Guidelines for Assessment of Core Curriculum Courses

Stephen F. Austin State University

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Guidelines for Assessment of Core Curriculum Courses

Both state agencies and accrediting bodies increasingly require universities to grapple with issues of accountability and student performance. As a result, assessment has taken a prominent place in educational oversight programs. In its 1998 document “Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics” the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board noted that meaningful assessment entails focusing on “specified student outcomes rather than simply…specified courses and content.” In this document the Coordinating Board listed Exemplary Educational Objectives which outline skills and knowledge which graduates should possess upon completion of core courses. Similarly, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has recently increased its emphasis on assessment and documentation of student mastery of specific course objectives.

Originally, all Texas state institutions of higher learning were to submit to the Coordinating Board a detailed report on student performance on the Exemplary Educational Objectives in fall 2009. This reporting schedule was changed by the Coordinating Board to coordinate with each institution’s accreditation reaffirmation self-study report to the SACS. The Coordinating Board specifically noted that student performance of the Exemplary Educational Objectives must be the “basis for faculty and institutional assessment of core components.” In preparation for this report, the SFASU Core Curriculum Assessment Committee developed a plan for a university-wide assessment program to determine to what extent our students have achieved the Exemplary Educational Objectives prescribed by the Coordinating Board.

The procedures described in this document are based on the “best practices” recommendations of university assessment offices around the country. In designing procedures, the committee emphasized faculty involvement, which assessment experts agree is key to sustainable assessment. While the committee recognizes that these guidelines may seem complex at first glance, we believe that they will allow departments to develop assessment plans that are both feasible and avoid the pitfall of encouraging instructors to “teach to the test.”

The purpose of this document is to introduce faculty to commonly-used assessment methods and to provide guidelines for creating course assessment plans that can be easily integrated into existing course assignments, a process known as embedded assessment. Briefly, embedded assessment is a three stage process. First, faculty identify existing assignments which correspond to specific objectives. Second, student performance on these assignments is scored with particular emphasis on the objective. Third, data collected are used to identify student weaknesses and to suggest methods to improve student performance in those areas.

In the spring of 2006, departments developed and submitted plans for assessing student mastery of the Exemplary Educational Objectives to the SFASU Core Curriculum Assessment Committee. These plans were reviewed and approved by the committee. Following these plans, each semester departments conduct and report on the assessment of their core course(s). Beginning in the fall of 2009, core assessment reports must be submitted through TracDat. To gain access and training in the use of TracDat, you should contact the Coordinator of Assessment at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu or Ext. 1260.
I. Overview

Below is a general overview of the steps departments should take to establish an ongoing assessment plan to evaluate student performance on the Coordinating Board’s Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEO). The Exemplary Educational Objectives are divided by subject area and can be found in Appendix A. Please note that the materials below refer to assessment of a single course. Departments must develop an ongoing assessment plan for each course they have in the core, and should submit the plan to the Assessment Coordinator at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu for approval by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee no later than the semester before the department intends to begin assessing the course.

Electronic copies of these guidelines, required forms, and additional reference materials may be found at the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee’s page, http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/core.asp.

II. Development of the Ongoing Assessment Plan (For Courses New to the Core)

1. The department will select a course coordinator and course assessment committee. Departments which have more than one course in the core should have a separate committee for each course, unless there is significant overlap in the two courses. The course coordinator should serve as the chair of the committee and otherwise oversee the assessment process; this position may rotate on an annual basis at the discretion of the department. The course assessment committee should be comprised of full-time faculty members who teach the course on a regular basis, and the number of committee members may range from one to all faculty who teach the course. Alternatively, the department’s curriculum committee may serve as the course assessment committee. The final composition and selection of the course assessment committee is left to the discretion of the department.

2. The course assessment committee will develop an ongoing assessment plan for each Exemplary Educational Objective (EEO) addressed by the course. Courses in the Communication, Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences components of the core should assess all EEOs relevant to the course. Departments with courses in these areas should work with the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee to ensure that all EEOs for the area are being assessed. Because students take a limited number of courses in the Mathematics and Natural Sciences components of the core, courses included in these components must assess all of the EEOs for the component area. Assessment plans are described in Sections II to IV of these guidelines. Briefly, an assessment plan describes how the department will use existing course assignments to analyze student performance on individual objectives.

3. The course assessment committee will schedule the ongoing implementation of assessment plans. Keep in mind that it is usually best to assess no more than one or two objectives per semester. At least one objective should be assessed each time the course is taught in a long semester.

4. The course assessment committee will develop assessment instruments for each assessment plan before the plan is to be implemented for the first time. It would be best to identify existing tests or assignments in the course that may be used as assessment instruments. If you cannot find existing course material to use, then new tests or assignments can be developed or secured from other sources. Instruments may be adjusted before subsequent implementations, should it become apparent that the initial instrument does not meet departmental assessment needs. See Section IV and the Assessment Resources webpage (http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/) for details on how to design assessment instruments.
5. The course coordinator will submit an Ongoing Assessment Plan to the Coordinator of Assessment. This plan is described in Sections II to IV of these guidelines and will include the material developed in steps 2 and 3 above. Instructions and the form for the plan are given in Appendix C for reference; departments should obtain an electronic version of the form on the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee’s webpage (http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/core.asp).

6. In addition to completing the Ongoing Assessment Plan, the course committee should also begin preparations for implementing the EEO assessment plan.

7. After the plan has been approved by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, the required elements of the plan should be entered into the TracDat system. Instructions for entering the plan in TracDat can be found in the TracDat Users Guide at http://www.sfasu.edu/research/docs/tracdat/sfa-tracdat_user_guide.pdf.

III. Implementation of EEO Assessments

1. The department will conduct assessment each semester as scheduled.

2. The course coordinator will collect data on student performance and anonymous samples of student work from participating faculty, and prepare a presentation of the results for presentation to the course assessment committee.

3. The course assessment committee will meet to review results of the previous semester as presented by the course coordinator, consider methods for improving student performance on the objective, and if required develop an action plan for responding to the results. This may involve recommending specific teaching techniques or increased emphasis on a particular topic; departments may also wish to refer to assessment results when seeking budget allocations to adjust course section size or hire new faculty. It is important the action plan be as specific as possible and provide clear details. It is recommended that this action plan be presented for consideration to all full-time faculty who teach the course.

4. The materials from Steps 2 and 3 above should be included in the assessment results submitted via TracDat. For fall semesters, assessment results must be submitted by March 1 of the next spring semester. For spring semesters, assessment results must be submitted by October 1 of the next fall semester.

5. Please note that assessment is an ongoing process designed to improve student achievement and departments will continue to perform assessments every semester.

IV. Designing EEO Assessments

Assessment should be integrated into existing classroom practices, and the department must develop separate EEO assessments for each of the objectives covered in the course. Each EEO Assessment must consist of the three elements described below. See Appendix B for detailed examples by subject area.

Objectives

This is the Exemplary Educational Objective provided by the Coordinating Board. Some faculty have expressed concern about measuring broadly worded EEOs or determining how to apply complex EEOs to 100-level survey classes. Course committees can often resolve these problems by creating
course-specific Student Learning Outcomes for each assessed EEO. At the program level, faculty
currently develop SLOs which indicate how a specific course addresses the department’s Program
Learning Objectives. Core courses can benefit from the same process.

For example, the Social Science EEO #12 is very broad and difficult to measure: “To identify and
understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.”

To make this EEO more manageable, the History 134 course committee developed the following
Student Learning Outcome for EEO #12: “Students will identify the main developments since 1877 in:
immigration to the United States, ethnic/race relations, and the post-war Civil Rights movement.” This
objective is specific to the course content and easily measured.

If course committees choose to create SLOs, they should be included in the assessment plan following
the original wording of the EEO. For example,

Social Science EEO #12: To identify and understand differences and commonalities within
diverse cultures.

HIS 134 SLO: Students will identify the main developments since 1877 in: immigration to the
United States, ethnic/race relations, and the post-war Civil Rights movement.

Courses with an existing approved assessment plan must have course-specific SLOs used for
assessment of EEOs approved by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee at least one semester
prior to the implementation of the assessment.

Assessment Methods

This is a brief description of the classroom assignment which will be used to determine if students
have achieved the objective. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee encourages the use of
three kinds of assessment instruments: embedded exam questions, assignment review, and student
perception questions in online student evaluations. Departments may choose to use one, two or all
three of these techniques. See below for information on how to develop assessment instruments.

In most cases, each EEO Assessment must measure student performance on a single objective. The
THECB objectives occasionally overlap; if faculty do not see a meaningful difference between two
objectives, they may combine them in one EEO Assessment. In other cases, the objectives are
excessively broad; this may require faculty to develop more than one EEO Assessment for a single
objective. (See the social science examples in Appendix B.)

In some cases, a single assignment may provide valuable information on more than one objective.
This is acceptable and even encouraged, so long as student performance on each objective is
assessed separately. Each objective should be addressed in a separate EEO assessment plan, and
data reported separately for each EEO. (See the natural science example using embedded exam
questions in Appendix B.)

Below are descriptions of the three kinds of instruments recommended by the Core Curriculum
Committee. The easiest way to create an assessment instrument is to use an existing assignment
which can be tailored to isolate student performance on one objective. Departments may use/design
other kinds of instruments, so long as they can isolate student performance on specific Exemplary
Educational Objectives. Most experts on assessment agree that faculty involvement in the decision-
making process is crucial for successful implementation of assessment plans. While the final
procedure for choosing instruments is left to the discretion of the departments, the Core Curriculum
Assessment Committee urges that the process be as democratic as possible.

Embedded Exam Questions  (Multiple-choice or short-answer questions)

Multiple-choice or short-answer questions can be used when objectives require student to demonstrate mastery of factual material. This type of question generally should not be used when objectives require students to demonstrate higher level learning, like application, analyzing, synthesis, and evaluating. It is also important to recognize that valid and meaningful assessment of a single EEO using multiple-choice or short-answer questions will likely require the use of several questions for each EEO.

For those courses in which all sections use the same multiple-choice exams, this is a simple matter of identifying which objective is tested by each question and counting up the number of correct answers for each objective. More often, however, faculty design their own exams. In this case, faculty would include questions tailored to a single objective. (Of course, most or all of the questions on the exam pertain to the objectives; only those questions identified in the assessment instrument would be used for assessment purposes.)

The questions will be designed/selected by the course assessment committee and should be approved by full-time faculty who teach the course on a regular basis. Departments may choose to hold a formal vote, but this is not a requirement so long as there is general consensus among faculty that the questions address points which students should know. The questions should have definite correct answers and not be open to interpretation. Since multiple-choice questions are usually scored electronically, the sample group will likely consist of all students in all sections. A random sample may be used for short-answer questions.

Assignment Review

In this technique, faculty review student performance on an existing assignment (paper, speech, essay exam question, etc) with specific reference to a single objective. Faculty do not all need to use the exact same assignment for this assessment, so long as they use an assignment which requires students to demonstrate mastery of the objective and use a common rubric to evaluate the assignment.

At the appropriate point in the semester, assignments completed by the sample group are assessed using a rubric developed by the course assessment committee and approved by all full-time faculty who teach the course on a regular basis. Departments may choose to hold a formal vote, but this is not a requirement so long as there is general consensus among faculty that the guide is appropriate for the objective. The review may be performed by individual faculty or by a review committee.

The scoring guide should only consider performance which directly relates to the objective. For example, writing skills should not be considered unless the objective specifically concerns writing. Please note that assignment grades are not an acceptable substitute for scoring guides, because grades usually involve additional criteria beyond the objective (factual accuracy, writing skills, organization, etc). For example, a rubric for an assignment asking students to analyze a historical document might include ratings for correctly identifying the following points: the main themes of the document; the goals of the author of the document; the intended audience of the document and likely responses to the document; and the historical context in which the document appeared. See the Assessment Resources Page
Three examples of excellent student work, three examples of average student work, and three examples of poor student work for each assessment measure using assignment review should be retained each time the EEO is assessed. Courses with multiple sections need only to retain nine examples of work each time the EEO is assessed, but these examples should be gathered from various sections of the course.

Embedded questions in online student evaluations
Using student evaluations for assessment is slightly more complicated than class assignments, because evaluations measure student attitudes and perceptions, rather than actual performance. Student evaluations may be used in two situations.

First, evaluations may be used to assess objectives which pertain specifically to student attitudes. This method is especially well-suited for hard-to-quantify objectives which require students to “appreciate” certain things, such as the arts or civic responsibility. In this case the EEO Assessment would rely exclusively on the evaluations. (See the Natural Science, Mathematics, Humanities and Social Science examples in Appendix B.)

Second, student evaluations may also be used as an indirect indicator of student performance in conjunction with other more direct EEO Assessments. For example, students may be asked about their awareness of the objectives of the course or if the course has helped them feel confident using the skills outlined in the objectives. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this information can assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course. It is important to note, however, that student confidence does not always correspond to actual performance; assessment of perception should always be coupled with assessment of performance, and separate EEO Assessments would still be required to evaluate that performance. (See the Communication example in Appendix B.)

Determining sample size
As noted in Section I, departments must also design procedures to collect data. The easiest way is usually to have participating faculty assess student performance and then report the results to a course coordinator. The coordinator aggregates the data for the semester, so that individual students and faculty cannot be identified. The aggregate data are submitted in TracDat assessment results, along with samples of student work. Some departments may prefer to have a separate review committee to score assignments instead of individual faculty, but departments should not feel obligated to take this approach.

Another key issue is sampling. Departments should provide a representative evaluation of student outcomes. One way to assure this is to evaluate all students in all course sections (enumeration or a census). In most cases, assessment instruments scored electronically should use the enumeration or census method. On the other hand, instruments scored by faculty review (papers, essay exams, presentations, etc) may require the use of a sample group. If a sample is taken it should be large enough to provide representative results, following these general guidelines:

- If more than one faculty member teaches the course, the sample should include students from sections taught by different faculty members, and the sample should provide a representative overview of the course as a whole, rather than of individual sections or faculty members.
For small and medium size courses (under 300 students per semester for all sections), the sample should include at least 30 students. Classes with fewer than 30 students should assess all students in the class and report the results each semester the assessment is conducted.

For courses over 300 students per semester for all sections, the sample group should include at least 10% of students drawn from multiple sections.

 Departments must take care to randomly select students for the sample group. If you have question on random sampling, please contact the Office of University Assessment at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu or Ext. 1260.

Assessment Criteria

This is a brief statement of how the department defines acceptable performance. It should also include the percentage of students expected to perform at the acceptable level or better. In general, the percentage of students expected to perform at the acceptable level should be set at 70% or higher. The use of a lower percentage must be justified in the assessment plan submitted to the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee.

V. Core Curriculum Assessment Reports

Reports on the assessment activity conducted during fall semesters must be submitted in TracDat by March 1 of the following semester, and reports on assessment activity conducted during spring semesters must be submitted in TracDat by October 1 of the following semester. Information about and training in using the TracDat system can be secured from Larry King at Ext. 1260 or lking@sfasu.edu. The TracDat Users Guide can be found at http://www.sfasu.edu/research/docs/tracdat/sfa-tracdat_user_guide.pdf, and the list of materials for inclusion in TracDat can be found at http://www.sfasu.edu/research/docs/tracdat/core_assessment_plan_results_list.pdf.

Each semester you will enter the results and any required action plan in TracDat. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will review the reports and approve or make recommendations for revisions in the reports. You can find the rubric used by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee to review the reports at http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/docs/core-rubric-2009.pdf. The following elements must be included in your results in TracDat.

Result

You must provide a brief description of the results of the assessment, the number of students enrolled in the course, the number of students included in the sample (if a sample is used), and the percentage of students that met the assessment criteria. Note any irregularities in your assessment or sampling plan. You should also reference results from earlier assessment cycles to illustrate longitudinal trends in the results.

Result Date

The results should be dated during the semester for which you are reporting.
Result Type
Based on your results, you must select criteria met, criteria not met, or inconclusive from the drop down menu.

Action Status
Depending on your results, you must select implement action plan, inconclusive, or no action required from the drop down menu.

Action Status Update Date
This date is used when you update your action plan after it has been implemented and evaluated.

Action Plan
You will need to enter an action plan if your results are inconclusive or show that you did not meet your criteria. At times, you may also want to enter an action plan if you meet your criteria. Your action plan must include an indication of faculty involvement in the analysis of the results and development of the action plan, and a clear plan for dealing with the results of your assessment. Your plan should be directed toward enhancing student learning, clearly identify who will be responsible for implementing the plan, and the timeline for implementation.

Documents
Documents, to be related to the results in TracDat, should include a frequency table that summarizes the assessment results (see information on frequency tables below), a copy of the exact assessment instrument, and a copy of the scoring guides, evaluation criteria, rubrics, or correct answers for the assessment instrument. These documents can be attached in Word, rtf, PDF, or Excel, or any other common file format. They should be given a title that clearly describes the document. The title should include the course name and number, semester of the assessment, the EEO assessed, and the content of the document (e.g. SOC 137 SP 09 EEO 2 Frequency Table).

Frequency Tables and Longitudinal Data
A frequency table should provide a summary of the assessment results in a table format. Results for individual students, sections, or instructors should not be identified. Longitudinal data should be provided a separate table. Examples of frequency tables can be found in Appendix D and E.
Appendix A: Exemplary Educational Objectives

Core courses at SFA should strive to meet as many of the relevant Exemplary Educational Objectives as possible. The following material is excerpted from the Coordinating Board's document “Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics.” The full text of the document can be accessed through the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee's website or directly at http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=7ED36862-993C-10F2-C64CA9C9EDF26C4C.

CORE COMPONENTS AND RELATED EXEMPLARY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

In designing and implementing a core curriculum of at least 42 semester credit hours, each Texas college and university should select and/or develop courses which satisfy exemplary educational objectives specified for each component area. The following exemplary educational objectives should be used as basic guidelines for selected component areas. Exemplary educational objectives become the basis for faculty and institutional assessment of core components.

I. COMMUNICATION (composition, speech, modern language)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>These six objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCM 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 111, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 131, 132, 133H, 273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRE 131, 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRK 131, 132</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The objective of a communication component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to communicate effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Exemplary Educational Objectives for 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, expositive, 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.
II. MATHEMATICS

These seven objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:
MTH 110, 127, 128, 133, 138, 139, 140, 143, 144, 220, 233, 234

The objective of the mathematics component of the core curriculum is to develop a quantitatively literate college graduate. Every college graduate should be able to apply basic mathematical tools in the solution of real-world problems.

Exemplary Educational Objectives for mathematics

1. To apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, higher-order thinking, and statistical methods to modeling and solving real-world situations.
2. To represent and evaluate basic mathematical information verbally, numerically, graphically, and symbolically.
3. To expand mathematical reasoning skills and formal logic to develop convincing mathematical arguments.
4. To use appropriate technology to enhance mathematical thinking and understanding and to solve mathematical problems and judge the reasonableness of the results.
5. To interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
6. To recognize the limitations of mathematical and statistical models.
7. To develop the view that mathematics is an evolving discipline, interrelated with human culture, and understand its connections to other disciplines.

III. NATURAL SCIENCES

These five objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:
AST 105
BIO 121, 123, 131, 133, 225, 238
CHE 111, 112, 125, 133, 134, 231
ENV 110

The objective of the study of a natural sciences component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to understand, construct, and evaluate relationships in the natural sciences, and to enable the student to understand the bases for building and testing theories.

Exemplary Educational Objectives for the Natural Sciences

1. To understand and apply method and appropriate technology to the study of natural sciences.
2. To recognize scientific and quantitative methods and the differences between these approaches and other methods of inquiry and to communicate findings, analyses, and interpretation both orally and in writing.
3. To identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues that touch upon ethics, values, and public policies.

5. To demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on, and contribution to, modern culture.

IV. HUMANITIES AND VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

These seven objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART 280, 281, 282</td>
<td>MHL 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAN 140, 341</td>
<td>MUS 140, 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 200 - 222, 300</td>
<td>PHI 153, 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS 151, 152</td>
<td>THR 161, 370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The objective of the humanities and visual and performing arts in a core curriculum is to expand students’ knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature, philosophy, and the visual and performing arts, students will engage in critical analysis, form aesthetic judgments, and develop an appreciation of the arts and humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society. Students should have experiences in both the arts and humanities.

Exemplary Educational Objectives for the humanities and visual and performing arts

1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.

2. To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.

3. To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.

4. To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artist.

5. To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.

6. To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.

7. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.
V. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEC 261</td>
<td>GEO 131, 230</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANT 231</td>
<td>HIS 133, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECO 231, 232</td>
<td>PSC 141, 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS 380</td>
<td>PSY 133, 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR 435</td>
<td>SOC 137, 139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The objective of a social and behavioral science component of a core curriculum is to increase students' knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

Exemplary Educational Objectives for the social and behavioral sciences

1. To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
3. To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
4. To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
5. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
6. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
7. To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
8. To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
9. To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
10. To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
11. To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
12. To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.
Appendix B: Sample EEO Assessment Plans by Subject Area

I. COMMUNICATION

These six objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:

| BCM 247 | ILA 111, 112 |
| COM 111, 170 | LAT 131, 132 |
| ENG 131, 132, 133H, 273 | SPA 131, 132 |
| FRE 131, 132 | SPH 172, 272 |
| GRK 131, 132 |

These examples are meant to supplement the general overview given in the guidelines; refer to that document for additional important information. Please note that these are hypothetical examples intended to help faculty members understand how each instrument might work for their departments. They are meant as models only, and the departments mentioned are not obligated to use them.

Communication: Embedded exam questions

Embedded exam questions may be used for those objectives which require students to demonstrate mastery of factual material. This instrument may be most appropriate for foreign language classes which use unambiguous short answer questions to evaluate mastery of basic language skills. The following is a hypothetical example for COM 111.

| Objective: | Objective # 1 requires that after completing COM 111 students should be able to “understand and demonstrate…speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.” |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee developed ten questions dealing with invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation to be inserted in the standardized tests for COM 111. All full-time faculty who teach the course will approve the questions. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as answering at least 7 out of 10 questions correctly. The department expects that at least 70% of students will perform at the acceptable level. |
Communication: Assignment review

In this subject area, assignment review will probably be the most commonly used instrument. In this a hypothetical example for COM 111, faculty will use an external standardized scoring guide to measure student performance. Although this particular plan is only for Objective #6, this scoring guide could also be used to assess additional objectives in the same or different semesters. There is no limit to the number of objectives which can be assessed with each instrument, so long as student performance on each objective can be isolated and assessed individually. Each objective would still require an assessment plan in order to ensure that departments isolate the objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Objective #6 requires that students be able to research, write, and give an oral presentation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment method:</td>
<td>Randomly selected student portfolios and videotaped speeches will be evaluated annually by a panel of senior speech communication faculty and at least one faculty member outside the department to determine if students’ written outlines and videotaped speeches demonstrate their ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. The Competent Speaker Form will be used as a scoring guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment criteria:</td>
<td>The speeches evaluated by the panel will demonstrate a statistically significant increase in proficiency as measured by the Competent Speaker Form from the student’s first speech to the final speech, and at least 70% percent of the final speeches evaluated by the panel will have an average score in the excellent range on the Competent Speaker Form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication: Online student evaluations

The most common use of student evaluations is to assess objectives which pertain specifically to student attitudes and perceptions. None of the communication objectives fall into this category. However, evaluations may also be used as an indirect indicator of student confidence and awareness of objectives in connection with a more direct measure like an embedded exam questions or assignment reviews. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this instrument is a practical tool to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about communication skills. It can also assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course.

It is important to note that student confidence does not always correspond to actual performance; assessment of perception should always be coupled with assessment of performance, and separate EEO Assessments would still be required to evaluate that performance. The following is a hypothetical example for English 131.

| Objective: | The six objectives for communication require students to develop the skills necessary “to communicate effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.” After completing ENG 131 students should understand what skills are necessary for effective communication and be more confident in their own skills. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee developed six questions relating to awareness of communication skills and six questions about confidence in using skills emphasized in the course. These questions will be included in the online student evaluations every semester. |
| Assessment criteria: | For awareness of skills, acceptable performance is defined as answering at least four of six questions correctly. Although there are no correct answers for the questions pertaining to confidence, the department hopes that at least 70% of students will describe themselves as more confident in their communication skills. |
II. MATHEMATICS

These seven objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:
MTH 110, 127, 128, 133, 138, 139, 140, 143, 144, 220, 233, 234

These examples are meant to supplement the general overview given in the guidelines; refer to that document for additional important information. Please note that these are hypothetical examples intended to help faculty members understand how each instrument might work for their departments. They are meant as models only, and the departments mentioned are not obligated to use them.

Mathematics: Embedded exam questions

This instrument may be commonly used in mathematics. Because the questions must have concrete answers, this instrument is most appropriate for assessing student mastery of factual information and the ability to solve concrete problems.

| Objective: | Objective #1 requires students "to apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, higher-order thinking, and statistical methods to modeling and solving real-world situations." |
| Assessment method: | The MTH 127 standing committee identified 6 questions that will be common to exams across all sections. |
| Assessment criteria: | The Department of Mathematics and Statistics expects 70% of students to correctly answer 4 out of the 6 questions. |
Mathematics: Assignment review

This instrument will be most useful for those objectives which require student to demonstrate the ability to analyze information or to explain complicated ideas.

| Objective: | Objective #4 requires that students "use appropriate technology to enhance mathematical thinking and understanding and to solve mathematical problems and judge the reasonableness of the results." |
| Assessment method: | In MTH 233 it is common to assign homework problems involving mathematical limits where traditional solution techniques fail. Many times these limits can be found using a numeric approach involving spreadsheets, graphing calculators, etc. Written explanations as to why traditional techniques fail and why other means of solving these problems are successful will be evaluated using a rubric developed by the course assessment committee. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined by the department as 70% of all students answering these questions correctly. |
Mathematics: Online student evaluations

Online evaluations are especially appropriate for assessing objectives which require students to “appreciate” things, such as diversity or civic responsibility. The only mathematics objective which falls into this category is #7, which pertains to students’ perception of math as an intellectual discipline.

| Objective: | Objective #7 requires students to “develop the view that mathematics is an evolving discipline, interrelated with human culture, and understand its connection to other disciplines.” MTH 220 meets this objective by introducing students to the techniques of statistical analysis, which have clear relevance to both other academic disciplines and to society in general. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee developed five Likert-scale questions related to students’ perceptions of the role of statistics in modern society and students’ willingness to engage in critical thought on the use of statistics. All full-time faculty who teach the course will approve the questions, which will be included in the online evaluations for all sections of MTH 220. |
| Assessment criteria: | At least 70% of the students surveyed should indicate either “agree” or “strongly agree.” |

In addition to the example above, students evaluations may be used to assess student awareness of objectives and confidence in using the skills taught in the course. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this instrument is a practical tool to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about mathematics, and it can also assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course. See the Communication example above.
III. NATURAL SCIENCES

These five objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AST 105</th>
<th>GOL 131, 132</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO 121, 123, 131, 133, 225, 238</td>
<td>PHY 101, 102, 110, 118, 125, 131, 132, 241, 242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 111, 112, 125, 133, 134, 231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV 110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These examples are meant to supplement the general overview given in the guidelines; refer to that document for additional important information. Please note that these are hypothetical examples intended to help faculty members understand how each instrument might work for their departments. They are meant as models only, and the departments mentioned are not obligated to use them.

**Natural Sciences: Embedded exam questions**

In this example, the Chemistry Department uses an external standardized test as an assessment instrument. Although this particular plan is only for Objective #3, the same standardized test could also be used to assess additional objectives simultaneously. There is no limit to the number of objectives which can be assessed with each instrument, so long as student performance on each objective can be isolated and assessed individually. Each objective would still require a separate EEO Assessment plan in the Ongoing Assessment Schedule.

| Objective: | Objective #3 requires that students “identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.” |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee has identified questions on the American Chemical Society exam that reflect objective #3. The exam will be given as the final in all sections of CHE 133. (Questions which address other objectives will be used as noted elsewhere in the Ongoing Assessment Schedule.) |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined by the department as 70% of all students answering these questions correctly. |
Natural sciences: Assignment review

Chemistry lab classes provide an excellent opportunity for assessment, because all sections perform the same activities. Lab assignments correspond well with several objectives, which will allow the department to use the same assignment to gather data on more than one objective at a time. There is also a lab coordinator who can easily compile data from student assignments. However, each objective must be assessed individually.

| Objective: | Objective #1 requires that students “understand and apply method and appropriate technology to the study of the natural sciences.” This assessment will evaluate the ability to use equipment necessary to perform a titration, a basic technique in chemistry research. |
| Assessment method: | The lab reports for the exercise “Titration of an Antacid” will be evaluated, using a standardized rubric, for evidence of correct use of equipment. This assignment cannot be completed successfully without this ability. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as a score of 70% on portions of the lab specifically pertaining to equipment use. |
Natural Sciences: Online student evaluations

Online evaluations may be used to assess objectives which pertain specifically to student attitudes. This method is especially well-suited for hard-to-quantify objectives which require students to “appreciate” certain things, such as the arts or civic responsibility. Natural science objectives #4 and #5 pertain to students’ perception of the relationship between science and society, and therefore online evaluations would be useful assessment instruments for these objectives. The hypothetical example below is for Biology 121.

| Objective: | Per Objective #4, BIO 121 should assist the student in recognizing “the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues which touch upon ethics, values, and public policies.” The primary goal of BIO 121 is to introduce students to basic concepts in biology, including controversial topics such as the origins of life, genetics and evolution. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee developed five Likert-scale questions related to students’ perceptions of the role of the biological sciences in modern society and students’ willingness to engage in critical thought on scientific issues. All full-time faculty who teach the course will approve the questions, which will be included in the online evaluations of all sections. |
| Assessment criteria: | At least 70% of the students surveyed should indicate either “agree” or “strongly agree.” |

In addition to the example above, students evaluations may be used to assess student awareness of objectives and confidence in using the skills taught in the course. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this instrument is a practical tool to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about the scientific method, and it can also assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course. See the Communication example above.
**IV. HUMANITIES AND VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

These seven objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:

| ART 280, 281, 282 | MHL 245 |
| DAN 140, 341 | MUS 140, 160 |
| ENG 200 - 222, 300 | PHI 153, 223 |
| HIS 151, 152 | THR 161, 370 |

These examples are meant to supplement the general overview given in the guidelines; refer to that document for additional important information. Please note that these are hypothetical examples intended to help faculty members understand how each instrument might work for their departments. They are meant as models only, and the departments mentioned are not obligated to use them.

**Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts: Embedded exam questions**

Not all classes in this subject area currently include multiple-choice exams, but those that do may use embedded exam questions for those objectives which require students to demonstrate mastery of factual material. The following is a hypothetical example for Theater 161.

| Objective: | Objective #1 requires that students “demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.” A major goal of this course is to introduce students to the history of theater in Western civilization, and therefore this course is well-suited to this objective. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee designed ten multiple choice questions which require students to correctly identify major Western playwrights, their works, and their importance in the history of theater. All full-time faculty who teach THR 161 approved these questions. Questions will be embedded in the exams of sections selected in the sample. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as answering at least 7 out of 10 questions correctly. The department hopes that at least 70% of students will perform at the acceptable level. |
Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts: Assignment review

In this subject area, assignment review will probably be the most commonly used instrument. It is especially appropriate for those objectives which require students to respond critically to works in the humanities and to demonstrate an understanding of the historical and intellectual context in which works appeared. The following is a hypothetical example for Art 280.

| Objective: | Per Objective #1, ART 280 students must “demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.” A major goal of this course is to introduce students to the history of the visual arts in Western civilization, and therefore this course is well-suited to this objective. |
| Assessment method: | The following written assignment will be given in ART 280:  
“Select any two artists studied in this course whose styles are very different from one another. In no more than 300 words, describe their styles and show how they differ.”  
Faculty will score student work using a rubric developed by the course assessment committee and approved by faculty. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as earning “satisfactory” or “exemplary” in at least three of the four categories on the scoring guide. The department hopes that at least 70% of the sampled group should demonstrate acceptable performance. |
Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts: Online student evaluations

Online evaluations are especially appropriate for assessing objectives which require students to “appreciate” things, such as the fine arts. This particular example from Music is for Objective #6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Per Objective #6, MUS 140 should assist the student in developing “an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment method:</td>
<td>The online student evaluation of this course will include the following Likert-scale question: “I have developed an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment criteria:</td>
<td>At least 70% of the students surveyed will indicate either “agree” or “strongly agree.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the example above, students evaluations may be used to assess student awareness of objectives and confidence in using the skills taught in the course. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this instrument is a practical tool to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about the humanities, and it can also assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course.
V. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

These twelve objectives apply only to the following SFA courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEC 261</td>
<td>GEO 131, 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANT 231</td>
<td>HIS 133, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECO 231, 232</td>
<td>PSC 141, 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS 380</td>
<td>PSY 133, 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR 435</td>
<td>SOC 137, 139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These examples are meant to supplement the general overview given in the guidelines; refer to that document for additional important information. Please note that these are hypothetical examples intended to help faculty members understand how each instrument might work for their departments. They are meant as models only, and the departments mentioned are not obligated to use them.

Social Sciences: Embedded exam questions

This instrument will probably be commonly used in the social sciences, especially in large classes where writing assignments are not practical. It is most appropriate for assessing student mastery of specific factual information. In this example, Political Science gathers data on student mastery of the terms of the US and Texas constitutions. Note however that the objective is not limited to the constitution, and therefore the department would need to create additional plans for the other aspects of American politics described in the objective.

| Objective: | Objective #6 requires that students “comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.” This assessment will focus solely on the constitutions of Texas and the U.S. Other items in the objective will be addressed in other assessments as noted elsewhere in the Ongoing Assessment Schedule. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee designed five questions on the US constitution and five questions on the Texas constitution. All full-time faculty who teach PSC 141 approved the questions. These questions will be embedded in randomly selected sections of the course. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as answering at least 7 out of 10 questions correctly. The department hopes that at least 70% of students will perform at the acceptable level. |
Social Sciences: Assignment review

This instrument will be most useful for those objectives which require student to demonstrate the ability to analyze information or to explain complicated ideas. In this hypothetical example, the history department may combine assessment of three objectives which overlap. Objectives 1, 8, and 9 require students to learn about social science methodology and the analysis of historical evidence. One important method in history is the analysis of primary documents, such as newspaper reports, political speeches, letters and other cultural artifacts which provide direct evidence of the past. For History 134, faculty would give an assignment requiring students to analyze such a document. (Not all sections must use the same document; the important thing is to teach students how historians approach historical evidence. Nor must all sections use the same assignment; possible assignments include an in-class essay exam, a short paper, or an oral presentation.) The course assessment committee would design a scoring guide outlining the key features of successful document analysis; participating faculty would use the guide to compile information on student performance.

| Objective: | Objective #1 requires that students “employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.” Objectives #8 and #9 require that students “differentiate and analyze historical evidence” and “recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.” The department may assess all three of these objectives using an assignment requiring analysis of a historical document. |
| Assessment method: | Faculty will require a short written analysis of a historical document in randomly selected sections of HIS 134, either as part of an in-class essay exam or as a short paper. Faculty will score student work using a rubric developed by the course assessment committee and approved by faculty. |
| Assessment criteria: | Acceptable performance is defined as scoring “good” or better in at least three of the four categories on the rubric. The department hopes that at least 70% of students will perform at the acceptable level. |
**Social Sciences: Online student evaluations**

Online evaluations are especially appropriate for assessing objectives which require students to “appreciate” things, such as diversity or civic responsibility. This hypothetical example for Sociology 139 is for Objective #11.

| Objective: | Per Objective #11, SOC 139 should assist the student in assuming “one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.” The major theme of SOC 139 is contemporary race relations, and students in the course should develop a greater understanding of the role of race in public discourse. |
| Assessment method: | The course assessment committee developed three Likert-scale questions related to students’ perception of race in contemporary public discourse and their willingness to engage in critical thought on racial issues. All full-time faculty who teach the course will approve the questions and the questions will be included in the online evaluations of randomly selected sections. |
| Assessment criteria: | At least 70% of the students surveyed should indicate either “agree” or “strongly agree.” |

In addition to the example above, students evaluations may be used to assess student awareness of objectives and confidence in using the skills taught in the course. The use of student evaluations for this purpose is not required and is therefore left to the discretion of the department. Nevertheless, this instrument is a practical tool to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about the social sciences, and it can also assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course.
Appendix C: Instructions and Form for the Ongoing Assessment Plan

The Ongoing Assessment Plan (see the following form) and all required supporting material should be submitted to the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee in Word format no later than the semester before assessment begins. Plans should be e-mailed to assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu. The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will review the packets and make comments in time for departments to begin to implement their plans. The form can be downloaded at the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee’s webpage, http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/core.asp.

The members of the committee recognize that developing assessment plans will be an unfamiliar and perhaps difficult process for many departments. Please do not feel that you have to work alone in the dark. Members of the committee will be available to assist departments and answer questions. Please contact Larry King (lking@sfasu.edu; or Ext. 1260) for further information or to arrange a consultation with a committee member in your subject area. Additional information on core assessment can be found at the Assessment Resource Page, http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp.
Core Curriculum Ongoing Assessment Plan

Department: 

Course name and number: 

Course subject area: 

Department chair and email address: 

Course coordinator and email address: 

Course Assessment Committee: 

Exemplary Education Objective Assessed
In the box below, please provide the exact wording of the EEO being assessed.

Assessment Method
In the box below, describe the procedures that will be used to collect information on student learning. Be sure to indicate if a sample or census will be used. Please attach a copy of embedded exam questions, embedded course assignments, or student evaluation questions being used for this assessment method.

Assessment Criteria
In the box below, provide the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

Faculty Participation and Student Sample Group
Proper selection of a sample group of the appropriate size is vital for accurate assessment. Indicate below how the department will determine faculty participation and select sample groups.

Assessment Schedule
It is usually best to assess no more than one or two objectives per semester, and we recommended that departments schedule only one objective the first semester of implementation. At least one objective should be assessed each time the course is taught in a long semester.

After the plan has been approved by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, the required elements of the plan should be entered into the TracDat system. Instructions for entering the plan in TracDat can be found in the TracDat Users Guide at http://www.sfasu.edu/research/docs/tracdat/sfa-tracdat_user_guide.pdf. Please contact the Coordinator of Assessment at assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu to secure a TracDat username and password, and schedule training in using the system.
## Appendix D

### Example Frequency Table for Multiple Choice Test Questions

This table is intended as an example only. Numbers and percentages are fictitious and for illustration only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number Correct</th>
<th>Percent Correct</th>
<th>Number Incorrect</th>
<th>Percent Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 One way to build confidence as a speaker is to create a vivid mental blueprint in which you see yourself succeeding in your speech. According to your textbook, this process is called</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The most important task when preparing to conduct a research interview is</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 The three kinds of plagiarism discussed in your textbook are</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Encyclopedias, dictionaries, yearbooks, atlases, gazetteers, and quotation books are all examples of</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 “My teacher was a gardener nurturing the seeds of knowledge” is an example of</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 The denotative meaning of a word is</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 The connotative meaning of a word is</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 What are the three criteria discussed in your textbook for assessing the soundness of documents found on the Internet?</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Language helps to shape our sense of reality by</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 As part of the research for her persuasive speech on Parkinson's disease, Alissa needs to find recent articles published in general interest periodicals and academic journals. The best resource for her is a</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Which of the following does your textbook mention as an advantage of extemporaneous delivery?</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Which of the following is a demographic characteristic of a speech audience?</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 A political candidate is running for office and must give a speech that will lay out the details of her platform. The speech will be widely covered by newspapers and television. What kind of delivery is the candidate most likely to use?</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 A conclusion is made up of 4 major parts. Identify which major component is missing: Signal close, Review main points, Impact strategy.</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 The introduction of a speech is designed to _________________</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Identify the three stages of outlining.</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Audience members perceive unorganized speakers as _________________</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 _______________ are sentences that show logical connections between the major parts and main points of a speech.</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 What is the maximum number of main points a speaker should use in the body of his/her speech if only 5 to 7 minutes are available?</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 Identify the two ways that organization can reduce distracters and make messages more memorable</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Speakers create a more memorable message when they consistently use similar grammatical forms for the same levels of structure. What organizing principle does this statement define?</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 The __________________ organizational pattern is used when a speech is providing directions from point A to point B.</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5453</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Example Frequency Table for a Rubric

This table is intended as an example only. Numbers and percentages are fictitious and for illustration only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Items</th>
<th>Number Rated Ineffective</th>
<th>Percent Rated Ineffective</th>
<th>Number Rated Adequate</th>
<th>Percent Rated Adequate</th>
<th>Number Rated Effective</th>
<th>Percent Rated Effective</th>
<th>Number Rated Outstanding</th>
<th>Percent Rated Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention strategy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes relevance with current audience</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly communicates thesis</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition to the body aids in fluency</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previews the body of the speech</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate organizational pattern chosen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes exceptionally clear main ideas</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition statements clearly link ideas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal communicates the speech is coming to an end</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews the body of the speech</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays effective pronunciation and grammar</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility is enhanced by delivery</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech is appropriately well paced</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>649</strong></td>
<td><strong>14%</strong></td>
<td><strong>535</strong></td>
<td><strong>12%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1994</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1346</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Embedded Assessment FAQ

Q. What is Embedded Assessment?
A. Embedded assessment occurs when data is gathered during the course of normal classroom instruction which measures student performance on a specific objective. In this case departments will use embedded assessment to evaluate student performance on the Exemplary Educational Objectives set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Q. Why would we want to do embedded assessment?
A. Understanding how well the students are doing at mastering the objectives we present is a vital part of program planning, course and curriculum improvement, and accreditation. Embedded assessment provides valuable data to help in the ongoing evaluation of student learning, and it is fundamentally non-intrusive. It assists in the ongoing improvement of course content, and data from assessment can be used in making budget allocations. It also provides the University at large with data to present to organizations such as SACS, The Coordinating Board, and discipline-specific accrediting entities.

Q. Wouldn’t this same goal be accomplished by using a standardized test?
A. There is no question that standardized tests are a useful tool for measuring certain types of skills. Many disciplines require such tests and may continue to do so. On the other hand, these tests often require considerable time and money to administer. They are also external to SFA and, as such, often fail to exactly match our internal goals and teaching philosophies. Perhaps most importantly, many accrediting bodies are shifting their emphasis away from standardized testing and toward embedded assessment.

Q. Won’t doing Embedded Assessment involve rewriting a lot of my curriculum?
A. Probably not. The assumption behind embedded assessment is that in-class assignments provide the best (and easiest to measure) mechanism for performance evaluation. This validates existing techniques and often will allow teachers to designate an existing assignment or test question as an assessment tool. In some cases, teachers may decide to develop a new assignment to better suit their assessment needs.

Q. Can I just use the grades on the assignment as my assessment?
A. Probably not. If the entirety of the grade rests on a single, clearly defined objective, then the answer may be yes. If the grade is a result of a number of factors in addition to the objective you are assessing, then no. (For example student work which demonstrates excellent problem-solving skills might receive a low grade because of poor writing mechanics.)

Q. Then how am I supposed to gather and report the data?
A. This is most easily handled with a scoring guide, also called a rubric. Standards for various levels of performance on the stated goal are clearly outlined and each assignment is evaluated by this measure. With this rubric as a guide, it is a simple matter to generate data such as “70% of the students demonstrated strong or exemplary performance on this objective, with only 15% falling in the unacceptable category.”
Q. Between our internal goals and those imposed by outside bodies, there are potentially dozens of objectives for each course. How am I supposed to do embedded assessment on all of these?

A. Do not try to do them all at once. Program reviews, core course review, professional accreditation – all of these things run on cycles of 5 to 10 years. Plan your assessment to look at a few items each semester so that you'll have most or all of them covered by the end of the cycle. This approach dramatically reduces the burden and gives you a way of looking at your instruction from a slightly different angle each semester.

Q. Do we have to assess all the students, or can we get the data we need using a smaller group?

A. In general, the rule of thumb is that the larger the group, the better. This being said, the needs of assessment can often be met by using a sampling rather than an entire group. Sample groups can be selected in a variety of ways, and determining the best way of getting the best number and diversity in the group can be a complex issue. See Section IV of the guidelines for details. When in doubt, contact the Coordinator of Assessment (assessmentcoordinator@sfasu.edu) for assistance and guidance.
Appendix G: Glossary

**Assessment Criteria** define the acceptable level of students’ performance for a particular objective. See Section III for more details.

**Assessment Instrument** is an assignment used to assess a single Exemplary Educational Objective. Common assessment instruments include embedded exam questions, papers, oral presentations, or student evaluations. Student performance is on complex assignments is evaluated using a rubric, or scoring guide. See Section III and Appendix B for more details.

**Assignment review** is a kind of assessment instrument. An assignment tailored to a single Exemplary Educational Objective are required in all sections participating in assessment of that objective. The assignment need not be identical across sections so long as all versions require student mastery of the Objective. Faculty score the assignment according to a rubric developed by the course assessment committee. See Section III and Appendix B for more details.

**Course assessment committee** is the departmental body responsible for coordinating assessment of a core course. The exact composition and selection of the committee is left to the discretion of the departments, but it should include only full-time faculty who teach the course on a regular basis. The committee may range in size from a single faculty member to all the faculty who teach the course. The department’s curriculum committee may double as the assessment committee. See Section I for more details.

**Embedded exam questions** are a kind of assessment instrument. A small number of questions tailored to a single Exemplary Educational Objective are included in exams given in all sections participating in assessment of that objective. These questions, usually multiple choice or short answer, should be identical across sections. Student performance on these questions are used to evaluate student mastery of the objective. See Section III and Appendix B for more details.

**Exemplary Educational Objectives (EEO)** are required elements of core courses required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and described in the document “Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics.” The Exemplary Educational Objectives express the intended student learning outcome in each of the subject areas, and the state has mandated that these objectives “become the basis for faculty and institutional assessment of core components.” Although not all courses will address every single objective, departments should strive to cover as many as possible. See Appendix A for more details.
**Student learning outcome** is what faculty members expect students to know after completing the course. It is a term commonly used in assessment research as a synonym for objective and emphasizes actual student performance, in contrast to earlier forms of assessment which stressed faculty coverage of material.

**Ongoing Assessment Plan** is the complete packet of materials that departments will use in planning and conducting the assessment. The packet should include the forms for the Ongoing Assessment Plan in Appendix C of this document and the materials to be used for assessment. The packet is due to the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee the semester before assessment is to be implemented. Note that each course will have up to twelve Objective Assessment Plans, depending on subject area and material covered. See Section II for more details and Appendix C for blank copies of the forms.

**Online student evaluations** can be useful assessment instruments. This method is especially well-suited for “fuzzy” objectives which require students to “appreciate” certain things, such as the arts or civic responsibility. While this instrument is not appropriate to assess performance of more concrete objectives, it can be used to evaluate student confidence and awareness of objectives. This instrument, therefore, is also a practical method to gauge how effectively the course encouraged students to think critically about the material. It can assist departments in identifying any objectives which still confuse students at the end of the course.

**Rubric** is a scoring guide or rating system by which faculty can determine at what level of proficiency a student is able to perform a task or display knowledge of a concept. It breaks the task into sections to be scored separately, usually on a scale of 0-4. For example, a rubric for an assignment asking students to analyze a historical document might include ratings for correctly identifying the following points: the main themes of the document; the goals of the author of the document; the intended audience of the document and likely responses to the document; and the historical context in which the document appeared. See the Assessment Resource Page, [http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/assessment/index.asp), for examples.