

GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT: 2008-09

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



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Acknowledgment: *The GEO Coordinator, Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office, and Outcomes Committee (formerly the SLO and GEO Committees) would like to officially recognize the effort, creativity, and intellectual contributions of the faculty members who participated in dialogue to plan and assess GEOs over the past year. The participation of these pioneers is greatly appreciated as their efforts, both within and outside of the classroom, support the college in building an institution-wide community of assessment and practice aimed at enhancing student success.*

INTRODUCTION

During spring 2009, faculty members teaching courses in the five areas of the General Education (GE) pattern embarked on the first assessment of general education outcomes (GEOs). More information about GEOs can be found at <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/>. An abridged version of the Academic Senate-approved General Education Outcomes (GEO) Assessment Plan and Timeline can be found at: http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/docs/geo_assessment_timeline.pdf. The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of their efforts.

In fall of 2008, the General Education Outcomes Committee (GEOC) identified workgroups and facilitated faculty dialogue on the development of general education outcome statements, assessment plans, and criteria for success for courses in Mt. SAC General Education Areas B (The Physical Universe and Life), C (Arts and Humanities), D (Social, Political, and Economic Institutions), and E (Lifelong Learning and Self-Development). Though Area A (Communications in English Language) did not attend a facilitated workshop, two of its faculty members served on the GEOC and thus, had the resources necessary to coordinate the assessment efforts in their respective courses.

METHODOLOGY

Faculty members had in-depth dialogue to develop GEOs broad enough to extend to the variety of courses in their area, yet specific enough to address the unique qualities of their respective areas. In tandem with these outcome statements, means of assessment (rubrics), and criteria for success were also identified (refer to *Table 1*). Faculty members from all GE areas discussed a range of different assessment plans and agreed to use course-embedded assessments to assess the GEOs. As outcomes were being developed, faculty members identified existing assignments or activities that could be used to assess these GEOs. Rubrics were designed to

identify expectations and yielded metrics for demonstrating how students would meet or not meet expectations. Full profiles of the GEOs by area can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1: Area GEOs, Means of Assessment (Rubrics) and Criteria for Success

General Education Area	General Education Outcome Statement	Means of Assessment (Rubrics)	Criteria for Success
A. Communication in the English language (Speech)	Students will critically evaluate public speeches.	Skills Assessed Evaluation of Communication	Students will score a “1” or above on the evaluation criteria.
A. Communication in the English language (Speech)	Students will be able to perform basic speech delivery skills.	Skills Assessed Evaluation of Communication	Students will score at least a “2” in two of four assessment categories to meet expectations.
B. The Physical Universe and Life	Students completing relevant assignments in Area B courses will evaluate the impact of science on their daily lives.	Skills Assessed Analysis, Application Performance Levels 0 = Below expectations 1 = Meets expectations 2 = Exceeds expectations	Students will score at least a “1” in each of the two assessment categories to meet expectations.
C. Arts	Students will be able to analyze modes of artistic expression.	Skills Assessed Acquisition, Analysis, Application Performance Levels 0 = Below expectations 1 = Meets expectations 2 = Exceeds expectations	Students will meet expectations by scoring a “1” on two of the three categories.
C. Humanities	Students completing an assignment in Humanities Area C will be able to identify the influence of culture on human expression.	Skills Assessed Identification of Culture, Influence on Expression Performance Levels 0 = Below Expectations 1 = Meets Expectations 2 = Exceeds Expectations	Students will meet expectations by scoring a “1” on each of the two categories.
D1. Social, Political, and Economic Institutions	Students will be able to differentiate among changes in the American constitutional government over time.	Skills Assessed Differentiation Performance Levels 1 = Not Meeting expectations 2 = Approaching expectations 3 = Meeting expectations 4 = Exceeding expectations	Students will obtain a score of “3” or better on multiple-choice or essay item related to the GEO.
D2. Social, Political, and Economic Institutions (Elective Courses)	Students completing relevant assignments in Area D2 courses will analyze the relationship between social, political, and/or economic institutions and human behavior.	Skills Assessed Analysis Performance Levels 0 = Below expectations 1 = Meets expectations 2 = Exceeds expectations	Students must score at least a “1” to meet expectations.

General Education Area	General Education Outcome Statement	Means of Assessment (Rubrics)	Criteria for Success
E. Lifelong Learning and Self-Development	Students completing an assignment in Area E courses will demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing their lifelong personal well-being.	<u>Skills Assessed</u> Collection, Analysis, Application <u>Performance Levels</u> 0 = Below expectations 1 = Meets expectations 2 = Exceeds expectations	Students will meet expectations by scoring a "1" or more in at least two of the three categories.

Faculty members were encouraged, both verbally and in writing, to provide their assessment results for their adopted GEOs via a reporting form. Reporting forms were provided to each participating faculty member and a template for these forms is located in Appendix B. Once the assessment was complete, the following information via the Reporting Form was submitted to the Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) Office: course title and respective GE area; reference number of section(s) assessed (optional); term of assessment; the number of students who completed the assessment; the number of students who met the expectations; key findings/highlights; and, action plan/use of results.

Using a thematic analysis, researchers aggregated the results and highlighted key findings which are included in the next section.

OVERALL FINDINGS

Table 2 displays the courses which planned and assessed GEOs during the 2008 to 2009 academic year.

Table 2. Participating Courses by Area

AREA	PARTICIPATING COURSES
A: Communication in the English Language (Speech)	SPCH 1A – Public Speaking
B: The Physical Universe and Life	Biol 6 - Humans and the Environment Biol 6 Lab - Humans and the Environment Laboratory MICR 22 - Microbiology
C: Arts	SPCH 4 - Oral Interpretation of Literature
C: Humanities	
D1: Social, Political, and Economic Institutions	
D2: Social, Political, and Economic Institutions (Electives)	BUSC 1A - Principles of Macroeconomics BUSC 1AH - Principles of Macroeconomics BUSC 1B - Principles of Microeconomics BUSC 1BH - Principles of Microeconomics PSYC 1A – Introduction to Psychology
E: Lifelong Learning and Self-Development	FCS 41 - Life Management LEAD 55 - Exploring Leadership COUN5 - Career/Life Planning BIOL 5 - Contemporary Health Issues BIOL 15 - Human Sexuality

	BIOL 15H - Human Sexuality Honors BIOL 13 - Human Reproduction, Development, and Aging NF 10 - Nutrition for Personal Health NF25 – Essentials of Nutrition NF25H - Essentials of Nutrition Honors NF 28 - Cultural and Ethnic Foods PSYC 14 - Developmental Psychology DN-T 20 - History and Appreciation of Dance*
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*Area C course that adopted an Area E GEO.

Table 3 summarizes the set of reports received by the Research Office. It is important to note that the semesters of assessment are staggered for the General Education areas.

Table 3. Results

Area	Expected Semester of Assessment (according to the GEO Plan)	Total Number of Courses	Number of Courses that Assessed GEOs in 2008—09	Number of Students Assessed	# of Students Meeting Expectations	% of Students Meeting Expectations
A	June 2009	4	1	245	224	91.4%
A	June 2009	4	1	151	141	93.4%
B	June 2010	53	3	†	†	†
C (Arts)	December 2010	44	1	††	††	††
C (Humanities)	December 2010	87	0	--	--	--
D1	December 2009	13	0	--	--	--
D2	June 2010	38	5	160	148	92.5%
E	December 2009	19	13‡	659‡	625‡	94.8%

†For two of the three courses in Area B, raw numbers of students assessed were not provided; thus, total numbers and percentages cannot be calculated.

†† One section in one course in Area C has assessed its GEO. In order to protect its identity, the results will be shared when additional sections/courses have participated in the assessment.

‡Of the 13 courses assessing the Area E GEO, 12 were Area E courses and 1 was an Area C course. For the purposes of this report, the Area C course results have been incorporated into the overall Area E GEO findings.

The following subsections provide a profile of the assessments by area and highlight key findings.

AREA A

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 4

NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 1

TERM OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2009

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: For the one course (10 sections) examined, a total of 245 students were assessed out of which 224 met expectations for the GEO (91.4%). Open-ended responses from faculty members assessing this GEO depicted desires to improve the articulation of course assignment standards when they are given to students. Faculty reactions also revealed plans to develop additional class exercises to improve the students' understanding of assignment-related standards.

AREA A

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 4
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 1
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2009

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: Survey design preceded GEO assessment, so there was not a parameter for “meet/does not meet” expectations as a GEO, only as an SLO. 123 students averaged a score of “2” or higher in the existing measurement, with results exceeding departmental expectations in three of four areas in the rubric as a GEO.

AREA B

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 53
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 3
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2010

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: For two of the three courses, the Mt. SAC five-column model was used instead of the GEO reporting form. Thus, the numbers of sections and students assessed are not provided. The majority of students assessed met the expectations, however, a shared percentage cannot be calculated since the raw numbers of students are missing from two of the three courses (percentages for the three courses were 86%, 77%, and 96%). In one assessment, the percentage of those who completed the assignment versus those who were enrolled in the course was identified. One course offered distinct classroom activities which could be added or modified to continue students’ development of the GEO while the other courses indicated the need for further discussion within the department about how to sustain the results.

AREA C (ARTS)

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 44
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 1
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2010

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: Students were assessed from one course in Area C, the majority of which met expectations. Open-ended responses regarding these results indicate that the GEO findings will be communicated to the department’s SLO Committee and shared with the instructors teaching this course. Numbers of students assessed and collective percentages will be shared as more sections and/or courses participate in the assessment of this GEO.

AREA C (HUMANITIES)

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 87
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 0
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2010

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: N/A.

AREA D1

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 13
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 0
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2009

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: N/A.

AREA D2

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 38
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 5
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2010

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: A total of 160 students from five courses were assessed, of which 148 students (92.5%) met expectations. Note that of the five courses, four courses were actually two unique courses, each with an Honors course counterpart. The summaries of data document the general knowledge exhibited by the students. The use of results is identically written for four of the five courses and indicates the intention to use the GEO results to inform changes in classroom delivery. One course indicated an interest in increasing the expectation of student performance to "Exceeds Expectations."

AREA E

TOTAL NUMBER OF COURSES: 19
NUMBER OF COURSES ASSESSED: 13
TERM OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2009

KEY FINDINGS AND TRENDS: Of the 659 students assessed in 13 courses within Area E, 625 (94.8%) successfully met or exceeded expectations. It is important to note that one of the courses which assessed this GEO was in fact, an Area C course; however, it was incorporated into these findings because it adopted the Area E GEO, means of assessment, and criteria for success. Various styles were used to summarize and present the data. Most expressed simply the percentage of students who met the expectations. Some additionally indicated which skills from the rubric were more commonly displayed than others. Several faculty members addressed the disparity in the number of students who were enrolled and the number who actually completed the assignment. One faculty member stated the inherent ease in being self-aware and thus, in meeting the expectations in this assessment and communicated that a GEO dealing with academic achievement may be more challenging. Many faculty members shared the intention to focus more heavily on analysis and/or application in future assignments. Plans to continue GEO assessment were clearly articulated as several intend to reassess in the fall of 2009. A couple of faculty members also addressed the research design aspect, commenting on increasing the sample size and assessing sections offered during different times of the day. Several specific considerations to modifying the course material were also indicated. Other courses in Area E indicated that the GEO findings will be communicated to the department. Additionally, one faculty member expressed that the assessment of the GEO illustrated the students' "appreciation" for learning, which was considered "essential" to the completion of the course.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

1. Faculty members had in-depth dialogue to develop statements broad enough to extend to the variety of courses in their area yet specific enough to address the unique of their respective areas. For many faculty members, the workgroups were the first venue in which they were able to interact with other faculty members teaching courses in the same area. This led to new shared understandings about the shared competencies in their areas.
2. Faculty members were open to the idea of adopting a common assessment methodology as a part of this process (refer to *Table 1*). In addition to maintaining the liberty of selecting the appropriate assignment that addressed their area's GEO, faculty members were also able to agree on shared criteria for success as well as common rubrics.
3. Faculty members' insights regarding the use of results demonstrate a variety of intentions including communication within their departments, changes to curriculum via additional or modified assignments, the willingness to reassess the GEO, changes to research design via increased sampling, and considering additional outreach and retention efforts. Overall, their uses of results indicated strategies to determine whether students can achieve the expectations and how to increase student success.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

1. There was not a shared understanding between faculty workgroups that GEOs were to be assessed in the spring 2009 semester and reporting forms were to be submitted by June 30, 2009. This expectation was unrealistic. A modified assessment plan and timeline was developed and approved by Academic Senate in May, 2009.
2. Though all GEO workgroups were able to develop outcome statements and rubrics, there was a variation in the completion of the actual GEO assessment. Through interviews with the GEO Coordinator as follow-up sessions, the findings indicated that there are many misconceptions about the GEO assessment process. The GEO Coordinator is working with the group in fall 2009 to clarify the issues.
3. The summary of data and use of result submissions were vague in many instances. In order to encourage more thorough articulation and documentation of assessment results, it would be beneficial to provide more guidance on the completion of these two sections without being prescriptive.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Address the rigor of GEO statements, rubrics, and criteria for success for new and follow-up workgroup sessions.
2. Introduce the possibility of having a percentage of students who meet the criteria for success as agreed upon by faculty members assessing the same GEO.
3. Encourage Area A to unify the Speech and English GEOs into a broader Area A GEO.
4. Continue to encourage the usage of GEOs as course-level SLOs and facilitate their entry into department ePIEs.
5. Encourage the use of a common reporting form to enable comparison and summary of assessment efforts.

6. Provide more guidance and direction (without being prescriptive) to the summary of data and use of results elements.
7. Address the reported results, in connection with the purpose and function of the Outcomes Committee.
8. Determine the appropriate strategy and set of venues to disseminate the progress of GEOs to the campus.
9. Make modifications to recording or reporting forms based on these collective highlights.
10. Consider the content of future and follow-up workgroup sessions for collective use of results.

APPENDIX A: AREA GEOs, MEANS OF ASSESSMENT, AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

AREA A: ORAL COMMUNICATION

General Education Outcome: Students completing an assignment in Area A courses (SPCH 1A and SPCH 1AH) will critically evaluate public speeches.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students must meet expectations by scoring a "1" using the criteria below.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL			
3	2	1	0
Student evaluation will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify both content and delivery aspects of the speech. - consistently utilize terminology consistent with the course text and/or lecture - propose strategies the speaker could utilize to improve the content and/or the delivery of the speech, when appropriate. - provide at least one detailed description of the speech as support. 	Student evaluation will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify multiple areas of excellence and areas for improvement, when appropriate. - utilize terminology consistent with the course text and/or lecture. 	Student evaluation will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify at least one area of strength and one area for improvement, but may omit either content or delivery variables - will not consistently utilize terminology consistent with the text and/or lecture. 	Students are unable to critically evaluate public speeches.

AREA A: COMMUNICATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General Education Outcome: Students will be able to perform basic speech delivery skills.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students must meet expectations by scoring a "1" using the criteria below.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL			
3	2	1	0
Student evaluation will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify both content and delivery aspects of the speech. - consistently utilize terminology consistent with the course text and/or lecture 	Student evaluation will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify multiple areas of excellence and areas for improvement, when appropriate. - utilize terminology consistent with the course text and/or 	Student evaluation will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summarize the observed speech - identify at least one area of strength and one area for improvement, but may omit either 	Students are unable to critically evaluate public speeches.

- propose strategies the speaker could utilize to improve the content and/or the delivery of the speech, when appropriate. - provide at least one detailed description of the speech as support.	lecture.	content or delivery variables - will not consistently utilize terminology consistent with the text and/or lecture.	
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AREA B: THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE AND LIFE

General Education Outcome: Students completing relevant assignments in Area B courses will evaluate the impact of science on their daily lives.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students must score at least a "1" in each of the two criteria to meet expectations.

CRITERION	PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
	0 - Below Expectations	1 - Meets Expectations	2 - Exceeds Expectations
ANALYSIS: Analysis of scientific information	No analysis	Some analysis including some key points	In-depth/thorough analysis including all key points
APPLICATION: Application of concepts to their daily lives	Not able to explain relevance	Somewhat able to explain relevance	Thoughtful and comprehensive explanation of relevance

AREA C: ARTS

General Education Outcome: Students completing an assignment in Area C (Arts) courses will be able to analyze modes of artistic expression.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students will meet expectations by scoring a "1" on two of the three categories.

CRITERION	PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
	0 - Below Expectations	1 - Meets Expectations	2 - Exceeds Expectations
ACQUISITION: Quality of information collected	No acquisition	Somewhat detailed and complete	Detailed and complete
ANALYSIS: Analysis of information	No analysis	Summary of information with some analysis	In-depth/thorough analysis
APPLICATION: Application of concepts to a mode of artistic expression	No application	Some appropriate application is evident	Thoughtful and specific application

AREA C: HUMANITIES

General Education Outcome: Students completing an assignment in Humanities Area C will be able to identify the influence of culture on human expression.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students will meet expectations by scoring a “1” on each of the two of the three categories.

CRITERION	PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
	0 - Below Expectations	1 - Meets Expectations	2 - Exceeds Expectations
Identify Culture	Cannot identify a culture; misidentify a culture	Accurate identification of relevant culture(s)	
Influence on Human Expression	Cannot identify or misidentify a relationship between the culture and the human expression.	Identify a relationship between the culture and the human expression.	Identify additional facets of the relationship.*

AREA D1: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

General Education Outcome: Students will be able to differentiate among changes in the American constitutional government over time.

Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.

Criteria for Success: Students will obtain a score of “3” or better on multiple-choice or essay item related to the GEO.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL			
4 – Exceeding Expectations	3 – Meeting Expectations	2 – Approaching Expectations	1 – Not Meeting Expectations
The student demonstrated accurate sequence of understanding constitutional changes over time; could also explain cause-effect relationships for events and changes in the constitution; could name multiple changes in the constitution over time.	The student could accurately identify/sequence a few changes in the constitution over time.	The student illustrated some understanding of changes in the constitution.	The student had no awareness or very inaccurate knowledge regarding changes in the constitution over time.

AREA D2: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS (ELECTIVE COURSES)		
General Education Outcome: Students completing relevant assignments in Area D2 courses will analyze the relationship between social, political, and/or economic institutions and human behavior.		
Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.		
Criteria for Success: Students must score at least a "1" to meet expectations.		
PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
0 - Below Expectations	1 - Meets Expectations	2 - Exceeds Expectations
Identifies some relevant information about social, political and/or economic institutions but is missing some key ideas; lacks the ability to identify related human behaviors.	Adequately identifies relevant information about social, political, and/or economic institutions; articulates the relationship to human behavior using one or more examples.	Thoroughly identifies relevant information about social, political, and/or economic institutions; articulates the relationship to human behavior using one or more examples; extends analysis to predictions and/or recommendations.

AREA E: LIFELONG UNDERSTANDING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT			
General Education Outcome: Students completing an assignment in Area E courses will demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing their lifelong personal well-being.			
Means of Assessment: A variety of classroom activities or assignments addressing the GEO including the following rubric.			
Criteria for Success: Students will meet expectations by scoring a "1" or more in at least two categories.			
CRITERION	PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
	0 - Below Expectations	1 - Meets Expectations	2 - Exceeds Expectations
COLLECTION: Quality of information collection	No collection	Somewhat detailed and complete	Detailed and complete
ANALYSIS: Analysis of information	No analysis	Summary of information with some analysis	In-depth/thorough analysis
APPLICATION: Application of concepts to enhance lifelong well-being	No application	Somewhat thoughtful and somewhat specific information	Thoughtful and specific application

APPENDIX B: GEO REPORTING FORM TEMPLATE

General Education Outcome (GEO) Reporting Form
AREA __: Title

GEO: _____

Criteria: _____

Reporting Date: _____

Course Title: _____

Reference Number: _____

Term of Assessment: _____

**Number of students who
completed the assignment:** _____

**Of those completing the assignment,
number of students who met expectations:** _____

Key Findings/Highlights:

How will the results be used?

Please return completed forms to the _____ by _____.