



Core Curriculum Assessment at Blinn College

**A Report to the
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
December 2004**

Table

Blinn College has a core curriculum of 42 semester hours that it considers central to the learning process in any discipline. The core curriculum is taken from the following disciplines: humanities, mathematics, natural science, social science, fine arts, and kinesiology. The College requires this core curriculum for its Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. This core curriculum revolves about central competencies of learning for the twenty-first century: reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy. These competencies are further enhanced through educational objectives and perspectives.

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Purpose and Substance of the Core Curriculum

Blinn College has a core curriculum of 42 semester hours that it considers central to the content of the learning process. The core curriculum is taken from the following disciplines: fine arts, humanities, kinesiology, mathematics, natural science, and social science. These academic areas offer students the opportunity to use higher-order critical thinking competencies such as analyzing, synthesizing and problem solving: cognitive skills necessary for the intellectual development of the individual, and the betterment of society. The College requires this core curriculum for its Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. This core curriculum revolves about central competencies of comprehensive learning: reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy. These competencies provide opportunities for students to interpret, analyze, develop and organize materials, and expand their knowledge of the natural world, the human condition, and human cultures expressed in and through behaviors, ideas, and values. In addition, each discipline and course in the core is amplified into exemplary educational objectives so students can know specifically how each course they take is designed to empower them. Broad perspectives have been applied to show students how each course can help them develop in a culturally and ethnically diverse world, become responsible members of society, maintain wellness, develop ethical behaviors, utilize aesthetic judgments and logical reasoning, and integrate scholarly disciplines. In addition, the College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) builds on this academic bedrock to enhance student engagement initiatives which strive to improve student learning outcomes in high-risk core courses. The core curriculum, intellectual competencies, exemplary educational objectives, perspectives, and the QEP discussed above support Blinn College's institutional goals of providing a quality educational program to enrich student

learning, increase student engagement, enhance student support programs, and enable use of technology for learning in the twenty-first century.

Alignment of the Core Curriculum to the Exemplary Educational Objectives

At Blinn College, the courses which comprise the Core Curriculum extensively support the Exemplary Educational Objectives as set forth in the document entitled *Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics*. The charts in this section graphically demonstrate the percentage of courses in the Blinn College Core Curriculum which support the Exemplary Educational Objectives in the core areas of Communications, Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Legend: Percentage of Core Curriculum courses supporting the Exemplary Educational Objectives, Intellectual Competencies, and Perspectives	0 – 20%
	21 - 40%
	41 - 60%
	61 - 80%
	81 - 100%

Communications

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	8 classes total
1 – To understand and demonstrate writing and speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.	100.0%
2 – To understand the importance of specifying audience and purpose and to select appropriate communication choices.	100.0%
3 – To understand and appropriately apply modes of expression, i.e., descriptive, expository, narrative, scientific, and self-expressive, in written, visual, and oral communication.	100.0%
4 – To participate effectively in groups with emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding.	100.0%

Communications (Continued)

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	8 classes total
5 – To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument.	87.5%
6 – To develop the ability to research and write a documented paper and/or an oral presentation.	100.0%

Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	25 classes total
1 – To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.	100.0%
2 – To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.	84.0%
3 – To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.	72.0%
4 – To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artist.	60.0%
5 – To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.	60.0%
6 – To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.	100.0%
7 – To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.	80.0%

Natural Sciences

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	23 classes total
1 – To understand and apply method and appropriate technology to the study of the natural sciences.	100.0%
2 – To recognize scientific and quantitative methods and the difference between these approaches and the other methods of inquiry and to communicate findings, analyses, and interpretation both orally and in writing.	100.0%
3 – To identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.	100.0%
4 – To demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues that touch upon ethics, values, and public policies.	100.0%
5 – To demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on, and contribution to, modern culture.	100.0%

Mathematics

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	11 classes total
1 – To apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, higher-order thinking, and statistical methods to modeling and solving real-world situations.	100.0%
2 – To represent and evaluate basic mathematical information verbally, numerically, graphically, and symbolically.	100.0%
3 – To expand mathematical reasoning skills and formal logic to develop convincing mathematical arguments.	100.0%
4 – To use appropriate technology to enhance mathematical thinking and understanding and to solve mathematical problems and judge the reasonableness of the results	100.0%
5 – To interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.	100.0%

Mathematics (Continued)

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	11 classes total
6 – To recognize the limitations of mathematical and statistical models.	100.0%
7 – To develop the view that mathematics is an evolving discipline, interrelated with human culture, and understanding its connections to other disciplines.	100.0%

Social and Behavioral Sciences

<i>Exemplary Educational Objectives</i>	24 classes total
1 – To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.	100.0%
2 – To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.	91.7%
3 – To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.	70.8%
4 – To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.	95.8%
5 – To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.	87.5%
6 – To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.	79.2%
7 – To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.	79.2%
8 – To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.	70.8%
9 – To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.	91.7%
10 – To analyze critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.	91.7%
11 – To recognize and assume one’s responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.	91.7%
12 – To identify and understand difference and commonalties within diverse cultures.	91.7%

Core Curriculum Courses and the *Texas Common Course Numbering System*

All of the courses in the Blinn College Core Curriculum comply with the Texas Common Course Numbering System. The table below lists all of the courses in the Core Curriculum.

Table 1: Core Curriculum Courses Using the Texas Common Course Numbering System.

Area	Blinn College Course (TCCNS compliant)	Title
Communications	ENGL 1301	Composition and Rhetoric
	ENGL 1302	Composition and Intro to Literature
	ENGL 2311	Technical Writing
Mathematics	MATH 1332	College Mathematics
	MATH 1314	College Algebra
	MATH 1316	Plane Trigonometry
	MATH 1324	Mathematics, Analysis I
	MATH 1325	Mathematics, Analysis II
	MATH 1342	Mathematics, Statistics
	MATH 1350	Fundamentals of Mathematics I
	MATH 1351	Fundamentals of Mathematics II
	MATH 2412	Pre-Calculus
	MATH 2413	Calculus I
	MATH 2414	Calculus II
	MATH 2415	Calculus III
Social and Behavioral Sciences	MATH 2320	Different Equations
	HIST 1301	American History I
	HIST 1302	American History II
	HIST 2301	Texas History
	GOVT 2305	American Government (Federal)
	GOVT 2306	American Government (State)
	ANTH 2302	Introduction to Archaeology
	ANTH 2346	Introduction to Anthropology
	ANTH 2351	Peoples and Cultures of the World
	GEOG 1301	Physical Geography
	GEOG 1302	Cultural Geography
	GEOG 1303	World Geography
	GEOG 2312	Economic Geography
	HIST 2311	Western Civilization I
	HIST 2312	Western Civilization II
	HIST 2321	World Civilization I
	HIST 2322	World Civilization II
	PSYC 2301	General Psychology
	PSYC 2308	Child Psychology
	PSYC 2314	Life Span Growth and Development
PSYC 2317	Statistical Methods in Psychology	

Area	Blinn College Course (TCCNS compliant)	Title
Social and Behavioral Sciences (continued)	PSYC 2319 PSYC 2371 SOC1 1301 SOC1 1306 SOC1 2301	Social Psychology Abnormal Psychology Introduction to Sociology Social Problems Marriage and Family
Natural Sciences	BIOL 1411 BIOL 1413 BIOL 2401 BIOL 2402 BIOL 2406 BIOL 2421 CHEM 1405 CHEM 1407 CHEM 1411 CHEM 1410 CHEM 1412 CHEM 2423 CHEM 2425 GEOL 1403 GEOL 1404 PHYS 1401 PHYS 1402 PHYS 1410 PHYS 1411 PHYS 2425 PHYS 2426	General Botany General Zoology Anatomy and Physiology I Anatomy and Physiology II Environmental Biology Microbiology Introductory Chemistry Introductory Chemistry General Chemistry I General Chemistry for Engineers General Chemistry II Organic Chemistry I Organic Chemistry II Physical Geology Historical Geology College Physics I College Physics II Introductory Physics Introductory Astronomy Physics for Engineers I Physics for Engineers II
Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts	ENGL 2307 ENGL 2308 ENGL 2322 ENGL 2323 ENGL 2327 ENGL 2328 ENGL 2332 ENGL 2333 ARTS 1301 DRAM 1241 DRAM 1310 DRAM 1322 DRAM 1330 DRAM 1351 DRAM 1352 DRAM 2361 DRAM 2362 MUAP 1137-1138, 2137-2138 MUAP 1237-1238, 2237-2238 MUAP 1157-1158, 2157-2158 MUAP 1257-1258, 2257-2258	Introduction to Creative Writing: Prose Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry Survey of British Literature I Survey of British Literature II Survey of American Literature I Survey of American Literature II Survey of World Literature I Survey of World Literature II Arts Appreciation Drama - Make-up Introduction to Theatre Stage Movement Dramatic - Stagecraft Dramatics - Acting I Dramatics - Acting II Theatre History I: Greeks to the 16 th C Theatre History II: 17 th Cent to the 19 th C Brass Instruments Brass Instruments Percussion Instruments Percussion Instruments

Area	Blinn College Course (TCCNS compliant)	Title
Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts	MUAP 1117-1118, 2117-2118	Woodwind Instruments
	MUAP 1217-1218, 2217-2218	Woodwind Instruments
	MUAP 1169-1170, 2169-2170	Piano Study
	MUAP 1269-1270, 2269-2270	Piano Study
	MUAP 1118-1182, 2181-2182	Voice Study
	MUAP 1281-1282, 2281-2282	Voice Study
	MUEN 1124-1125, 2124-2125	Band
	MUEN 1126-1127, 2126-2127	Laboratory Band
	MUEN 1133-1136, 2133-2136	Woodwind Ensemble
	MUEN 1134-1135, 2134-2135	Brass Ensemble
	MUEN 1138-1139, 2138-2139	Percussion Ensemble
	MUEN 1141-1142, 2141-2142	Chorus
	MUEN 1154-1155, 2154-2155	Choral Ensemble
	MUSI 1181-1182, 2181	Class Piano
	MUSI 1211-1212	Music Theory I, II
	MUSI 1216-1217	Aural Music I, II
	MUSI 1301	Introduction to the Study of Music
	MUSI 1308	Music Literature
	MUSI 2211-2212	Music Theory III, IV
	MUSI 2216-2217	Aural Music III, IV
SPCH 2341	Oral Interpretations	
Institutionally Designed Option	SPCH 1311	Introduction to Speech
	SPCH 1315	Public Speaking
	SPCH 1321	Business and Professional Speaking
	KINE 1101-1102	Kinesiology
	MUEN 1124-2124	Marching Band

Analysis of the Perspectives and Intellectual Competencies in the Core Curriculum

In 2001, Blinn College began an intensive review of all courses in the core curriculum. The focus of this review was to ascertain the extent to which each element of the intellectual competencies and perspectives, as defined in the Rules and the *Assumptions and Defining Characteristics*, was represented throughout the core. The first step in the process was to carefully review the master course syllabus in each core course, to determine which elements were being met and which could be reasonably added. The College's Core Curriculum Committee, which oversaw the review process, decided in the early stages that it was neither reasonable nor desirable that every intellectual competency,

perspective, or exemplary educational objective be represented in every course. To do so, the committee believed, would be counter-productive. By forcing each course to contain every core element, some would be weakly addressed; however, by focusing on the strengths of each discipline and concentrating appropriate elements in logical and rational courses, the core would be more centered and, ultimately, stronger. As shown graphically in the chart below, a student completing the core curriculum at Blinn College would have substantial exposure to all of the intellectual competencies.

	Communi- cations	Humanities & Visual & Performing Arts	Mathematics	Natural Sciences	Social & Behavioral Sciences
Intellectual Competencies	<i>Total Classes per Core Area</i>				
	8	25	11	24	24
1 – READING the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials – books, document, and articles – above the 12 th grade level.	62.5%	84.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2 – WRITING the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience – above 12 th grade level.	62.5%	84.0%	0.0%	70.8%	100.0%
3 – SPEAKING ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.	100.0%	48.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
4 – LISTENING analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading – above 12 th grade level.	100.0%	80.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
5 – CRITICAL THINKING think and analyze at a critical level.	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
6 – COMPUTER LITERACY understand our technological society, use computer based technology in communications, solving problems, requiring information.	12.5%	36.0%	100.0%	83.3%	100.0%

The Perspectives are similarly pervasive throughout the entire core curriculum at Blinn

College, as shown in the chart below.

	Communi- cations	Health & Kinesiology	Humanities & Visual & Performing Arts	Mathematics	Natural Sciences	Social & Behavioral Sciences
Perspectives	<i>Total Classes per Core Area</i>					
	8	3	25	11	24	24
1 – Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world;	87.5%	0.0%	76.0%	0.0%	4.2%	95.8%
2 – Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society	75.0%	0.0%	92.0%	0.0%	12.5%	91.7%
3 – Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;	0.0%	100.0%	40.0%	0.0%	66.7%	41.7%
4 – Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives;	0.0%	100.0%	56.0%	72.7%	100.0%	100.0%
5 – Develop a personal values for ethical behavior;	100.0%	100.0%	88.0%	0.0%	37.5%	95.8%
6 – Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
7 – Use logical reasoning in problem solving; and	87.5%	100.0%	68.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
8 – Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.	25.0%	100.0%	60.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Processes and Procedures for Evaluating the Core Curriculum

When the master course syllabus review had been completed for all core curriculum courses, the next step was to begin defining ways to assess the core elements. A broad-based committee, led by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and consisting of all pertinent division chairs, assistant division chairs, the Director of Program Evaluation, and the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, met to plan the initial stages of the evaluation process. In the early stages, the group decided to concentrate its initial activities toward evaluation of the intellectual competencies in the core curriculum courses. Using information derived from the master course syllabus review process, the first phase of the process involved designing matrices to illustrate and track which courses incorporated which intellectual competencies. All courses in the core curriculum, except for Kinesiology and Music Appreciation courses, completed these matrices. Division chairs and all faculty members in each core component area reached consensus on the inclusion of the appropriate Intellectual Competencies in all core courses, regardless of teaching site or modality. A sample of the matrix for the Mathematics core area is shown below. As shown in the chart and discussed previously, it was not expected that every course encompass every intellectual competency.

Discipline: Natural Sciences

LIST OF ALL COURSES RECOMMENDED AND IDENTIFIED COMPETENCIES

Competencies						Course Number	Course Title
1	2	3	4	5	6		
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	CHEM 2425	Organic Chemistry II
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	GEOL 1403	Physical Geology
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	GEOL 1404	Historical Geology
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 1401	College Physics I
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 1402	College Physics II
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 1410	Introductory Physics
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 2425	Physics for Engineers I
✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 2426	Physics for Engineers II
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	PHYS 1411	Introductory Astronomy
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		BIOL 1408	Introductory Biology I
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		BIOL 1409	Introductory Biology II
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	CHEM 1470	Chemistry for Engineers

COMPETENCY REFERENCES

6 – COMPUTER LITERACY - understand our technological society, use computer based technology in communications, solving problems, acquiring information.

5 – CRITICAL THINKING - think and analyze at a critical level.

4 – LISTENING - analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading – above 12th grade level.

3 – SPEAKING - ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.

2 – WRITING - the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience – above 12th grade level.

1 – READING - the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials – books, document, and articles – above the 12th grade level.

Division Chair Signature:

Division Chair Signature: (if applicable)

Date:

Date:

After the intellectual competencies matrices were defined and approved, the next phase was to develop methods by which these elements could be evaluated. During the course of discussion of the underlying intent of the Intellectual Competencies and their relation to the master course syllabi, faculty and instructional administrators arrived at the decision that the most effective way to evaluate the core would be to use course specific student achievement-based embedded assessment methodologies, based on the defined learning outcomes of each course. The basis for the decision was the fact that many students transfer to their chosen senior institution without completing the core curriculum. To wait until a student had completed the 42-hour core before taking a capstone course or externally-normed assessment test, although an admirable goal, was not realistic. However, if student learning outcomes were assessed through a substantial number of randomly selected courses each term, the effectiveness of the core curriculum could reasonably be inferred. Therefore, the division chairs and the teaching faculty for each core course met to determine strategies which could be used to measure the appropriate student learning outcomes and the standards for each measurement. Additional discussion led to the premise that multiple assessment methods should be defined so as not to impose undue restrictions on faculty appraisal of student performance.

A sample of a core curriculum course assessment matrix is shown below. Note that an instructor in an individual section of the course has multiple assessment options to address the strategy for demonstrating mastery of the relevant competency.

Core Curriculum Assessment

Core Curriculum Course: ENGL 1301
 Section: _____

Instructor: _____
 Semester: _____ Year: _____

Competency: **Listening**

--to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication, possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading -- above 12th grade level.

Note: Circle only one measure for each strategy

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
Pay attention to and comprehend lecture materials			X							
Demonstrate ability to follow directions					X	X		X		
Participate in group work									X	

Competency: **Critical Thinking**

--to apply qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solve.

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
Interpret and analyze readings						X		X		
Demonstrate effective argumentation techniques					X	X				
Develop and support original theses					X	X				
Evaluate sources for research					X					

Competency: **Computer Literacy**

--to understand our technological society, use computer based technology in communications, solving problems, requiring information.

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
N/A										

Core Curriculum Assessment

Core Curriculum Course: ENGL 1301
 Section: _____

Instructor: _____
 Semester: _____ Year: _____

Competency: **Reading**

--the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials, books, document, and articles -- above the 12th grade level.

Note: Circle only one measure for each strategy

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
Read and use assigned readings from textbooks			X					X		
Read and evaluate sources					X	X		X		
Understand techniques of documentation					X	X		X		

Competency: **Writing**

--the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion and audience -- above 12th grade level.

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
Produce in-class essays 500-750 words in length						X		X		
Produce out-of-class essays 500-750 words in length						X		X		
Produced researched/documentated paper of a minimum of 2000 words in length					X					

Competency: **Speaking**

--the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.

Strategies/Course Requirements	Outcomes		Methods of Measurement							
	Number Students Assessed	Number Students 70% or Greater	Post-Test Score	Lab Assignment Score	Research Paper Score	Written Assignment Score	Classroom Presentation Score	Other Test Score	Class Participation Score	Other Measure Score
N/A										

In the fall 2002 semester, the College launched the third phase of assessment, the pilot evaluation process, in which 12 English classes taught by full-time faculty members were selected to maintain records on the level at which students mastered the intellectual competencies listed on the Assessment Form for each respective course. For each measurement method, artifacts (papers, examinations, etc.) were kept to document the levels of achievement. At the end of the semester, the assessment forms and the artifacts were forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation for compilation. The compiled information was examined by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Humanities division chairs, and other relevant instructional and non-instructional personnel.

One result of the review of the process was the realization that the collection and examination of artifacts was overly burdensome for all, and plans were made to begin development of grading rubrics, which would be faculty defined and consistently used as grading standards to measure the intellectual competencies for each course in all core areas. The development of the grading rubrics to measure the intellectual competencies began in the Spring 2003 semester and evolved over the course of the following year. A sample of the grading rubrics for one course is shown below.

Core Curriculum Intellectual Competencies Rubric for GEOL 1403	
<p>Competency 1: Reading a. Textbook 1) Source: text, minimum 500 word length 2) Method of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam Score Post Test or Other Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 3 questions of the exam on reading assignment ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or online testing tool • Quiz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Quiz must be minimum 3 questions, pertaining to reading assignment. ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or e-instruction response pads <p>b. Lab book 1) Source: Lab assignment, minimum length 50 words 2) Method of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab Assignment Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 3 questions in lab exercise ◦ Question format: Multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or e-instruction response pads • Exam Score Other than Post Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ May be lab practicum or lecture exam ◦ Minimum 3 questions from practicum / exam on reading assignment ◦ Question format: Multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or other online testing tool <p>Competency 2: Writing a. Internet or Journal article review or Term Paper Method of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Assignment Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 500 words ◦ May include traditional paper or Calibrated Peer Review text entry <p>b. Essays on Exam Method of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam Score Other than Post test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 50 words 	<p>Competency 3: Listening a. Lecture or video 1) Source: lecture minimum 5 minutes in length 2) Method of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam Score Post Test or Other Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Exam minimum 3 questions over lecture or video ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use WebCT or other online testing tool • Quiz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ May include written or verbal questions with lab or lecture quiz ◦ Quiz must be minimum 3 questions ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or e-instruction response pads <p>Competency 4: Critical Thinking Problem solving 1) Sources may include geological data, specimen or map analysis, applying knowledge to answer question. 2) Methods of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab Assignment Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 3 questions in lab exercise ◦ Question format: Multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or e-instruction response pads • Exam Score Other than Pre / Post Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ May be lab practicum or lecture exam ◦ Minimum 3 questions from practicum / exam on reading assignment ◦ Question format: Multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT or other online testing tool • Quiz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ May include with lab or lecture quiz ◦ Quiz must be minimum 3 questions ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT, e-instruction response pads or Calibrated Peer Review Calibrations <p>Competency 5: Computer Literacy Use Internet or computer technology resources 1) Sources may include CD-Rom from text or lab book, WebCT, e-instruction response pads, Calibrated Peer Review, articles from online resources, text-supported online study guides. 2) Methods of Measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Assignment Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Minimum 500 words ◦ May include traditional paper or Calibrated Peer Review text entry • Classroom Presentation Score <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Presentation must be minimum 5 minutes length ◦ Must use computer application (e.g., Power Point) • Quiz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Quiz must be minimum 3 questions ◦ Question format: multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short answer ◦ May use traditional paper, WebCT, e-instruction response pads or Calibrated Peer Review

Another change was made during the review process was in the calculation of mastery of the competency; initially, the denominator had been the number of students enrolled in the class, but after review of course drop rates, the decision was made to base the calculation only on the number of students actually completing the assessment task. This creates more complicated processes for maintaining student records, but ultimately gives the clearest picture of student success in mastering the intellectual competencies of the course. This change was implemented with the Fall 2003 core assessment cycle.

Using the Results of Evaluation

With several semesters of assessing the intellectual competencies completed, Blinn College began evaluating outcomes through the assessment instrument, Actions on Results, in the Fall 2004 semester. At the end of the semester, information from the Actions on

Results instrument will be gathered by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness on all the core courses, and the evaluative cycle will be initiated using these data.

Beginning in the Spring 2005 semester, the Curriculum Assessment Committee will meet to review the data collected as well as the Actions on Results form. The primary task of this committee will be to examine the assessment process itself, to determine if the strategies and measurement metrics that have been used are appropriate to assess the effectiveness of the core curriculum. This is being designed as an oversight process; the committee will address itself to the broader issues of core mastery and will make recommendations to instructional areas for further development in areas deemed ineffective or insufficient. The Action on Results form that will be used for this process is shown below.

<i>Effectiveness Issue</i>	<i>Reviewers</i>	<i>Improvement Action Plans</i>	<i>Follow-up Schedule</i>	<i>Success Measures</i>

2005-2009 Plan for Evaluating the Core Curriculum

Although much has been accomplished toward evaluating the core curriculum at Blinn College, much still remains to be done. The chart below shows the status as of Fall 2004.

Blinn College
Core Curriculum Evaluation
(Status as of Fall 2004)

	Phase I Identify Core Elements in Core Courses	Phase II Develop strategies and measurements	Phase III Pilot Test Review and Analyze Data	Phase IV Conduct Full Implementation of Assessment	Phase V Use of Results for Improvement (Close the Loop)	Phase VI Curriculum Committee Review
Intellectual Competencies	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	In process	Annual
Exemplary Educational Objectives	Completed	In process	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Annual
Perspectives	Completed	In process	Fall 2005	Spring 2006	Fall 2006	Annual

The next step in the evaluation will be to begin assessment of the exemplary educational objectives and the perspectives. The relevant areas of the core have been defined and alignments of the core elements with the master course syllabi have been completed.

Alignment of the Blinn College Core Curriculum to the Perspectives	
Core Curriculum Course: Psyc 2314	
Title: Lifespan Psychology	
Perspective	Based on the Master Course Syllabus, how does the course meet this perspective?
Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world.	"This course will look at major social factors in a historical perspective, e.g. family, education, peer, media, work-place and community influences at work in the development of personal identity. They will also examine the differences and commonalities between diverse cultures as they affect social, emotional, and cognitive development.
Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society.	Students are expected to understand Lifespan Psychology theories and concepts; recognize cultural influences on individual and group behavior; understand and respect differences and similarities among human groups; and use knowledge and methods to analyze current issues and events.
Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness.	"This course will equip the individual with the knowledge necessary to recognize, understand, facilitate, and cope with developmental and behavioral changes across the lifespan including biological and genetic bases of development, prenatal development and birth, physical, cognitive, and social development across the lifespan, death, dying and bereavement."
Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives	"The goal of Lifespan Psychology is to equip the individual with the critical thinking tools and the knowledge necessary to recognize, understand, facilitate, and cope with developmental and behavioral changes across the lifespan. This includes research methodology and statistical techniques used to gain data on humans and their reactions to their environment. Biological and genetic bases of development, prenatal development and birth, and physical growth and development will be studied.
Develop a personal values for ethical behavior	"Students will demonstrate an awareness of the important age-related changes in the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the individual across the life span". The various theories and research on cognitive and moral development will be studied.
Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgements	Not selected for measurement.
Use logical reasoning in problem solving	Students will learn to "use analytical thinking skills, supplemented by knowledge of valid and reliable research methods, to gather and evaluate information from reported research, and to make logical inferences about human behavior across the life span.
Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.	Students will demonstrate an awareness of the important age-related changes in the biological, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of the individual across the life span. Information from related disciplines such as biology, ethology, genetics, nutrition, sociology, education and anthropology will be studied.

**Alignment of the Blinn College Core Curriculum
to the Exemplary Educational Objectives**

Core Area: Behavioral and Social Sciences

Core Curriculum Course: Psyc 2314

Title: Lifespan Psychology

<i>Exemplary Educational Objective</i>	<i>Based on the Master Course Syllabus, how does the course meet this objective?</i>
To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.	"The goal of Lifespan Psychology is to equip the individual with the critical thinking tools and the knowledge necessary to recognize, understand, facilitate, and cope with developmental and behavioral changes across the lifespan. This includes research methodology and statistical techniques used to gain data on humans and their reactions to their environment."
To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.	"This course will provide an overview of many of the complex factors involved in man's physical, psychological and social development from embryo to old age and death. Information covered will include historical perspectives and theories of development (, e.g. theories of learning, cognitive and moral development, intellectual and language development, and biological aging) as well as cultural impacts on development."
To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.	"This course will provide an overview of historical perspectives and theories of development (, e.g. theories of learning, cognitive and moral development, intellectual and language development, and biological aging) "as well as exercises in evaluating these theories
To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.	"Major social factors at work in development of personal and sexual identity, e.g., media, work-place and community influences "will be studied and conflicting viewpoints discussed
To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.	"This course will look at major social factors in a historical perspective, e.g. family, attachment, education, peer, media, work-place and community influences at work in the development of personal identity."

To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.	Not selected for measurement
To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.	Students will examine where the U.S. stands in issues of developmental psychology/aging and how it compares to other societies
To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.	Not selected for measurement
To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.	This course will examine " historical perspectives and theories as well as research methodology used to gain data on humans and their reactions to their environment. Students will use analytical thinking skills, supplemented by knowledge of valid and reliable research methods, to gather and evaluate information from reported research, and to make inferences about human behavior across the lifespan." the life span
To analyze critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.	Students will learn to gather and evaluate information from reported research, and to make inferences and recommendations about possible improvements of the human condition across the life span in various cultures and generation.
To Recognize and assume one's responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.	A variety of methods including lectures, assigned readings, class discussions, written or oral projects, use of media or computer programs and guest speakers will be used to engage the students in the course content and to challenge them to use all sources of information available to understand the issues being studied.
To identify and understand difference and commonalities within diverse cultures.	Students will examine the differences and commonalities between diverse cultures. as they affect social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The Core Curriculum Committee will work toward the appropriate assessment methodologies throughout the remainder of the 2004-2005 academic year with the intent to pilot assessment of the exemplary educational objectives and perspectives in the Fall 2005 semester. A proposed timeline for the core curriculum evaluation process is shown below.

2001	Initial review of core elements in Master Course Syllabi
2002	Strategies and measurements for ICs developed. Pilot assessment in Fall 2002
2003	Review of data collected in pilot. Modifications to assessment matrices
2004	Development of grading rubrics to reduce collection of artifacts/ samples
2005	Development of strategies and measures for EEOs and Perspectives
2006	Collect and review data, refine processes, and make improvements to Core Curriculum
2007	Collect and review data, refine processes, and make improvements to Core Curriculum
2008	Collect and review data, refine processes, and make improvements to Core Curriculum
2009	Compile data for report to THECB

Summary of the Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan and High Risk Core Curriculum Courses

Blinn College recognizes the importance of the Core Curriculum and has established the effectiveness of the core as one of its top institutional priorities. To that end, the College chose to focus on it for its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of its reaffirmation of accreditation through the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The SACS on-site review team approved the QEP during its visit in late September 2004. The actual text of the executive summary of the QEP follows.

**Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan
Increasing Student Engagement in High-Risk Core Curriculum Courses
Through Enhanced Academic Support and Continued Assessment**

E X E C U T I V E S U M M A R Y

The Blinn College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) sets forth a process for increasing student engagement in high-risk core curriculum courses at the institution to support successful student outcomes. The core focus of the QEP, increasing student engagement in high-risk core curriculum courses, is designed as an integrated effort associated with ongoing institutional planning and institutional effectiveness efforts at the College. The need for Blinn College to increase student engagement in high-risk core curriculum courses corresponds with one of the primary objectives of the College’s mission, which is to provide “two years of accredited college-level transfer courses in arts and sciences for those seeking associate degrees or intending to transfer to senior institutions” (*Bulletin of Blinn College*, 2004). Further, institutional goals for 2003-2006 require that the College provide quality academic transfer programs, assess the core curriculum, and increase student engagement.

The decision to focus on student engagement in high-risk core curriculum courses was data-based and a result of several institutional analysis initiatives at the College, including the development of a marketing plan, QEP Roundtable discussions, student and faculty focus groups, course completion rates, and course-based pre/post test results. Through institutional analysis and discussion with key constituents, the quantitative and qualitative data and discussions revealed concerns about passive students not attending classes regularly, nor putting forth the attention and effort required for more comprehensive learning. Some of these concerns have been confirmed by the College’s 2004 results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The College believes that this lack of engagement has affected pass rates and withdrawal rates, particularly in high-risk core curriculum courses.

Overall Expected Outcome

The College expects the following outcome from the QEP:

- To increase student engagement and performance in identified high-risk core curriculum courses through enhanced academic support and continued assessment.

Action to Increase Student Engagement in High-Risk Core Curriculum Courses

- Blinn College identified seventeen high-risk core curriculum courses. Over the next five years, the College will implement enhanced academic support options and continued assessment to foster active and collaborative learning and will support student effort and successful student learning outcomes to meet the academic challenge of the College's high-risk core curriculum courses.

Initially, the STAR (Students Take Active Roles) Team, a 19-member committee of faculty and professional staff appointed by the President in Fall 2003, made recommendations to the SACS Leadership Team for the successful development of the QEP. Course-based faculty teams will make recommendations to implement and sustain the QEP and will develop field-based student learning outcomes, enhanced academic support, and course-based assessments within high-risk core curriculum courses.