Executive Summary

This report provides evaluation data from the Spring 2015 General Education Pilot and the 8th Annual Summer Assessment conducted Summer 2015. It includes data generated from the pilot designed to address concerns related to collecting student evidence, faculty time involved, and the technology used to facilitate this activity. Also included in this report are faculty scores of the student artifacts and faculty recommendations on how to help students better understand and subsequently demonstrate their understanding of these competencies. The faculty evaluation process was intended to provide insight on the quality of student artifacts tagged to Clemson’s general education competencies, as well as the clarity of the scoring rubrics.

Key Findings

Spring General Education Pilot

- Fourteen faculty members participated in the pilot: 7 from AAH, 2 from BBS, 2 from CAFLS, and 3 from CES.
- Thirteen courses (encompassing all course-related competencies, AH, CC, M, NS, SS, STS) some with multiple sections, were included in the study, generating 1607 artifacts as presented in Table 1 below. Overall, the submission rate was 89%.
- Instructor time varied, with the average time spent on the pilot being 3.45 hours, which included the monthly meetings and brown bag lunches. The average time instructors spent on the actual upload process was 41 minutes.
- Faculty participants ended their reports with their final thoughts on the pilot. Overall, everyone thought the process was simple and straightforward.
- Of the 14 faculty who were part of the pilot, 10 participated in the Summer Assessment Institute, the goal of which was to review a comprehensive sample of student artifacts from the Spring 2015 general education pilot.

General Education Summer Assessment

- The summer assessment team included 20 faculty members from a variety of disciplines across campus. The faculty members worked in groups within the competency areas. Each group was assigned to specific competencies to allow for greater inter-rater reliability.
- Student artifacts for 6 of the 8 general education competencies were examined and scored by 20 faculty evaluators across the university. Over 800 artifacts were scored for content and communication.
- The most frequently assessed competency was Arts and Humanities (AH) with 196 (68%) artifacts reviewed, followed by the Social Sciences (SS) with 72% (N=179) of the total number of artifacts evaluated.
In terms of scores, NS received the highest average overall score of 2 closely followed by STS with an average score of 1.9 (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average Score By Competency

The most pressing recommendation is to revise most of the competencies. Most participants agreed that a closer evaluation of the competencies must occur as some seem to be written beyond an introductory level. Listed below are the competencies and the extent to which they need revising:

- **Arts and Humanities** – The competency should be changed. Suggested competency: **Demonstrate an ability to analyze and/or interpret the Arts and Humanities as a reflection of human expression.**
  
  *Or* **Demonstrate an ability to analyze and/or interpret the Arts and Humanities as an expression of the human condition.**

- **Cross Cultural Awareness** – The competency as written is reaching beyond what should be expected for a general education course to accomplish, especially for these introductory level courses and should be revised.

- **Mathematics**

- **Natural Sciences** – We found that the NS competency as written is too exclusive for all Natural Sciences. The NS competency appears to be biased towards artifacts that are written like manuscripts (lab reports with literature review and literature review articles).

- **Social Sciences** – We welcome the change from the old to the new competency in terms of the fact that the new competency better reflects the kinds of artifacts that are being submitted by students. Even the new competency, though, continues to limit flexibility in terms of the types of assignments that faculty members may require.

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1 Rationale and additional comments can be found in Appendix B
- **Science and Technology in Society** - Competency is fine as written

Also, double-dip artifacts seemed to address only one of the competencies. A review should be made of double-dip courses to make sure all relevant competencies are addressed in the course. All participants agreed that professional development that addresses writing student learning outcomes for syllabi, developing assignments appropriate for the competencies, etc. should be provided to everyone teaching general education courses.

At the University/College levels participants urged for an internal audit of general education courses to ensure faculty understand and implement the competency throughout the general education curriculum. It was suggested a University or college-level ad hoc committee should be created to guide and oversee general education. The work of this committee could make reporting to SACSCOC an easier process.

The full list of participant recommendations can be found beginning on page 17 in Appendix A.
What Are the Purpose and Goals of this Report?

This report was written to serve the following purposes:

1. To provide data on the Spring 2015 general education pilot.
2. To provide evaluation data from the 8th Annual General Education Summer Assessment conducted Summer 2015.
3. To document faculty scoring of student general education artifacts.
4. To gather information and recommendations about general education and assessment and its key components (competencies, rubrics) to facilitate adjustments and improvements in the future, where and when necessary.
5. To generate support documents for students and faculty.

General Education Pilot, Spring 2015

The primary purpose of the pilot was to review the plan suggested for the assessment of general education particularly related to collecting student evidence, faculty time involved, and the technology used to facilitate this activity. We met monthly either as a group for brown-bag lunches, or through one-on-one consultations to monitor the project and document the procedure. Participants were provided professional development funds and were encouraged take part in the 2015 Summer Assessment.

Pilot Goals

- Collect student evidence (work) for course-related general education competencies.
- Evaluate various methods of collecting student work.
- Evaluate the technology used to collect student work.

Fourteen faculty members participated in the pilot: 7 from AAH, 2 from BBS, 2 from CAFLS, and 3 from CES. Sample courses for all course-related competencies (AH, CC, M, NS, SS, STS) were included in the study. More specifically 13 courses, some with multiple sections, generated 1607 artifacts as presented in Figure 2 below. Overall, the submission rate was 89%.
Participants tested the following methods of uploading artifacts:

- Faculty batch upload
- Student upload with in-class support from Gail Ring or Bob Brackett
- Student upload with in-class support from the professor
- Instructions on how to upload artifacts emailed to students who then did so outside of class.

Two courses, REL 1020 and THEA 2100, yielded a 100% submission rate attributed to the fact that the instructors for these courses would not grade the assignments unless they were submitted to the artifact repository. In an attempt to motivate students to submit evidence to the General Education Assessment Repository (GEAR), some professors gave them extra points for submitting their work while others took a punitive approach (eg. REL and THEA).

The average time instructors spent on the actual upload process was 41 minutes. Figure 3 below provides a breakdown of time expenditures by upload type. For the entire pilot instructor time varied, with the average time spent on the pilot was 3.45 hours, including the monthly meetings and brown bag lunches.
Faculty participants ended their reports with their final thoughts on the pilot. Overall, everyone thought the process was simple and straightforward. Most of the difficulties encountered had to do with the technology and included browser issues and the limited functionality of the artifact repository. Below are sample faculty comments:

This pilot required significantly less work on my end than I expected.

“I was able to explain to my students the purpose of this pilot (as well as e-portfolio). I believe they had a better understanding of the overall goal. I will need to work with my students on how to achieve a “justification” statement. I believe this too is an important part of the assessment as we would like students to be able to identify that they achieved the competency and how they did so.”

Participants were also asked to provide student feedback that for the most part was positive. The comments below show the range of student responses:

“The students who had experienced anything with the ePortfolio all agreed that this method of collection was far superior to what we had before. No one gave negative feedback.”

“Students are still resistant of anything that smells like e-portfolio and a few actually refused to upload work even after explanation of why and knowing they would lose 10 course points.”
Of the 14 faculty who were part of the pilot, 10 participated in the Summer Assessment Institute, the goal of which was to review a comprehensive sample of student artifacts from Spring 2015 general education pilot.

**General Education Summer Assessment**

This section provides data on the 8th Annual General Education Summer Assessment Institute and includes faculty scores of the student artifacts, participant recommendations on how to help students better understand and subsequently demonstrate their understanding of these competencies, and participant recommendations related to courses, assignments, faculty and student support, and the competencies. The faculty evaluation process was intended to provide insight on the quality of student artifacts tagged to Clemson’s general education competencies, as well as the clarity of the scoring rubrics.

**Summer Assessment Institute Goals**

- Engage in a discussion of the SACSCOC requirements for general education.
- Learn about the General Education Spring Pilot Assessment and prepare for Fall 2015 pilot.
- Review and revise course syllabi.
- Assess student work generated from the General Education Assessment Pilot.
- Review and norm the communication rubric.²
- Prepare a final report with assessment findings.

**Method**

Student artifacts for six of the eight³ general education competencies were examined and scored by 20 faculty evaluators across the university. This process occurred over the period of one week during the college summer session. Over 800 artifacts were scored for content and communication.

The faculty evaluation process was intended to provide insight on the quality of student artifacts tagged to Clemson’s general education competencies, as well as the clarity of the scoring rubrics. In addition, suggestions on how to better support students in the process of artifact development and collection, how to educate and support faculty in the

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² The communication rubric was revised in the May assessment session and normed in the June session after extensive use.
³ Only the 6 course-connected competencies (AH, CC, M, NS, SS, STS) were included in both the pilot and the assessment. The distributed competencies (CT, EJ) were not included.
process of course and assignments development, and how to strengthen both general education and the assessment of it were sought from the faculty evaluators.

All artifacts were scored on a 1-4 scale with a score of 4 representing exemplary work, a 3 above average work, 2’s satisfactory work and a score of one indicating that the artifact did not adequately demonstrate competency.

Participants

The summer assessment team included 16 faculty members from a variety of disciplines across campus, 10 of whom participated in the Spring 2015 Pilot. The faculty members who worked in groups within the competency areas. Each group was assigned to specific competencies to allow for greater inter-rater reliability.

Faculty members that participated in the Assessment Institute and their areas are listed below:

**Arts and Humanities**
* Kendra Johnson – Assoc. Prof., College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* Barbara Ramirez – Sr. Lecturer, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* Shannon Roberts – Assoc. Prof., College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* Kerrie Seymour – Asst. Prof., College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* Rick St. Peter – Asst. Prof. College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities

**Cross Cultural Awareness**
* Sallie Turnbull – Program Coord., College of Business and Behavioral Science
* Katherine Weisensee – Assoc. Prof., College of Business and Behavioral Science

**Mathematics**
* Ellen Breazel – Lecturer, College of Engineering and Science
* Judith Cottingham – Sr. Lecturer, College of Engineering and Science
* Laura Shick – Lecturer, College of Engineering and Science

**Natural Sciences**
Dylan Dittrick-Reed – Asst. Prof., College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences
* Robert Kosinski – Prof., College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences
* Christine Minor – Sr. Lecturer, College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences
* Minory Nammouz – Lecturer, College of Engineering and Science

**Social Sciences**
Lance Howard – Sr. Lecturer, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* James Jeffries – Sr. Lecturer, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
* Jennifer Holland - Sr. Lecturer, College of Business and Behavioral Science
* Zeynep Taydas – Assoc. Prof., College of Business and Behavioral Science

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4 *Represents faculty that participated in the Spring 2015 pilot.
Science and Technology in Society
*Pam Mack – Assoc. Prof., College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities
Jennifer Ingle – Sr. Lecturer, College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities

Goal 1: Engage in a discussion on the SACSCOC requirements for general education

Dr. Penny Brunner, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, gave a presentation on the overarching purpose and methodology of SACSCOC. She explained that university programs need to demonstrate that their stated learning outcomes (e.g., pertaining to general education) lead directly to corresponding assessment measures and that these results, in turn, circulate back to the programs (and its faculty) for the purposes of making informed adjustments to improve the scores.

Recommendations based on use of results
Participants suggested that all faculty should have the opportunity to attend an abbreviated session like the one provided by Dr. Brunner and Dr. Ring in the summer assessment and should be aware of the purpose of assessment and benefit of accreditation. Some suggested faculty teaching general education courses attend a session that informs them of the expectations of assessment and includes a discussion of the meaning of the various competencies. Possibly this can be conducted by competency coordinators, bearing in mind that not all competencies have coordinators. The full list of participant recommendations can be found on page 23 in Appendix A.

Goal 2: Learn about the General Education Spring Pilot Assessment and prepare for Fall 2015 Pilot

Performance expectations
Dr. Gail Ring and members of the Spring 2015 Pilot presented data gained related to faculty time, artifact upload method, and the technology used to facilitate the upload process.

Recommendations based on use of results
Participants pointed out that feedback must be provided to participants in both the pilot programs and the summer assessment in regard to their individual class performance and the overall findings and conclusions of the program in a timely manner. Processes for the collection and assessment of general education artifacts must be fully communicated and transparent to all involved faculty and there must be opportunity for faculty input into both the process and evaluation. The full list of participant recommendations can be found on page 17 in Appendix A, most of which have been implemented.

Goal 3: Review and revise course syllabi
Participants reviewed and revised course syllabi based on knowledge gained from the assessment institute.

**Recommendations based on use of results**
Participants stressed that all faculty, grad students, lecturers and adjuncts should be provided support to learn how to make any appropriate adjustments to their syllabi and courses related to general education and the competencies. This support can take the form of professional development opportunities (University-wide or within individual department meetings), online training, technical support, email communication, etc. Also, examples of syllabi that exhibit good models for producing successful artifacts should be available to faculty. The full list of participant recommendations can be found beginning on page 17 in Appendix A, most of which have been implemented.

**Goal 4: Assess student work generated from the General Education Assessment Pilot**
Participants assessed a random sample of student work for the 6 course-related competencies included in the general education Spring 2015 Pilot. Faculty assessors were grouped by content area and reviewed a stratified random sample of all artifacts across AH, CC, M, NS, SS, & STS. Eight hundred and forty-nine artifacts were evaluated representing 53% of the total number of artifacts submitted. The most frequently assessed competency was Arts and Humanities (AH) with 196 (68%) artifacts reviewed, followed by the Social Sciences (SS) with 72% (N=179) of the total number of artifacts evaluated. Because fewer artifacts were collected for mathematics all accessible artifacts were reviewed. Figure 4 shows the distribution of competencies reviewed.
In terms of scores, NS received the highest average overall score of 2 closely followed by STS with an average score of 1.9 (See figure 5). Table 1 provides percentages of artifacts scored.
Beginning Fall 2015, the new competency for Social Sciences: “Describe and explain human actions using social science concepts and evidence” will be in the Undergraduate Announcements. In preparation for this new competency, the reviewers of the Social Science artifacts evaluated them based on both the existing and the new competency. The average score for the existing competency was 1.84 while the average score for the new competency was 1.93. Overall the reviewers of the social sciences competencies felt the change in competency improved the clarity of the competency slightly though additional recommendations can be found in Appendix A.

The following section provides recommendations from the reviewers based on the scoring results. These recommendations include suggestions for revising some of the rubrics (SS, NS) as well as revisions to the AH competency.

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<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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</table>

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Broken Down by Competency

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* Indicates scores for both assessment sessions are averaged together.
Overall recommendations related to improving student understanding of content

At the University/College levels participants urged for an internal audit of general education courses to ensure faculty understand and implement the competency throughout the general education curriculum. Perhaps creating a University or college-level ad hoc committee could be convened to guide and oversee general education. The work of this committee could make reporting to SACSCOC an easier process.

Most participants agreed that a closer evaluation of the competencies should occur as some seem to be written beyond an introductory level. Also, double-dip artifacts seemed to address only one of the competencies. A review should be made of double-dip courses to make sure all relevant competencies are addressed in the course. All participants agreed that professional development addressing writing student learning outcomes for syllabi, developing assignments appropriate for the competencies, etc. should be provided to everyone teaching general education courses.

The full list of participant recommendations can be found beginning on page 17 in Appendix A.

Communication Scores

In addition to reviewing the content, participants also scored the communication levels of the artifacts. In the May session participants struggled with the pass/fail system for communication often mentioning: “I hate to fail this artifact, but I also hate to pass it. I want to pass it but with reservations.” Conversations among the groups then generated a four-category scale: excellent, pass, pass with reservations, and fail. The May reviewers used the pass/fail system represented in Figure 6 and the June reviewers used the four-category system represented in Figure 7.
Goal 5: Review and norm communication rubric findings

As mentioned, the communication-scoring criterion was changed from pass/fail to a 4-category rubric. This new rubric was reviewed, applied, normed and revised.
during the June session. Figure 8 provides a score comparison in percentages from both the May and June assessment sessions.

**Figure 8. Comparison of Passing Communication Scores for May and June**

The following section provides comments and recommendations from the reviewers based on the use of the scoring results.

**Overall recommendations related to improving student communication skills**

Participants agreed that the 4-point Communication Rubric developed at the 2015 summer assessment should be retained. Some participants argued that if the writing is not "college level," it should not receive a passing score. Currently one can submit a less than college level artifact and receive a "Pass with reservations" score. More discussion about what is “college-level” needs to occur.

In addition, participants worked across competency groups to further norm the communication rubric. The first change to the new 4-point rubric included an update to include statements for math communication (i.e., when students don’t label calculations properly, etc.). Overall the participants felt that this was an extremely useful exercise and led to additional tips for faculty. The full list of participant recommendations categorized by competency can be found at the end of the report beginning on page 29 in Appendix C.

**Final Thoughts and Recommendations**

Participants agreed as we move forward in general education assessment, it is essential to have departmental involvement in general education and assessment and that we change the way that general education courses are evaluated such that value is placed upon involvement in general education improvement strategies.
Regarding the Summer Assessment Institutes, most participants think they should continue in roughly the same format and faculty should commit to participating for two consecutive years so that there is overlap from year-to-year. There should be at least one new faculty from each content area each summer. The full list of participant recommendations categorized by competency can be found at the end of the report beginning on page13, many of which are already in place.
Appendix A

Participant suggestions on issues related to general education and assessment.

1) Feedback must be provided to participants in both the pilot programs and the summer assessment in regard to both their individual class performance and the overall findings and conclusions of the program in a timely manner. (Complete)

2) Processes for the collection and assessment of general education artifacts must be fully communicated and transparent for all involved faculty and there must be opportunity for faculty input into both process and evaluation. (Complete via http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ugs/faculty/)
   a. This information would be very helpful for new faculty as part of faculty and chair orientation. We believe that it may be too much to disseminate during new faculty orientation at the college level.

3) Findings from the pilot should be provided to all general education faculty. (Complete).

4) This report should be shared with all faculty who are participating in the fall pilot. (Complete)

5) The information in this report should be shared with faculty in a content specific meeting/lunch.

6) General education faculty should have access to the competency rubric for the course they are teaching to ensure that assignments fulfill the competency. (Complete available at http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ugs/faculty/)

7) Provide examples of syllabi that exhibit good models for producing successful artifacts. (Complete available at http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ugs/faculty/)

8) Tips developed by faculty from the summer assessment should be available to general education faculty. (Complete available at http://www.clemson.edu/administration/ugs/faculty/)

9) There should be example student artifacts (anonymous) with scores available to general education instructors year-round via a website. (Complete)

10) Student learning outcomes should be written in a measurable way (i.e., Bloom's taxonomy) using language that can be assessed and actually demonstrate student learning.

11) Professional development should be available for all faculty, grad students, lecturers and adjuncts where they learn about and in some cases create rubrics used in assessment, Bloom's updated taxonomy information, definition of competency and examples of assignments that fulfill the competency.

12) All faculty, grad students, lecturers and adjuncts should be provided with support to learn how to make any appropriate adjustments to their syllabi and courses as general education assessment methods change. This can include professional development opportunities (University-wide or within individual department meetings), online training, technical support, email communication, etc.
**Ongoing Processes**

1) An exploration of the efficacy of multiple-choice tests as evidence of the competency particularly in introductory level courses where students are not expected to gain mastery of the skill. This may also be beneficial for large classes and for gaining faculty support while providing a sustainable (and reliable) assessment model.

2) Ideally faculty should participate in the summer assessment *before* participating in the pilot as it can provide clarity on how to form the appropriate assignments to demonstrate outcomes and should commit to working on the summer assessment for two consecutive years so that there is overlap from year-to-year. *(This model is in currently in place though increased participation must be encouraged.)*

3) The summer assessment ought to continue in roughly the same format, but we believe that it ought to incorporate more opportunities for the entire group to engage in discussions about recurring overarching challenges to assessment. *(Based on these suggestions the location of the summer assessment is a crucial part of the event. It is recommended that the ASC or a similar space be used for the summer assessment as it facilitates group discussions.)*

4) There should be at least one new faculty from each content area each summer.

5) Before another summer assessment occurs a small group (2 or 3) of experienced assessors should calibrate a rubric that will serve the assignments to be assessed. They can then train/norm a larger group that will then assess the bulk of the artifacts. They can also adjudicate disputes and back-read the other assessors if possible/practicable/desirable. This is based on AP procedures.

**College/Departmental Level Suggestions**

1) Colleges should have an internal audit of general education courses to ensure faculty understand and implement the competency throughout the general education curriculum. A mechanism needs to be developed to do that audit and to delete courses from a general education list without the home department having to submit a curriculum change. Perhaps creating a college-level or department-level ad hoc committee to complete this task. The work of this committee could make reporting to SACSCOC an easier process.

   1. Each general education course should generate at least one artifact that fulfills the competency.
      a. All general education syllabi should be checked at the departmental level for inclusion of appropriate information (i.e., correct competency statement, specification of artifact, etc.) to ensure that general education courses offered within the department are providing students the opportunity to fulfill the competency.
      b. Review and make suggestions for appropriate language for general education syllabi.
2. For the most part, double-dip artifacts seemed to address only one of the competencies. A review should be made of double-dip courses to make sure all relevant competencies are addressed in the course.

3. Course coordinators (when applicable) should review and make suggestions for syllabi and examples at the course coordinators meeting at the beginning of the semester.

4. Each college should review the competencies for clarity and transferability as the wording of many of them has made assessment unnecessarily difficult.

5. Faculty engagement must be encouraged at the department level with leadership from chairs.
   a. The curriculum committee and undergraduate coordinator (when applicable) should play an active role in educating faculty about the importance of general education and the assessment of it.
   b. Incentives should be offered for faculty members who play a meaningful role in advancing the quality of general education within their departments and the University, as well as those who provide consistent evidence of successfully fulfilling competencies within their own classes. Examples could include the General Education Scholar designation, credit toward promotion and tenure, course reductions, bonus pay, and professional development funds.

University Level Suggestions
1. The need for a change in the way that faculty are evaluated such that value is placed upon involvement in general education improvement strategies.
2. The need for a guiding body for general education on campus.

Generic general education information for faculty - may require faculty development

1. The competency descriptions ought to identify basic tasks (suitable for introductory-level courses) that, at the same time, suggest higher levels of sophistication/scoring (i.e., suitable for upper-division courses). (Will require broader conversations among faculty/curriculum committee etc. Thinking along the lines of beginning, developing, mastery).

2. The use of PowerPoint/Prezi presentations as evidence of fulfillment of the competency is seldom sufficient because they do not provide the in-depth analysis and synthesis required by the competency.
   a. PowerPoints and Prezi presentations may be submitted if they provide analysis, synthesis and/or comparison/contrast through detailed presentation notes, voiceovers (with citations as needed), and detailed slides. Assessors should have clear and complete presentations for review. Presentations that are not complete have difficulty meeting this competency – strongly recommended that notes and/or paper be provided along with the slides.
b. When using multimedia (videos, prezis, powerpoint, etc.), a more intentional discussion needs to be included. Students don’t seem to be applying knowledge from their courses in their multimedia presentations.

3. Each faculty member submitting artifacts should submit a bullet point sheet on the assignment and the expectations of the student, including information about which parts of the artifact may be most useful in assessing in terms of content and communication.

Content Specific Suggestions - may require professional development for faculty, adjuncts and TAs

Communication
1. Keep the latest 4-point Communication Rubric that was developed Summer 2015. It works fine! But use numbers instead of descriptors for easier averaging.
   a. However, some participants argued that if the writing is not “college-level” it should not receive a passing score. Currently one can submit a less than college-level artifact and receive a “Pass with reservations” score. More discussion about what is “college-level” needs to occur.
   b. Since visual communication of results is important in the NS, it might be helpful to include a reference to graphs in the communication rubric.

AH
1. The use of PowerPoint/Prezi presentations as evidence of fulfillment of the competency is seldom sufficient because they do not provide the in-depth analysis and synthesis required by the competency.
   a. PowerPoints and Prezi presentations may be submitted if they provide analysis, synthesis and/or comparison/contrast through detailed presentation notes, voiceovers (with citations as needed), and detailed slides. Assessors should have clear and complete presentations for review. Presentations that are not complete have difficulty meeting this competency – strongly recommended that notes and/or paper be provided along with the slides.

Cross Cultural Awareness
1. The competency seems to be written at a level beyond what should be expected for a general education course to accomplish, especially for these introductory level courses. For courses that do not have an in-depth discussion of culture, don’t define culture well, or address culture specifically students will have a very difficult time attaining the minimum requirement for this competency. As written, the competency requires a very intentional exercise and discussion designed to get students to really understand what culture is to begin with, much less make even an adequate comparison of two or more cultures.
   2. Presentations do not allow students the opportunity to “provide an in-depth analysis of two or more world cultures where multiple aspects of these cultures are considered” (competency rubric). They lack coherence, there is no
development of ideas, and do not allow the reviewer to assess college level communication effectively.

3. Rubric issues: This year for most of the reports that we saw that were given a 1, the student listed traits of a culture (or a religious tradition within a culture) but did not develop their ideas, or make assessments or comparisons. For 2, which was considered passable the student typically provided a superficial comparison (emphasis on superficial). One effective method for students who submitted PowerPoints or Prezis was to do this through use of a Venn diagram. The current standard for 3 should be standard for “pass” since it is the first example on the rubric that actually meets the written competency of “critically compare”. No assignments as written attained this standard. We’re not even sure what a 4 would look like.

Mathematics
1. If possible it is helpful for Math artifacts to ask (in possibly a bonus format) questions that are beyond the scope of the course to gauge the student’s competency in mathematics beyond course content (the higher levels in Bloom’s taxonomy.)
2. Assignments should incorporate more interpretation of problems throughout the course.
3. Hand-written answers are difficult to read so possibly make the question “take-home” with typed responses that are in turn easy-to-read and may possibly result in higher percentage of participation.

Natural Sciences
1. The competency works well for lab science classes. But perhaps as written is too exclusive for all Natural Sciences. The NS competency appears to be biased towards artifacts that are written like manuscripts (lab reports with literature review and literature review articles). Not all Natural Sciences courses should necessarily expect students to be able to produce this kind of work. Additionally, the spirit of the competency seems to be about demonstrating scientific thinking or literacy, which could be demonstrated by other artifacts. For example, a reflective essay in which students are prompted to describe how they used the scientific process during a laboratory exercise or to solve a problem could be an excellent artifact for assessing understanding of scientific process, but would fail to demonstrate the NS competency as currently written.
2. Additional training for teaching assistants to include
   a. Students sometimes needed help constructing compact tables, and ended up producing tables that were far too large and repetitious. Instructors should emphasize ways to correct these deficiencies with the laboratory TAs the next time the course is taught.
   b. Students seem to need help understanding what a control was.
   c. Students seem to need help understanding the importance of replication. Students repeatedly would report results based on one replicate when additional replicates would have been easy to add.
d. Students seem to need help selecting appropriate references when accessible literature is available.

3. We recommend more scaffolding during the experimental design phase to ensure that students will meet the competency. TAs should be trained to provide scaffolding (rather than direct instruction) for experimental design and report writing, so that inquiry can be student-led and students can still successfully meet the competency. Many student artifacts failed this competency because they did not provide evidence of an experiment (for example, N=1 is an anecdote, not an experiment) or did not make a connection between their results and other research (whether or not it was peer-reviewed). We recommend that student artifacts be provided after students have had the chance to edit them.

Social Sciences
1. We welcome the change from the old to the new competency in terms of the fact that the new competency better reflects the kinds of artifacts that are being submitted by students. Even the new competency, though, continues to limit flexibility in terms of the types of assignments that faculty members may require. Also, even some assignments that are perfect for a particular course and show advanced understanding of social science concepts may not fulfill the competency because of the nature of the assignment (i.e., a book report or literature review).
   a. Perhaps terms such as “describe” and “explain” should be replaced with ones such as “identify” and “recognize.”
   b. Overly complicated assignments - To this end, the assignment might be scaled back to better suit the introductory level of the students.
   c. Revisions to the competency should be practical in the sense that they should take into account increasing class sizes, the composition of the classes (i.e., large freshman enrollments), and the course loads of instructors.
2. Artifacts should focus upon human behavior (as opposed to environmental factors, plant behavior, biological processes, etc.) and should identify multiple relevant social science concepts.
3. Artifacts should move beyond simple description of a social science concept or human behavior to:
   a. Apply social science concepts, models, and theories.
   b. Make connections between social science concepts and human behavior.
   c. Draw reasonable and logical conclusions based upon relevant social science evidence.
4. Opinion pieces are not appropriate artifacts unless multiple viewpoints are addressed, adequate evidence is provided to support the opinion, and relevant literature is cited.
   a. Many of the argument papers involve the author cherry-picking evidence that confirms her ideologically charged point of view. Thus, they do not offer a balanced assessment of the controversy, and ensuing social impacts.
5. Providing a list of what each discipline or even course considers to be its important social science concepts, models, etc. to be used as an appendix for assessors would clarify the rubric.

6. The application of social science concepts in these artifacts tends to be limited. Increased use of social science theory and evidence and strong social science sources would improve the quality of the papers.

Science and Technology in Society
1. Some topics work better than others, but students need to be required to focus more explicitly on the interaction between technology and society.
2. Assignments should be clearly written to emphasize the importance of analyzing and connecting the impact of humans through technology.
3. The competency seems to work, but because it is simple, it is difficult to interpret for different courses. We need to communicate to faculty that the interaction between science or technology and society needs to be discussed explicitly, not just leaving the reader to draw their own conclusion.

Issues Related to Accreditation

Can be implemented immediately though may require faculty development

1) All faculty should be educated and involved in the accreditation process and should be aware of the purpose of assessment and benefit of accreditation.
2) All faculty teaching general education courses should attend a (yearly?) session that informs them of the expectations of assessment and includes a discussion of the meaning of the various competencies. Possibly this can be conducted by competency coordinators, bearing in mind that not all competencies have coordinators.
   a. Communicate to faculty that at least one assignment must be tailored towards demonstration of the competency. Conveying that information will make assessment much more efficient and effective.

Suggestions requiring college/department action

1) As SACSCOC requirements evolve, colleges need to make sure we remain current with the changing system.

Upper level Administration Support Needed

2) Upper administration should provide support to department chairs to ensure
   a. That the minimum requirements for SACSCOC accreditation (as it relates to general education) are met.
   a. That everyone understands both reason for accreditation and the importance of departmental involvement in general education buy-in and assessment.
Appendix B

Arts and Humanities:
Recommendations for CHANGING THE COMPETENCY
After the Summer Assessment Session in May of 2015, we recommend that the Arts and Humanities competency be changed to the following:

Demonstrate an ability to analyze and/or interpret the Arts and Humanities as a reflection of human expression.

Our rationale for this recommended change is:

- Most of our classes focus on the Arts and Humanities in relation to human expression rather than to historical and cultural contextualization.
- This would be a broader competency that would allow for more academic freedom for professors in designing curriculum and assignments.
- The options for evidence of this revised competency may result in better work from the students, who would enjoy more creativity and options in their assignments.
- More opportunity for critical thinking.

Cross Cultural Awareness -
Recommendations for CCA competency based on use of results
- Competency issues: The competency as written is reaching beyond what should be expected for a general education course to accomplish, especially for these introductory level courses. For courses that do not have an in depth discussion of culture, don't define culture well, or address culture specifically; students will have a very difficult time attaining the minimum requirement this competency. As written currently, a very intentional exercise and discussion is required to get students to really understand what culture is to begin with, much less make even an adequate comparison of two or more cultures. Courses that are focused on religion or international relations are not incorporating the discussion necessary for students to attain this competency.

Mathematics
Recommendations for Mathematics competency based on use of results
- There should the ability to score a 0 for both content and communication.
- There should be the ability to give a “dash” or “blank” for submissions that are blank or missing/not able to be opened.
- The two points above would help to better distinguish the reasoning for scores of 1 and not include in the average score the artifacts that are missing.
- If possible it is helpful for Math artifacts to ask (in possibly a bonus format) questions that are beyond the scope of the course to gauge the student’s competency in mathematics beyond course content (the higher levels in Bloom’s taxonomy.)

Natural Sciences –
**Recommendations for NS competency based on use of results**

We found that the NS competency as written is too exclusive for all Natural Sciences. The NS competency appears to be biased towards artifacts that are written like manuscripts (lab reports with literature review and literature review articles). Not all Natural Sciences courses should necessarily expect students to be able to produce this kind of work. Additionally, the spirit of the competency seems to be about demonstrating scientific thinking or literacy, which could be demonstrated by other artifacts. For example, a reflective essay in which students are prompted to describe how they used the scientific process during a laboratory exercise or to solve a problem could be an excellent artifact for assessing understanding of scientific process, but would fail to demonstrate the NS competency as currently written.

We also found the original and revised rubrics were not satisfactory for assessing the current competency as written. We recommend using the following rubrics (one for lab reports, one for lit. reviews) to assess the current competency.

**NS Competency Text**

“Demonstrate the process of scientific reasoning by performing an experiment and thoroughly discussing the results with reference to the scientific literature, or by studying a question through critical analysis of the evidence in the scientific literature.”

**NS Competency Rubric (Lab Report)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doesn’t Pass (1)</th>
<th>The artifact doesn’t meet the competency because either the task that the student performed was not an experiment (e.g., an anecdotal study without replication), there is no discussion, or the discussion is merely a summary of the results. Citations are omitted entirely, or not incorporated into the text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass with Reservations (2)</td>
<td>The artifact meets the competency at a basic level. The artifact makes clear that the student has performed a scientific experiment. The discussion includes a conclusion derived from</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
an interpretation of the results. The results and conclusion are given context within the greater body of scientific knowledge by referencing scientific literature. Citations might not be relevant, or scientific literature might be limited (primarily lab manuals, non-scientific sources, websites, etc.).

Good (3) The artifact clearly shows competency. In addition to the features of a score of 2, the discussion is developed by a justification or explanation of the interpretation of the results. Citations of scientific literature are appropriate and relevant.

Excellent (4) The artifact shows mastery of the competency. The discussion includes an eloquent interpretation of results justified and supported by an extensive list of relevant scientific literature citations.

NS Competency Rubric (Literature Review)

Doesn’t Pass (1) The artifact doesn’t meet the competency because either there is no clear problem posed, evidence presented is not from the scientific literature, and/or the evidence is presented, but not evaluated (High on Bloom’s taxonomy!).

Pass with Reservations (2) The artifact meets the competency at a basic level. Presented evidence is evaluated with respect to the problem being studied. Evidence presented is supported by citation. Evidence is judged and given value based on a clear set of criteria. A conclusion is reached after weighing the value of all presented evidence.

Good (3) The artifact clearly shows competency. In addition to the features of a score of 2, the student poses an answer to the question, the primary criterion for evaluation of evidence is scientific merit, and both supporting and conflicting pieces of evidence are presented and judged.

Excellent (4) The artifact shows mastery of the competency. The student poses an engaging or fundamentally important question. More than one answer to the question are considered and the evidence for each is evaluated using relevant scientific literature.
Both of these rubrics have rigorous requirements for student understanding of the science process in order to pass (score of 2 or higher). This explains the lower average scores for the June assessment compared to the May assessment.

We feel this rubric is an effective tool for assessing student artifacts, but does not address the exclusive nature of the NS competency. We suspect that changing the competency to include a broader set of NS Gen Ed courses is a better solution to the difficulties we had in assessing the following course artifacts.

Social Sciences –
Recommendations for SS competency based on use of results

1) We welcome the change from the old to the new competency in terms of the fact that the new competency better reflects the kinds of artifacts that are being submitted by students. Even the new competency, though, continues to limit flexibility in terms of the types of assignments that faculty members may require. Also, even some assignments that are perfect for a particular course and show advanced understanding of social science concepts may not fulfill the competency because of the nature of the assignment (i.e., a book report or literature review).
   a. Recommendations:
      i. The competency should be changed to reflect what is actually happening in general education classes within the Social Sciences.
         1. Perhaps terms such as “describe” and “explain” should be replaced with ones such as “identify” and “recognize.”
         2. Revisions to the competency should be practical in the sense that they should take into account increasing class sizes, the composition of the classes (i.e., large freshman enrollments), and the course loads of instructors.

2) Crafting a list of what each discipline or even course considers to be its important social science concepts, models, etc. to be used as an appendix for assessors. This way the rubric can use generic terms.

3) The rubric should be specific enough to ensure that faculty and assessors have the same expectations for artifacts (i.e., expectations consistent with the type of learning that takes place in introductory-level classes as opposed to advanced classes). (We have attached a suggested revised rubric.)

4) To that end, the new competency rubric is overly complicated. Proposes changes to the rubric:
   a. The scoring rubric crafted by the May scorers was extremely helpful, but that it ought to be scaled back into a single-dimension format.
b. To do so, the entire central row (on “concepts”) should be eliminated to better honor the competency description, which deliberately omitted such terminology.

c. Below is a suggested rubric (which is heading in the right direction, but needs refinement):

2. Describes a social science concept related to human action and identifies some phenomena as relevant evidence.

3. Describes a social science concept and uses evidence to explain a human action

4. Describes a) one or more social science concepts and uses b) one or more sets of evidence to explain c) one or more human actions (a, b, or c must be more than one).

Description can be interpreted broadly to cover a mere mention of the term if it is used deliberately.
Appendix C

Tips for General Education Faculty

Arts and Humanities
Example of Information Sent to an Arts and Humanities Gen Ed Faculty Member

Text of the competency:

**Competency as it currently stands:**

Demonstrate an understanding of the Arts and Humanities in their cultural and historical context.

**Recommended change in competency:**

Demonstrate an ability to analyze and/or interpret the Arts and Humanities as a reflection of human experience.

A successful artifact will:

- Provide evidence of the competency in a well-organized manner with logical flow,
- Employ appropriate reasoning and support,
- Provide specific details and references from the material being analyzed with minimal spelling and grammatical errors,
- Incorporate literary and/or discipline-specific sources / examples to support ideas by providing citations that are adequate and appropriate (when necessary for assignment),
- Exhibit an understanding of the material as shown in college-level exploration and synthesis of ideas,
- Discuss broader implications of material in relation to the competency.

Further tips to the instructor:

- The typical Arts and Humanities artifact is a report, research paper, critical reflection or arts-related project on any topic related to a human experience with a cultural component. An artifact of this kind will reflect on the experience using support, allusions, or references to proper academic sources (ie Project Muse) within the discipline by comparison/contrast, analysis and/or synthesis.
- After reviewing a number of Power Points and Prezis we have concluded that they do not serve as appropriate artifacts given the current rubric configuration.
- It is our conclusion that artist conceptual statements do not meet the artifact standards as engagement with art tends to be a very subjective experience. By definition conceptual statements often do not meet the rigor required for academic writing and/or presentations.
- Worksheets, short-answer assignments, multiple choice assignments, descriptions of artistic process, plot summaries, book reports and lesson plans DO NOT demonstrate the Arts and Humanities competency.
Tips for Creating a Mathematics Competency Artifact

Text of the competency:

Demonstrate mathematical literacy through solving problems, communicating concepts, reasoning mathematically, and applying mathematical or statistical methods, using multiple representations where applicable.

A successful artifact from a mathematics course will:

- Correctly use algebra and logic to solve multistep problems;
- Correctly translate between mathematical language and lay language.

OR

- Correctly present and apply a mathematical technique to a real world problem discussed in the specific mathematical area under study;
- Correctly translate between mathematical language and lay language.

A successful artifact from a statistics course will:

- Correctly identify variables and the relationships among them;
- Use appropriate statistical methods to describe quantitative data observed or generated from these variables;
- Correctly present numerical, graphical, and algebraic representations of these data.
- Correctly translate between statistical language and lay language.

Further tips to the instructor:

- The student must perform mathematics in order to demonstrate this competency. The mere discussion of quantitative data will not be sufficient.
- The artifact must describe the context in which the mathematical work is being presented.
- Notes on some common types of artifacts:
  a) A hypothetical mathematical problem could be acceptable if the student describes the context and explains the process used in reaching the solution.
  b) Excel spreadsheets will not qualify unless the student includes explanations of the math and interpretation of results.
  c) Mathematics exams could be sufficient provided that step-by-step calculations are shown, and they include written interpretation of results.
  d) Research papers with statistical calculations are acceptable for this competency, but the calculations must be shown and discussed.
  e) Input/output from statistical software must be presented as a Word file or PDF so that assessors can open the file. Also, the artifact must include explanations of the mathematics and interpretation of results.
Social Sciences

Example of Information Sent to a Social Sciences Gen Ed Faculty Member

Recommendations for faculty members teaching general education Social Sciences courses

a. Artifacts should focus upon human behavior (as opposed to environmental factors, plant behavior, biological processes, etc.) and should identify multiple relevant social science concepts.

b. Artifacts should move beyond simple description of a social science concept or human behavior to:
   i. Apply social science concepts, models, and theories.
   ii. Make connections between social science concepts and human behavior.
   iii. Draw reasonable and logical conclusions based upon relevant social science evidence.

c. Opinion pieces are not appropriate artifacts unless multiple viewpoints are addressed, adequate evidence is provided to support the opinion, and relevant literature is cited.

d. Faculty members teaching large sections may consider assigning group projects, ungraded activities, narrated presentations, and randomly graded assignments.

A successful artifact will:

- **Identify** social factors that are relevant to the explanation of human behavior.
- **Apply** social science concepts, models, and theories to explain these human actions.
- **Establish** meaningful and logical **connections** between social science concepts and human behavior.
- **Provide** sufficient evidence to reach conclusions.
- **Draw** meaningful and logical **conclusions** that are supported by evidence.
- If appropriate, discuss the broader implications of the study.

Further tips to the instructor:

- Students’ understanding of core principles within a social science discipline should be evident in the artifact.
- The typical artifact is a paper in which an important social issue is explored. Topics may be historical or contemporary and may relate to the actions of individuals, collectivities, cultures, nations, or world systems.
- Group projects, presentations with narration or substantive speakers’ notes, student-produced videos, or portfolios may also be acceptable.
• Book, article, and literature reviews may fulfill the competency if students critically review social science research and evidence, discuss and analyze issues raised by that research, and draw conclusions which arise from this analysis.
• Outlines, lecture notes, worksheets, short-answer assignments, multiple choice tests, and presentations without narration are unlikely to demonstrate the Social Sciences competency as it is written.