

SLOAT Fall 2010 REPORT

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Introduction

The use of two instruments helped measure the achievement of outcomes in ENG 096 during the Fall 2010 semester. Both were based upon Course Goals developed in the submitted revised ENG 096 course outline. The purpose of these instruments provided two outcomes: First, a rubric was used to randomly assess the achievement of essay development skills by students across the course, based upon the first Course Goal listed in the revised outline, “write a composition.” This rubric was used twice during the semester to measure any change noted in the outcome.

The second instrument was a questionnaire, completed by students in the ENG 096 sections, regarding their readiness for the mid-term essay, in order to measure, to some extent, the second Course Goal, “implement critical reading to analyze selected materials.”

Support from faculty and students was strong in this effort, and the results were interesting and worthy of consideration.

Methodology

Of the two instruments used in this study, the first was meant as a limited, random sample. Therefore, the anonymous nature of the study was made clear to the instructors who received a rubric designed to evaluate each of the Measureable Performance Outcomes (MPOs) listed in the revised ENG 096 outline under the first Course Goal, “write a composition.” Instructors were given ample copies of the rubric and asked to evaluate their students’ most recent essay for the elements, focusing on the first five students on their roster. By selecting alphabetically, the random nature of the study was maintained. Instructors rated each on a three point scale labeled, “Yes,” “Somewhat,” or “No.”

The first distribution and collection of the surveys happened in late September and October while the second was completed in December to note any changes in the outcomes. Since these questionnaires were anonymous, the Humanities Division work study students helped total results by category.

In the September/October rubric, eight ENG 096 sections participated, while just two sections participated in the December rubric. Unfortunately, timing may have been an issue in December as many instructors may have been preparing for the Divisional final essay.

The second instrument, a student questionnaire regarding mid-term essay preparedness, was distributed to ENG 096 instructors the week following the Divisional

mid-term essay. A total of 135 students responded to the survey, a representative sample of the student enrollment in the course.

As with the essay rubric, the questionnaire was administered and evaluated anonymously; therefore, the Humanities Division's work study students again helped tally the results for each category. The results and original instruments were returned to me and are stored in my office.

Results

Results from the rubric distributed to ENG 096 instructors and the survey administered to ENG 096 students after the mid-term essay provide insight into students' abilities and awareness.

The questions on the rubric, distributed twice, were:

1. The paper includes an appropriate subject based upon the given writing assignment.
2. A specific topic was addressed within the assigned subject for the paper.
3. A relevant thesis statement was incorporated within the introductory paragraph.
4. Body paragraphs were well structured.
5. Body paragraphs were related to each other in a logical structure that supported the thesis.
6. The paper contained an appropriate concluding paragraph.
7. The paper approaches an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.
8. The paper demonstrates an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.

Instructors were asked to evaluate the first five papers alphabetically, to insure randomness, and for each question respond "Yes," "Somewhat," or "No" in each category. The categories were drawn from the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) in the ENG 096 revised course outline.

Results of the first distribution of the rubric during September/October 2010 follow:

1. The paper includes an appropriate subject based upon the given writing assignment.
Yes 63 (61%) Somewhat 29 (28%) No 11 (11%)
2. A specific topic was addressed within the assigned subject for the paper.
Yes 98 (89%) Somewhat 7 (6%) No 5 (5%)
3. A relevant thesis statement was incorporated within the introductory paragraph.
Yes 75 (23%) Somewhat 31 (5%) No 5 (5%)
4. Body paragraphs were well structured.
Yes 88 (81%) Somewhat 19 (17%) No 2 (2%)
5. Body paragraphs were related to each other in a logical structure that supported

- the thesis.
- | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Yes 77 (86%) | Somewhat 12 (13%) | No 1 (1%) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------|
6. The paper contained an appropriate concluding paragraph.

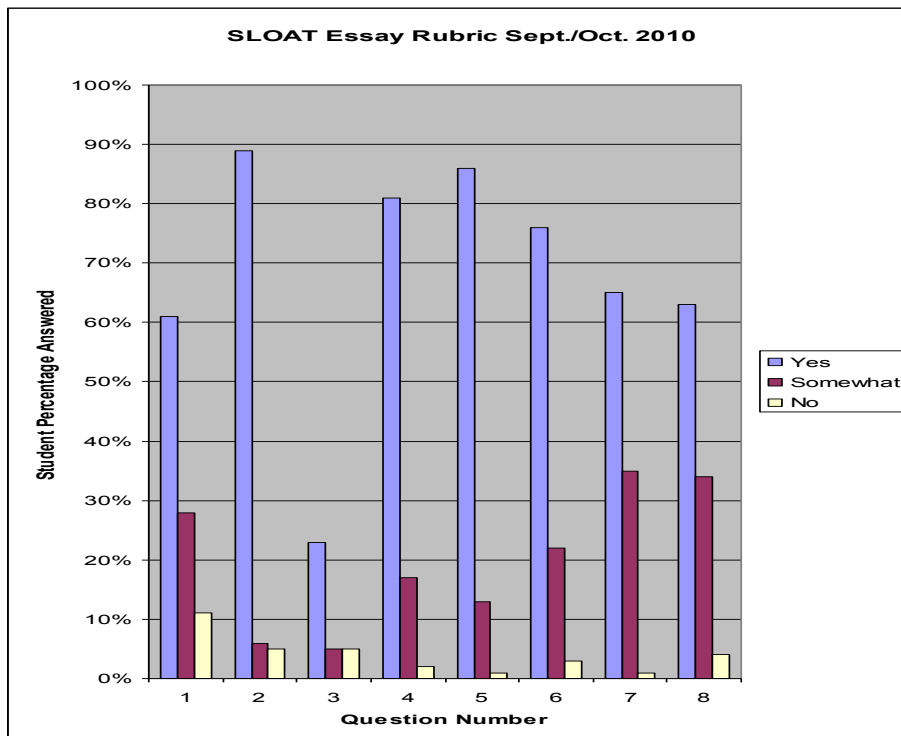
Yes 28 (76%)	Somewhat 8 (22%)	No 1 (3%)
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 7. The paper approaches an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.

Yes 22 (65%)	Somewhat 12 (35%)	No 1 (1%)
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 8. The paper demonstrates an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.

Yes 22 (63%)	Somewhat 12 (34%)	No 1 (4%)
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In terms of the first question, the “Yes” responses were mostly encouraging, especially for numbers 2, 4, 5 and 6 with the least positive response being for number 3 at 23%, which implies the need for thesis development in the introductory paragraph for the ENG 096 level. The other least positive responses, though exceeding 60% indicate the need for “an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.” Question number 1, like 3, seems to point to a need for stronger critical thinking skills for this level.

The results can be charted as follows:



In December 2010, ENG 096 instructors were once again given the same rubric to complete for a subsequent assignment. It was anticipated that some patterns of improvement would be seen in the second study. Faculty participation was very low in

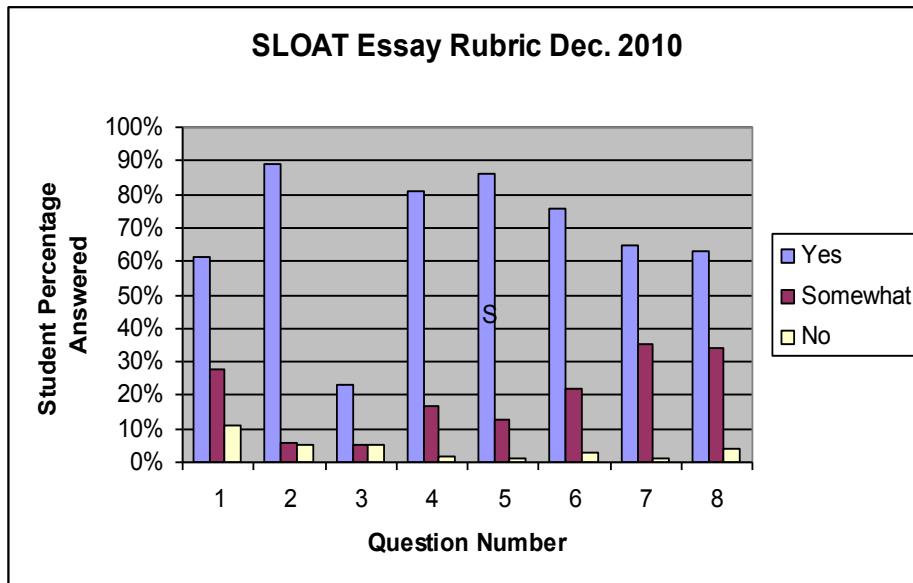
the second study, which was disappointing, but timing was an issue considering faculty absorption in Divisional final essay preparation and other concerns.

December 2010 results follow:

1. The paper includes an appropriate subject based upon the given writing assignment.
Yes 9 (90%) Somewhat 0 (0%) No 1 (10%)
2. A specific topic was addressed within the assigned subject for the paper.
Yes 8 (80%) Somewhat 1 (10%) No 1 (10%)
3. A relevant thesis statement was incorporated within the introductory paragraph.
Yes 7 (70%) Somewhat 2 (20%) No 1 (10%)
4. Body paragraphs were well structured.
Yes 5 (50%) Somewhat 3 (30%) No 2 (20%)
5. Body paragraphs were related to each other in a logical structure that supported the thesis.
Yes 6 (60%) Somewhat 3 (30%) No 1 (10%)
6. The paper contained an appropriate concluding paragraph.
Yes 5 (50%) Somewhat 2 (20%) No 3 (30%)
7. The paper approaches an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.
Yes 5 (50%) Somewhat 2 (20%) No 3 (30%)
8. The paper demonstrates an acceptable level of mechanics and language usage.
Yes 5 (50%) Somewhat 2 (20%) No 3 (30%)

Although the December 2010 survey noted fewer faculty members participated, it was interesting that question number 1 presented more positive results than in the first survey with 90% marked “Yes.” And question number 3 illustrates an increase from 23% to 70%. There remains more support needed in terms of paragraph development represented in questions 4 and 5 at the end of the semester that appeared more positive in the first survey. The support for “mechanics and language usage” is evident here with 50% approaching “an acceptable level” in question 7, and 50% demonstrating “an acceptable level” in question 8.

The results can be charted as follows:



Another instrument that was used during the Fall 2010 semester was a questionnaire that was distributed to ENG 096 students a week after taking the Divisional mid-term essay. The anonymous responses allowed students to openly consider their own preparedness for the midterm essay. Students were asked five questions dealing with their performance and preparedness. Note the following results:

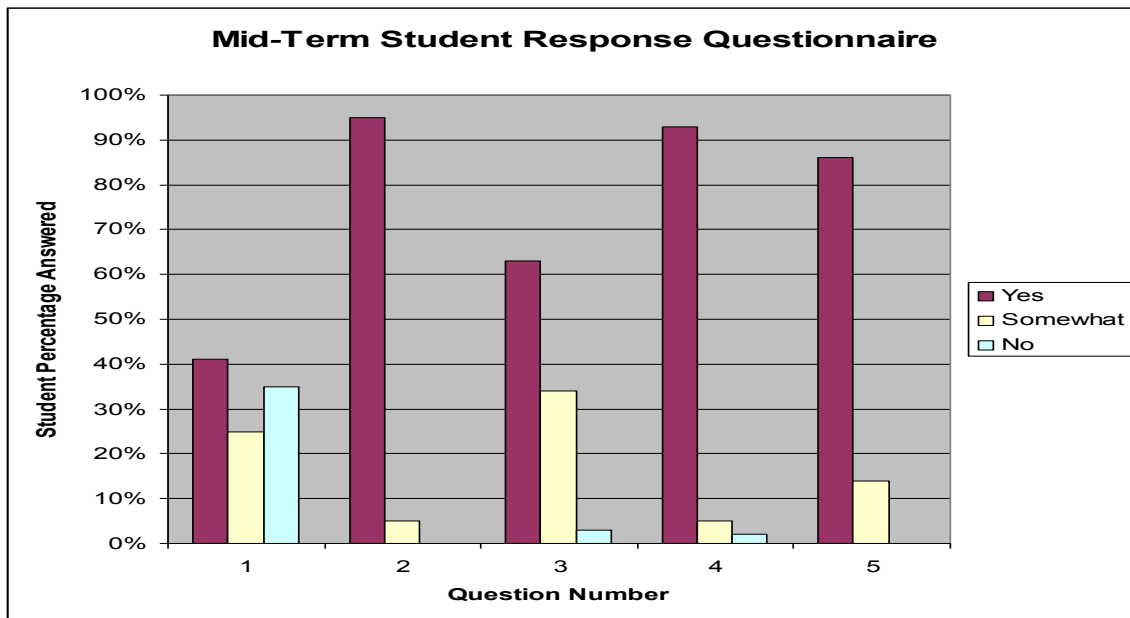
- Are you pleased with your score on the exam?
Yes 20 (41%) Somewhat 12 (25%) No 17 (35%)
- Did the professor accurately tell you what to expect on the exam before the exam date?
Yes 59 (95%) Somewhat 3 (5%) No 0 (0%)
- Did you adequately prepare for the exam?
Yes 46 (63%) Somewhat 25 (34%) No 2 (3%)

If not, why not? (Circle all that apply)

- Did not have time to study
- Did not know the exam was scheduled
- Have an overcommitted schedule
- Did not study enough during the semester

- Did the exam relate to what you have been learning in class?
Yes 57 (93%) Somewhat 3 (5%) No 1 (2%)
- Do you feel confident that you will attain college level writing by semester's end?
Yes 31 (86%) Somewhat 5 (14%) No 0 (0%)

The results can be charted as follows:



Of the 135 students who responded to the mid-term questionnaire, I noted 27 responses to question number 3, A through D. Nine students checked A, 1 chose B, 12 circled C, and 7 marked off D. What is most telling here is that most responses revealed that our students have “overcommitted schedules.” Nine students who checked A admitted that they “did not have time to study,” while 7 “did not study enough during the semester.” Only 1 student “did not know the exam was scheduled.”

As can be seen, question number 1 notes that only 25% were “Somewhat” satisfied with their mid-term scores, while 35% were not pleased at all, which indicates a healthy determination to improve.

A positive response to question number 2 revealed that 95% of professors accurately explained “what to expect on the exam before the exam date.” In question number four, 93% revealed that the exam related to what was being learned in class, while question number 5 noted that 86% felt confident of attaining “college level writing by semester’s end.”

Summary

The evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 096 during Fall 2010 semester proved to be a positive, enlightening experience. Both full and part-time faculty members seemed to understand and even appreciate the importance of conducting this study. Many were eager to participate. Results indicated several strengths in terms of the course structure and the effective approach taken by faculty to fulfill the course requirements.

The survey also points to the need for further support for ENG 096 students struggling with thesis development and issues with mechanics and sentence structure.

Although the college offers tutorial resources in The Learning Center, at this level, students are in dire need of a separate grammar course. When one considers that the Humanities Division offers three remedial level courses (ENG 085, 096, and RDG 096), it seems plausible to offer students a grammar course. Such a course would also offer support, if needed, for the college level composition courses.