



# GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND ANALYSIS PILOT YEAR 2011-2012

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## PURPOSE AND CHARGE

The General Education Outcomes Forum II (GEO Forum II) adopted the following purpose statement.

"Through the general education core curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse global world; and cultivate advanced intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning." ~Adopted by the Texas Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee

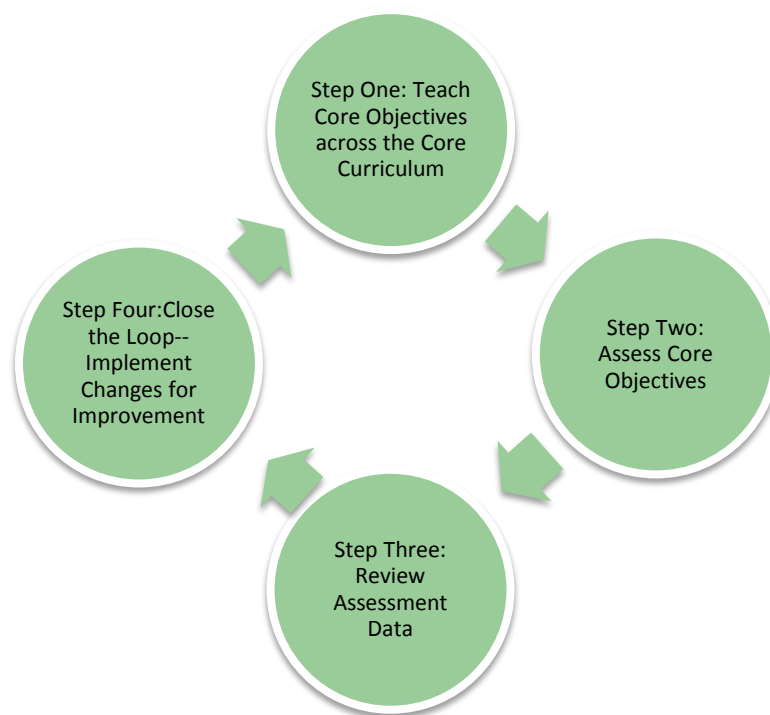
The THECB approved the following core competencies for all Texas institutions of higher education: Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork, Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility. These core competencies, although not required in every course in the core, must be present and taught throughout the curriculum in such a way that when a student receives their Associate's Degree or is Core Complete, they will have demonstrated competencies in these six areas.

To ensure teaching and learning of the general education core competencies, assessment of core competencies, although course-embedded, will occur at the institutional level. This faculty-driven process will be overseen by the Core Objectives Assessment Team (COAT). COAT, a district-wide faculty committee is charged with making recommendations for measures, including the development and maintenance of rubrics, serving as a sounding board for assessment logistics, consulting with faculty on assessment issues, conducting core assessments of student artifacts outside of courses as well as making recommendations for improvements needed based on assessment results.

## PROCESS OF ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CORE CURRICULUM

- Student learning in two of the six THECB core objectives will be assessed each long semester. In spring 2012, communication skills and critical thinking skills will be piloted. In fall 2012, teamwork and empirical/quantitative skills will be assessed. In spring 2013, visual communication, social responsibility and personal responsibility will be assessed. Then, the cycle will start anew and continue forward in this fashion.

- The assessment sample will rotate through high-enrollment Core courses that will be identified at the beginning of each assessment cycle. A total of at least 150 artifacts will be generated for each of the two core objectives intended for assessment in the given long semester. Each semester, the sample will include a variety of modalities and campuses to ensure a quality sample across the curriculum.
- Faculty whose courses have been chosen to participate in the assessment process will be notified and given the appropriate Collin College Core Objectives Rubrics. Beginning October 2012, all Collin College Core Objective Rubrics will be available online.
- Faculty/Departments may choose any type of measure for the assessment as long as it meets the criteria for the Core Objective being assessed. The assignment is one that also will be used by the instructor as part of the student's grade in the course.
- Artifacts will be assessed by Collin faculty members of the Core Objectives Assessment Team.
- Assessments will be based on rubrics developed by Collin faculty members for the purpose of assessing student attainment of the state's core objectives.
- COAT will be responsible to oversee implementation of the assessment process, to train assessors, and to maintain the rubrics.
- Prior to each assessment cycle, COAT faculty members who conduct the assessment will be trained in the use of the rubrics by someone with extensive experience with the use of rubrics and holistic grading for assessment purposes.
- Faculty members who rate student artifacts related to the empirical and quantitative skills core objective should be specialized in disciplines related to the core objective and must complete the requisite training referred to in the previous bulleted item. For the other five core objectives, faculty members who rate student artifacts should be faculty members who complete the requisite training.
- Members of COAT will serve three-year terms with 1/3 of the committee rolling over each year beginning fall 2013.
- New members will be recommended by COAT to the Associate Vice President for Teaching and Learning. The AVP will then make recommendations to the Deans. After Dean approval, new members will begin their appointments each fall semester.



## SUMMARY

### PILOT CYCLE: SPRING 2012

Collin College piloted the assessment process during spring 2012.\*\*\* The competencies assessed for the pilot were critical thinking and communication skills.

**Table 1: COAT Assessment Summary Spring 2012 Pilot**

Core Objective	Measures	Modalities	# Sections Assessed	# Students Assessed
Critical Thinking	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Variety of Campuses	15	194
Communications Skills	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Honors, Variety of Campuses	18	207**

\* Measures are determined by faculty within their departments. Departments decide whether to choose a single measure or to allow multiple measures for the assessment. All assessments are course imbedded.

\*\*Note that for the criterion “audience” in Oral communication, 50 artifacts were missing data.

\*\*\*The process is outlined in the original assessment results and analysis report.

The following high-enrollment core courses were chosen for the pilot:

Core Objective	Courses Chosen
Critical Thinking	HUMA 1301 (8 sections) SOCI 1301 (7 sections)
Communication Skills	ENGL 1302 (8 sections) SPCH 1311 (10 sections)

At the end of the spring 2012 semester, faculty sent copies of student artifacts to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. After an inter-rater reliability training session, members of COAT rated student artifacts using the faculty-generated rubrics for the Core Objectives: Critical Thinking and Communication Skills. GOAL:

COAT proposed that 70% of students assessed should rate, on a scale of 1-4, a 3 or above for each criterion listed on the Core Objective Rubrics.

The following tables show the percentages per criterion for Written Communication Skills, Critical Thinking and Oral Communication as assessed in spring 2012:

**Table 2: Written Communication Summary**

Written Communication Criteria	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Total
Context of and Purpose for Writing	53%	1%	54%
Content	51%	2%	53%
Organization and Controlling Idea	57%	0%	57%
Sources and Evidence	39%	1%	40%
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	36%	1%	37%

### Written Communication

Goal: 70% of students assessed will rate a 3 (on a scale of 1-4) or higher for each criterion

Result: Goal per criterion not met

Continuous Improvement

- Inter-Rater Reliability Issues
  - Committee members discussed that the lower scores for “Sources and Evidence” could be related to inter-rater reliability issues rather than student performance. During the training session, it wasn’t made clear what to do in the instances where the assignment didn’t meet certain criterion. Some faculty scored artifacts missing bibliographies with a 1 for “below expectation.” Other faculty observed that the assignment didn’t require a bibliography and therefore scored the criterion as N/A. For future assessments, the criterion must be made clear to faculty using the rubric. Also, COAT members will need to make a determination prior to the next assessment cycle how to handle missing criteria.
- Rubric Clean-up
  - The initial use of the rubric proved to be cumbersome due to the variety of assignments and disciplines. The COAT has divided into subcommittees to pare down the rubric based on the findings from this summer’s assessment. Many faculty found the rubrics to still be based too heavily in course/discipline specifics.

- Committee actions and suggestions
  - COAT gave a presentation on the rubrics at the Fall 2012 Faculty Development Conference. They plan to have the rubrics available online to all faculty in October 2012. COAT suggests that faculty use the rubrics in their classes. Students need to be made aware of the rubrics.
- COAT plans to give a similar presentation at the 2013 Spring Associate Faculty “Collaborations” Conference.
  - COAT, through the discipline leads, the Faculty Council Teaching and Learning Committee, Chairs, Writing Center and the Deans, will convey that although we met our goal for the criterion “Sources and Evidence,” this area will be targeted for improvement. Improvements will occur as follows:
- Students must be given clear instructions.
  - Faculty will be given opportunities through faculty development programs to learn new ways to think about teaching Written Communication Skills. These opportunities will focus within as well as apart from their disciplines. Faculty should provide students with the instruction needed and the opportunity to “demonstrate skillful use of high-quality credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.” As well as give students the opportunity to practice creating documents that “follow accurate formats and documentation of sources.”

## Critical Thinking

Table 3: Critical Thinking Summary

Critical Thinking Criteria	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Total
Creativity	45%	10%	55%
Innovation	42%	11%	53%
Exploration	49%	12%	61%
Identification	41%	23%	63%
Presentation	30%	13%	43%
Conclusion	31%	13%	44%

The Core Objective Assessment Team met to discuss the assessment data.

Goal: 70% of students assessed will rate a 3 (on a scale of 1-4) or higher for each criterion

Result: Goal per criterion not met

Continuous Improvement

- Inter-Rater Reliability Issues

- Committee members discussed that the lower scores for Presentation and Conclusion could be related to inter-rater reliability issues rather than student performance. During the training session, it wasn't made clear what to do in the instances where the assignment didn't meet certain criterion. Some faculty scored artifacts missing bibliographies with a 1 for "below expectation." Other faculty observed that the assignment didn't require a bibliography and therefore scored the criterion as N/A. For future assessments, the criterion must be made clear to faculty using the rubric. Also, COAT members will need to make a determination prior to the next assessment cycle how to handle missing criteria.
- Rubric Clean-up
  - The initial use of the rubric proved to be cumbersome due to the variety of assignments and disciplines. The COAT has divided into subcommittees to pare down the rubric based on the findings from this summer's assessment. Many faculty found the rubrics to still be based too heavily in course/discipline specifics.
- Committee actions and suggestions
  - COAT gave a presentation on the rubrics at the Fall 2012 Faculty Development Conference. They plan to have the rubrics available online to all faculty October 2012. COAT suggests that faculty use the rubrics in their classes. Students need to be made aware of the rubrics.
  - COAT through the discipline leads, the Faculty Council Teaching and Learning Committee, Chairs and the Deans, will convey that although the College met its goals for Critical Thinking, the rubric needs improvement. Based on the summer assessments, the Critical Thinking Rubric has been altered to be less ambiguous. Other improvements that need to occur in this area are as follows:
    - Students must be given clear instructions.
    - Students need to have the rubric along with the assignment so that they know the criteria by which they will be assessed.
    - Faculty will be given opportunities through faculty development programs, to learn new ways to teach Critical Thinking. These opportunities will focus within as well as apart from their disciplines. Faculty should provide students with the instruction needed and the opportunity to produce "thorough and logical conclusions well supported by evidence and explanation."

## Oral Communication

Table 4: Oral Communication Summary

Oral Communication Criteria	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Total
Verbal and Physical delivery	82%	14%	96%
Content	67%	33%	100%
Sources and Evidence	66%	27%	93%
Organization	68%	29%	97%
Audience	-	-	-

Goal: 70% of students assessed will rate a 3 (on a scale of 1-4) or higher for each criterion

Result: Goal per criterion met

Continuous Improvement

- Inter-Rater Reliability Issues
  - Early in the pilot process, many concerns were voiced regarding the assessment of SPCH1311. Violating FERPA constituted the majority of concerns. After investigating the speech assessment process at other colleges, COAT decided to have speech professors use the COAT rubric to turn into COAT as the artifact. Two problems arose during the pilot of this process: 1) speech professors were not trained on the rubric to insure inter-rater reliability and 2) the pilot didn't include a large enough number of sections to ensure reliability. The final criterion on the rubric, "audience" had to be eliminated because 50 of the 111 artifacts left this criterion blank.
- Rubric Clean-up
  - According to the speech faculty members of COAT, the rubric had several issues. COAT has completed a major revision of the Oral Communication Rubric.
- Committee actions and suggestions
  - COAT through the discipline leads, the Faculty Council Teaching and Learning Committee, Chairs and the Deans, will convey that although we met our goal for the criterion "Sources and Evidence," this area will be targeted for improvement. Improvements will occur as follows:
  - COAT made the recommendation to improve the instrument used to assess Oral Communication. Also, for future assessment cycles, all speech professors that are part of the assessment will be required to participate in the inter-rater reliability process.

Table 5: COAT Assessment Plan Fall 2012

Core Objective	Measures	Modalities	# Sections Assessed	# (Expected) Students Assessed
Teamwork	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Variety of Campuses	15	398
Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Honors, Variety of Campuses	19	636

Table 6: COAT Assessment Plan Spring 2013

Core Objective	Measures	Modalities	# Sections Assessed	# (Expected) Students Assessed
Social Responsibility	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Variety of Campuses	64	1000
Personal Responsibility	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Honors, Variety of Campuses	142	3000
Visual Communication	Multiple*	Hybrid, Online, Night, Day, Express, Honors, Variety of Campuses	20	400