Middle Tennessee State University

General Education Assessment Report 2012-13

Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Academic Year 2012-2013

Subject Area: Mathematics

1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment. Include the prefix, number, and title of each course.

   MATH 1710—College Algebra and MATH 1710K—College Algebra

2. Indicate the number of students who were assessed.   Was sampling used? If yes, briefly describe the method of selecting student work and the percentage of students whose work was assessed.

   All 2,111 students taking the final examination in fall 2012 and spring 2013 were assessed.

3. Do the procedures described in Items 1 and 2 represent any significant change from previous assessments? If so, describe the changes and rationale.

   The procedures used are the same used in the 2011 and 2012 reports. Each learning outcome is associated with a specific set of questions—40 questions for the first learning outcome and 16 questions for each of the other learning outcomes.

   It was felt that the distinction between Learning Outcomes 2 (real-life problems) and 3 (meaningful connections) was too subtle to measure with a single examination. Thus, the same set of 16 questions was used to assess these two learning outcomes.

   A correct response rate of at least 85% was deemed to be superior; a correct response rate between 60% and 84% was deemed to be satisfactory; a correct response rate of less than 60% was deemed to be unsatisfactory.

   Fall 2012 and spring 2013 results are combined in this report.

Mathematics Learning Outcome to be Assessed	Test Used	Test Item Numbers
Learning Outcome 1: Students are able to use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 1-40
Learning Outcome 2: Students are able to use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real life problems.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14,16,18,22,39
Learning Outcome 3: Students are able to make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14,16,18,22,39
Learning Outcome 4: Students are able to use technology for	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 2,3,5,8,9,13,14,18,20,22,24,29,31,32,34,38

mathematical reasoning and problem solving.		
Learning Outcome 5: Students are able to apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 2,3,4,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,21,27,28,30,40

4. Per the evaluation rubric utilized at your institution, adapt the table below to record the results of the assessments of each learning outcome in the subject area discussed in the report. Below is an example of a table for mathematics. <u>Revise the table to reflect the descriptors used at your institution.</u> If you rephrased a TBR goal statement, type your institution's version below the corresponding TBR goal and within the same cell. If you addressed additional outcomes not included in the TBR list, create rows for them at the bottom of the table.

Mathematics Outcome to be Assessed	**Superior** Number and Percent	**Satisfactory** Number and Percent	**Unsatisfactory** Number and Percent
Learning Outcome 1: Students are able to use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	**13.0% (-4.8%)[*] (275 of 2,111 students) were correct on at least 85% of the questions**	**59.5% (-2.9%)[*] (1255 of 2,111 students) were correct on between 60% and 84% of the questions**	**27.5% (+7.7%)[*] (581 of 2,111 students) were correct on fewer than 60% of the questions**
Learning Outcome 2: Students are able to use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real life problems.	**10.8% (-2.6%)[*] (227 of 2,111 students) were correct on at least 85% of the questions**	**51.5% (-8.9%)[*] (1088 of 2,111 students) were correct on between 60% and 84% of the questions**	**37.7% (+11.5%)[*] (796 of 2,111 students) were correct on fewer than 60% of the questions**
Learning Outcome 3: Students are able to make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	**10.8% (-2.6%)[*] (227 of 2,111 students) were correct on at least 85% of the questions**	**51.5% (-8.9%)[*] (1088 of 2,111 students) were correct on between 60% and 84% of the questions**	**37.7% (+11.5%)[*] (796 of 2,111 students) were correct on fewer than 60% of the questions**
Learning Outcome 4: Students are able to use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving	**12.7% (-2.1%)[*] (268 of 2,111 students) were correct on at least 85% of the questions**	**58.9% (+0.3%)[*] (1244 of 2,111 students) were correct on between 60% and 84% of the questions**	**28.4% (+1.9%)[*] (599 of 2,111 students) were correct on fewer than 60% of the questions**

Learning Outcome 5: Students are able to apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	27.6% (+1.1%)[*] (583 of 2,111 students) were correct on at least 85% of the questions	52.9% (-2.3%)[*] (1117 of 2,111 students) were correct on between 60% and 84% of the questions	19.5% (+1.2%)[*] (411 of 2,111 students) were correct on fewer than 60% of the questions

[*]Change in percentage from fall 2011-spring 2012 to fall 2012-spring 2013

5. Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 4. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcomes?

Combined results from fall 2012/spring 2013 show some decreases in outcomes from the comparable numbers from fall 2011/spring 2012.

During 2012-2013:

Learning Outcome 1. The percentage of students in the superior range decreased by 4.8 percentage points, and the percentage of students in the satisfactory range decreased by 2.9 percentage points. Corresponding to these decreases, the percentage of students in the unsatisfactory range increased by 7.7 percentage points.

Learning Outcomes 2 and 3. The percentage of students in the superior range decreased by 2.6 percentage points, and the percentage of students in the satisfactory range decreased by 8.9 percentage points. Corresponding to these decreases, the percentage of students in the unsatisfactory range increased by 11.5 percentage points.

Learning Outcome 4. The percentage of students in the superior range decreased by 2.1 percentage points, and the percentage of students in the satisfactory range increased by 0.3 percentage points. Corresponding to these increases, the percentage of students in the unsatisfactory range increased by 1.9 percentage points.

Learning Outcome 5. The percentage of students in the superior range increased by 1.1 percentage points. Although the percentage of students in the satisfactory range decreased by 2.3 percentage points, the combined percent either superior or satisfactory decreased by 1.2 percentage points. The percentage of students in the unsatisfactory range increased by 1.2 percentage points.

Interpretation of Data and Conclusions. This year's assessment shows decreases in the superior and satisfactory categories for learning outcomes 1-4. The largest declines were in Learning Outcomes 2 and 3, applying mathematical concepts to real-world problems and making connections between mathematics and other disciplines.

Both of these learning outcomes require ability to read and think critically. While disappointing, this decline is consistent with the lower composite ACT scores of students enrolled at the University. More specifically, the average ACT Math score of College Algebra students in fall 2012 was 19.9. In spring 2013 it dropped to 18.4. Some of these College Algebra students presented ACT Math scores as low as 12, and 1105 students had ACT Math less than 19, some 40%!

Of the 2,760 students enrolled in College Algebra during fall 2012 and spring 2013, only 649 (23.5%--less than a quarter!) presented an ACT Math score of at least 22, the ACT benchmark for college readiness in mathematics. ACT asserts that a student must score at

least 22 on the ACT Math examination in order to have a 50% change of earning a *C* or better in College Algebra. Among the 2111 students who did not present an ACT Math score of at least 22, the DFW rate was 51.1%. While this number is unacceptably high, we are surpassing the ACT projection of student success. The instructors of College Algebra performed admirably. Raising success rates in College Algebra will require efforts beyond those of the mathematics faculty.

6. Do you plan to implement strategies to correct any deficiencies that emerged from the data obtained? If yes, please explain.

- The Department of Mathematical Sciences appointed a Coordinator of General Education this fall. This person chairs the Department's General Education Committee. In the last year, several steps have been taken to provide a more consistent program for general education courses—

    o In an effort to determine best practices, the Service Course Committee, in fall 2012 and spring 2013, developed and administered a survey of faculty in general education courses, MATH 1010, MATH 1710, MATH 1810, MATH 1530, and MATH 1630. A summary of responses for MATH 1710 indicated there is an appropriate curriculum, use of technology, and textbook for the course. However, the committee recommended an improvement in the sophistication and breadth of assessments for the course, including examinations that consist of different types of questions, not solely multiple-choice items.

    o The Committee created common departmental syllabi and common course schedules for all instructors of MATH 1710 (also for MATH 1010, MATH 1530, MATH 1630, & MATH 1810).

    o All faculty have been encouraged (graduate assistants and adjuncts have been instructed) to keep accurate attendance records for each student as a part of documentation for grades of D, F, or W. An attendance recording template for this purpose was distributed.

    o Faculty members were and will be encouraged to utilize the University's Academic Alert System early in the semester in order to notify students who are in jeopardy.

- In the Department of Mathematical Sciences, College Algebra is taught entirely by full-time temporary instructors, adjunct instructors, and GTAs, except for the limited number of online sections. In fall 2012, 34 different instructors taught 64 sections of College Algebra; in spring 2013, 18 different instructors taught 41 sections of College Algebra. The Department is making efforts to more closely monitor all FTTs, GTAs, and Adjuncts.

- The department's MS GTAs are currently supervised by Dr. Rebecca Calahan. The Department is working to improve oversight and supervision of GTAs in the Ph.D. program by reassigning faculty workload for that purpose beginning in spring 2014.

- In order to identify actions and strategies to improve student achievement, these results will be considered by the Department of Mathematical Science's General Education Committee, and Coordinator of the Mathematics Tutoring Lab, as well as by the Department of University Studies.

7. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from the assessment of 2011-12? If yes, please explain.

- In order to insure greater uniformity in syllabi, grading, and learning expectations, all instructors are now required to have common information on syllabi and to use the same grading scale ranges.

- The Department of Mathematical Sciences and University Studies both provide free tutoring labs for students in College Algebra. These labs are open as many hours as tutoring staff are available.

- Several tenured/tenure-track faculty members have been given one-hour workload assignments to support the Department's tutoring labs.

- University Studies continues to offer a program called Academic Intervention in Mathematics (AIM) to promote success for those highly at-risk students who are repeating prescribed General Education mathematics courses. AIM targets students who have failed the course in which they are enrolled. These at-risk students are identified for each instructor at the beginning of the semester. The instructor meets with each student periodically to advise, to encourage, to teach study skills, and to individualize other interventions. Interventions may include assignments of time to be spent in the Math Lab, notebook checks, or written assignments. Simply meeting with students to show concern for them and to build relationships with them is a proven retention tool. Students are encouraged to meet with instructors during office hours. Instructors also use phone calls, emails, and Advisor Alerts to contact students who are not attending class. It is obvious that this type of intervention would be helpful to other students, so instructors intervene when any student is not progressing well. Any intervention that is designed for repeating students is also available to non-repeaters.

- Results of previous assessments have been shared with the Department of Mathematical Sciences Faculty, General Education Committee, and also with University Studies.

Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Academic Year 2012-2013

Subject Area: Oral Communication

1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment. Include the prefix, number, and title of each course.
> The course Fundamentals of Communication, COMM 2200, was used in the assessment of Oral Communication. To evaluate student performance in constructing and delivering an oral presentation, Informative Speech Outlines and Persuasive Speech Oral Presentations were assessed.

2. Indicate the number of students who were assessed.   Was sampling used? If yes, briefly describe the method of selecting student work and the percentage of students whose work was assessed.

> The COMM 2200 procedure consisted of random stratified samples of representative populations of the COMM 2200 sections offered in Spring 2013. The total enrollment in COMM 2200 for Spring 2013 was 1910. The 79 sections of COMM 2200 were stratified into morning, afternoon and evening classes. From this list, a representative sample of sections was then selected based on the stratification. (43sections were used for the outline assessment and 44 sections were used for the oral presentation assessment.)

> From the randomly selected sections of COMM 2200, Informative Speech Presentation Outlines and Oral Persuasive Speech Presentations were randomly selected for evaluation. The data was then collected from a total of 300 students (149 Presentation Outlines and 151 Oral Presentations). The outlines consisted of blind copies requested from the instructors. Selected student oral presentations were video recorded. No identifying elements were used for individual students or instructors. Outlines, demographics instructions, videotapes, and sections were identified by assigned numbers for the study. Assigned number listings were secured in a locked drawer in the principal investigator's office.

> All random selections were generated using Research Randomizer (Urbaniak and Plous, 2008) from the Social Psychology Network.

> Four faculty members in Communication Studies participated in a Pre-Assessment Workshop and developed a speech rubric (for assessment of the Persuasive Speech Presentations) and an outline rubric (to evaluate the Informative Speech Outlines). Resources for development of each rubric were collected from a variety of sources, including the National Communication Association and recent workshops.

> Training for faculty members included three hours per evaluator to assess persuasive speeches and three hours per evaluator to assess outlines. All six evaluators utilized in 2013 received three hours of training. Evaluation of speeches and outlines required three evaluators (as stipulated by the National Communication Association and professionals in the field). For the   2013 assessment, two new faculty members were trained to be evaluators. This is in keeping with the original proposal to add several new evaluators each assessment cycle.

3. Do the procedures described in Items 1 and 2 represent any significant change from previous assessments? If so, describe the changes and rationale.

The number of participants was increased from the number used in the pilot study to insure a valid representative sample (10 percent of the total enrollment) as well as provide a baseline for future assessment.

For the pre-pilot and for the 2010 assessment, informative speech outlines from all students enrolled in 12 different sections of COMM 2200 were collected while 5 to 7 persuasive speeches were recorded in 40 different sections of COMM 2200.

To increase sampling representativeness, the number of randomly stratified sections from which outlines and speeches were collected was increased for the Spring 2013 to 43 sections for the outline assessment and 44 sections for the speech assessment.

4. Per the evaluation rubric utilized at your institution, adapt the table below to record the results of the assessments of each learning outcome in the subject area discussed in the report. Below is an example of a table for oral communication. Revise the table to reflect the descriptors used at your institution. If you rephrased a TBR goal statement, type your institution's version below the corresponding TBR goal and within the same cell. If you addressed additional outcomes not included in the TBR list, create rows for them at the bottom of the table.

TABLES (2013)

Oral Communication TBR Competencies to be Assessed *NOTE: Since we assess persuasive oral presentations AND informative speech outlines, more than one table may be included for each TBR Outcome.*	Unsatisfactory Number and Percent	Satisfactory Number and Percent	Superior Number and Percent
TBR Outcome I Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement. *[Table A: Revised on <u>our rubric (item #2) for the persuasive oral presentation</u> to: Within the opening segment of the speech the speaker communicates a) a thesis or purpose statement that is clear and concise, b) is appropriate for a persuasive presentation and, c) clearly relates to the members of the audience.]* [1]	1; (0.7%)	26; (17%)	124; (82.1%)
[Table B: Revised on our rubric for the <u>informative speech outline (item #1)</u> to: Student outlines contain a purpose statement that is appropriate for an informative speech, is clear and concise, and contains no deficiencies in expression].	34; (27.2%)	55; (44%)	36 (28.8%)
TBR Outcome II. Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. *[Table C: Revised on <u>our rubric (item# 4) for the persuasive oral presentation to</u>: The speech is clearly*	1; (0.7%)	16; (10.6%)	134; (88.7%)

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[1] The informative speech and corresponding outline is assigned midway through the semester. The persuasive speech is assigned near the end of the semester.

persuasive and the speaker presents an exceptionally clear and compelling argument or case. The organizational pattern is complete and the speaker leaves the audience with an undeniable message or call to action.]			
TBR Outcome III. Organizational Patterns. Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition). *[Table D: Revised on <u>our rubric (item # 3) for the</u> <u>persuasive oral presentation to:</u> The speaker's use of support material is exceptional. (I.E. the speaker uses all three kinds of support material; source credibility is clearly established; the quality and variety of support clearly enhances credibility of the speech.]*	4; (2.6%)	45; (29.8%)	102; (67.5%)
[Table E: Revised on our rubric for the <u>informative</u> <u>speech outline (item #6)</u> to: *Student outlines contain 2 to 5 main points; each point is clear and wording is consistent; all main points and sub-points are well developed and an appropriate pattern is utilized throughout.]*	23; (18.4%)	89; (71.2%)	13; (10.4%)
TBR Outcome IV. Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics. *[Table F: Revised on <u>our rubric (item # 6) for the</u> <u>persuasive oral presentation to:</u> The speaker uses language that is exceptionally clear, vivid, and appropriate for a formal occasion and for the audience; the language is not sexist, racist, non-inclusive, etc.]*	0	0	151; (100%)
[Table G: Revised on our rubric for the <u>informative</u> <u>speech outline (item # 10)</u> to: Student outlines contain no major errors in spelling, syntax and/or grammar.]	4; (3.2%)	99; (79.2%)	22; (17.6%)
[Table H: Revised on our rubric for the <u>informative</u> <u>speech outline (item # 9)</u> to: Overall language is clear and appropriate; contains a measure of creativity, and is free from inappropriate jargon and slang, and excludes language that is sexist, racist, etc.; may contain a few deficiencies in expression.]	2; (1.6%)	117; (93.6%)	6; (4.8%)

TBR Outcome V. Students are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources. *[Table I: Revised on our rubric for the <u>informative speech outline (item # 11)</u> to: Bibliography /Works Cited page contains 6 or more sources; citations are formatted correctly utilizing MLA or APA format. citations may have a few minor errors or omissions.]*	41; (32.8%)	48; (38.4%)	36; (28.8%)

5. Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 4. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcomes?

> With regard to the five TBR Learning Outcomes, performance was somewhat mixed for Outcome I. (Tables A, B: Clear Articulation of a Purpose Statement). Improvement was indicated with 99% of the students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher on the speech as compared to 92% in 2012. Additionally, the percentage of unsatisfactory scores decreased from 8% in 2012 to 1% in 2013. Performance on the outlines showed some decline with 82% scoring at the satisfactory level or higher in 2012 compared to 73% in 2013. Unsatisfactory scores also rose slightly for the outlines from 18% in 2012 to 27% in 2013.

> For Outcome II (Table C: the Ordering of Main Points in a reasonable and convincing manner) performance showed significant improvement with 93% scoring at the satisfactory level or higher, as compared to 77% of students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher in 2012.

> For Outcome III (Tables D and E: use of appropriate rhetorical patterns) the performance was very strong for the oral presentations with 97% of the students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher in 2013 compared to 76% in 2012. While performance on the outlines also remained high, with 82% of students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher, there was a slight increase in the unsatisfactory scores, from 16% in 2012 to 18% in 2013.

> Performance was also very strong for Outcome IV (Tables F, G and H: diction, syntax, usage, grammar, mechanics) with more than 99% of students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher on the speech assessments. Performance on outlines also remained strong with 98% scoring satisfactory or higher on the use of clear and appropriate language, and 97% of students scoring satisfactory or higher on the outlines for spelling, syntax, and grammar.

> Performance on Outcome V continues to show steady improvement. (Table I: the gathering and use of multiple sources). The number of students receiving a satisfactory or higher score rose from 64% in 2012 to 67% in 2013. The number of students who received an unsatisfactory score decreased from 36% in 2012 to 33% in 2013.

6. Do you plan to implement strategies to correct any deficiencies that emerged from the data obtained? If yes, please explain.

> One of the continuing challenges with this assessment is insuring that evaluators are adequately trained. For the 2013 evaluation, all six evaluators received 3 hours of training in order to improve and achieve greater rater reliability. Specifically, the coder ratings were significantly related with each other, ranging from 60 to 85 on the Pearson's correlation rating scale.

A fall workshop and a spring workshop will continue to be held for all COMM 2200 instructors. A portion of the spring 2014 workshop will be dedicated to reviewing the assessment outcomes for 2013 and discussing ways to improve all the outcomes. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving outcomes on the informative speech outlines, with special emphasis on improving Outcome I and Outcome V.

In the fall of 2012, we adopted the 11th edition of *The Art of Public Speaking,* which includes a web-based supplemental platform (Connect 2.0). This text was selected, in part, because of its focus on outlines, and the availability of an outlining program on the Connect website. Instructors have been encouraged to instruct students on how to use this online tool. Additionally, several pages were added to the custom edition of the text that specifically address outcomes I, III, IV and V. These measures may account, in part, for the improvements noted for Outcome I. Another review of additional supplemental materials will be conducted at the spring workshop in order to identify other materials that should be added to the custom version of the text to improve outcomes in all areas.

At the beginning of the fall 2013 semester, a joint workshop was held for the Gen Ed faculty teaching courses in the Communication Core (ENGL 1010, ENGL 1020 and COMM 2200.) During the workshop, we shared course content in each of the Gen Ed courses in the core and then provided an opportunity for instructors from both disciplines to identify common instructional goals and course content.

The workshop also included presentations by the MTSU library staff and the director of the MTSU writing center. The coordinator will continue to work closely with the writing center to provide materials that will assist their consultants in assisting COMM 2200 students who may be referred to the writing center for assistance with outlines. We will also continue to rely on the MTSU library staff in providing the special subject guides they have provided specifically to assist COMM 2200 students with research.

We have received funding to provide tutorial services specifically for students preparing oral presentations. This service will be part of the tutorial center that will be established in the MTSU library beginning in the spring of 2014. Training will be provided for the tutors and will include information on helping students achieve the five TBR outcomes for communication.

7. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from the assessment of 2011-12? If yes, please explain.

Since fall 2011, at least two workshops have been conducted for all COMM 2200 instructors each academic year. During these workshops, instructors have an opportunity to discuss and develop specific strategies for improving instruction on all the competencies, with special focus on those areas where students continue to fall below the satisfactory level of competence. We will continue to monitor the data from the assessment and will continue to provide information and assistance to instructors in order to continue to improve instruction.

We continued to work closely with the library staff and the writing center staff.

Currently COMM 2200 sections are being capped at a 25:1 student/faculty ratio. We would strongly recommend that class sizes remain at this 25:1 ratio as recommended by the National

Communication Association.[2] Any increase in class size will only hamper efforts to maintain and improve the ability of our instructors to provide adequate instruction in COMM 2200 and assure that all students meet the minimum competency requirements.

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[2] According to *The National Communication Association's Standards for Undergraduate Communication Programs,* ". . . all performance courses (e.g. public speaking) <u>should not have more than a 25:1 student /faculty ratio.".</u> <http://www.natcom.org/Default.aspx?id=1128&libID=1149> .

Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Academic Year 2012-2013

Subject Area: Writing

1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment. Include the prefix, number, and title of each course.

English 1020: Research and Argumentative Writing

2. Indicate the number of students who were assessed.   Was sampling used? If yes, briefly describe the method of selecting student work and the percentage of students whose work was assessed.

All 1020 instructors were asked to submit one copy of a research essay (specifically the essay requiring the most research) submitted by each student. There were 2,071 students enrolled in English 1020 in spring 2012; a pool of 1,672 essays was collected. Essays for 399 students enrolled in English 1020 were not able to be used for the study due to one main issue this year: student non-compliance (e.g., not turning in an essay to the instructor). *For the first time since the beginning of this project, all instructors turned in papers from all sections; thus, we had 100% instructor compliance.*

A computer-generated randomizer (www.random.org/lists) was used to decrease the original pool of 1,672 essays to a pool of 250 essays that were double blinded by clerical staff, using cover-up tape. The assessment organizer then double checked that the pool of 250 essays matched the data generated by the clerical staff. The computer-generated randomizer was used again on these 250 essays, and the first 150 essays from the randomized pool were chosen as the final sample. Out of the original 1,672 essays, 100 essays—5.98% of the total essays— were chosen for the final sample and grading session. The next 50 essays picked by the randomizer were considered for the grade norming session, and five essays dealing with entertainment (from five different instructors) were chosen as the grade-norming samples. Twelve faculty members at six different levels (GTA, adjunct, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor) graded the 100 essays with each essay being read twice and scored with the assessment rubric approved by the general education committee and TBR.

3. Do the procedures described in Items 1 and 2 represent any significant changes from previous assessments? If so, describe the changes and rationale.

The procedures used this year were the same as the procedures used last year.

4. Per the evaluation rubric utilized at your institution, adapt the table below to record the results of the assessments of each learning outcome in the subject area discussed in the report. Below is an example of a table for writing. Revise the table to reflect the descriptors used at your institution. If you rephrased a TBR goal statement, type your institution's version below the corresponding TBR goal and within the same cell. If you addressed additional outcomes not included in the TBR list, create rows for them at the bottom of the table.

Better ↑ or Worse ↓ than Last Year	Writing Outcome to be Assessed	Superior (More than Adequate) Number and Percent	Satisfactory (Adequate) Number and Percent	Unsatisfactory (Less than Adequate) Number and Percent
↑	Outcome A: Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to distill a **primary argumen**t into a single, compelling statement.]	18/200=9% (2012: 15/200=7.5%)	111/200=55.5% (2012: 101/200=51%)	71/200=35.5% (2012: 54/200=41.5%)
↓	*Outcome C: Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on **primary argument**.]	22/200=11% (2012: 17/200=8.5%)	88/200=44% (2012: 105/200=52.5%)	90/200=45% (2012: 78/200=39%)
↑	Outcome D: Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition).	20/200=10% (2012: 11/200=5.5%)	122/200=61% (2012: 74/200=37%)	58/200=29% (2012: 115/200=57.5%)
↑	Outcome E: Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.	16/200=8% (2012: 13/200=6.5%)	107/200=53.5% (2012: 96/200=48%)	77/200=38.5% (2012: 91/200=45.5%)
↑	Outcome F: Students are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple **secondary** sources.]	20/200=10% (2012: 9/200=4.5%)	94/200=47% (2012: 94/200=47%)	86/200=43% (2012: 97/200=48.5%)
↑	Outcome B: [added criterion for our rubric: **The student writer gives a clear purpose and audience**.]	19/200=9.5% (2012: 9/200=4.5%)	111/200=55.5% (2012: 100/200=50%)	70/200=35% (2012: 91/200=45.5%)
↓	Outcome G: [added criterion for our rubric: **The student writer has written a minimum of 1,000 words or four typed pages at 250 words per page (please estimate)**.]	Not applicable	164/200=82% (2012: 179/200=89.5%)	36/200=18% (2012: 21/200=10.5%)

*A – G alphabetical order of Outcomes for this report follows the MTSU Assessment Rubric

FIGURE 1: Outcome Results (A to G)

5. Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 4. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcomes?

- Although not represented in the preceding table, **inter-rater reliability** for this assessment project ranges from 57% to 74%, dependent on the assessment objective. Each objective, except the one on rhetorical patterns, is within an acceptable range of inter-rater reliability based on composition studies models.

- Based on the successful collection of assessment data for the last six years, we are now raising standards and revising the pedagogy our department used to teach English 1020. An effective program assessment has both **structure** and **fluidity**, and our plan has both in that we can now use the same criteria and process each year, but we can also expect that as we make changes, our data and results will not be stagnant and will show both positive and negative fluctuations.

- This year, five out of seven of the criteria show **improvement** over last year.

- For the last six years, we have noted the significant **less than adequate** achievement by student writers in the pool for Criterion D [using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition.)] This outcome has been a primary **focus** in our department for the last five years of the study and has been presented to the department as one of our primary focuses in seeking to improve the teaching of writing. This year, student writers have shown **excellent** progress in this area, from 57.5% unsatisfactory last year decreased to 29% this year.

- We will continue to take a long-range view of how to improve the teaching of writing at MTSU, and we will continue to place **primary** focus on three of the outcomes of concern. This year, our primary areas of focus will be

    i. Outcome C: Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. [Revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on **primary argument**.] – 45% unsatisfactory this year

    ii. Outcome E: Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics. – 38.5% unsatisfactory this year

    iii. Outcome F: Student writers are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple secondary sources. – 43% unsatisfactory this year

6. Do you plan to implement strategies to correct any deficiencies that emerged from the data obtained? If yes, please explain.

The English Department plans to

- disseminate results of the 2012-13 assessment study. We will

    o provide copies of the results to Dr. Tom Strawman, Department Chair; Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director; Dr. Allison Smith, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants; and Dr. Kristi Serrano, Director of the University Writing Center.

- o discuss the results at the spring 2014 Lower Division curriculum meeting, highlighting the three outcomes our department instructors should focus on.

- o provide access to assessment results via the link to general education faculty resources on the English department website. (Additional resources include teaching and learning objectives for 1020, sample syllabi and assignments.)

- o email the faculty listserv with this year's results and highlight the three outcomes that should be focused on this year.

- actively encourage tenure-track and tenured faculty to include ENGL 1020 on their requests for either fall or spring semester teaching.

- focus on student management and coordination of sources. We will

  - o have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and Dr. Julie Barger, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants, continue to invite Dr. Jason Vance and others from James E. Walker Library to GTA/adjunct/FTT orientations to discuss available library assistance, including Research Coach, SearchPath, and Embed a Librarian options.

  - o have the English Lower Division Committee continue the requirement for each English 1020 instructor to take their classes to the library for at least one class period for a librarian-led introduction to using the library effectively for research in 1020.

- investigate the role departmental grade inflation may play in less than adequate scores. We will

  - o have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and the Lower Division Committee continue to review 1020 syllabi (for GTAs, adjuncts, FTTs and tenure-track faculty) for how instructors represented and fulfilled the Course Objectives for English 1020. The results will be given to each instructor with a request to revise any deficiencies before the instructor teaches 1020 again. The committee will also confirm that each 1020 instructor uses appropriate texts that focus on the specific course objectives for 1020.

  - o continue to provide instructors with end-of-semester grading data specific to their own courses and to the program.

  - o have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and Dr. Allison Smith, Coordinator of Teaching Assistants, organize grade norming sessions for GTAs/adjuncts/instructors in fall 2013 and spring 2014.

- continue the restructuring of the English 1020 course into a research and argumentative course that focuses on Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), rather than on one that focuses on literary analysis, to stimulate more student interest and more student experience in research and argumentation. We will

  - o have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, lead the way in this restructuring. All 1020 instructors are required to choose one of the new WAC-based books and prepare new syllabi for this focus.

- continue to review and revise the curriculum for ENGL 1010 to better prepare students not only for the demands of ENGL 1020 but for expository writing requirements in other courses. Dr.

Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, and Dr. Allison Smith, TA Coordinator, will continue to work with instructors and teaching assistants to revise their ENGL 1010 classes with the overall theme of Literacy for Life. The Lower Division office will continue to provide new textbooks and assignments that focus on writing (and reading) as literacy skills that will not only help students succeed in general education courses and courses in their major, but also be vital in the transfer of writing skills and knowledge to the workforce post-graduation.

- further customize the new handbooks for ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020 to emphasize the course objectives, the General Education Learning Outcomes, and the resources available to MTSU composition students. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, has made specific significant changes to the department handbooks for ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020, customizing them for our students, our program, and our university. Dr. Jason Vance, from the James E. Walker Library on campus, contributed customized screen shots of library search engines that are particular to our university for the 1020 handbook, *Research Matters at MTSU*. (Instructors of COMM 2200: Fundamentals of Communication, are now investigating the feasibility of this handbook for their program.)

- provide opportunities for professional development for adjuncts and full-time instructors. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, will

  - continue managing the foundation account with grant monies donated by Bedford/St. Martin's, publishers of our new 1010 handbook *Easy Writer*, and McGraw-Hill, publishers of our new 1020 handbook, *Research Matters at MTSU*. Dr. Dubek and the Lower Division Committee will evaluate applications for travels funds for faculty to attend the annual Composition and Communication Conference, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. Recipients will write successful grant proposals (an important form of professional development) and will return to the department and host information sessions or conduct workshops on composition topics.

- emphasize the 1020 course objectives for new hires and returning GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors. We will

  - guide all GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors to the General Education Faculty Resources and Lower Division FAQs web pages, located on the English Department website, that include the course learning and teaching objectives, sample syllabi and assignments, general information for contingent faculty, and specific assistance with grading, developing effective assignments, and judging written work in General Education courses.

  - provide more intensive oversight of General Education faculty. Course objectives, syllabi, assignments, and grading are already reviewed in the annual evaluation of each GTA, adjunct, and instructor in the department. Contingent faculty (adjuncts and FTTs) complete a self-evaluation checklist every semester that clarifies expectations for teaching general education courses (including an expectation to participate in two professional development activities per semester) and asks instructors to state their primary teaching goal for that semester. Dr. Laura Dubek will receive reassigned time to conduct additional classroom observations.

- continue a new project that will send general education faculty into area high schools to learn about the kinds of writing our students do before they come to us. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director; Dr. Ron Kates, K-12 Liaison; and Dr. Ellen Donovan, Director of the Middle Tennessee Writing Project, will

- coordinate this three-year outreach project, a summer faculty learning community program, which will bring back information about how writing is being taught to students before students reach MTSU. This project, initiated by Dr. Laura Dubek and supported by Dean Mark Brynes from Liberal Arts, will allow essential information to be exchanged between local high schools and our department.

- continue to study how Common Core, the new standards for K-12 education, present opportunities to rethink the TBR learning outcomes for general education courses. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, and Dr. Julie Barger are currently participating in a Faculty Learning Community focused on the relationship between Common Core and General Education teaching and learning at MTSU, an initiative funded by the Provost's Office. This year, the Communication Rubric sub-group (Dubek, Barger, and Peg McCree) will revise the official course proposals for ENGL 1010 and COMM 2200, using the Common Core standards for reading, writing, language arts, and speaking as a foundation for a more rigorous college-level curriculum in general education communication.

- continue to investigate Flipping the Classroom and course redesign initiatives, supported by the Provost's office. Dr. Allison Smith and Dr. Jimmie Cain, along with Ms. Jenny Rowan, will
  - attend course redesign meetings and workshops
  - collect the 1010 papers from Ms. Rowan's English 1010 class in fall 2013 as a control example prior to applying course redesign
  - collection the 1010 papers from Ms. Rowan's English 1010 class in spring 2014 for evaluation after the course redesign initiatives are applied
  - report to the Course Redesign Group, the Provost, the Chair, and the Lower Division Director on how course redesign could improve English 1020.

- emphasize the need for freshman writing courses to follow the guidelines of the National Council of Teachers of English with regard to class size. Dr. Tom Strawman and Dr. Laura Dubek will

  - make a request to upper administration that the current class size of 25 students per freshman writing class conform to NCTE guidelines: "No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement."

- emphasize the need for sufficient reassigned time for Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, so she can focus necessary attention and time to the mentoring of our temporary English 1020 instructors.

7. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from the assessment in 2011-12? If yes, please explain.

The English Department has

- disseminated results of the assessment studies. The assessment organizer, has

  - provided copies of the results to Dr. Tom Strawman, Department Chair; Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director; Dr. Allison Smith, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants; and Dr. Kristi Serrano, Director of the University Writing Center.

- emailed results to the faculty and GTA listservs.

- continued to focus on student management and coordination of basic information. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director,

    - formalized the requirement for all English 1020 instructors to take their classes to the library for at least one class period for a librarian-led introduction to conducting research.

- continued to investigate the role departmental grade inflation may play in less than adequate scores. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and the English Lower Division Committee have

    - reviewed ENGL 1010 and 1020 syllabi and meticulously noted how each syllabus (for GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors) represented and fulfilled the Course Objectives. The results were given to each instructor with a request to revise any deficiencies. This syllabus review continues each year.

    - organized grade norming sessions for adjuncts/instructors in fall 2010 and spring 2011. Dr. Julie Myatt, Coordinator of GTAs, also organized grade norming sessions for the GTAs.

- emphasized the 1020 course objectives for new hires and returning GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, has

    - created two new web pages—General Education Faculty Resources and Lower Division FAQs—that include the course objectives, teaching and learning objectives, sample syllabi and assignments, general information for General Education faculty, and specific assistance with grading, developing effective assignments, and judging written work in Gen Ed courses. Course objectives, syllabi, assignments, and grading are all reviewed in the annual evaluation of each GTA, adjunct, and instructor in the department.

- formalized the revision of the ENGL 1020 curriculum to be more closely aligned with the General Education Outcomes. The Lower Division Committee

    - selected new textbooks for ENGL 1020 that have a Writing Across the Curriculum focus and that better support the General Education Learning Outcomes.
    - selected new handbooks for both ENGL 1010 and 1020 that emphasize the distinctions between the two courses.
    - used the Syllabus Review to encourage more required reading and additional reading instruction in both ENGL 1010 and 1020 and more classroom workshops and peer review opportunities.

- hosted Dr. Andrea Lunsford, Stanford University, who is an expert on multi-modal writing, as the Peck Composition Series speaker in spring 2013. Since the new focus on Literacy for Life entails including more reading and writing of multi-modal projects, her visit sparked an interest in both multi-modal writing and the Literacy for Life focus of English 1010.

- provided new opportunities for professional development for adjuncts and full-time instructors. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, has

    - established a foundation account with grant monies donated by Bedford/St. Martin's, publishers of our new 1010 handbook *Easy Writer*, and McGraw-Hill, publishers of our

new 1020 handbook, *Research Matters at MTSU*. Dr. Dubek and the Lower Division Committee evaluated applications for travels funds for faculty to attend the annual Composition and Communication Conference, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, and other conferences that allowed faculty to focus on improving their teaching of writing. Recipients received travel expenses and returned to the department to host information sessions and/or lead workshops on composition topics.

- o In 2011-2012, three grants totaling $1285 were given to support general education teaching and professional development: Dr. Laura Dubek (Writing Program Administration summer institute), Kevin Brown, FTT (Writer's Conference), and Matthew Brown, FTT (Conference on College Composition and Communication).

- o In 2012-2013, four grants totaling $1694 were given to support general education teaching and professional development. All four recipients were FTTs and all four attended the Conference on College Composition and Communication: Kevin Brown, Matthew Brown, Ethan Castelo, and Lisa Williams.

- o Faculty are encouraged to apply for professional development grants at the fall and spring curriculum meetings. Information about particular conferences, workshops, and seminars is disseminated via the faculty listserv.

- established adjunct and FTT teaching awards. Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, and the Lower Division Committee have

  - o created new teaching awards for adjunct and FTT instructors, funded by the grant monies described above. This recognition of some of the best teachers of writing in our department is a critical step in acknowledging the important work the members of our department do.

  - o Lee Casson received the award for best FTT teaching in 2012, and Patricia Baines received the award for best FTT teaching in 2013. LeAnne Garner received the award for best adjunct teaching in 2012. (No adjunct was selected in 2013.) Instructors nominated for these awards put together a portfolio of materials, the compilation of which is an important professional development activity. The Lower Division Committee reviews the portfolios and selects a winner who is then honored at the annual Liberal Arts Award ceremony.

Assessment of Critical Thinking

Academic Year 2012-2013

1. Identify the Performance-Funding test of general education used by your institution.

   California Critical Thinking Skills Test

2. If you used sampling as permitted by THEC, describe the method used.

   Sampling was not used.

3. Present the institutional mean scores or sub-scores on the Performance Funding instrument that your institution reviewed to assess students' comprehension and evaluation of arguments. If comparable scores for a peer group are available, also present them.

   MTSU = 17.1
   National = 16.7

4. Summarize your impressions of the results yielded by the THEC test regarding critical thinking. Based upon your interpretations of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of critical thinking skills?

   The CCTST requires students to draw inferences, make interpretations, analyze information, draw warranted inferences, identify claims and reasons, and evaluate the quality of arguments using brief passages, diagrams, and charts. For the sixth consecutive year, MTSU students' critical thinking skills exceed those of students taking the same test at universities across the country.

5. Do you plan any strategies to correct deficiencies or opportunities for improvement that emerged with respect to critical thinking? If so, describe them below.

   Critical thinking skills will continue to be emphasized in the General Education Program and in each degree program. Some university initiatives that emphasize critical thinking include the following:
   - All General Education courses emphasize the development of critical thinking skills. The three required courses in the Communication category, in particular, provide incoming students with an introduction to the critical and analytical skills necessary for success in college. Small class size in these courses is essential to insure that students receive the individual attention they need to develop these skills. The General Education Committee has recommended to the Provost that class size in the courses in the Communication category not exceed the recommendations of the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Communication Association. In most cases, class sizes are now within the recommended guidelines. The General Education Committee continues to recommend that class size not exceed the guidelines endorsed by professional organizations.
   - Instructors of UNIV 1010 will continue to assign textbooks that contain a critical thinking component in each chapter.
   - Tutoring in the University Writing Center emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills in the writing process. Instructors will continue to encourage students to work with the Center's trained tutors.
   - The University Library Research Coach service (which offers students in-depth, one-on-one sessions with a librarian) emphasizes critical thinking in finding and selecting the best books, articles, and database resources for projects, papers, and presentations. Instructors will continue to advise students to use this service.