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# General Education Assessment: the good, the bad, and the ugly

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SCoA Zoom-In  
November 10, 2022  
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**First, don't panic!**



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**Next, ensure  
sufficient caffeine  
levels.**



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**Then, define  
general  
education.**

## Knowledge and Skill Areas

- AA/AS/Baccalaureate (7/10 and 30 credits)
  - AAS (4/10 and 20 credits)
  - AOS (4/10 and no credit requirement)
1. Communication – Written and Oral (required)
  2. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (required)
  3. Mathematics (and Quantitative Reasoning) (required)
  4. Natural Sciences (and Scientific Reasoning) (required)
  5. Humanities
  6. Social Sciences
  7. The Arts
  8. US History and Civic Engagement
  9. World History and Global Awareness
  10. World Languages

## Core Competencies (no credit requirement)

- Critical Thinking and Reasoning (required)
- Information Literacy (required)

# The Expectations

- Course student learning outcomes form the basis of course level learning and should be indicated in all course syllabi.
- Although Middle States does not specifically require course level assessment, this usually provides a format for assessment of other outcomes at the gen ed, program, and institutional levels.

# The Tricky Bits

- Middle States considers General Education to be a program.
- Up to this point, gen ed assessment has typically been done within courses. How is the program as a whole assessed?
- The current expectation is that GE learning outcomes need to be considered at the institutional level, like ILOs.



# The Tricky Bits

- Overlap between MSCHE GE and SUNY GE 2.0 isn't perfect, but the alignment is much improved.
- However, many individual programs may select different optional knowledge and skill areas depending on the type of program and the discipline.
- Establishing an institutional gen ed program therefore presents a challenge.



# Suggestion

- For the purposes of Middle States evaluation, consider using the four required categories and two competencies as the **institutional** gen ed program.
- Individual programs might add the optional categories they deem most appropriate to fulfill the SUNY requirement, but these would be assessed at the program level rather than the institutional level.

# The Tricky Bits

- How do we look at learning at the global level and understand enough about what's happening to be able to make improvements in teaching and learning?
- The key is aggregating enough to see institution-wide trends, and subsequently disaggregating again in order to see where improvements might be made.

# Review and Plan

- Review aggregate outcomes institutionally to discover any trends or issues of concern.
- Consider use of percentages of students not meeting the standard, approaching the standard, meeting the standard and exceeding the standard
- Disaggregate data for any emerging trends in order to discover where changes may be made to improve teaching and learning.
- Plan changes.
- Address any necessary budget implications for planned improvements.
- Review regularly and tweak as needed.
- Document everything.

**First you need to know  
where your Gen ED  
learning outcomes are  
delivered and assessed.**

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**See previous curriculum mapping workshop for mapping of knowledge and skills areas. Slides are available on the SCoA website [scoa.suny.edu](http://scoa.suny.edu).**

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**A recording of another mapping presentation is available on SUNY Blue at:**

**<https://blue.suny.edu/departments/AcademicAffairs/ProgramReview/Shared%20Documents/CPR%20Meeting%20-%202018-11-20%20-%20Outcome%20Mapping/Conversations%20with%20Program%20Reviewers-20181120%202001-1.mp4>**

**Recording starts about 3 minutes in. Use your local campus login credentials to access it. Use Google Chrome for best results.**

# Core Competencies

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# Previously

- Critical Thinking and Information Management were considered to be “infused throughout the curriculum”.
- Student attainment of these competencies were not recorded on the General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA).
- Competencies were generally not owned by anyone and generally not assessed.





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# Previously

- We have been claiming for almost 25 years that students have acquired these competencies by completing a SUNY degree program without any evidence whatsoever that this is true.

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# Now

- Student attainment of Core Competencies must be included on the GETA.
- Result: justifiable general freak out.

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**Again, don't panic!**

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# First Map Your Competencies

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# Assessing Infused Competencies

Adapt your maps to reflect how and where core competencies are Introduced, Reinforced, Mastered, and Assessed.

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Course Designation	Course Title	Credits	Critical Thinking	Assessed	Information Literacy	Assessed
ENG 101	Freshman English I	3			I	
BUS 101	Principles of Accounting I	4	I			
BUS 103	Principles of Business	3	I			
	Math Elective	3				
	Natural Science Elective	4				
ENGL 102	Freshman English II	3			R	
BUS 102	Principles of Accounting II	4	R			
BUS 225	Microcomputer Application Software	3				
	Math Elective	3				
	Physical Education	1				
	Health	1				
ENG 221	Effective Speech: Public Address	3			R	
	OR					
ENG 270	Technical Writing	3			R	
BUS 200	Principles of Management	3	R			
BUS 205	Business Law I	3	R			
ECON 201	Intro to Economics I	3	R			
	World History and Global Awareness	3				
	OR					
	The Arts Elective	3				
	Physical Education	1				
BUS 204	Marketing	3				
ECON 202	Intro to Economics II	3	M			
Math 214	Statistics	3				
DEISJ 101	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice	3	M	✓	M	✓



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# Combining Maps Departmentally

- Determine which courses in each program meet gen ed and institutional student learning outcomes.
- Find the courses which are most common to all programs and identify these for assessment of these outcomes.
- If possible develop common assessment tools for use across sections.
- Establish a defensible standard to which you will benchmark success.
- Assemble the percentage of students not meeting, approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standard established.

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# The Issue is the GETA

- The requirement to include core competencies on the GETA is challenging.
- How do we do this?
- Do we have to list every course where these are addressed?
- Can we just use the grades in classes where the competencies are delivered as evidence that students have attained these competencies?

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# Can We Use Grades for the GETA?

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**Problem:**

**Grades  $\neq$  Assessment**

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# What do grades tell you?

1. If two thirds of the students in a course get a C, what does that tell you about what they know and what they don't know?
2. How will you then know what adjustments to make in your teaching/content so that learning improves?

**For Example:**

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Grading scale: 13-15=A, 10-12=B, 7-9=C, 4-6=D, <4=F

	Student #1	Total points 7	Grade C			Points
	Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate their abilities to produce coherent texts within common college level forms.	Does not meet (0) (add description)	Approaches (1) (add description)	Meets (2) (add description)	Exceeds (3) (add description)	
1.	Writer presents an identifiable thesis.					2
2.	The paper moves coherently and logically from introduction to conclusion.					2
3.	Paragraphs present examples and evidence to support the thesis.					2
4.	The language and tone are appropriate for the intended audience.					1
5.	Mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling and documentation, if needed) are accurate.					0

Grading scale: 13-15=A, 10-12=B, 7-9=C, 4-6=D, <4=F

	Student #2	Total points 7	Grade C			Points
	Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate their abilities to produce coherent texts within common college level forms.	Does not meet (0) (add description)	Approaches (1) (add description)	Meets (2) (add description)	Exceeds (3) (add description)	
1.	Writer presents an identifiable thesis.					<b>3</b>
2.	The paper moves coherently and logically from introduction to conclusion.					<b>2</b>
3.	Paragraphs present examples and evidence to support the thesis.					<b>1</b>
4.	The language and tone are appropriate for the intended audience.					<b>1</b>
5.	Mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling and documentation, if needed) are accurate.					<b>0</b>

Grading scale: 13-15=A, 10-12=B, 7-9=C, 4-6=D, <4=F

	Student #3	Total points 7	Grade C			Points
	Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate their abilities to produce coherent texts within common college level forms.	Does not meet (0) (add description)	Approaches (1) (add description)	Meets (2) (add description)	Exceeds (3) (add description)	
1.	Writer presents an identifiable thesis.					<b>1</b>
2.	The paper moves coherently and logically from introduction to conclusion.					<b>1</b>
3.	Paragraphs present examples and evidence to support the thesis.					<b>2</b>
4.	The language and tone are appropriate for the intended audience.					<b>1</b>
5.	Mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling and documentation, if needed) are accurate.					<b>2</b>

**So what are the  
options?**







# Suggestions

- It's necessary to separate out the transcribing process and the assessing process.
- We have been recording gen ed attainment in knowledge and skills areas as passing the designated courses.
- There is no need to change this for core competencies.
- However, it would not work to assess general education knowledge and skill areas and core competencies by using grades.



# Suggestions

- Remember that the main purpose for assessment is to make improvements and to determine their effectiveness.
- This is not about individual student attainment, but rather about trends and patterns needing attention.

# Suggestions

1. Use the last course in the map in which you are doing assessment of the competencies. It doesn't make sense to list on the GETA every course where you are delivering competency instruction.
2. There should be a link between assessing and grading, but they shouldn't be used interchangeably. Instead, assessment should be used to inform grading.

# Assess Your Assessment

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**How is it working?**

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**If it's not meaningful  
and useful, it's not  
assessment. It's just  
busy work.**

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# Assess Your Assessment

- Is it too complicated or cumbersome to be sustainable?
- Does it occur frequently enough to make changes in time to help students?
- Does it give you meaningful results and the information you need to make improvements?

# Assess Your Assessment

Make changes where needed and document these.



**Questions?**

**SUNY**