cycle will focus on how to improve academic vocabulary and use of appropriate collocations in writing.

Assignment:

Name:

Date:

Portfolio Scoring Rubric for a 4 to 5 paragraph essay (Level 2)

	Maximum score	Actual score
Organization and Content: The essay follows the outline and has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The essay is on topic; ideas are clearly stated. The essay addresses the requirement of the assignment. <u>Introduction:</u> Ends with a thesis statement. <u>Body:</u> Each paragraph of the body discusses a new point and begins with a clear topic sentence. Each paragraph has specific supporting material: facts, examples, quotations, paraphrased or summarized information. Each paragraph has unity and coherence. Appropriate transitions are used to link paragraphs. <u>Conclusion:</u> The conclusion summarizes the main points or paraphrases the thesis statement, begins with a conclusion signal and leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic.	5 10 15 5 35 total	
Grammar, Sentence Structure, and Mechanics: <u>Grammar:</u> S-V agreement; Verb Forms and Verb Tenses; Clauses; Articles and Prepositions; Pronoun Reference. <u>Sentence Structure:</u> The essay demonstrates use of complete and varied sentences with the correct use of clauses; no Run-ons, Fragments, or Comma Splices. <u>Mechanics and Format:</u> The essay demonstrates correct use of punctuation, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, capitalization, and spelling. Title centered, first line of each paragraph indented, margins on both sides, text double-spaced, student's name, date, course number in the upper left corner of the page.	20 15 10 40 total	
Vocabulary: Writer uses varied vocabulary appropriate for academic writing. Writer demonstrates knowledge of word forms. Writer uses collocations, idiomatic expressions, and synonyms.	20 total	
Total:	100 points	

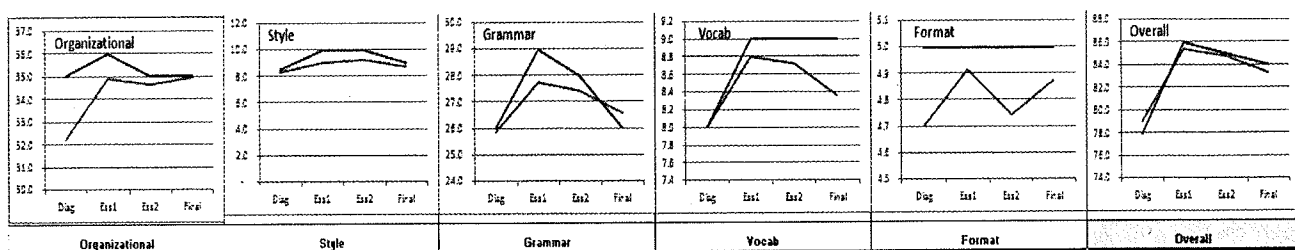
Assignment:

Name:
Date:

Portfolio Scoring Rubric for a 5 to 6 paragraph essay: (level 3)

	Maximum score	Actual score
Organization and Content: The essay follows the outline and has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The essay is on topic. Ideas are clearly stated.	5	
<u>Introduction:</u> Ends with a thesis statement.	5	
<u>Body:</u> Each paragraph of the body discusses a new point and begins with a clear topic sentence which advances the thesis. Each paragraph has specific supporting material: facts, examples, quotations, paraphrased or summarized information. Each paragraph has unity and coherence. Appropriate transitions are used to link paragraphs.	10x3=30	
<u>Conclusion:</u> The conclusion summarizes the main points, paraphrases the thesis statement, or provides recommendations and leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic.	5	
	45 total	
Grammar, Sentence Structure, and Mechanics:		
<u>Grammar:</u> S-V agreement; Verb Forms and Verb Tenses; Clauses; Articles and Prepositions; Pronoun Reference.	15	
<u>Sentence Structure:</u> The essay demonstrates use of complete and varied sentences with the correct use of clauses; no Run-ons, Fragments, or Comma Splices.	15	
<u>Mechanics and Format:</u> The essay demonstrates correct use of punctuation, commas, semicolons, quotation marks, capitalization, and spelling. Title centered, first line of each paragraph indented, margins on both sides, text double-spaced, student's name, date, course number in the upper left corner of the page.	5	
	35 total	
Vocabulary: Writer uses varied vocabulary appropriate for academic writing. Writer demonstrates knowledge of word forms. Writer uses collocations, idiomatic expressions, and synonyms.		
	20 total	
Total:	100 points	

Level 3: Final Data / Blue Line-Average Score / Red Line-Median



Level 2: Final Data / Blue Line-Average Score / Red Line-Median

