General Education Core Competencies 2010 to 2011

Background: What is Competency Assessment?
Florida Keys Community College strives to ensure that its graduates who complete the core curriculum possess the knowledge, skills and values associated with college-educated individuals.

A method for accomplishing this is to assess general education, the core curriculum, each semester to identify that graduates demonstrate proficiency in competencies that are integrated within the academic disciplines.

These competencies include the ability to effectively communicate, seek creative solutions to problems, exhibit cultural awareness, and command basic technological skills. Students who acquire proficiency in these areas have an enhanced opportunity to experience the positive impact of education, which can, in turn, ignite a passion for continual, life-long learning.

In March 2010, faculty evaluated its overall progress with preliminary assessment of the college’s eight competencies (spring 2009 and fall 2010 comparison): communication, critical thinking, art appreciation, diversity, ethics, mathematics, natural sciences and technology. The consensus was that these competencies should be merged for the purpose of generating more manageable and meaningful results. Faculty voted on the following competencies as being primary for FKCC graduates:

1. Communication
Comprehend and articulate effectively – written and oral communication

2. Critical thinking
Demonstrate mastery of problem-solving skills in the discipline

3. Diversity
Interpret and evaluate societal and ethical issues, problems and values

4. Technology
Utilize technology effectively

The Process
General education courses at FKCC are categorized according to academic discipline: Letters & Humanities, Social Sciences, and Math and Sciences. All core courses are listed under their respective discipline in a “Course Content Distribution” table where each course also indicates which, or any, of the four competencies are addressed. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letters &amp; Humanities</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENC1101 Eng Comp I</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENC1102 Eng Com II</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AML2020 American Lit</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENL2022 Eng Lit</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although all of the core courses are linked in the Course Content Distribution table to identify the competencies that they address, the college focuses its assessment processes primarily on the upper level courses because those are the courses where students who are preparing to graduate are most likely to be enrolled.

Each semester, the Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) reviews the college’s schedule of 200-level course offerings that have an enrollment of 8 or more. The college then lists those courses under each competency that has been linked on the Course Content Distribution table. However, some courses that may not be taken in the students’ graduating year are included in this process because they are still courses that are required for graduation.

For example, graduates of the associate in science programs are not required to take ENC1102; therefore, ENC 1101 must also be included in this filtering process in order to capture the competency proficiency of the associate in science graduates. The courses included in this process that some students may take during their first or second year include: ENC1101, ENC1102, MGF1106, CGS1000C, CGS1100, and MAC1105.

After all of the currently offered courses are listed under their respective competency, the OAA conducts a 20% random selection of courses. This random selection process identifies those courses that will participate in competency assessment for the semester.

**Participation**
Faculty who are teaching the randomly selected courses are notified within the first couple weeks of the semester that they must identify and assess a course learning activity or activities that support the specific competency. Faculty can identify the course learning activities that correspond to the competency by reviewing the “course calendar” portion of their syllabus. In the left-hand column of the course calendar, the college-level competencies are linked directly to the course student learning outcomes and learning activities that support it.

After faculty have selected the activity or activities to participate in the assessment process, they are asked to document the method of assessment by using the codes listed below:

**Assessment Options:**
- CE: Composition(s) or Essay(s)
- CP: Class Participation
- CU: Curriculum Unit Project
- WE: Written Examination(s)
- HW: Homework Exercises
- IA: Internet Activities
- LP: Lesson Plan & Analysis
- OP: Oral Presentation(s)
- Q: Quizzes (oral and/or written)
- RP: Research Paper
- DP: Discussion Post
- Other:

This documentation of the type of assessment activities allows the faculty members to identify the most prevalent type(s) of assessment and whether they feel it is effective for assessing proficiency in the specific competencies.
Assessment: Rubrics

No matter what type of assessment measure faculty are implementing, they are asked to evaluate student performance using a standardized rubric for each competency. This standardized rubric is very broad and designed for all disciplines of the college to use to demonstrate competency proficiency.

In some cases, faculty may have other methods of assessment, including another, more specific rubric that they use for their selected activity or activities. In a situation such as this, faculty are encouraged to use both the assessment method they developed for their course activity as well as the standardized rubric. This way, the college can conduct interdisciplinary comparisons of the overall results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Emerging 0</th>
<th>Developing 1</th>
<th>Proficient 2</th>
<th>Exemplary 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. \textbf{Communication: Comprehend and articulate effectively – written and oral communication} | ● Thesis and main ideas not clearly stated, writing wavers in purpose and does not address assigned topic.  
● Loose focus on ideas and detail. Repetition, weak structure, several errors in structure, word choice and mechanics. | ● Thesis and main ideas adhere to purpose. Adequate understanding of key issues. Purpose not focused or detailed.  
● Several errors in structure, word choice or mechanics that obscure content or purpose. | ● Thesis and main ideas communicate purpose effectively.  
● Content shows insight of key issues.  
● Details are clear throughout work.  
● Occasional errors in structure, usage or mechanics do not obscure content or purpose. | ● Thesis and main ideas communicate purpose with sophistication and insight.  
● Content demonstrates analysis to key issues.  
● Key points and details are focused and clearly stated.  
● Nearly flawless structure usage and mechanics. |
| 2. \textbf{Critical thinking: Demonstrate mastery of problem-solving skills in the discipline} | ● Unable to analyze information, questions, and problems or does so superficially  
● Unable to evaluate material.  
● Unable to identify implications and consequences. No demonstration of ability to use deductive and inductive reasoning and problem-solving skills | ● Analyzes some key information, questions, and problems competently  
● Evaluates material inconsistently.  
● Inconsistent identification of implications and consequences.  
● Uses deductive and inductive reasoning and problem-solving skills inconsistently | ● Analyzes key information, questions, and problems competently  
● Evaluates material competently.  
● Can identify implications and consequences.  
● Uses deductive and inductive reasoning and problem-solving skills competently | ● Analyzes key information, questions, and problems clearly and precisely  
● Evaluates material with insight.  
● Uses clearly stated premises to important implications and consequences  
● Uses deductive and inductive reasoning and problem-solving skills consistently and with ease |
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</table>
| **3. Diversity: Interpret and evaluate societal and ethical issues, problems and values** | - Lacks general awareness of cultural diversity or of its significance.  
- Student lacks the ability to directly reference issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities in narrative content or methodology/process, and might refer to one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES (Socioeconomic Status), political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world. | - Ability to refer to issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with few details but lacks complexity in narrative content or methodology/process, and includes references to one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES (Socioeconomic Status), political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world. | - Ability to explicitly explore or examine issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with sufficient details and some complexity in narrative content or methodology/process, and includes references to more than one of the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES (Socioeconomic Status), political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world. | - Ability to explicitly explore or examine issues of socio-cultural diversity and/or sustainability of human or natural communities with extensive details and complexity in narrative content, methodology/process, and includes reference to all that apply in the following: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, SES (Socioeconomic Status), political perspectives, belief systems or the natural world. |
| **4. Technology: Utilize technology effectively** | - Does not use a computer or software to create a document or any enhanced application software features.  
- Does not use discipline-appropriate applications  
- Exhibits little to no ability to choose appropriate technology for assignments and other tasks.  
- Exhibits little to no ability to evaluate the potentials and limitations of technology as applied to a specified discipline. | - Exhibits minimal software skills, and requires remediation to perform basic tasks.  
- Shows minimal understanding of enhanced software features, but requires guidance or assistance in using features  
- Shows minimal understanding of discipline-appropriate applications, but requires guidance or assistance in using features.  
- Exhibits minimal ability to choose appropriate technology for assignments and other tasks.  
- Exhibits minimal ability to evaluate the potentials and limitations of technology as applied to a specified discipline. | - Exhibits satisfactory software skills, but requires guidance or assistance in using specific features.  
- Uses advanced application functions.  
- Demonstrates competent use of discipline-appropriate applications.  
- Exhibits satisfactory ability to choose appropriate technology for assignments and other tasks.  
- Exhibits satisfactory ability to evaluate the potentials and limitations of technology as applied to a specified discipline. | - Exhibits exemplary use of appropriate software to create documents using basic application features without assistance.  
- Exhibits exemplary software skills, and has mastered advanced application functions.  
- Maximizes power and functionality of discipline-appropriate applications.  
- Exhibits an excellent ability to choose appropriate technology for assignments and other tasks.  
- Exhibits excellent ability to evaluate the potentials and limitations of technology as applied to a specified discipline. |
Results

After faculty have conducted the learning activity, they document their results on a competency assessment template that indicates the type of activity, the student learning outcome it supports, the program learning outcome that the SLO supports, the proficiency results as specified on the rubric, and the use of results. The “use of results” is very important because this is an opportunity for faculty to document the improvements and modifications that they have made or are making to their course based on the assessment results and students’ ability to demonstrate proficiency of the selected competency.

The OAA compiles the overall results and presents them to faculty. The Dean of Arts and Sciences reviews these comprehensive results with the faculty who comprise the core curriculum in order to discuss their satisfaction with the assessment measures and results of student proficiency. During these meetings, faculty strategizes on methods to improve student competency attainment. These strategies may include curricular or process revisions, professional developments and trainings, or modifications to the assessment processes.