

Background to the Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment Project

In 2011, the San Luis Obispo County Community College District (SLOCCCD) initiated a project to define and assess Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The Academic Senate Council approved the ILO statements on March 16, 2012. An electronic assessment for the ILOs was distributed to all district degree applicants in the spring semesters in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The District considers the ILO statements to encompass the outcomes in the General Education program. The combined ILO statements are the expected student learning outcomes for Cuesta College students either graduating with Associate degrees (A.A. or A.S.) or transferring to a four-year college or university. These students will be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills contained within all of the six ILO areas based on General Education and discipline-specific courses at the lower division level. In addition, these ILOs address areas of learning that are specified by the Accrediting Commission for Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) in Standard II.A.3 (of the 2002 standards) that go beyond the current General Education patterns for degrees. Therefore, all students who attend Cuesta College will be exposed to at least one ILO as a result of their overall experiences with any aspect of the college, including courses, programs, and student services.

Assessment Administration

The assessment of student attainment of the ILOs was initiated in spring 2012. An electronic assessment tool was created and delivered via the district-issued email addresses to all students who applied for A.A., A.S., or A.D.-T. degrees at the end of the spring terms in 2012 (746 applicants), 2013 (843 applicants), 2014 (856 applicants), 2015 (980 applicants). The assessment contained 16 common questions that were given to all students. The common questions were a blend of student self-report questions on the attainment of the ILOs and questions regarding the impact of specific college experiences. In addition, the assessment was customized with additional, discipline-specific questions in order to assess students earning degrees in the areas of social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, and science and mathematics. **In 2015, 3 new questions pertaining to Cuesta College's mission statement were asked.**

The assessment sent to the science and mathematics degree earners contained content-related direct assessment questions to determine the ability of students to use the scientific method for solving problems. Appendix A contains the exact questions in the assessment tools.

Students were given 30 days to respond to the survey. A follow-up reminder message was sent approximately one week after the initial notice. As an incentive for students to complete the assessment, the Vice President of Academic Affairs arranged for a Kindle Fire tablet or iPod and four Amazon gift cards (\$25) to be randomly awarded to participating students.

Assessment Results

The 2015 ILO assessment was completed by 188 students for a 19.2% response rate (31.4% in 2014, 30.1% in 2013, and 25.2% in 2012). The data was tabulated both within degree areas and by aggregating all assessment subgroups into one category. The following figures present the assessment results from the persistent questions over the four-year period. The three new questions that were added in 2015 about the college's mission statement are shown separately, following the persistent questions.

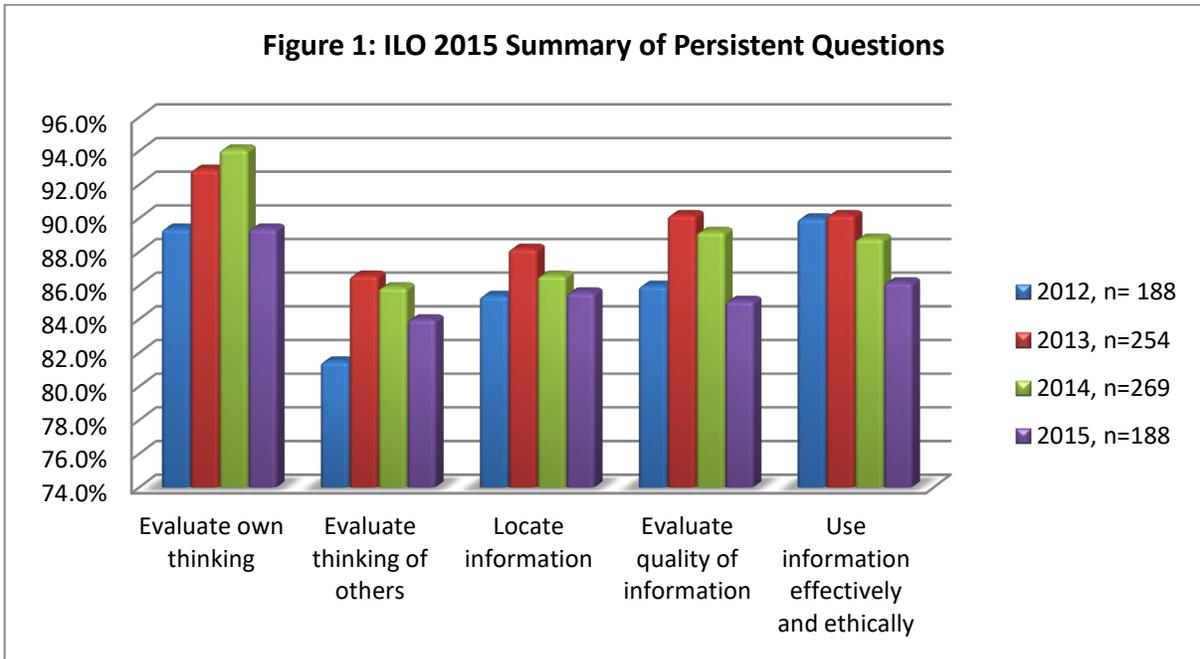


Figure 1: The percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that their abilities in selected ILO areas have improved while at Cuesta College.

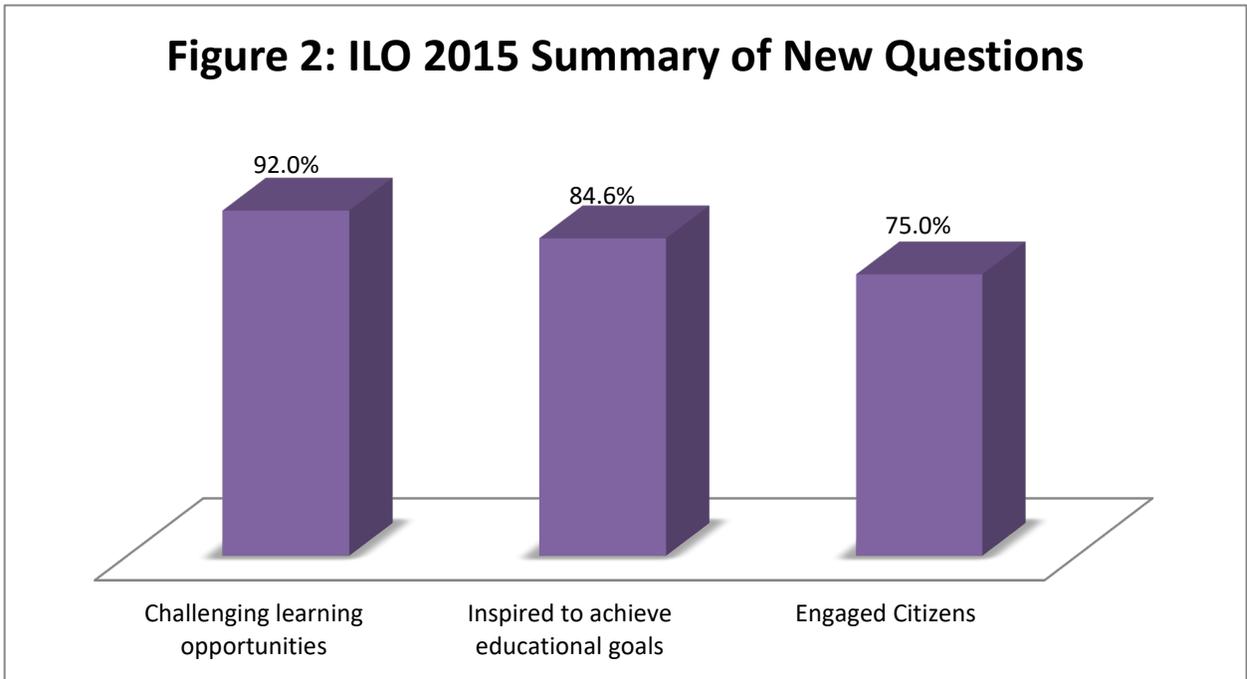


Figure 2: Students who agree or strongly agree that their abilities in selected areas have improved while at Cuesta College.

Appendix A: ILO Assessment Questions

1. I experienced interesting and challenging learning opportunities at Cuesta College.
2. Cuesta College inspired me to achieve my educational goals.
3. Cuesta College prepares students to become engaged citizens.
4. In my courses at Cuesta College, I improved my ability to critically evaluate the quality of my own thinking.
5. The following courses most improved my ability to analyze and evaluate the quality of my own thinking.
(use 3-4 letter course abbreviate and number code, i.e. POLS225 or BIO209A)
6. In my courses at Cuesta College, I improved my ability to critically evaluate the quality of other people's thinking.
7. The following courses most contributed to my ability to critically evaluate the quality of other people's thinking: (use 3-4 letter course abbreviate and number code, i.e. POLS225 or BIO209A)
8. During my time at Cuesta, I improved my ability to locate information that helps me answer questions or solve problems.
9. Rank the impact of how the following experiences improved your ability to locate information that helps you to answer questions or solve problems.
 - Interactions with librarians
 - Help from the library website
 - English 201A coursework
 - Interactions with instructors
 - Interactions with students
 - Other individual research
10. During my time at Cuesta, I improved my ability to evaluate the quality of information that I locate or receive.
11. During my time at Cuesta, I improved my ability to use information effectively and ethically.
12. During my time at Cuesta, I improved my ability to communicate clearly and logically.
13. I received clear and accurate information from counselors at Cuesta College regarding requirements and processes for transfer to a four year university.
14. I received clear and accurate information from counselors at Cuesta College regarding the courses that I needed to earn my associate's degree.
15. Please provide any additional comments you have regarding your educational experiences at Cuesta College, or this survey
16. What is your primary goal after earning your degree?
17. Select the campus location where you took the highest number of units.

Arts and Humanities discipline specific questions (19 total questions)

12. During my time at Cuesta College, I have improved my ability to identify, create, or critique key elements of inspirational art forms, such as visual arts, performance arts, or literature.
13. During my time at Cuesta College, I have improved my knowledge of how history and culture influence artistic expression.

Social and Behavioral Sciences discipline specific questions (20 total questions)

14. During my time at Cuesta College, I have improved my ability to explain how societies and social groups function.