

**Middle Tennessee State University  
General Education Competencies  
Assessment Report 2021 -2022**

Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Academic Year: 2021-2022

Subject Area: Oral Communication

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

The course of COMM 2200 (Fundamentals of Communication) was utilized for assessment during the Spring of 2022 semester at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). This is a class which concentrates on public speaking. The aforementioned assessment course has the prefix of “COMM” because this offering is taught by faculty members in the Department of Communication Studies. The designated number associated with this assessment course is “2200.” The course has the title of “The Fundamentals of Communication.” It was during the 2021-2022 academic year that COMM 2200 was the only course that was utilized for the purpose of assessment. The focal point for our assessment efforts during the 2021-2022 academic year were the persuasive speeches of students who were enrolled in our assessment course of COMM 2200.

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

The number of assessed students during the Spring of 2022 semester was 191 ( $N = 191$ ). A purposive method of sampling was employed in the Spring of 2022 semester. All of the student work that was purposively selected for inclusion was assessed in our analyses. It should be noted that a purposive sampling procedure was used because of outcomes tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, assessment efforts were organized in January of 2022 when the omicron variant was resulting in a spike of COVID cases both on a national and regional level. Furthermore, the proportion of COMM 2200 classes that were offered on-ground in the Spring of 2022 were disproportionately low relative to a normal pre-pandemic semester. Taken together, health concerns and the increased proportion of online sections of COMM 2200 lead to the purposive sampling of only online sections being evaluated in the Spring of 2022 assessment of COMM 2200. It is our hope to return to a stratified random sampling procedure of both on-ground and online sections of COMM 2200 in the 2022-2023 academic year. Relatedly, it should be noted that demographic data on the assessed students was not collected in 2022 because of the pandemic. However, it was in the Spring of 2019 assessment of COMM 2200 that our sample included 111 Freshmen (47.0%), 82 Sophomores (34.8%), 29 Juniors (12.3%), and 14 Seniors (5.9%). The mean age for the participants was 20.24 years old in the Spring of 2019 semester. Although it would be reckless to state these percentages perfectly apply to the 2022 year, the aforementioned data offers a solid point of comparison for illustrative purposes. Historically, these percentages have been representative of the demographic data of our assessed students prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

Yes, the procedures that are described in item 1 and item 2 represent a significant change from the pilot assessment. The changes that were made in the 2022 assessment of COMM 2200 occurred because traditional face-to-face classes were again limited in the Spring of 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The rationale for this change was that the live in-class assessment of COMM 2200 was not in the best interests of our evaluators and students as it relates to health considerations. As hinted at previously, the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the sampling procedures, data collection, and data analyses that were completed in the Spring of 2022 semester.

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

(See Table 1 on the Following Page)

**Table 1.** Oral Communication Competencies for 2022

ORAL PRESENTATION Rubric	Severely Deficient (1/A)	Inadequate (2/B)	Fair (3/C)	Good (4/D)	Excellent (5/E)
<p><b>Competency One:</b> Within the opening segment of the speech the speaker meets the four criteria for an effective opening [1. the introduction gains the audience's attention; 2. the thesis / purpose statement is clear and concise, 3. the speaker addresses his/her credibility on the subject, and 4. the speaker clearly relates the topic to the members of the audience]; the opening segment is adequately developed.</p>	Within the opening segment the speaker fails to meet all four criteria and/or the opening segment is missing.	Within the opening segment the speaker only meets <u>two</u> of the four criteria and/or the opening segment is severely under developed.	Within the opening segment the speaker meets <u>three</u> of the four criteria; and the opening segment lacks some development.	Within the opening segment the speaker meets all <u>four</u> criteria; the opening section may contain minor flaws in development.	Within the opening segment the speaker meets all <u>four</u> criteria; the opening segment is fully developed.
<p><b>Competency One</b> (2021) <math>M = 3.89</math>, <math>SD = 1.15</math> (<math>N = 157</math>)</p> <p>(2022) <math>M = 3.94</math>, <math>SD = 1.24</math> (<math>N = 191</math>)</p>	2 (1.3%)	26 (16.6%)	23 (14.6%)	43 (27.4%)	63 (40.1%)
	6 (3.1%)	30 (15.7%)	27 (14.1%)	35 (18.4%)	93 (48.7%)
<p><b>Competency Two:</b> The speaker uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the persuasive presentation, which may include one of the four patterns addressed in the Lucas text: problem-solution, problem-cause-solution, comparative advantages, or Monroe's Motivated Sequence</p>	The speech is clearly not persuasive and/or fails to effectively use a persuasive organizational pattern that is appropriate for the topic, and audience.	The speech is somewhat persuasive and/or the organizational pattern and expression of arguments are severely deficient [the organizational pattern is unclear and/or incomplete].	The speech is persuasive; the speaker uses an appropriate persuasive organizational pattern with some errors or omissions, and some arguments may be deficient	The speaker uses an appropriate persuasive organizational pattern. The organizational pattern is complete, and the speaker leaves the audience with a clear persuasive message or call to action.	The speech is clearly persuasive and the speaker presents an exceptionally clear and compelling argument or case. The organizational pattern is complete and the speaker leaves the audience with an undeniable message or call to action.
<p><b>Competency Two</b> (2021) <math>M = 4.19</math>, <math>SD = 1.13</math> (<math>N = 157</math>)</p> <p>(2022) <math>M = 4.15</math>, <math>SD = 1.07</math> (<math>N = 191</math>)</p>	5 (3.2%)	12 (7.6%)	22 (14.0%)	27 (17.2%)	91 (58.0%)
	1 (0.5%)	20 (10.5%)	30 (15.7%)	39 (20.4%)	101 (52.9%)
<p><b>Competency Three:</b> The speaker provides supporting material (<i>examples, statistics and testimony</i>) appropriate for a persuasive presentation; the quality and variety of support clearly enhances the credibility of the speech.</p>	The speaker uses no supporting material.	The speaker's use of support material is lacking in variety, and/or is lacking in quality.	The speaker's use of support material is adequate but is somewhat deficient; may be lacking in quality or variety.	The speaker uses supporting material that is appropriate in quality and variety.	The speaker's use of support material is exceptional; utilizes all three kinds of support material. The quality and variety of support clearly enhances credibility of the speech.

<p><b>Competency Three</b> (2021) <math>M = 3.89</math>, <math>SD = 1.29</math> (<math>N = 157</math>)</p> <p>(2022) <math>M = 4.05</math>, <math>SD = 1.19</math> (<math>N = 191</math>)</p>	<p>6 (3.8%)</p> <p>5 (2.6%)</p>	<p>29 (18.5%)</p> <p>26 (13.6%)</p>	<p>17 (10.8%)</p> <p>22 (11.5%)</p>	<p>29 (18.5%)</p> <p>40 (20.9%)</p>	<p>76 (48.4%)</p> <p>98 (51.3%)</p>
<p><b>Competency Four:</b> The speaker uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion. Additionally, the vocalics are suitable to the audience and occasion. Voice is conversational, is loud enough to be easily heard, and is energetic to maintain audience interest.</p>	<p>The speaker uses unclear language and/or uses jargon and/or slang that is inappropriate for a formal occasion and for the audience; the language is sexist, racist, non-inclusive, etc. Grammar and pronunciation are incorrect and/or distracting. The speaker fails to meet <u>all</u> vocalics factors.</p>	<p>The speaker uses unclear language and/or uses jargon and/or slang that is inappropriate for a formal occasion and/or distracts from the presentation. The language attempts to be persuasive but sounds more informative. Grammar, syntax, and diction are not effective. The speaker fails to meet <u>two</u> of the three vocalics factors.</p>	<p>The speaker uses language that is reasonably clear and appropriate for a formal occasion. The speaker uses an occasional slang expression or jargon, but such language is not distracting. The language is persuasive to an extent but borders on informative. Grammar, syntax, and diction are effective. The speaker meets all but <u>one</u> of the vocalics factors.</p>	<p>The speaker uses language that is clear, vivid, and appropriate. The presentation is devoid of inappropriate slang or jargon. Language is persuasive throughout the entire speech. Grammar, syntax, and diction are used to emphasize points. The speaker meets all <u>three</u> vocalics factors.</p>	<p>The speaker uses language that is exceptionally clear, vivid, and appropriate. Language is persuasive throughout the entire speech. Grammar, syntax, and diction are used to emphasize points. The speaker uses rhythmic devices such as parallelism and/or repetition etc., to create an especially compelling and clear message. The speaker makes exceptional use of all vocalics factors.</p>
<p><b>Competency Four</b> (2021) <math>M = 4.18</math>, <math>SD = 0.99</math> (<math>N = 157</math>)</p> <p>(2022) <math>M = 4.20</math>, <math>SD = 1.01</math> (<math>N = 191</math>)</p>	<p>0 (0.0%)</p> <p>4 (2.1%)</p>	<p>10 (6.4%)</p> <p>8 (4.2%)</p>	<p>35 (22.3%)</p> <p>34 (17.8%)</p>	<p>29 (18.5%)</p> <p>44 (23.0%)</p>	<p>83 (52.9%)</p> <p>101 (52.9%)</p>
<p><b>Competency Five:</b> The speaker demonstrates the ability to effectively utilize and document a variety of multiple, credible sources.</p>	<p>The speaker fails to include any source documentation in the presentation.</p>	<p>The speaker incorporates a few sources in the presentation, but the documentation is deficient [<u>three</u> or fewer sources cited]. Some sources do not appear credible and/or a variety of sources are not used.</p>	<p>The speaker incorporates a minimum of <u>four</u> sources in the presentation and the sources appear to be credible, but the documentation is deficient. Source credibility is not always established and/or a variety of sources are not used.</p>	<p>The speaker incorporates a minimum of <u>five</u> sources in the presentation; the sources appear to be credible, a variety of sources are utilized, and the source documentation is <u>not</u> deficient.</p>	<p>The speaker incorporates <u>six</u> or more sources in the presentation; the sources are clearly credible, a variety of sources are utilized, and the source documentation is <u>not</u> deficient.</p>
<p><b>Competency Five</b> (2021) <math>M = 3.64</math>, <math>SD = 1.53</math> (<math>N = 157</math>)</p> <p>(2022) <math>M = 4.03</math>, <math>SD = 1.28</math> (<math>N = 191</math>)</p>	<p>17 (10.8%)</p> <p>7 (3.7%)</p>	<p>37 (23.6%)</p> <p>31 (16.2%)</p>	<p>9 (5.7%)</p> <p>17 (8.9%)</p>	<p>17 (10.8%)</p> <p>31 (16.2%)</p>	<p>77 (49.0%)</p> <p>105 (55.0%)</p>

ORAL PRESENTATION Rubric	Severely Deficient (1/A)	Inadequate (2/B)	Fair (3/C)	Good (4/D)	Excellent (5/E)
<b>Competency Six:</b> Within the closing segment of the speech, the speaker meets the three criteria for an effective ending [1. the speaker signals the end of the speech; 2. the thesis / purpose statement is clearly restated, 3. The speaker ends with a memorable message]; the closing segment is adequately developed.	Within the closing segment the speaker fails to meet all three criteria and/or the closing segment is missing.	Within the closing segment the speaker only meets one of the three criteria and/or the closing segment is severely under developed.	Within the closing segment the speaker meets two of the three criteria; and the closing segment lacks some development.	Within the closing segment the speaker meets all three criteria; the closing section may contain minor flaws in development.	Within the closing segment the speaker meets all three criteria; the opening segment is exceptionally developed.
<b>Competency Six</b> (2021) $M = 4.00$ , $SD = 1.06$ ( $N = 157$ )	5 (3.2%)	8 (5.1%)	33 (21.0%)	47 (29.9%)	64 (40.8%)
(2022) $M = 3.73$ , $SD = 1.20$ ( $N = 190$ )	16 (8.4%)	11 (5.8%)	40 (21.1%)	65 (34.2%)	58 (30.5%)
<b>Competency Seven:</b> The speaker maintains appropriate eye contact with the entire audience throughout the presentation.	The speaker fails to establish any eye contact with the audience; reads the presentation.	The speaker establishes minimal eye contact with the audience; eye contact is limited to one focal point.	The speaker establishes some eye contact with the audience; eye contact is limited to one or two focal points.	The speaker establishes an appropriate amount of eye contact with the audience; focal points are varied.	The speaker establishes an appropriate amount of eye contact with the audience, the focal points are varied and the speaker is intentional in establishing eye contact with the entire audience.
<b>Competency Seven</b> (2021) $M = 4.08$ , $SD = 1.16$ ( $N = 157$ )	8 (5.1%)	8 (5.1%)	28 (17.8%)	33 (21.0%)	80 (51.0%)
(2022) $M = 4.18$ , $SD = 1.12$ ( $N = 191$ )	9 (4.7%)	8 (4.2%)	27 (14.1%)	43 (22.5%)	104 (54.5%)
<b>Competency Eight:</b> The speaker uses physical behaviors (body movement, gestures and posture) that support the verbal message and enhance the speaker's appearance of confidence and competence.	The speaker uses almost no gestures and/or body movement during the presentation to support the verbal message. The speaker's posture significantly detracts from his/her appearance as a confident and competent speaker.	The speaker uses very limited gestures and/or body movement during the presentation and/or the gestures do not support the verbal message. The speaker's posture detracts somewhat from his/her appearance as a confident and competent speaker.	The speaker utilizes some body movement gestures to support the verbal message. The speaker's posture supports his/her appearance as a somewhat confident and competent speaker.	The speaker uses <u>both</u> body movement and gestures during the presentation to enhance the verbal message. The speaker's posture supports his/her appearance as a confident and competent speaker.	The speaker uses <u>both</u> body movement and gestures during the presentation. The movement and gesture add significantly to the clarity and impact of the message and enhances the verbal message. The speaker uses posture that supports the verbal message and the speaker appears to be a strong, confident and competent speaker.

<b>Competency Eight</b> (2021) $M = 4.14$ , $SD = 1.10$ ( $N = 157$ )	7 (4.5%)	8 (5.1%)	18 (11.5%)	47 (29.9%)	77 (49.0%)
(2022) $M = 4.27$ , $SD = 1.03$ ( $N = 187$ )	7 (3.7%)	6 (3.2%)	21 (11.2%)	49 (26.2%)	104 (55.6%)

\*For the purpose of comparison, data from 2021 are presented in blue. Data from 2022 are presented in red.

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

The 2022 assessment data which were reported in the fourth item produced conclusions and interpretations that pertain to the student attainment of learning outcomes. A breakdown of each of the competencies and some conclusions are noted in the section which follows.

- **Competency I:** The opening segment of a speech was the focal point for the first competency. Results indicated that 81.10% of students were evaluated at a level that was fair or higher for the first competency. More specifically, the findings revealed that 14.1% of students ( $N = 27$ ) were evaluated as fair, 18.3% of students ( $N = 35$ ) were evaluated as good, and 48.7% of students ( $N = 93$ ) were evaluated as excellent. It was at the other end of the spectrum that 18.80% of students were evaluated as inadequate or severely deficient. An inadequate assessment was applied by evaluators to 15.7% of the student ( $N = 30$ ) speeches and an assessment of severely deficient was applied by evaluators to 3.1% of the student ( $N = 6$ ) speeches.
  - The results from Competency I are good. A non-statistically significant upward trend was observed on Competency I in 2022 relative to the data that emerged on Competency I in 2021 ( $t(346) = .401$ ,  $p = .689$ ). This data suggests our students are performing at a level that is rather firmly entrenched in the good category and moderately above the fair category in the introduction of her/his/their persuasive speech.
- **Competency II:** The second competency concentrated on using an organizational pattern that was persuasive in nature. Results indicated that 89.00% of students were evaluated at a level that was fair or higher for the second competency. That is, the findings from this analysis illustrated that 15.7% of students ( $N = 30$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 20.4% of students ( $N = 39$ ) were evaluated as good, and 52.9% of students ( $N = 101$ ) were evaluated as excellent. In contrast, a total of 11.00% of students were evaluated as inadequate or severely deficient. The breakdown reveals that evaluators assigned the label of inadequate for Competency II to 10.5% of the student ( $N = 13$ ) speeches and an assessment of severely deficient was assigned by evaluators to 0.5% of the student ( $N = 1$ ) speeches.
  - The results from Competency II are good from a categorical standpoint. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a downward statistical trend that was not statistically significant was observed on Competency II in the 2022 assessment relative to the results for Competency II in the 2021 assessment ( $t(346) = 0.377$ ,  $p = .707$ ). A closer examination of the data from previous assessments for Competency II suggests scores on this competency have been relatively stable for some time.
- **Competency III:** The third competency of this analysis centered on the use of appropriate supporting materials. The findings for the third competency indicated that 83.70% of students were evaluated at a level that was fair or higher. A further breakdown revealed that 11.5% of students ( $N = 22$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 20.9% of the students ( $N = 40$ ) were evaluated as good, and 51.3% of students ( $N = 98$ ) were evaluated as excellent. Additional data for the third

competency found that 13.6% of students ( $N = 26$ ) were evaluated as inadequate. A total of 2.6% of students ( $N = 5$ ) were evaluated as severely deficient.

- The findings from Competency III are also good but this finding should be appropriately tempered. The scores on Competency III for 2022 when compared to Competency III for 2021 increased albeit not at a statistically significant level ( $t(346) = 1.166, p = .244$ ). Results from the third competency reveal that students in COMM 2200 are still doing a good job of incorporating a variety of quality supporting materials that are appropriate (e.g., statistics, examples, etc.) into her/his/their speech.
- **Competency IV:** The fourth competency for the 2022 assessment of COMM 2200 concentrated on language features such as whether appropriate grammar, diction, and syntax were used in the speech. The emergent data on the fourth competency indicated that 93.70% of students were evaluated at a level that was fair or higher. The specifics for the fourth competency illustrated that 17.8% of students ( $N = 34$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 23.0% of the students ( $N = 44$ ) were evaluated as good, and 52.9% of students ( $N = 101$ ) were evaluated as excellent. The findings also revealed that 6.3% of students were evaluated as inadequate or lower. Specifically, 4.2% of students ( $N = 8$ ) were evaluated as inadequate and 2.1% of students ( $N = 4$ ) were evaluated as severely deficient.
  - The results from Competency IV are satisfactory from a general and non-rubric perspective. Findings that were not statistically significant were found when the 2022 data were compared against the 2021 data for the fourth competency ( $t(346) = 2.39, p = .811$ ). As alluded to in a prior assessment report, the relatively high scores that continue to be procured on Competency IV are probably tied to the notion that this competency is the least rigorous of all of the eight competencies. Another interpretation of the 2022 findings is that utilizing polite and normal everyday language that is not offensive is sufficient enough to secure an evaluation of fair on Competency IV. A rating of severely deficient is generally applicable to students who make a concerted effort to utilize offensive or inappropriate language, which rarely occurs in assessment. All things considered, the evaluated students performed very well on this competency.
- **Competency V:** The fifth competency for the oral communication assessment of COMM 2200 focused on gathering and using multiple sources. Results indicated that 80.10% of students were evaluated at a grade of fair or higher. A further rundown for the fifth competency revealed that 8.9% of students ( $N = 17$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 16.2% of students ( $N = 31$ ) were evaluated as good, and 55.0% of students ( $N = 105$ ) were evaluated as excellent. At the same time, the evaluators found that 19.9% of student speeches were inadequate or lower. Evaluators rated 16.2% of students ( $N = 31$ ) as inadequate and evaluated 3.7% of students ( $N = 7$ ) as severely deficient on this competency.
  - The findings on Competency V show a positive trend in the data. It was in the present analysis that comparing the observed data on the fifth competency in 2022 against the observed data on the fifth competency in 2021 revealed a statistical increase occurred between these two years ( $t(303) = 2.54, p = .012$ ). In short, the observed increase for the fifth competency indicates that a robust number of students are doing a nice job in terms of using an appropriate number of credible sources.
- **Competency VI:** The sixth competency for the oral communication assessment focused on the closing segment of a speech. Results indicated that 85.80% of students were evaluated at a grade of fair or higher in 2022. A further rundown for the sixth competency revealed that 21.1% of students ( $N = 40$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 34.2% of students ( $N = 65$ ) were evaluated as good, and 30.5% of students ( $N = 58$ ) were evaluated as excellent. At the same time, the

evaluators found that 14.20% of student speeches were inadequate or lower. Evaluators rated 5.8% of speeches ( $N = 11$ ) as inadequate and evaluated 8.4% of speeches ( $N = 16$ ) as severely deficient.

- The findings on Competency VI are something to watch going forward. The findings on Competency VI reveal a statistically significant negative trend on this outcome in 2022 when compared against the observed data on the sixth competency in 2021 ( $t(344) = -2.26, p = 0.24$ ). Stated simply, our students are not performing as well as they used to in terms of appropriately developing the closing segment of her/his/their speech.
- **Competency VII:** The seventh competency for the oral communication assessment concentrated on appropriate eye contact. Results indicated that 91.1% of students were evaluated at a grade of fair or higher. More specifically, the findings for the seventh competency indicated that 14.1% of students ( $N = 27$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 22.5% of students ( $N = 43$ ) were evaluated as good, and 54.5% of students ( $N = 104$ ) were evaluated as excellent. In contrast, the 2022 evaluators found that 8.9% of student speeches were inadequate or lower. Evaluators rated 4.2% of students ( $N = 8$ ) as inadequate and evaluated 4.7% of students ( $N = 9$ ) as severely deficient.
  - The findings on Competency VII for 2022 are okay when compared to the data on Competency VII from 2021. A statistically significant increase was not observed when the 2022 data on this competency was compared against the 2021 data on this competency ( $t(346) = .828, p = .408$ ). All in all, the eye contact of our students in terms of varying focal points and maintaining appropriate amounts of eye contact was at a level above good as it relates to the utilized rubric.
- **Competency VIII:** The eighth competency for the oral communication assessment broadly looked at nonverbal communication during a persuasive speech. Results indicated that 93.00% of students were evaluated at a grade of fair or higher. Findings for the eighth competency revealed that 11.2% of students ( $N = 21$ ) were evaluated as fair, while 26.2% of students ( $N = 49$ ) were evaluated as good, and 55.6% of students ( $N = 104$ ) were evaluated as excellent. Conversely, the evaluators found that 6.9% of student speeches were inadequate or lower. Evaluators rated 3.2% of students ( $N = 6$ ) as inadequate and evaluated 3.7% of students ( $N = 7$ ) as severely deficient.
  - The findings on Competency VIII are also pretty good. A minimal increase that was not statistically significant was observed when the 2022 data on Competency VIII was compared against the 2021 data on Competency VIII ( $t(342) = 1.107, p = .269$ ). Taken together, these results indicate that COMM 2200 students are continuing to do good as it relates to using body movements and gestures that enhance the verbal component of her/his/their speech.

### Overall Interpretation and Analysis

The analyses that were undertaken for the 2022 oral communication competency assessment report indicated that students in COMM 2200 are performing at an above satisfactory level on the eight competencies that are being tracked. A statistically significant decrease was observed on competency six which looked at whether the speaker effectively prepared and developed the closing segment of the speech. A statistically significant increase was observed on competency five which centered on the ability of students to effectively utilize and incorporate a variety of multiple sources. Non-statistically significant increases were also observed on competencies one, three, four, seven, and eight while a non-statistically significant decrease was observed on competency two. The paragraphs which follow further unpack the statistically significant results as well as some overall interpretations.

There are four overall interpretations of the 2022 data for the course of COMM 2200 that should be noted. First, students in COMM 2200 were rated as a 3.73 on the sixth competency which centered on whether the closing segment of the speech was adequately developed. As alluded to previously, a score of 3.73 on a 5-point Likert scale can be categorically defined as above fair and slightly below good. However, the 2021 assessment data for this competency was an even 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale. The *t*-tests analyses showed this decrease from year-to-year was statistically significant. This was a surprising decrease. Relatedly, it should also be noted this was the rubric criterion which our students had the lowest mean score. One simple interpretation of this observed decrease was that our teaching of the closing segment of a speech was lacking in the online classes that were observed in this assessment. In relation to the nuances of this rubric competency, our previous data has consistently shown that most students know to signal the end of speech with phrases such as: in conclusion or to conclude. Similarly, our past data has suggested students are usually pretty good about offering some type of a restatement of the main ideas. Thus, it would seem more of a focus should be placed on teaching the importance of the speaker ending the speech with a memorable message. While this interpretation might be a bit presumptuous, the instructors of COMM 2200 will be asked to place more of an emphasis on adequately developing the closing segment of the speech and specifically having a memorable closing message for our assessed speeches in the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year.

Second, a statistically significant increase was observed on competency five which looked at whether students used a variety of credible sources. This result was also a bit surprising. Competency five has historically been the rubric competency on which our students have struggled the most over the past six years. A mean score above the 4.00 threshold for our 5-point Likert scale is a good sign. That noted, one possible reason for the observed increase on this rubric competency is because having students focus on using multiple credible sources was a point of emphasis for our COMM 2200 instructors at the COMM 2200 instructor meeting that we held in advance of our data collection in January of 2022. The excellent category for this rubric criterion centers on six or more sources being utilized. With this in mind, our COMM 2200 instructors were told at our last meeting to encourage their students to have seven or more sources. The presumption here was that encouraging students to do more than what is measured in this assessment would lead to a faction of students actually doing more. Setting the bar higher appears to have worked. Indeed, having credible sources is also a component of this competency, but the main focal point of this criterion centers on the total number of sources utilized. Thus, and based on the observed increase in this assessment, students will again be appropriately nudged towards incorporating seven credible sources into her/his/their speech.

Third, competency one which looks at the opening segment of a speech obtained the second lowest mean score of the eight rubric competencies that were analyzed. Besides competency six, it was the only competency on which our students procured a mean score below 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale. Since a statistically significant drop was not observed and because the mean score for this competency was just under the good categorization, this is not an area of concern. A closer analysis of the data revealed that one evaluator scored the student speeches of one instructor at an abnormally low level. Specifically, evaluator three scored the introductory speeches of this instructor at a mean score of 2.19 on this particular competency. To provide context based on available data from previous assessments, the mean score of 2.19 for this particular instructor on this particular competency was one of the lowest ratings attained on any competency in the last six years, amongst more than 20 different instructors, on any of our eight measured competencies. The evaluations of this one instructor dragged down the mean score for competency one for the entire group. The abnormally low mean score for this particular instructor for competency one could be a function of the instructor having students who were just not good at beginning a speech, or class meetings on speech introductions having to be canceled for some reason, or it could be that evaluator three was just being unusually tough on this particular instructor. It could be a combination of all three, yet this will be a point of discussion with this

particular evaluator and this instructor during the 2022-2023 academic year. Nevertheless, a definitive conclusion can not be drawn as to why this particular instructor and this particular competency was lower than normal relative to the previous year. That said, the decrease on this competency for the group was not statistically significant and will be watched more closely in the coming year before our next assessment begins.

Fourth, the highest scoring competency this year for our students was competency eight which focuses on nonverbal behaviors. A mean score of 4.27 was observed on this competency. It is encouraging to see this score on a 5-point Likert scale because competency eight is one of the newer competencies that we added to our measured outcomes. The nonverbal competency was added to our analyses in 2018. As noted, a statistically significant increase was not observed on this competency, but it is encouraging to see scores above 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale in both 2022 and 2021. One possible reason for the high mean score on this competency in 2022 (and 2021) is tied to outcomes associated with the pandemic. Data collection for this year as well as the year prior came from only online sections of COMM 2200 whereas data for non-pandemic influenced semesters is obtained from a mixture of both on-ground and online classes. It's possible that the evaluations of the nonverbal component of these speeches were robust this year because students had the chance to record and re-record themselves multiples times before submitting their assignment. Students who watch or re-watch themselves before submitting their work could therefore visually see whether they were speaking illustratively with their hands, directing their posture to the sides of the room, and so forth. Students in a regular non-pandemic semester in an on-ground class have just one opportunity to nonverbally execute the speech. The ability of students to record and re-record their speeches in online classes likely lead to an enhanced score on the rubric criterion of nonverbal behaviors. While it is possible that only online sections being evaluated during the pandemic also benefitted scores on the other competencies, it would seem that competency eight benefitted the most from the ability to record and re-record because students could easily, casually, and visually see their nonverbal tendencies just with a simple re-watching of their original recording. Moreover, it should be previewed that 2023 scores on competency eight and the other competencies are likely to be lower in the next semester in which our data collection for COMM 2200 returns to mostly on-ground evaluation.

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

The best answer to the question of whether strategies will be implemented to correct deficiencies in the data is yes. The data point which was the most deficient in terms of comparisons to the year prior was documented on the sixth competency which looked at whether the closing segment of the speech was adequately developed. As alluded to previously, this will be addressed at a COMM 2200 meeting at the beginning of 2023. Typically, devoting meeting attention to our lower-scoring competencies at our COMM 2200 assessment meeting (which normally occurs in January of each year) has resulted in an increase for that data point in the assessment for the following year. Furthermore, our deficiency on competency six is not alarming at this time for a couple of different reasons. First, students have traditionally done well on the closing segment of the speech. It's possible the observed decrease this year was an anomaly as opposed to a new trend developing in the data. Another reason why this decline is not too concerning at this time is because the overall mean score was a 3.73 on a 5-point Likert scale. In terms of competency categories, a score of 3.73 out of a possible 5.00 is nearing the good categorization of our rubric and is a decent amount above the fair categorization of 3.00 on the rubric. Nevertheless, this deficiency will be addressed by having a meeting this January in which COMM 2200 instructors will be encouraged to devote more lecture time towards effectively teaching the closing segment of the speech to her/his students.

Another general deficiency that will be addressed involves training. One of the evaluators missed a small portion of the assigned training because they had distractions with an infant toddler. These things happen and it likely did not impact the observed scores. While it is impossible to determine why lower scores were observed for one instructor in particular for competency one, a redesign of the training of our evaluators would not hurt. The normal training involves the COMM 2200 Coordinator discussing the rubric with the evaluators, selecting a sample of speeches with the evaluators present, watching and assessing pre-recorded sample speeches with the evaluators, debriefing about evaluations to get all of the evaluators on the same page, and so forth. This has historically worked well over at least the past six years. At the same time, the training of our evaluators might be becoming a bit stale. Scores amongst all of our evaluators have closely mirrored each other in all of our previous training sessions, but it might be beneficial to formally conduct some inter-coder reliability analyses in the future. Again, these are not areas of concern, but changing things up a bit as it relates to training might help improve the possible deficiency associated with one evaluator rating one instructor at a statistically improbable level.

An additional (and recurring) strategy that would help correct deficiencies as it pertains to all of our competencies would be to establish a speaking center on campus. This strategy has been highlighted in previous assessment reports and should continue to be noted. Interestingly, the possibility of re-establishing a speaking center on campus is appearing to gain some traction. Meetings to re-establish a speaking center were held with the department chair, two associate Deans for the College of Liberal Arts, and personnel for the library at the conclusion of the Spring of 2022 semester. It seems likely (although not guaranteed) that some makeshift version of a speaking center will be re-established in Jones Hall at some point during the 2022-2023 academic year. This is encouraging. It is not guaranteed at the time of this report being written, but re-establishing a speaking center on campus would benefit assessed students who seek tutoring at our possible speaking center. The benefits of an on-ground speaking center as it relates to oral communication competence have been noted in previous scholarship (see Yook & Atkins-Sayre, 2012). The individualized tutoring of students at a speaking center on campus would offer personalized assistance to students who are struggling and general assistance to those students who are not struggling. A re-established speaking center on campus would also be a great resource for students in terms of securing the appropriate quality and quantity of sources for her or his speech. Taken together, course incentives such as offering extra credit for visiting the speaking center could also assist with students increasing the scores on the eight measured competencies that constitute our oral communication assessment.

7. Have you implemented any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from previous assessments?

The answer to this question is yes. One of the deficiencies that was noted in the 2021 general education oral communication competency assessment report were the lower scores obtained on competency five, which centers on incorporating a variety of multiple and credible sources. As previously stated, the independent samples *t*-test that was conducted revealed a statistically significant increase on this competency. Further, the mean score increased from 3.64 in 2021 to a score of 4.03 in 2022. The plan of asking our instructors to expect more of their students when it comes to the quantity of sources and the plan of our professors devoting more lecture time towards finding sources seems to have worked well. In summation, the findings from the 2022 oral communication competency assessment report reveal that (a) focusing more of our teaching efforts on helping our students improve the closing segment of her/his/their speech would be beneficial and that (b) the uncovered data indicates that MTSU students in COMM 2200 are collectively performing very well on all eight outcomes that examine oral communication competence.

## References

- Frey, L., Botan, C., & Kreps, G. (2000). *Investigating communication: An introduction to research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Yook, E., & Atkins-Sayre, W. (2012). *Communication centers and oral communication programs in higher education: Advantages, challenges, and new directions*. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD.

**Results of Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes  
Academic Year 2021-2022  
Subject Area: Writing  
English Department  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Report Drafted by Dr. Warren Tormey (2021-22), English**

**1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment.**

ENGL 1020 Research and Argumentative Writing

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

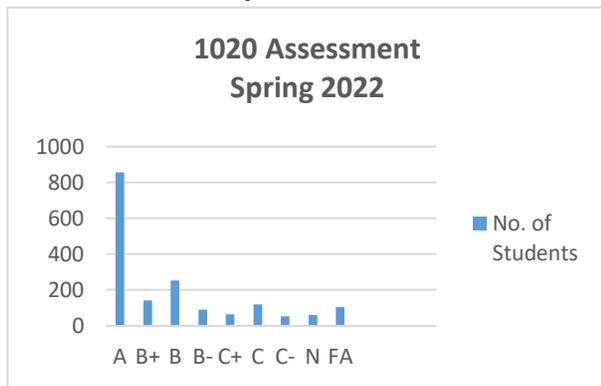
*Sampling process*

A random sample of 155 students was drawn from the population of 1,861 students enrolled in ENGL 1020 in spring 2022. These students' 1020 instructors were instructed to submit the most researched essay written by these students. The sample included essays from sections of 1020 taught by 38 different faculty. Of the 155 students in the sample, 127 completed the course and submitted their final essays to the department. The 127 essays were numbered and anonymized for both student-author and instructor. Of those, 125 essays were randomly selected to be scored by two scorers each.

1. *Comparison of sample to population*

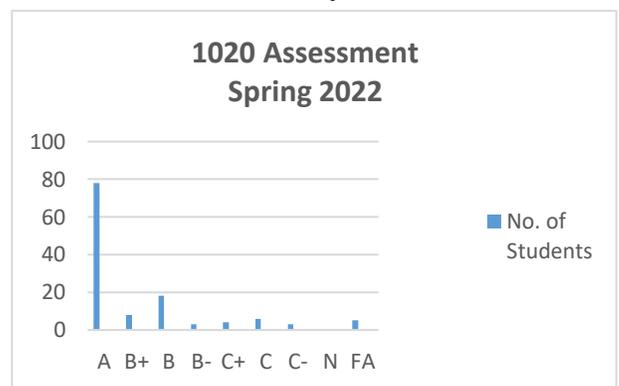
To ensure that the sample was representative of the population, we conducted a chi-square analysis of the 1020 final course grade distributions of the sample in comparison to the population. The course grade distributions of the sample and of the population were statistically comparable (i.e., not statistically significantly different) despite the five year gap in our using ENGL 1020 as the primary assessment vehicle (2016-17:  $\chi^2 = 7.99, p = .4345$ ; 2021-22:  $\chi^2 = 13.213, p = .1047$ ).

**Population**



**Total Students: 1883**  
**Avg. Grade: B+**  
**(excluding F's, I's, W's)**

**Sample**



**Total Students: 125**  
**Avg. Grade: B+**  
**(excluding F's, I's, W's)**

### *Scoring*

Eight English faculty representing two faculty ranks in the department (senior instructor and full-time temporary lecturer)<sup>1</sup> were recruited to score the essays. They were (in alphabetical order) Matt Burlison, James Hamby, Brett Hudson, Jennifer Kates, Robert Lawrence, Alyson Lynn, Adam McInturff, and Candie Moonshower. Following a three-hour grade norming session led by the department's Assessment Coordinator on May 17, 2022, the scorers received 30-31 essays each to score independently over a period of eight weeks. Each essay in the sample received two separate scores from two different readers on each of six outcomes (see Appendix A). Each reader received a \$225 stipend at the conclusion of the scoring.

### *Cut off scores*

The following mean cut-off scores were used in this assessment (see Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Grade</b>	A, B	C	D, F
<b>Score</b>	5, 4.5, 4	3.5, 3, 2.5	2, 1.5, 1

**Table 1. Score range by category**

The department's rationale for setting 2.5 as the floor of the satisfactory range was that it represents a score higher than 2 points (i.e., the score representing a D in our scoring rubric). Moreover, a score of 2.5 (which was largely the mean of a score of 2 and a score of 3) is the baseline score necessary to get credit in our General Education classes, and reflects that at least one of two readers considered the student's performance satisfactory on that outcome. These cut off points were adopted by the department in 2015.

### *2. Interrater reliability*

Given multiple scorers, we evaluated interrater reliability by a two-way mixed effects intraclass correlation model based on absolute agreement (i.e., different raters assigning the same score for a given essay for a given outcome). Even as the department's previous analysis of ENGL 1020 outcomes was undertaken before the Covid-19 pandemic, in AY 2017, it is not possible to ascertain how students and faculty responded in adapting to new and unfamiliar conditions or how these conditions influenced Student Learning Outcomes. Results of this analysis appear in Table 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Because in AY 2016-2017 the English department had only two faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor, with only one available over the summer to serve as a scorer, this rank was under-represented in this year's assessment. Despite a rigorous recruitment effort in AY 2021-22, only individuals at the rank of Lecturer or Instructor volunteered as scorers.

	ICC 2017	ICC 2022
<b>Outcome A</b>	.338	.432
<b>Outcome B</b>	.510	.400
<b>Outcome C</b>	.557	.432
<b>Outcome D</b>	.525	.368
<b>Outcome E</b>	.561	.424
<b>Outcome F</b>	.587	.504

**Table 2.** Interrater reliability (ICC coefficients)

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

Change 1: The 2021-2022 Assessment captured a “return” to the use of ENGL 1020 as the primary assessment vehicle after a five-year gap punctuated by one major shift. This development is significant in light of the fact that the three of the five previous AY’s were “Covid” years—In AY’s 2020-21 and 2021-22 instructional procedures and student experiences were disrupted and modified by the pandemic. Despite the number of variables that figured in the intervening years between samples, however, it appropriate to avoid over-generalizing in accounting for any differences in Student Learning Outcomes.

Change 2: While the 2016-2017 assessment followed largely the procedures established in the 2015-2016 assessment with some significant modifications from previous years, the intervening years between 2017 and 2022 saw a vast expansion in online, hybrid, honors, and (online plus) dual enrollment sections of ENGL 1020, with pedagogical practices likely transforming in accordance with these developments. Moreover, the student’s experience in the “Covid” semesters (March 2020 through November 2021) was influenced by teaching strategies that were developed to accommodate both mandates for social distancing in classrooms and greater degrees of remote course delivery. While exact statistics are impossible to include or be reflected within this AY 2021-22 report, it is appropriate to note this feature of a “post Covid” sample in light of the changes necessitated by those developments.

**3. Per the evaluation rubric utilized at your institution, adapt the table below to record the results of the assessments of each learning outcome in the subject area discussed in the report.**

	Writing Outcomes	Year	Superior Score M = 5, 4.5, 4	Satisfactory Score M = 3.5, 3, 2.5	Unsatisfactory Score M = 2, 1.5, 1

<b>A</b>	<i>The student writer is able to distill a primary argument into a single, compelling statement.</i>	2014	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>40.5%</b>
		2015	<b>6%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>28%</b>
		2016	<b>24%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>12%</b>
		2017	<b>23%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>12%</b>
		2022	<b>18%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>17%</b>

<b>B</b>	<i>The student writer gives a clear purpose and audience.</i>	2014	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>51.7%</b>
		2015	<b>8%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>24%</b>
		2016	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
		2017	<b>19%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>14%</b>
		2022	<b>14%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>17%</b>

<b>C</b>	<i>The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on primary argument.</i>	2014	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>
		2015	<b>3%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>29%</b>
		2016	<b>19%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>16%</b>
		2017	<b>20%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>15%</b>
		2022	<b>19%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>19%</b>

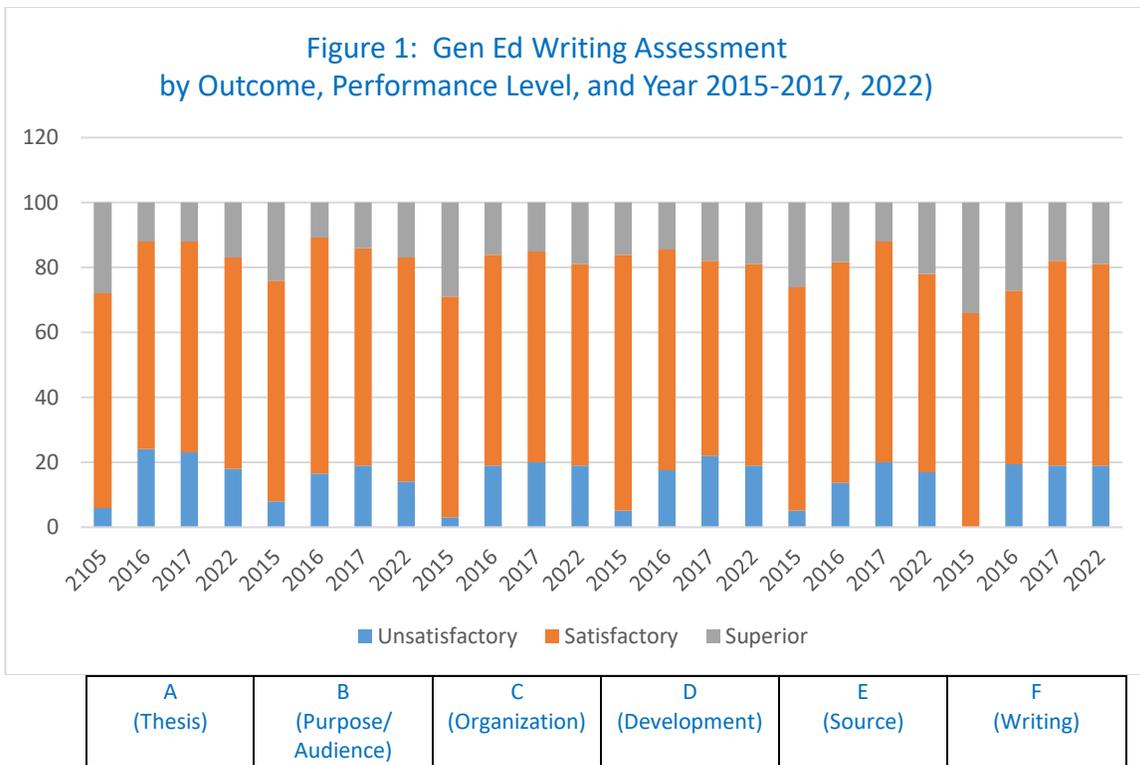
<b>D</b>	<i>Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison, contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition).</i>	2014	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>
		2015	<b>5%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>16%</b>
		2016	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
		2017	<b>22%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>18%</b>
		2022	<b>18%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>18%</b>

<b>E</b>	<i>The student writer is able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple secondary sources.</i>	2014	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>
		2015	<b>5%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>26%</b>
		2016	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
		2017	<b>20%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>12%</b>
		2022	<b>17%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>22%</b>

<b>F</b>	<i>Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.</i>	2014	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>46.1%</b>	<b>51.1%</b>
		2015	<b>0%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>34%</b>
		2016	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>
		2017	<b>19%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>18%</b>
		2022	<b>18%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>18%</b>

**4. Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 3. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcomes?**

- A. The 2022 writing assessment results show modest decreases in student attainment of all learning outcomes compared to 2014 thru 2017 (see Figure 1). These decreases are reflected in minor but evident declines in the proportion of students performing at the superior level. However, in noting the comparable proportion of students in all outcomes performing at levels comparable with the 2017 assessment, the results of the 2022 assessment also suggest continuing patterns of student attainment across the five-year gap between the two studies.
  
- B. The 2022 writing assessments show a general continuation of the curricular shifts toward more specialized versions of ENGL 1020 (i.e. the enhanced development of Honors, Dual Enrollment, and Online Sections) and also the instructional modifications as made necessary by the disruptions of the “Covid years.” The numbers from AY 2021-22 suggest that instructional criteria and standards were maintained despite the modifications made necessary by the pandemic. In addition, despite the perception of diminished student engagement due to remote instruction and less stringent attendance requirements, the data suggest that students continue to write effectively in the program as reflected in the data.



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

The MTSU English Department has implemented a number of successful initiatives (see Item 7). Most importantly, the department is deeply committed to excellence in its writing program, and this year’s assessment results reflect that commitment. We are pleased to note that regardless of the difficulties students and faculty have encountered in the last five years since we last assessed ENGL 1020, students are still able to meet each objective either at the satisfactory or superior rate 78-84% of the time. However, our primary reflection in reviewing this data is that the existing outcomes do not necessarily represent the current curriculum for ENGL 1020. Given this finding, we are particularly excited about the coming General Education Redesign and the opportunity to realign our individual course objectives with the new True Blue Core Outcomes. Based on these findings we plan to do the following in the coming year:

- Realign Course Objectives with True Blue Core Outcomes
- Propose a revised ENGL 1020 course to the General Education Redesign Committee
- Gather faculty and student input on existing course objectives and course design
- Develop additional Open Education Resources (OER) to meet the needs of our revised curriculum.

**6. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from previous assessments?**

Given that the last ENGL1020 assessment was in 2017, it is difficult to generalize the impact of individual and collective efforts of ENGL 1020 faculty and students. However, the following changes since 2017 have been met with faculty and student approval, and we believe may impact student success:

1. Development of OER: In 2020 we developed and piloted a new ENGL 1020 OER textbook that replaced *Everything's An Argument*, a traditional textbook from Bedford Publishing. Since then, and based on data from students and faculty, we have expanded the use of the OER program-wide. This means that students have low-cost textbooks on the first day of class, which has been proven to increase student success.
2. Participation in the Celebration of Student Writing: Beginning in 2017, students in ENGL 1020 were invited to share their research with a public audience near the close of the semester. This sharing of research is a high impact practice in line with MT Engage and Quest For Success.
3. Opportunities for Professional Development: Faculty and graduate teaching assistants who regularly teach ENGL 1020 were invited to several professional development events, including semester Curriculum Meetings, annual General Education English Orientation, and OER workshops.
4. Implementation of Guided Self-Placement (GSP): In an effort to increase student agency and respond to national concerns about equity in General Education, we first piloted GSP into first-year writing courses for international students in 2018. In 2020, we designed a GSP survey tool for students across General Education English to address difficulties in placement testing as a result of the pandemic. Further, the GSP provides multiple measures of student writing experience in lieu of one standardized test score. The GSP survey tool includes the following section: Student Information, Previous Reading and Writing Experiences, Learning Preferences, Test Scores & GPAs, and Personal Narratives
5. Earned roughly \$70,000 in student-centered grant monies: Since 2020, the Gen Ed English office has won extensive grant monies to support OER and SSP throughout the program. As a result of these grants students enrolled in ENGL 1020 spend only \$16 on course materials.

#### *Dissemination of Assessment Results*

1. At the end of each assessment cycle, the department's Assessment Coordinator and the Gen Ed English Administrative Team have disseminated the assessment results to the department faculty either through the listserv and/or at department meetings. In 2023, this information will be shared with the department faculty.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

The department has been advocating for limiting enrollment in its General Education writing courses to 20 students in line with the *Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing* advocated by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (<http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/postsecondarywriting>). Enrollment caps are a significant variable in writing achievement because enrollment caps in writing intensive courses

create opportunities for more individualized feedback during the writing process and ensure more rapid and detailed evaluation of students' writing. Thanks to the continued support of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the University Provost, the department has been able to limit enrollment accordingly. The improvement in student performance is certainly largely due to the individualized attention students in ENGL 1010 and 1020 are, therefore, receiving from their ENGL instructors.

## APPENDIX A

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT  
WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC<sup>i</sup>  
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
June 15, 2016

**OUTCOME A: The student writer is able to distill a primary argument into a single, compelling statement.**

5	The paper foregrounds a succinct, unambiguous, & focused thesis, that is, a <i>central, controlling claim</i> that is <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>arguable</i> (rather than a fact, a recognized truth, or a matter of personal taste),</li><li>• <i>reasoned</i> (e.g., “E-cigarettes should be regulated <i>because</i> ...), and</li><li>• functions as the main <i>result</i> of the research.</li></ul>
4	The paper foregrounds a thesis that is a <i>central, controlling claim</i> but is a bit less compelling, focused, succinct or unambiguous.
3	The paper contains a thesis but, in meeting the stated purpose of the paper, is too broad, too narrow, or lacks adequate focus.
2	The paper contains elements of a thesis (e.g., a central claim, reasons) but fails to bring together these elements in a statement that most readers would recognize as a “thesis.”
1	The paper lacks any sense of a central claim related to the paper’s stated purpose.

**OUTCOME B: The student writer gives a clear purpose and audience.**

5	The paper establishes a clear, specific purpose in relation to <i>impressive</i> knowledge of pertinent research and, in doing so, establishes a strong sense of audience ( <i>viz.</i> , the paper demonstrates knowledge of an “academic conversation” and is tailored to take part in that conversation).
4	The paper establishes its purpose in relation to <i>ample</i> knowledge of pertinent research and, in doing so, establishes a clear sense of audience.
3	The paper defines a purpose and establishes a sense of audience based on <i>rudimentary</i> knowledge of pertinent research ( <i>viz.</i> , the paper demonstrates some awareness that it needs to contribute to an existing academic conversation).
2	The paper maintains a purpose and sense of audience, though not formulated in response to pertinent research ( <i>i.e.</i> , the purpose is not situated in a conversation).
1	The paper does not exhibit a <i>controlling</i> sense of purpose and audience. The paper exhibits shifts in audience or lacks a clear sense of audience altogether.

**OUTCOME C: The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on primary argument.**

5	From the beginning, the paper provides readers with a clear sense of direction (organization). The paper maintains that sense of direction by using cues (e.g., transitions) to guide readers from one step to the next. The conclusion of the paper carries the sense that the paper's stated purpose has been achieved.
4	The paper provides readers with a clear sense of direction though that sense of direction is not always maintained clearly through the use of discursive cues.
3	The paper contains some but minimal effort to give readers a sense of its direction.
2	The paper seems to have some sense of direction but does nothing to make that direction clear to readers.
1	The paper lacks a sense of direction and, thus, lacks global organization.

**OUTCOME D: The student writer is able to develop his/her ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition).**

5	The paper is <i>impressive</i> in its development of arguments, e.g., by defining key words, by clarifying ideas through the use of examples or the use of comparison, by clarification through use of narration or classification.
4	The paper develops several of its arguments, e.g., by defining key words, by clarifying ideas through the use of examples or the use of comparison, by clarification through use of narration or classification.
3	The paper reflects an understanding of the need to develop ideas but develops only one or two.
2	The paper reflects some but inadequate effort at developing its ideas.
1	The paper shows no effort at developing its ideas.

**OUTCOME E: The student writer is able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple secondary sources.**

5	The paper makes <i>impressive</i> use of basic information from multiple, reliable sources to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make clear the situation, problem, or question that the paper engages;</li> <li>• introduce readers to different positions in an academic "conversation" regarding the situation, problem, or question; and</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide supporting evidence for the paper’s arguments.</li> </ul> <p>All of the information from sources is well integrated and is appropriately attributed to the sources.</p>
4	<p>The paper makes <i>good</i> use of basic information from multiple, reliable sources to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make clear the situation, problem, or question that the paper engages;</li> <li>• introduce readers to different positions in an academic “conversation” regarding the situation, problem, or question; and</li> <li>• provide supporting evidence for the paper’s arguments.</li> </ul> <p>Most of the information from sources is well integrated and appropriately attributed to the sources.</p>
3	<p>The paper provides supporting information from multiple sources, but the reliability or appropriateness of some sources would be regarded as questionable by likely readers of the paper. Information from sources is adequately integrated and attributed to the sources.</p>
2	<p>The paper provides supporting information, but only from one source or from multiple unreliable sources. Information is poorly integrated and/or poorly attributed to the sources.</p>
1	<p>The paper fails to use basic information gathered from multiple, reliable sources. Information is not integrated and is not attributed to the sources.</p>

**OUTCOME F: The student writer is able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.**

5	<p>The paper reflects a degree of mastery over diction, grammar, syntax, and usage in formal written English, as well as a degree of mastery over other conventions appropriate to academic papers (e.g., APA or MLA documentation style), including the appropriate mechanics for citing sources.</p>
4	<p>In spite of a few errors, the paper reflects control over diction, grammar, syntax, and usage in formal written English, as well as control of conventions appropriate to the purpose of the paper, including the appropriate mechanics for citing sources.</p>
3	<p>In spite of numerous errors, the paper reflects basic control over formal written English, as well as control of conventions appropriate to the purpose of the paper, including the appropriate mechanics for citing sources.</p>
2	<p>The paper contains an obtrusive number of grammatical, syntactic, or usage, and provides minimal mastery of the mechanics for citing sources.</p>

1	The paper reflects a significant lack of control over formal written English (including diction, grammar, usage, and mechanics).
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<sup>i</sup> This document describes the levels of quality in performance for each of the TBR-mandated outcomes for assessing General Education Competency in writing. The rubric was developed by Dr. James Comas with input from a committee of English faculty representing all the faculty ranks in the department (GTA, adjunct instructor, full-time temporary lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor). The committee consisted of Deborah Barnard, Lando Carter, James Comas, Megan Donelson, Morgan Hanson, Martha Hixon, Jennifer Kates, Rebecca King, Kate Pantelides, Robert Petersen, Aaron Shapiro, Kathleen Therrien, and Aleka Blackwell (Department's Assessment Coordinator). The following sources were consulted in the development of the rubric:

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2014). Textbook commonly used in ENGL 1020 at MTSU.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Standard reference work for writers of research.

**Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes**  
**Subject Area: Mathematics**  
**Academic Year: 2021-2022**

1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment. Include the prefix, number, and title of each course.
  - MATH 1710 – College Algebra
  - MATH 1710K – College Algebra
2. Indicate the number of students who were assessed. Sampling was not used.
  - A total of 1,555 students were assessed in the academic year (1,091 in fall 2021 and 464 in spring 2022). Results of all students who took the departmental final examination were used in the assessment.
3. Do the procedures described in Items 1 and 2 represent any significant change from previous assessments? If so, describe the changes and rationale.
  - There was no change in the procedure. The final exam was revised. Each of the 5 general education learning outcomes for mathematics is associated with a specific set of questions on the final exam. The association scheme was redefined so that each of the 5 learning outcomes is associated with a specific set of 5 questions on the final exam such that no learning outcome has overlapping exam questions associated with it. The results of all students who took the exam are used to assess each of the Mathematics Learning Outcomes.

A correct response rate of:

- At least 85% is deemed superior,
- Between 60% and 84%, inclusive, is deemed satisfactory, and
- Less than 60% is deemed unsatisfactory.

Mathematics Learning Outcome to be Assessed	Test Used	Test Item Numbers
<b>Learning Outcome 1:</b> Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 4, 26, 28, 29, 33
<b>Learning Outcome 2:</b> Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 7, 8, 9, 11, 14
<b>Learning Outcome 3:</b> Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 5, 6, 10, 12, 21
<b>Learning Outcome 4:</b> Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 3, 16, 17, 18, 24
<b>Learning Outcome 5:</b> Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	Math 1710 Common Final	Questions 1, 20, 30, 34, 35

4. The table below records the results of the assessments of each Mathematics Learning Outcome where N = total number of students who took the final exam.

<i>General Education Mathematics Learning Outcomes Fall 2022 N = 1091</i>				
<b>Mathematics Outcome to be Assessed</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Superior or Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>
1. Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	n=91 (8.3%)	n=577 (52.8%)	n=668 (61.2%)	n=423 (38.7%)
2. Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.	n=627 (57.4%)	n=213 (19.5%)	n=840 (76.9%)	n=251 (23.0%)
3. Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	n=253 (23.2%)	n=699 (64.0%)	n=952 (87.2%)	n=139 (12.7%)
4. Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.	n=415 (38.0%)	n=585 (53.6%)	n=1000 (91.6%)	n=91 (8.3%)
5. Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	n=626 (57.3%)	n=436 (39.9%)	n=1062 (97.3%)	n=29 (2.7%)

<i>General Education Mathematics Learning Outcomes Spring 2022 N = 463</i>				
<b>Mathematics Outcome to be Assessed</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Superior or Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>
1. Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	n=62 (13.4%)	n=236 (50.9%)	n=298 (64.2%)	n=165 (35.6%)
2. Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.	n=221 (47.6%)	n=149 (32.1%)	n=370 (79.7%)	n=93 (20.0%)
3. Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	n=81 (17.50%)	n=256 (55.2%)	n=337 (72.6%)	n=126 (27.2%)
4. Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.	n=148 (31.9%)	n=212 (45.7%)	n=360 (77.6%)	n=103 (22.2%)
5. Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	n=216 (46.6%)	n=179 (46.9%)	n=395 (85.1%)	n=68 (14.7%)

<b>General Education</b> <b>Mathematics Learning Outcomes AY 21-22</b> <b>N = 1554</b>				
<b>Mathematics Outcome to be Assessed</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Superior or Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>	<b># (%)</b>
1. Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	n=153 (9.8%)	n=813 (52.3%)	n=966 (62.1%)	n=588 (37.8%)
2. Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.	n=848 (54.5%)	n=362 (23.3%)	n=1210 (77.8%)	n=344 (22.1%)
3. Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	n=334 (21.5%)	n=955 (61.4%)	n=1289 (82.9%)	n=265 (17.0%)
4. Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.	n=563 (36.2%)	n=797 (51.3%)	n=1360 (87.5%)	n=194 (12.5%)
5. Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	n=842 (54.1%)	n=615 (39.5%)	n=1457 (93.7%)	n=97 (6.2%)

The table below shows results of AY 2021-2022 for percentages of unsatisfactory responses on each of the 5 mathematics learning outcomes compared to data from 4 previous academic years. Due to the global pandemic, data is not available for sub-aggregate analysis for AY 20-21. See AY 20-21 Assessment report for more information.

<b>Percentages of Unsatisfactory Responses</b>					
<b>Mathematics Learning Outcome</b>	<b>AY 17-18</b>	<b>AY 18-19</b>	<b>AY 19-20</b>	<b>AY 20-21 No Data Available</b>	<b>AY 21-22</b>
LO 1	19.7%	22.7%	18.7%	n/a	37.8%
LO 2	20.6%	20.4%	19.3%	n/a	22.1%
LO 3	20.6%	20.4%	19.3%	n/a	17.0%
LO 4	14.5%	15.1%	19.5%	n/a	12.5%
LO 5	10.4%	12.5%	19.3%	n/a	6.2%

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

Analyzing the data, and comparing to AY 19-20 and AY 21-22, we see a decrease in the percentage of students performing at the unsatisfactory rate for Learning Outcomes 3, 4 and 5. Focusing on Learning Outcomes 1 and 2, there is a significant increase in the percentages at the unsatisfactory rate for Learning Outcomes 1 and 2.

One possible explanation is that of the number of dual enrollment sections doubled from AY 19-20 to AY 21-22. For AY 18-19 there were 30 non-K sections taught of which 5 were dual enrollment. For AY 21-22, there were 22 non-K sections taught of which 10 were dual enrollment. The Spring 22 semester also included 1 online, dual enrollment K section for the first time. Another likely contributing factor is that the final exam was revised with new questions developed and a set of 5 exam questions were assigned to each of the Learning Outcomes. For Learning Outcomes 1, in the past, all 40 exam questions were used to measure the success rate and a subset of 16 questions taken from the 40-question exam was assigned to Outcome 2.

Students are placed in K-sections (prescribed enhanced sections) based on a Math ACT score of 17 or 18, and students are placed in non-K-sections with a Math ACT score of 19 or better. This assessment combines the results of all students (both K- and non-K-sections), so that the average math ACT score of the student population in MATH 1710 is certainly less than the ACT Test Benchmark of 22 set as the benchmark for “a high probability of success” in College Algebra (<http://www.act.org/research>). Less than one-quarter of College Algebra students present an ACT Math score as high as 22.

Extra support for students enrolled in K-sections includes the tenured and tenure-track faculty from University Studies who consistently teach the majority of the K-sections of MATH 1710. These students also receive extra time each week for classroom instruction, as well as the use of online programs to help students to be more consistent in completing homework assignments. These efforts have been successful as indicated by studies consistently showing no significant difference in the final examination results when K- and non-K-sections are compared.

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

Several strategies have been taken to provide a more consistent program for general education courses—

- The Committee created common departmental syllabi and common course schedules listing topics to cover for all instructors of MATH 1710 (also for MATH 1010, MATH 1530, MATH 1630, & MATH 1810). The syllabi are routinely updated and posted to the department website.

- All faculty members are instructed to keep accurate attendance records on each student to document D-F-W grades and to encourage students to attend classes.
- Faculty members are instructed to utilize the University's Academic Alert System early and throughout the semester to notify students who are in academic jeopardy.
- Students are encouraged to use all available resources to receive tutoring and help with classwork. The syllabus includes a link to Tutoring Center in James Walker Library. Students are informed directly of the tutoring services available to them.
- Starting in Fall 2022, Dr. Jeremy Strayer assumed the role of Graduate Teaching Supervisor for all GTAs assigned to teach mathematics courses from MSE, COMMs, MSPS and Mathematical Sciences MS. The GTA supervisor mentors GTAs, giving them opportunities to deepen teaching skills, observe teaching, and implement new pedagogies. Additionally, the GTA supervisor assists the chair in the scheduling of workloads, addressing concerns, and attending to requirements of graduate programs.
- In the Department of Mathematical Sciences, College Algebra is taught almost entirely by full-time temporary instructors, adjunct instructors, and GTAs.
  - ❖ In F2021, 55 sections were taught (23 K-sections and 24 non-K sections). Of the 23 K-sections, 3 were distance learning. Of the 22 non-K sections, 1 was distance learning and 10 were dual enrollment. The K sections were taught by 10 different instructors with 3 being tenured. The non-K sections were taught by 18 different instructors with only 2 sections taught by a tenured MTSU faculty. The remaining non-K sections were taught by GTAs, temporary and adjunct faculty. All 10 dual enrollment sections were taught by adjunct and temporary faculty.
  - ❖ In S2022, 29 sections were taught (17 K-sections and 12 non-K sections). Of the 17 K-sections 2 were distance learning. Of the 12 non-K sections, 1 was distance learning and 3 were dual enrollment. The K-sections were taught by 8 different instructors with only 1 of them tenured. The non-K sections were taught by 8 different instructors with only 1 a tenured MTSU faculty. The remaining non-K sections were taught by GTAs, temporary faculty and adjunct faculty.

Because of an inherently higher turn-over rate for adjunct and temporary faculty, the Department continues to request more tenure-track faculty lines to meet the needs of the student population enrolling in MATH 1710 to satisfy general education requirements.

7. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from previous assessments? If yes, please explain.
  - To ensure greater uniformity in syllabi, grading, and learning expectations, all instructors are now required to have common information on syllabi and to use the same grading scale ranges.

- A significant and continuing goal of the Department is to develop course communities, also called professional communities, of faculty for its Gen Ed courses. MATH 1530 is an example where such a community has been developed. Faculty teaching the courses meet on a regular basis to share and plan for ways to improve student learning. Mathematics faculty also engage in Teaching TRIOS, a time-sensitive (T), reciprocal (R), inclusive (I), operative (O), and strengths-based (S) approach to peer observation of instruction. In this model, teams of three mathematics faculty observe in one another's classrooms and then meet to debrief on the observations. Unlike ordinary teacher observation where the observer is positioned as the instructional coach, in the Teaching TRIOS model the goal is for the observers to be the learners. The observers attend to the strengths of the instructor that they observed and use their debrief time to unpack the strengths of the instructor, hence learning from his or her professional knowledge. We have found the TRIOS model to be effective at building professional communities of faculty who are deeply focused on issues of teaching and learning within our department.
- The Department of Mathematical Sciences and the Department of University Studies both continue to provide free tutoring to students in all General Education Mathematics courses. The Mathematics Department offers tutoring for MATH 1710 and other General Education Mathematics courses in the Walker Library. The University Studies Department offers tutoring for MATH 1010-K, 1710-K, and 1530-K in the KOM building. All MTSU mathematics tutors receive extensive training.

University Studies offers a program called Academic Intervention in Mathematics (AIM) to promote success for those highly at-risk students who are repeating prescribed General Education mathematics courses. AIM targets students who have failed the course in which they are enrolled. These at-risk students are identified for each instructor at the beginning of the semester. The instructor meets with each student periodically to advise, to encourage, to teach study skills, and to individualize other interventions. Interventions may include assignments of time to be spent in the math lab, notebook checks, or written assignments. Simply meeting with students to show concern for them and to build relationships with them is a proven retention tool. Students are encouraged to meet with instructors during office hours. Instructors also use phone calls, emails, and Advisor Alerts to contact students who are not attending class. It is obvious that this type of intervention would be helpful to other students, so instructors intervene when any student is not progressing well. Any intervention that is designed for repeating students is also available to non-repeaters. For students who have missed a class or for tutors who might need to review some course topic(s), videos for all mathematics courses offered by University Studies are made available for viewing with all students and all faculty given access.
- An item analysis was performed on the final exam data. Two exam questions associated with Learning Outcome 1, 1 question associated with Learning Outcome 3 and 1 question associated with Learning Outcome 5 were identified as having less

than a 50% student success rate. Materials will be made available to Math 1710 instructors to assist with addressing this deficiency. Supporting data is provided at the end of the report.

- To identify actions and strategies to improve student achievement, assessment results are provided and shared with faculty in Mathematical Sciences, faculty in University Studies, and members of the Mathematics General Education Committee.

All faculty received the following email. Suggestions for improvement are being implemented.

*Greetings All,*

*The table below shows results of AY 2021-2022 for percentages of Superior, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory responses on each of the 5 General Education Learning Outcomes for the Mathematics Competency as measured by the College Algebra MATH 1710 Department Final Exam. Please let me know if you have comments or ideas on how we can improve on these results.*

*A correct response rate of:*

- *At least 85% is deemed superior,*
- *Between 60% and 84%, inclusive, is deemed satisfactory, and*
- *Less than 60% is deemed unsatisfactory.*

*Learning Outcome 1: Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.*

*Learning Outcome 2: Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.*

*Learning Outcome 3: Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.*

*Learning Outcome 4: Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.*

*Learning Outcome 5: Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.*

*MATH 1710 course review: <https://mtsu.edu/math/docs/1710-Course-Review-F18.pdf>*

<b>General Education Mathematics Learning Outcomes N = 1553</b>				
<b>Mathematics Outcome to be Assessed</b>	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Superior or Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	<b># and %</b>	<b># and %</b>	<b># and %</b>	<b># and %</b>
1. Students can use mathematics to solve problems and determine if results are reasonable.	n=153 (9.8%)	n=813 (52.3%)	n=966 (62.1%)	n=588 (37.8%)
2. Students can use mathematics to model real-world behaviors and apply mathematical concepts to the solution of real-life problems.	n=848 (54.5%)	n=362 (23.3%)	n=1210 (77.8%)	n=344 (22.1%)
3. Students can make meaningful connections between mathematics and other disciplines.	n=334 (21.5%)	n=955 (61.4%)	n=1289 (82.9%)	n=265 (17.0%)
4. Students can use technology for mathematical reasoning and problem solving.	n=563 (36.2%)	n=797 (34.5%)	n=1360 (87.5%)	n=194 (12.5%)

5. Students can apply mathematical and/or basic statistical reasoning to analyze data and graphs.	n=842 (54.1%)	n=615 (39.5%)	n=1457 (93.7%)	n=97 (6.2%)
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**Question Response Rate by Learning Outcome  
50% or Less Success Rate Highlighted**

Question #	Total Percent Correct
LO1 Q04	56.18
LO1 Q26	53.71
LO1 Q28	63.55
LO1 Q29	40.60
LO1 Q33	27.42
LO2 Q07	69.50
LO2 Q08	96.00
LO2 Q09	88.30
LO2 Q11	90.66
LO2 Q14	71.88
LO3 Q05	96.46
LO3 Q06	86.59
LO3 Q10	81.71
LO3 Q12	30.63
LO3 Q21	50.05
LO4 Q03	75.79
LO4 Q16	68.68
LO4 Q17	86.30
LO4 Q18	75.81
LO4 Q24	51.00
LO5 Q01	97.77
LO5 Q20	77.50
LO5 Q30	92.94
LO5 Q34	66.45
LO5 Q35	45.00

## Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Our most recent QEP, MT Engage emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, specifically integrative thinking and critical reflection.

**Academic Year: 2021-2022**

**Subject Area: Critical Thinking**

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

California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)

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

Sampling was not used.

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

MTSU = 15.91; National = 15.12

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

The CCTST specifically targets analysis, evaluation, and inference. The test also provides traditional scores in inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. For a detailed definition of critical thinking and a description of critical thinking skills, see link <https://www.mtsu.edu/iepr/docs/cctstinterpret.pdf>. To examine the data in greater detail, see link [https://www.mtsu.edu/iepr/field\\_test.php](https://www.mtsu.edu/iepr/field_test.php). Since 2018-2019 the average for MTSU students have been above the national average, but has decreased over the past three years. The 2018-2019 score for MTSU students (16.4) rose for the first time in five years and is above the 2018-2019 national average (15.40). Comparatively, MTSU scores are still below their 2014-2015 (16.7) and 2013-2014 (16.9) levels, but are above the national level.

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

Because it is currently difficult to draw a straight line between gen ed courses and the teaching and learning of critical thinking skills, we pursue a broad plan of general support for the teaching and critical thinking across the curriculum and in a number of university initiatives, including the following:

Our newly approved Gen Ed curriculum, The True Blue Core, includes a critical thinking student learning outcome that may contribute to improving student learning and will be assessed after the launch of the new program in 2024.

The Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) continues to offer workshops that help faculty incorporate strategies for improving critical thinking. For example, in 2021-2022, the LT&ITC offered workshops on topics such as course redesign for increased student engagement, active learning, experiential learning and MT Engage pedagogies, etc.

Many General Education courses emphasize the development of critical thinking, although there's not currently a curriculum-wide requirement to do so. The three required courses in the Communication category provide incoming students with an introduction to the critical and analytical skills necessary for success in college. We maintain small class size to make sure these essential skills are taught.

Critical thinking skills will continue to be emphasized in General Education and in each degree program (see Institutional Effectiveness Reports for the various majors).

Instructors of UNIV 1010 will continue to assign textbooks that contain a critical thinking component in each chapter.

Tutoring for most gen ed courses is offered through the Office of Student Success and emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills.