

**Texas A&M International University
Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review (CCIER)**

Core Curriculum Academic Discipline: COMMUNICATION

Assessment Period Covered: Sept. 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011

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The Core Curriculum Institutional Effectiveness Review is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU), a member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society. TAMIU Provides a learning environment built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. The University offers a range of baccalaureate and master's programs and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business Administration. In addition, the University pursues a progressive agenda for global study and understanding across all disciplines.

Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International improves the quality of lives for citizens of the border region, the state of Texas, and national and international communities.

Core Curriculum Mission

At Texas A&M International University, the Core curriculum introduces students to academic disciplines which form the foundation of human thought: mathematics, science, history, language, literature, the arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Our Core is conceived to open new areas of learning for our students and to foster skills necessary for success in higher education.

As they move through this course of study, students are encouraged, as their knowledge increases, to develop the capacity to articulate and support a thesis, to think critically, to synthesize their observations and to perceive analogies and relationships between seemingly diverse ideas and intellectual pursuits.

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented: *The statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations formulated.*

ENGL 1301-1302: Based upon the results thus far gleaned, the FYWP structure is successful. However, modifications have been made and implemented in the Fall 2009, and the results of these changes are yet to be determined. Expectations are that the changes will have allowed for more revision of writing that will likely result in significant improvement. The Writing Program Director met with the FYWP instructors during the 2010 summer to review the results obtained and to implement changes as appropriate.

MATH 2371: As our system seems to be working, we will continue to assess and evaluate student work as we have done.

SPCH 1311 and ENGL 2311: We have systems in place to evaluate student work; a plan to measure progress from year to year is currently being developed and will in place by Fall 2010.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Exemplary Educational Objectives for the following academic discipline:

COMMUNICATION

1. To understand and demonstrate writing and speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.
2. To understand the importance of specifying audience and purpose and to select appropriate communication choices.
3. To understand and appropriately apply modes of expression, i.e., descriptive, expository, narrative, scientific, and self-expressive, in written, visual, and oral communication.
4. To participate effectively in groups with emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding.
5. To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument.
6. To develop the ability to research and write a documented paper and/or to give an oral presentation.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s)

This year, we will focus on outcomes 5 and 6:

- To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument.
- To develop the ability to research and write a documented paper and/or to give an oral presentation.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (*Write On, TAMIU!*).

Although none of the CORE Communication matrix courses are labeled writing intensive, writing is a vital component in each course (ENGL 1301/1302, SPCH 1311, and MATH 2371). Math faculty members are meeting to discuss the possibility of categorizing MATH 2371 as a university WIN (writing intensive course).

Methods of assessment to be used:

To assess outcomes 5 and 6, a range of means are used throughout the Communication matrix courses. These instruments include rubrics as well as pre/post exams. In ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 course instructors make use of an analytic rubric (including 5 domains for effective writing—Focus, Organization/Development, Style and Sentence Structure, Grammar/Mechanics, Research), for scoring diagnostic and terminal (final exam) essays; a required electronic portfolio that demonstrates success in each stage of the writing process; required student participation in the various stages of the writing process. ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 emphasize the recursive stages of writing (i.e., invention, drafting, revising, editing, and publication/presentation). ENGL 1301 focuses intensely on the writing process and on strategies for composing written expression while ENGL 1302 covers argument, research, and documentation. Course assignments are designed to respond to the Communication Matrix objectives including: diagnostic and terminal (final exam) essays; a required electronic portfolio that demonstrates success in each stage of the writing process; required student participation in the various stages of the writing process and multiple required drafts of various genres (e.g., Personal Essay, Review Essay, Ethnographic Essay). ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 require that successful students write essays in a variety of genres with an “average writing competency.” Course Instructors are responsible for reading these essays, using the analytic rubric in assessing the writing competency, and reporting scores to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (IEP). IEP then compares the scores (student-to-student) and provides the results to the program director and department chair. IEP then compares the scores (student-to-student)

between diagnostic and terminal (final exam) essays and provides the results to the program director and department chair.

SPCH 1311 focuses more on creation, editing and presentation of oral and written communication messages. Over the course of the semester, students present four speeches in multiple different genres during the semester. Grading criteria developed by the National Communication Association assist course instructors in evaluating student work. In the spring of 2011 faculty introduced a pre-test and post-test assessment tool. Faculty administered the pre-test and post test throughout multiple 1311 courses. The scores from the pre-test and post-test were collected by the instructors.

ENGL 2311 takes a problem-based learning (PBL) approach, with students analyzing rhetorical situations and producing a variety of documents specific to the professional workplace (e.g., reports, proposals, correspondence). Students work toward competency in all stages of the writing process, including invention, research, prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Feedback is provided by the instructor at multiple stages of the writing process.

Writing success will be evaluated based on an analytic rubric for measuring: the extent to which the document addresses the assignment prompt; formatting requirements; effectiveness of organization, development, syntax, grammar and punctuation (mechanics). Individual progress will be evaluated by comparing a document of a specific genre (e.g. formal business letter) assigned early in the semester with another assigned at the end of the semester.

Math 2371 focuses on enhancing students' communication skills in mathematics. Students enrolled in MATH 2371 Communication in Mathematics, will write a paper and give an oral presentation about it. To assess each outcome a rubric developed by the assessment committee of the Department of Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics will be used. Mathematics faculty conduct assessment using rubrics developed for oral and written presentations. This course also uses a variety of methods in assessing this outcome, including a required portfolio for which students produce at least two drafts toward a final paper; students also give an oral presentation twice (once to the professor and once to the class) before receiving a final grade. They also have the opportunity to participate in local and regional conferences. Students also submit a minimum of three writing reports that are evaluated by the course instructor. The

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

For each of the courses discussed assessment is processed at the end each fall and spring semester, once all materials have been received and graded.

Criteria/Benchmark(s) for assessing students' progress in meeting the exemplary objective(s) selected:

We expect, in terms of the various course rubrics, that students will score between the C (2) and B (3) ranges. Faculty members in English, Math, and Communication are committed to regularly evaluating discipline specific benchmarks.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Overall, measured success has been attained throughout the ENGL 1301/1302, SPCH 1311, and MATH 2371. The results of the 2010 ENGL 1301 and 1302 showed the following: Students' writing proficiency, as measured by diagnostic and terminal essay comparative data, has steadily improved each academic year from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010. This growth is particularly noticeable in two categories: *focus* as well as *organization and development* of students' written products. Based upon these results, the writing program curriculum is successful. In the SPCH 1311 course, the primary results and findings of the tests suggest that the students did increase their overall proficiency in communication. Students post- test scores compared to pre-test scores are notably higher. MATH 2371 findings are detailed in appendixes found at the end of this document.

What were the conclusions reached?

The Writing Program Director shares results with the instructors in the FYWP during the mandatory fall orientation conducted in August. Also, results of the comparative data are shared via e-mail with the Associate Provost Advisory Committee who oversees the QEP, with the department chair, and with the college dean. Data collected and discussed after the fall of 2010 resulted in the curriculum change of ENGL 1302 for spring 2011. This course now includes two critical essay assignments so that students have more experience writing about literature in preparation for ENGL 2322, 2323, and other sophomore-level literature course.

In reference to SPCH 1311 the conclusions settled upon suggested that the assessment tool of the pre/post test help Communication faculty understand the students increased proficiency in communication however, the instrument did not gauge their overall improvement in all of the areas identified in the CORE Communication Matrix. This conclusion was based on specifically addressing the fifth and sixth objective in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Exemplary Educational Objectives list. We also came to the conclusion that the common assignments in the course do meet these objectives. Therefore in the assessment of the course the pre/post test in conjunction with the assignments would provide us with a clearer understanding of how this course is meeting the CORE objectives.

Assessment findings for MATH 2371 proved were multifaceted. With regards to outcome 5, in average students perform at or near the benchmark, with 68% of them reaching it. The lowest point is Critical Thinking in the Development of Argument. In this section, students had to discuss their paper in relation to a bigger context, and although the average is low, it is to be expected, since we cannot expect students will fully reach this point to the level it was assessed in a first course about communication in Mathematics, since students have not had all the experience in the subject that is necessary to make all connections to other areas in Mathematics. An average of 2.64 in this area is seen as acceptable. We discuss later some ways in which students will work in this area in later offerings of this course. With regards to outcome 6, 80% of students reached the benchmark. Their weakest area is that they rely too much on notes to

present their paper. However, most students do understand in general how to present their paper. Students meet twice with their instructor to present their paper and feedback is given to them on their presentations, and many mistakes are fixed before they give their presentation for a grade. This presentation is used for purposes of assessing this outcome. We believe that this has worked well, and we will continue to do so in the future.

Describe the action plan formulated.

Data from the spring of 2011 ENGL course is not yet available. Data from spring 2011 is in process. Once results are available by roundtable discussion will begin. Last year's action plans included the change in ENGL 1301 so that it introduced the Argument Essay earlier than it was previously (in ENGL 1302). This decision was made in consultation with the Writing Program Director and instructors teaching in the FYWP. The results of this change upon students' writing competency will be available in fall 2011 after the QEP results from the 2010-2011 are compared to the previous academic year. Again, a range of means are used in both ENGL 1301 and ENGL 1302 to determine the achievement of this objective: use of assignment-specific rubrics for scoring individual assignments; use of analytic rubric for scoring diagnostic and terminal (final exam) essays; a required electronic portfolio that demonstrates success in each stage of the writing process; required student participation in the various stages of the writing process; multiple required drafts of various genres (e.g., Personal Essay, Review Essay, Ethnographic Essay). In the future, year-to-year comparative analyses will also be made based on an appropriate sampling of student work in all ENGL 2311 sections

Communication faculty members have reexamined the Student Learning Outcomes of the SPCH 1311 course and have made significant alterations to those outcomes. We discussed at length the assignments in the course and made some alterations to the common syllabus. Beginning in the fall 2011 semester instructors will administer the exam, but we will also use the assignments in the assessment of the course. This will include using the two written assignments for next cycle's assessment. Beginning in the fall 2011 semester we will focus our assessment on the third and fourth objectives in the CORE Communication Matrix. The assessment of the two written assignments will be utilized to measure the third objective and the pre/post test will be used to measure the fourth objective. We will also start working on revamping the pre/post test questions to specifically help us measure the objectives in the Communication Matrix and address the areas where the results were deficient. We decided to reevaluate the test so that the questions will be specific areas covered in course lectures and assignments. We plan to have the new test ready to administer beginning in the fall 2011 semester. The rubric for the written assignment will be created over the summer 2011 semester and then implemented beginning the fall 2011 semester.

Math faculty members have also discussed MATH 2371. With regards to outcome 5, students will be given as assignments during the semester to write particular sections of the paper. There will be at least two writing assignments focused on the area of critical thinking in the development of argument before students include such text in their final paper.

With regards to outcome 6, students will not be allowed to use notes during their presentation. The section will still be included in the rubric but not evaluated next time. We will continue to meet with students previous to their presentations to give them feedback.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Although no programs are specifically seeking additional resources, each program is dedicated to seeking possibilities for triangulation. We hope to cultivate new opportunities within our courses for student engagement and increased scholarship.

APPENDIX A

Written Paper Report						
Major	Explanation of Mathematical Concepts	Understanding of Mathematical Concepts	Proof Writing	Grammar	Critical Thinking in the Development of Argument	Average
BSIS 4-8	3	3	4	3	4	3.4
BSIS 4-8	3	2	2	3	2	2.4
BSIS 4-8	4	4	3	3	3	3.4
BA 8-12	3	3	4	3	0	2.6
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA 8-12	4	4	3	3	3	3.4
BA 8-12	4	3	3	3	3	3.2
BA 8-12	3	4	3	3	3	3.2
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA 8-12	2	2	2	0	2	1.6
BA 8-12	3	3	4	3	3	3.2
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
BA 8-12	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
BA MATH	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA MATH	4	3	4	3	3	3.4
BA MATH	0	2	3	2	2	1.8
BA MATH	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA MATH	3	3	3	3	3	3
BA MATH	3	3	4	2	3	3
BA MATH	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
BA MATH	3	3	3	3	2	2.8
BS MATH	4	4	4	3	3	3.6
BS MATH	3	4	4	2	3	3.2
Average	3.04	3.08	3.2	2.76	2.64	2.94

APPENDIX B

Oral Presentation Report								
Major	Organization	Conveyed Point	Content Knowledge	Visuals	Mechanics	Delivery	Use of Notes	Average
BSIS 4-8	3	3.5	2	4	4	3	0	2.8
BSIS 4-8	3	3	3.5	3	4	4	2	3.2
BSIS 4-8	3.5	3.5	2	3	3.5	3.5	2	3
BA 8-12	3.5	4	4	3.5	4	4	3	3.7
BA 8-12	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3.6
BA 8-12	2.5	3.5	2.5	3.5	4	2.5	2.5	3
BA 8-12	3	4	3	3	4	4	2	3.3
BA 8-12	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3.6
BA 8-12	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4	2.5	3.6
BA 8-12	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.7
BA 8-12	2	1.5	1	2.5	4	3	3	2.4
BA 8-12	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4	4	2.5	3.6
BA 8-12	3.5	3.5	2.5	4	3.5	3.5	1	3.1
BA 8-12	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3.3
BA 8-12	4	3.5	4	4	4	4	3	3.8
BA MATH	3	3.5	3	4	4	3	2.5	3.3
BA MATH	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	3.5	2	3.3
BA MATH	2.5	1	1	2.5	4	3.5	0	2.1
BA MATH	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	3.7
BA MATH	3.5	4	3.5	3	4	3.5	3	3.5
BA MATH	4	3.5	2.5	2.5	3	4	1	2.9
BA MATH	3	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	2	2.9
BA MATH	3.5	3.5	3	3.5	4	4	2.5	3.4
BS MATH	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.5	3.9
BS MATH	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.9
Average	3.22	3.44	2.94	3.46	3.9	3.62	2.52	3.3