

Citrus College GE Assessment Dialogue Report

May 14, 2015

Present:

Facilitators - Stephanie Yee, SLO Coordinator; Michelle Plug-Gordin, Articulation Officer; John Vaughan, Academic Senate President

Panelists -

Area A:	Carsten Dau, English Alfie Swan, Math
Area B:	Dr. Christine Goedhart, Biology
Area C/Area D:	Senya Lubisich, History
Area E:	Nicki Shaw, Kinesiology

Faculty - Eric Odegaard, English; Carsten Dau, English; Becky Rudd, English; Alfie Swan, Math; Paul Swatzel, Math; Robert Solis, CIS; Lanette Granger, Librarian; Dr. Dave Kary, Astronomy; Gloria Ramos, Physics; Dr. Barbara Juncosa, Biology; Dr. Christine Goedhart, Biology; Roberta Eisel, English; Dr. Senya Lubisich, Jean Culp, History; Nancy Quinones, Ethnic Studies; John Vaughan, Dance; Nicki Shaw, Kinesiology; Stephanie Yee, Counseling; Michelle Plug, Counseling/Articulation

1

Background

Purpose:

Why assess GE? All degree seeking and transfer students at Citrus College are required to complete a core of general education courses. Since GE is an institutional requirement that crosses disciplines, assessment occurs on a broader scale than course or program level assessment. The goal is to improve the GE curriculum to benefit our students. It is through general education that the College fulfills its mission to provide quality transfer, career technical, basic skills, and life-long learning programs that prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

Background:

Annual assessment of our General Education program has been conducted every year in May since 2012. We assess our GE outcomes in order to discuss the interesting connections between our courses, the General Education pattern at Citrus, and student completion and success. In addition to instructional faculty, deans, and Institutional Research, representatives from the library, student services, classified staff, and the student body have been in attendance. This practice is innovative since we have conversations in each GE area (**Language and Rationality**, **Natural Sciences**, **Arts and Humanities**, **Social and Behavioral Sciences**, **Physical Education/Dance**), and then share our observations and concerns with the larger group.

Results:

We have discussed the findings and recommendations in HotShots, the SLO committee, and share this report with the instructional divisions since the topics discussed can be a good starting point for continued dialogue about the concerns in our GE areas and how to best address them. For example, Natural Sciences has discussed the findings in the report at division meetings and then used the results to create an action plan to focus on critical thinking in the classroom. Social/Behavioral Sciences committed to use Early Alert more to support students.

Citrus College General Education (GE) Program Survey

For the 4th annual 2015 GE Assessment Dialogue, survey results were used to determine the theme of the discussion as well as the format and discussion prompts for the event. In an attempt to increase participation and hear thoughts from more faculty, HotShots and the GE Committee created an 11-question survey to gather as much data as possible from all full-time and part-time faculty beforehand (see Appendix for questions and results). The results were analyzed and discussed in both committees. Accordingly, four questions were written and were used as a starting point for conversation.

Below are the General Education (GE) Outcomes for Area A-E on the local Associate Degree pattern. These same outcomes can also apply to transfer GE patterns such as CSUGE and IGETC.

Citrus College General Education Outcomes: Area A-E

A. Language and Rationality

Students successfully completing courses in Area A are able to read, write, speak, and think creatively in personal, academic, workplace and community contexts.

- I. English Composition
- II. Communication and Analytical Thinking
- III. Mathematics

B. Natural Sciences

Students successfully completing courses in Area B are able to investigate and explain physical phenomena through application of empirical knowledge using mathematical and scientific processes and concepts.

- I. Biological Sciences
- II. Physical Sciences

C. Arts and Humanities

Students successfully completing courses in Area C are able to appreciate, critically understand, and express artistic, philosophical, and cultural sensibilities in historical and contemporary contexts.

- I. Arts
- II. Humanities

D. Social and Behavioral Sciences

Students successfully completing courses in Area D are able to identify, analyze, and communicate an understanding of self and society through systematic investigation of social behavior, institutions, and culture.

- I. History and Political Science
- II. Behavioral sciences

E. Kinesiology and Dance

Students successfully completing courses in Area E are able to demonstrate personal responsibility, health literacy, and understanding of the importance of physical health and wellbeing.

- I. Kinesiology
- II. Dance

Findings

71 faculty representing all five GE areas completed the survey. 54% were full-time faculty and 46% part-time faculty. 83% of respondents felt that course-level outcomes reflect(or align with, or map to) the GE outcome in your area(s) and 17% did not know. No respondents indicated that course SLOs did not align or map to their area's GE outcome. 70% of respondents indicated that students either exceeded or met the GE outcome for the area(s), while 30% somewhat met. For the 30% that indicated somewhat met, the faculty felt improvement can be seen if more prerequisites were added to certain courses. In addition, other ideas include increase tutoring services and more dialogue between disciplines/division/GE areas. Some specific recommendations were that since some

students have difficulty communicating their thoughts and ideas in writing, students need college level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills BEFORE they take transferable level courses as well as be better disciplined.

98% of respondents determined that the primary Core Competency (skills/behaviors) for general education that a student on a GE pathway (e.g. Associate Degree, IGETC, CSUGE) should be able to demonstrate after successfully completing coursework in an area is Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking/Info Competency. This was closely followed by Communication (65%) and Community, Global Consciousness and Responsibility (60%). The most popular course-level assessments for any Core Competency includes 1) class discussion or activity; 2) exams; 3) written work; 4) quizzes; and 5) homework. 67% of respondents agreed that the Core Competency that should be focused on for the 2015 GE Assessment Dialogue session was Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking/Info Competency. Most faculty felt that the following activities would aid student success: faculty development activities, interactive workshops, and technology training.

In terms of ways Library services and Student Services can be utilized to better enhance student attainment of the GE area outcomes, faculty felt that resources on campus for helping students choose a major and/or career path, Library liaisons for each course or subject and assisting librarians with their collection development process would be most helpful. Another recommendation was the need for liaisons between counseling and the divisions for the benefit of students. Almost every division has expressed interest in a counseling liaison for programs.

2015 GE Assessment Dialogue Overview

After a brief overview of the survey results, the panel was then asked to discuss the following questions:

1. **What pedagogical techniques or strategies do you utilize to facilitate critical thinking in your classes? How do you assess these techniques?**
2. What discipline specific activities do you do in your classes that relate back to the General Education SLOs and/or Core Competencies? For example, how does your discipline relate back to global awareness or technology?
3. What types of activities would you like to see that incorporate more cross disciplining throughout our campus?
4. What specific skills do you perceive that are lacking in our students and how can we better address these deficiencies?

General Summary of Dialogue:

The theme for this year's session was "Creative, Analytical, and Critical Thinking and Information Competency." For the first time the format was a panel discussion representing all the GE areas, and discussion focused around critical thinking tools in the classroom, best practices/innovative strategies, and barriers to student success. Based on this dialogue, faculty provided input on how faculty development and equity funds can be used for planning specific activities or recommendations.

Panelists felt this meeting was a great experience to talk with other instructors about what goes on (and what should go on) in general education courses.

Recommendations

1. Meet on a more regular basis - perhaps 2x/year or within smaller discipline groups more frequently and within a larger group 1-2x/year.
2. Campus wide conversation on the topic of critical thinking, during Convocation or in the Spring Flex Day schedule. An example might be a presentation where instructors from six or seven different disciplines present two methods of teaching the same idea from their course -- the way they did it before they were concerned with enhancing students' critical thinking skills, and then the method they adopted to accommodate that concern.
3. More pedagogical training opportunities.

Panelists Best Practices

1. Students need to be active learners rather than passive learners - classes should not be a place to "relax" (as one student had described history classes).
2. Lose some lecture content to integrate critical thinking into the classroom. It is more important to let students find information on their own in the digital world, but we need to teach them how to find it.
3. In my own classrooms, I have had to let go of content and the "end game" in order to engage students in the process.
4. Skill-based learning, and the practice of those skills, is an opportunity to engage students in critical thinking and analysis.
5. Discuss the process after they (students) try solving a problem. For example, how did they come up with their answer, creative thinking, and different approaches used?
6. Challenge students. Help them become active learners by walking them through it. Teach them how to ask better questions. Do not be there to simply give them the answers, instead be there to assist with facilitating better questions and different methods for finding solutions.
7. Do more activities to help their thought process, group activities, and do things which let them be more active.
8. Create a space where everyone dives in together (student and professor).
9. Let the student pick what they want to be lectured on from the book in the beginning of the semester. Let them tell you what interests them from the book and build your lectures from that.
10. Flipping the classroom: put up videos and lectures online before class and work through issues or questions students have during class time. This also allows them to discuss among each other and promotes involvement.
11. Have quizzes based off content that hasn't been covered yet to encourage/get them to read ahead before coming to class.
12. Use the app "Explain Everything*" to load a pdf of most common questions which allows the professor to target basic questions that students have. These questions can be answered before students come to class and additional questions, if not answered through the app, can be answered in office hours. This method of using the app allows the professor to focus on key concepts during class. (*"Explain Everything" is an app (\$2.99) which is an easy-to-use design, screen casting, and interactive whiteboard tool that lets you annotate, animate, narrate, import, and export almost anything to and from almost anywhere).

Pedagogical Techniques or Strategies

1. Making connections between ideas - relationships between different topics and to draw on those relationships in future study. In math, students must learn different content areas, but must also show how these concepts are interwoven. On quizzes or exams, a conceptual question is included to see if students understand these connections. For example, how are log and exponential functions related to one another?
2. Students must be able to think outside of the box and solve problems in non-routine ways in an unpredictable context. Student's abilities can be assessed to see how they got to an answer rather than just showing the work. This allows the student to monitor their thinking and reflect on where the process went right or wrong.
3. Be prepared to present (critical thinking) in more varied ways, including being prepared to "let go" and give students room to explore. Students can be assigned problems that can be solved in a variety of methods, and these students can then discuss or reflect on these different methods to see which of them was the most efficient or more creative. This helps guide students from being passive thinkers to being a creative thinker.
4. We need to equip students with not only the knowledge, but also the transferable skills they will need to be marketable and successful in this 21st century world. General education courses are perfect places to teach transferable skills while also introducing students to important content knowledge.
5. Plan the curriculum to move from the individual understanding the concept, to students being required to use it (non-verbal) to show understanding or to force reflection. From there either within the same activity/lecture or across a group of connected concepts, they are given the responsibility to review problems, come up with their own solutions, then cooperate and come to consensus with others. This

is a style of curricular formatting experienced in the Sierra/Social Ecology learning community where students live with each other all year and start as passive students in the course who, by the end of the course, are teaching the class. This method puts the onus on the student because the stakes increase as time progresses.

6. There is a need to rethink teaching strategies and modify according. We are no longer the keepers of knowledge – our students have access to more information than we could ever hope to offer them, and information keeps changing over time. What our students really need is to be effective problems solvers and life-long learners. This requires a whole host of important 21st century skills, such as
 - The ability to find relevant and accurate information in the digital landscape
 - The ability to integrate information in new, innovative, and creative ways
 - The ability to communicate information and ideas in a variety of ways and to diverse audiences
 - The ability to collaborate effectively within diverse groups
 - Leadership skills
 - Time management and responsibility
 - Adaptability and flexibility

Questions for Reflection and Continued Discussion

1. The prioritizing of 'critical thinking' as a goal of community college seems to have reached mainstream acceptance (judging from the people who attended the meeting). Does that hold true to the larger population of teachers? If we accept that critical thinking skills are important enough to be part of every class' curriculum, then it seems to me that we're advocating that a lot of people change what they've been doing for a long time?
2. In order to incorporate critical thinking training into the students' learning does it usually mean dropping coverage of some course material? Is this a reality that most departments should accept and work towards (not all)? Does it imply widespread willingness to change methodology?
3. Some of the main purposes of education have been to prepare people to become productive citizens and to be able to effectively enter into the workforce. However, as the world changes, we have to ask ourselves if we are still meeting these objectives. Employers are telling us no – poll after poll show that employers do not think that recent graduates have the skills necessary for the jobs of today. So we need to then ask ourselves: How can we best serve our students? How can we best serve our community (both local and global)?
4. We need to generate a weighted list of all the college readiness skills (other than basic math and basic reading and writing). How can we help students be better prepared? Should more students take a Counseling 156, 159, or 160 course their first semester? Do we need a course about Information Competency?

Curriculum Questions

1. Should all students be required to take an Intro to Computer Science as a local Associate Degree graduation requirement? Will learning these basics before getting to other classes such as Critical thinking, English, and Math help students with technology literacy?
2. Can we create a Pre-Statistics course? If a pre-stats course is created, would it be able to fulfill a local GE requirement at the same level as Intermediate Algebra?

Concerns

1. At community college students can pick their own classes which can set them up for failure if they are not up to the level of the class. Students will take anything to meet their financial aid requirements, EOP&S or other reasons to be full-time students. Should we add more pre-requisites or look at this more in depth? Should certain "intense" courses such as history, ethics, humanities, etc. have these prerequisites? How will this impact enrollment? What about student success? Students may not realize "what they are signing up for" especially if they have not met with a counselor and Wingspan will allow the student to enroll without having any "basic fundamental classes."

Collaboration Opportunities

Types of activities would you like to see that incorporate more cross disciplining throughout our campus:

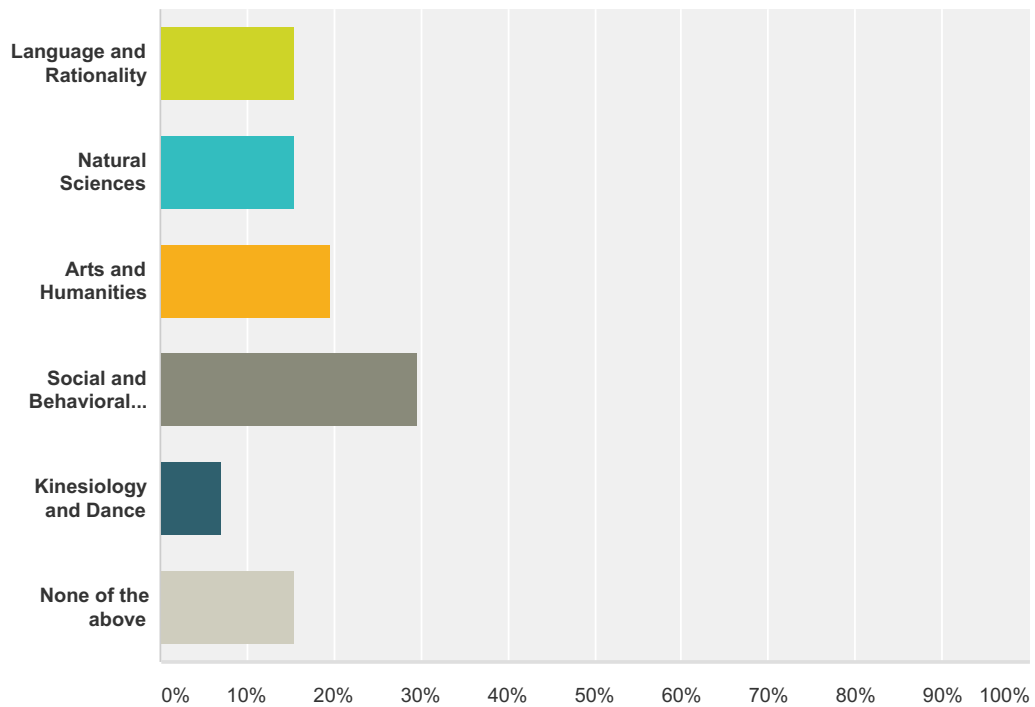
1. Kinesiology, Biology, Chemistry, & Physics- special “meet ups” to apply principals to live case studies or to explore different ways to analyze the same problem using blended groups of students to discuss varied approaches/ techniques.
2. Learning communities that are built around new courses. For example, at Evergreen State College, a lot of courses count in more than one discipline because they address immediate concerns of both. The Business of Fine Arts class is both an art class where students are producing work and a business class that deals directly with how artists can make a living in the real world. Depending on a student's major, this class will count as either an art or a business class.
3. I would love to see integrated learning in STEM areas to help students make connections across curricula. For example, having STEM based learning communities (Physics/calculus or Biology/Chemistry).
4. More collaboration between Counseling and Instructional divisions.

Appendix

GE SURVEY RESULTS

Q1 Which GE area(s) do you teach? If applicable, check more than one.

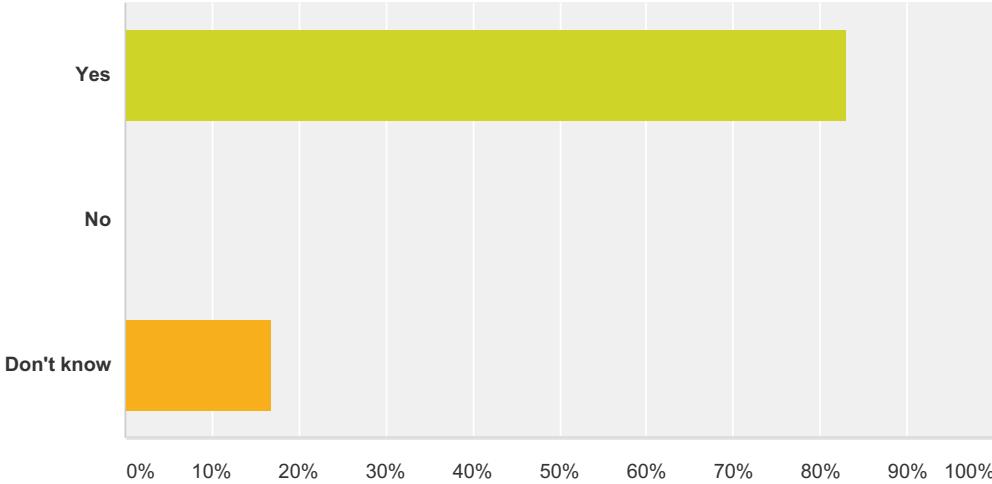
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Language and Rationality	15.49% 11
Natural Sciences	15.49% 11
Arts and Humanities	19.72% 14
Social and Behavioral Sciences	29.58% 21
Kinesiology and Dance	7.04% 5
None of the above	15.49% 11
Total Respondents: 71	

Q2 Do your course-level outcomes reflect (or align with, or map to) the GE outcome in your area(s)?

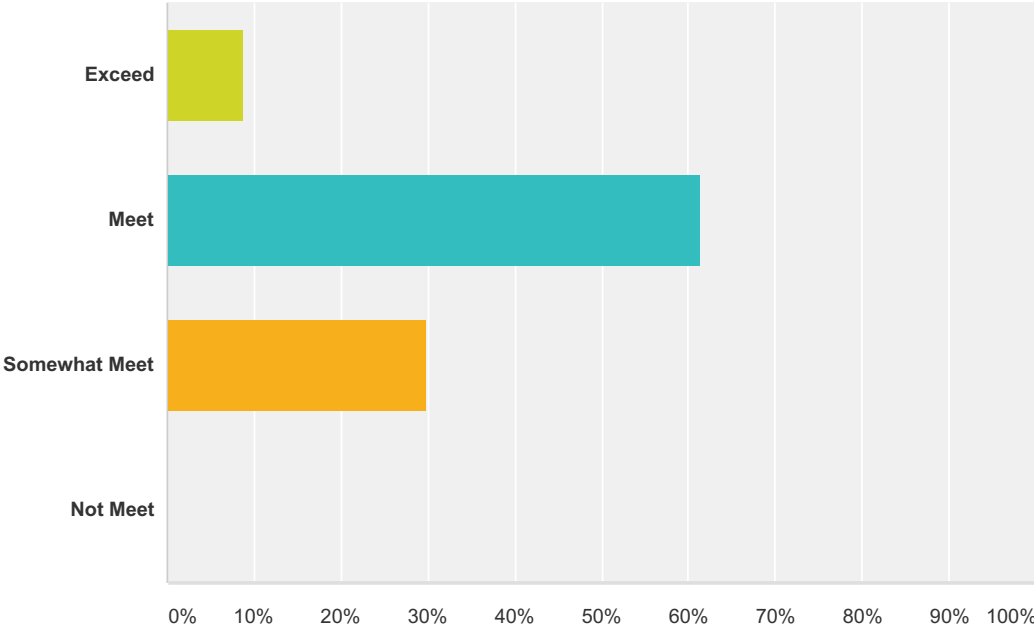
Answered: 59 Skipped: 13



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	83.05%	49
No	0.00%	0
Don't know	16.95%	10
Total		59

Q3 In your opinion, to what extent do your students in your GE courses meet the GE outcome for your area(s)?

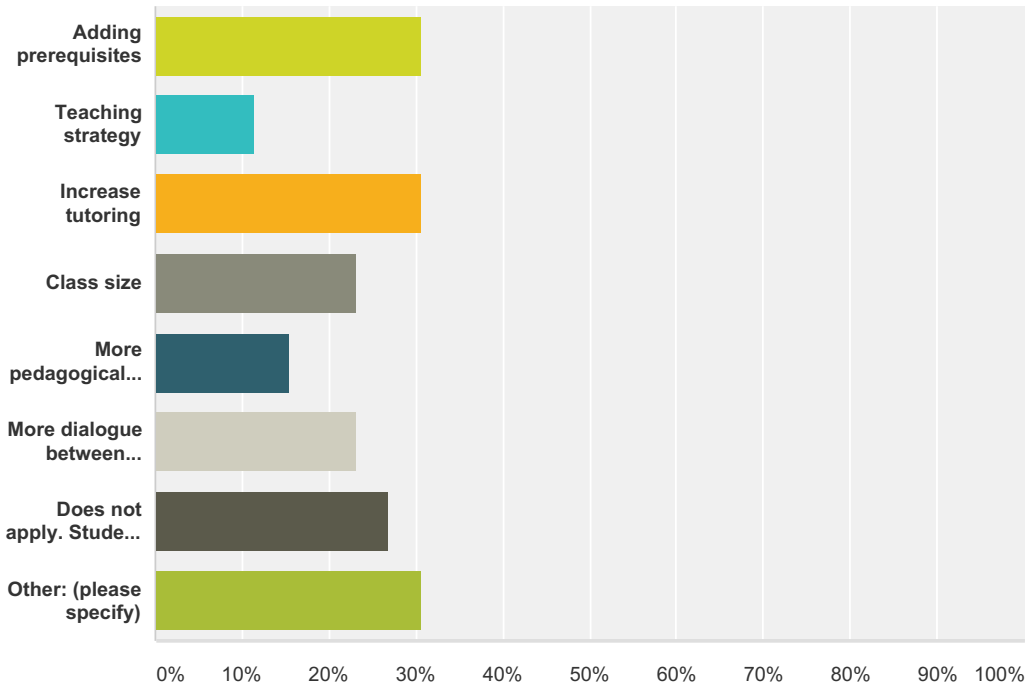
Answered: 57 Skipped: 15



Answer Choices	Responses
Exceed	8.77% 5
Meet	61.40% 35
Somewhat Meet	29.82% 17
Not Meet	0.00% 0
Total	57

Q4 If you answered "somewhat meet" or "not meet" to the previous question (Q3), please reflect on what you'd like to see improved. (check all that apply)

Answered: 26 Skipped: 46



Answer Choices	Responses
Adding prerequisites	30.77% 8
Teaching strategy	11.54% 3
Increase tutoring	30.77% 8
Class size	23.08% 6
More pedagogical training opportunities	15.38% 4
More dialogue between disciplines/division/GE areas	23.08% 6
Does not apply. Students meet or exceed outcome.	26.92% 7
Other: (please specify)	30.77% 8
Total Respondents: 26	

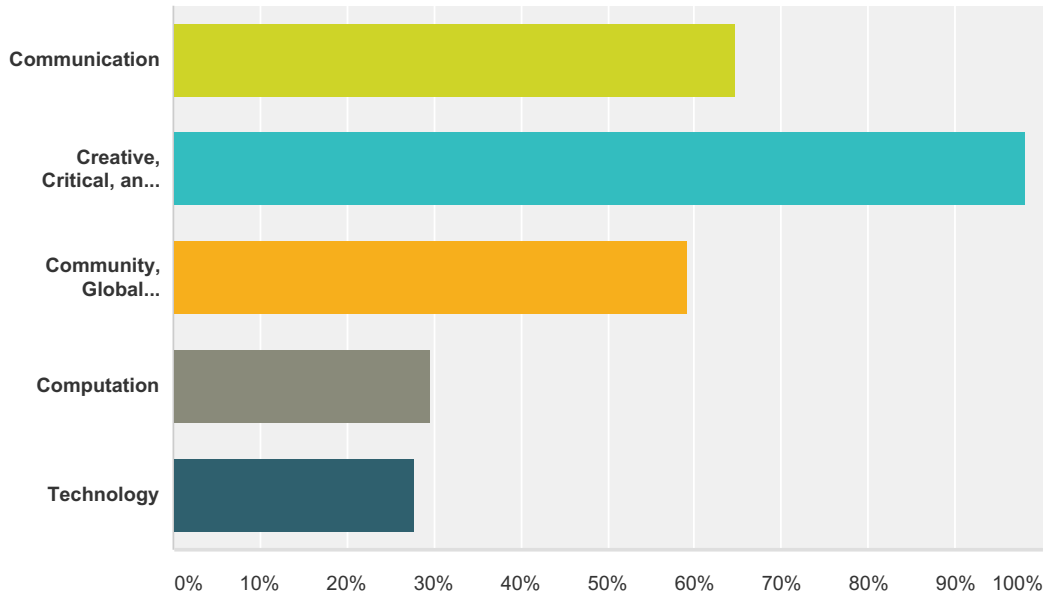
#	Other: (please specify)	Date
1	Students need to be better disciplined and should have adequate reading and writing skills before entering my GE class.	4/10/2015 3:03 PM
2	Students need college level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills BEFORE they take our transferable courses.	4/1/2015 3:04 PM

2015 Citrus College General Education (GE) Assessment Faculty Survey

3	Students have difficulty communicating their thoughts and ideas in writing. The level of written communication is below the level appropriate for college or university work.	4/1/2015 11:42 AM
4	More student preparation in study skills, stronger emphasis in writing skills.	3/26/2015 12:10 PM
5	The fact that outcomes in an art class can't be measured so specifically and to even attempt to is an outrage. It doesn't account for things like learning through failure and developing a sense of self and thinking critically about their world. SLOs limit students and teachers alike.	3/26/2015 10:56 AM
6	Reduce class size in order to improve student-teacher relationship.	3/26/2015 9:43 AM
7	Students need to increase expectations of self and the amount of time spent in preparation for class and tests.	3/26/2015 8:57 AM
8	Too many students simply need to perform at at least the base collegiate level in order to comprehend written material and write essays.	3/25/2015 8:26 PM

Q5 In your opinion, what are the primary Core Competencies (skills/behaviors) for general education that a student on a GE pathway (e.g. Associate Degree, IGETC, CSUGE) should be able to demonstrate after successfully completing coursework in your area? (check all that apply)

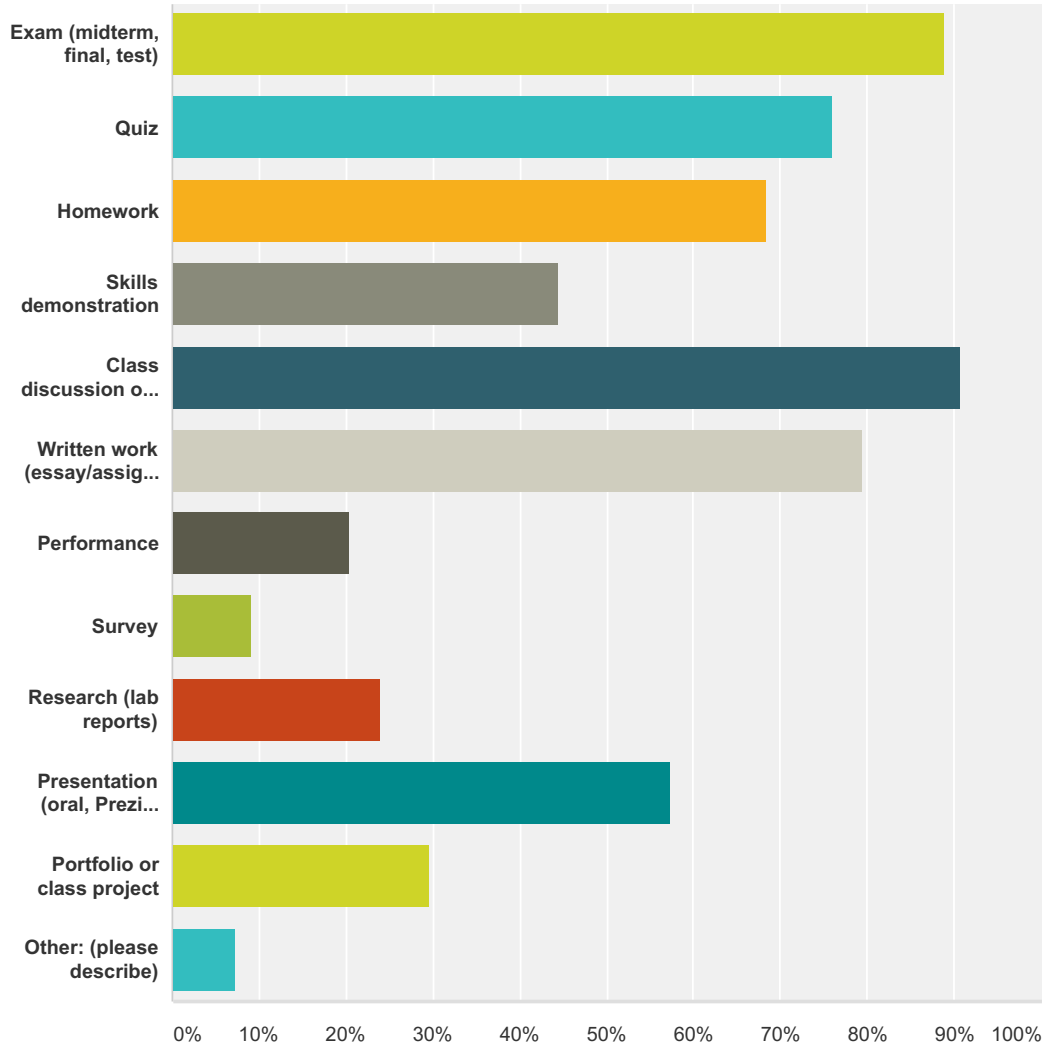
Answered: 54 Skipped: 18



Answer Choices	Responses
Communication	64.81% 35
Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking/Info Competency	98.15% 53
Community, Global Consciousness and Responsibility	59.26% 32
Computation	29.63% 16
Technology	27.78% 15
Total Respondents: 54	

Q6 What are some examples of course-level assessments for any Core Competency you checked in the above question? (check all that apply)

Answered: 54 Skipped: 18



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Exam (midterm, final, test)	88.89%	48
Quiz	75.93%	41
Homework	68.52%	37
Skills demonstration	44.44%	24
Class discussion or activity	90.74%	49
Written work (essay/assignment)	79.63%	43

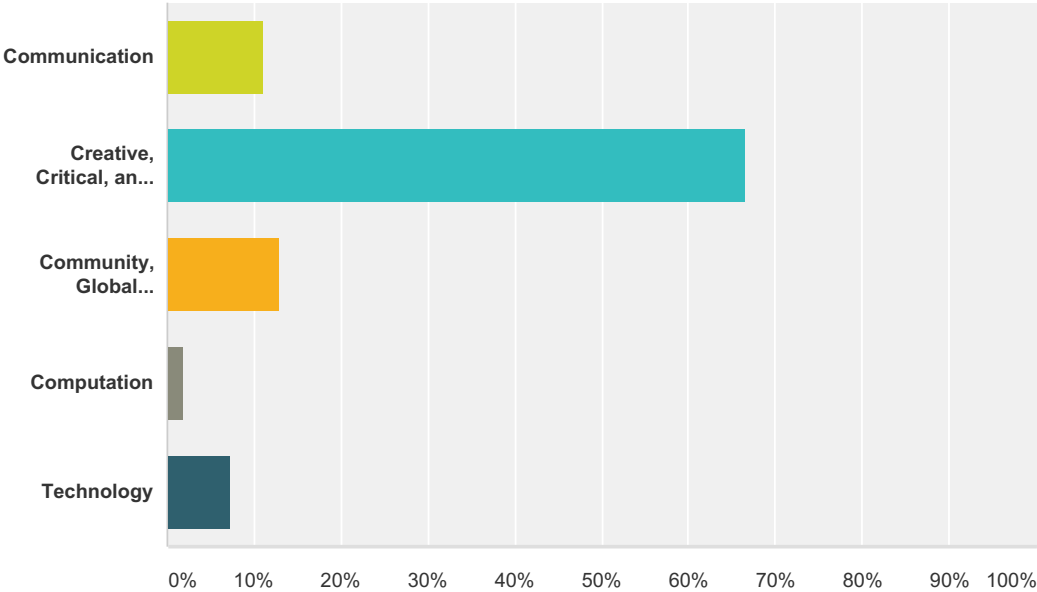
2015 Citrus College General Education (GE) Assessment Faculty Survey

Performance	20.37%	11
Survey	9.26%	5
Research (lab reports)	24.07%	13
Presentation (oral, Prezi, video)	57.41%	31
Portfolio or class project	29.63%	16
Other: (please describe)	7.41%	4
Total Respondents: 54		

#	Other: (please describe)	Date
1	All of the above assessments are necessary.	3/26/2015 3:16 PM
2	Academic research	3/26/2015 11:43 AM
3	Making artwork	3/26/2015 10:57 AM
4	Concert attendance and critique	3/25/2015 6:41 PM

Q7 What Core Competency, as it relates to the GE outcomes, would you like to focus on for the next academic year?

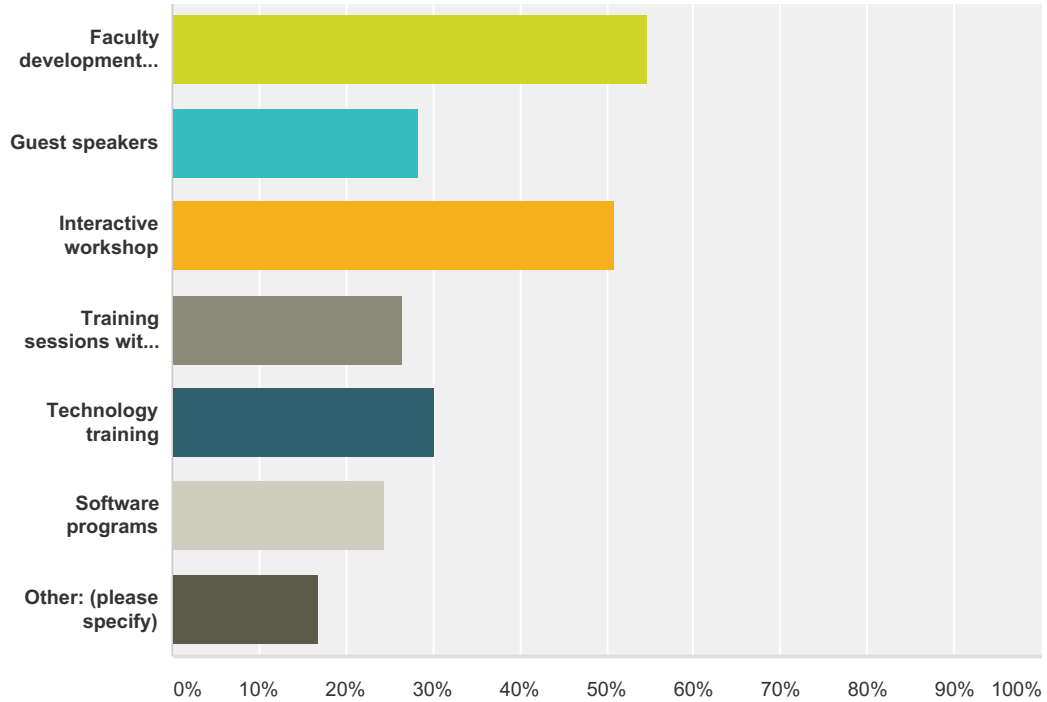
Answered: 54 Skipped: 18



Answer Choices	Responses
Communication	11.11% 6
Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking/Info Competency	66.67% 36
Community, Global Consciousness and Responsibility	12.96% 7
Computation	1.85% 1
Technology	7.41% 4
Total	54

Q8 In the area(s) that you teach, what activities would you like to see that will aid student success? This will help Faculty Learning Institute for event planning purposes.

Answered: 53 Skipped: 19



Answer Choices	Responses
Faculty development activities	54.72% 29
Guest speakers	28.30% 15
Interactive workshop	50.94% 27
Training sessions with a consultant or professional in the field	26.42% 14
Technology training	30.19% 16
Software programs	24.53% 13
Other: (please specify)	16.98% 9
Total Respondents: 53	

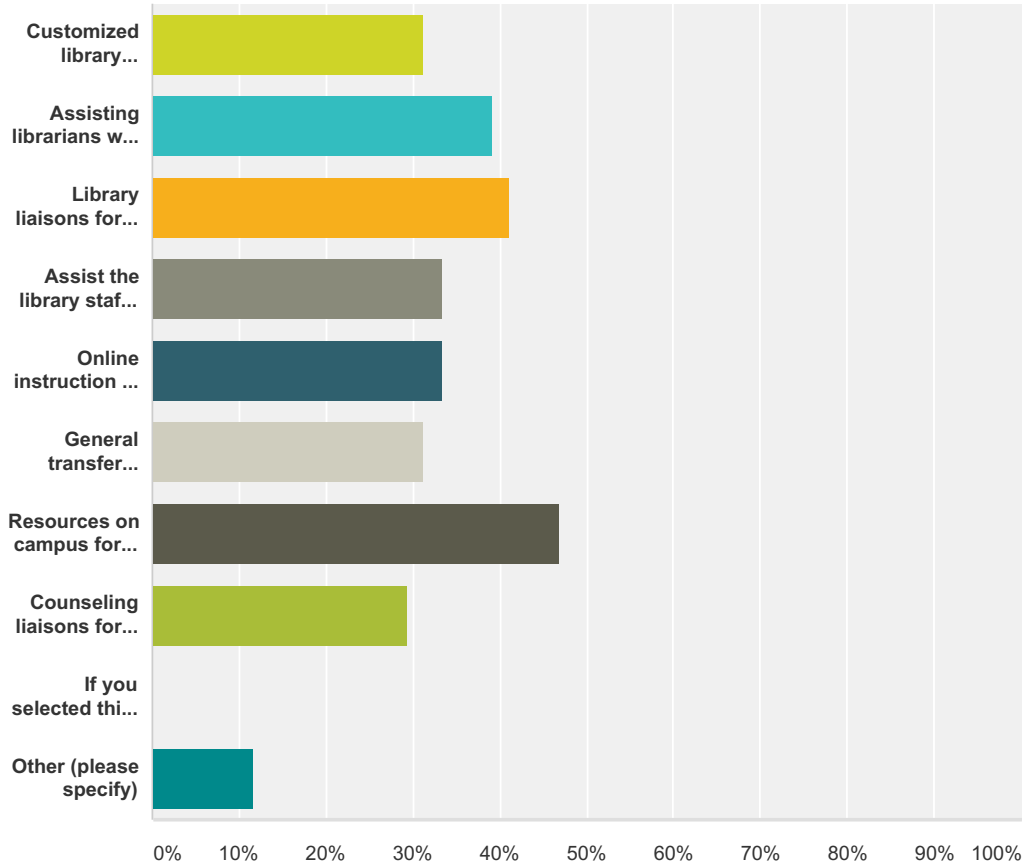
#	Other: (please specify)	Date
1	Surveying the student market to see what would be most valuable/benefit to them within the learning environment.	4/4/2015 3:12 PM
2	Training of K-12 teachers to properly prepare students.	4/1/2015 3:05 PM
3	Rubric standards for assessing writing	4/1/2015 11:44 AM

2015 Citrus College General Education (GE) Assessment Faculty Survey

4	Encouragement to pursue broader off campus opportunities to select real professional development (this does not include fake professional development to Olvera Street and the like).	4/1/2015 9:15 AM
5	More interaction with other members of the department, both full time and adjunct.	3/26/2015 3:17 PM
6	Attending Foreign Language workshops that showcase different activities and teaching techniques would be helpful. I find that general faculty workshops don't really offer me much help for elementary level language learning classes.	3/26/2015 11:55 AM
7	Less software, more hands on experience and more fluid discussions which allow students to discover themselves, those around them, to begin to examine their own preconceived notions of others.	3/26/2015 11:00 AM
8	upgrade computer & presentation hardware	3/26/2015 10:36 AM
9	basic skills development	3/25/2015 8:27 PM

Q9 In what ways can Library services and Student Services be utilized to better enhance student attainment of the GE outcome in your area(s)? (check all that apply)

Answered: 51 Skipped: 21



Answer Choices	Responses
Customized library instruction sessions	31.37% 16
Assisting librarians with their collection development process (selecting new materials, weeding out outdated materials etc.)	39.22% 20
Library liaisons for each course or subject	41.18% 21
Assist the library staff by contributing to the reserves collection by helping students check-out your textbooks	33.33% 17
Online instruction for DE faculty and students	33.33% 17
General transfer information training	31.37% 16
Resources on campus for helping students choose a major and/or career path	47.06% 24
Counseling liaisons for a program or division	29.41% 15
If you selected this option, please indicate the program/division you would like to see a liaison.	0.00% 0

2015 Citrus College General Education (GE) Assessment Faculty Survey

Other (please specify)	11.76%	6
Total Respondents: 51		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Library does a great job.	4/1/2015 11:54 AM
2	Writing tutors for drop in assistance who can help students with proofreading work.	4/1/2015 11:45 AM
3	Reliable Wifi available all over campus and devices that students can utilize in our classrooms to access the internet.	4/1/2015 11:10 AM
4	I think faculty need to do a better job of utilizing the skillfulness of our collection specialists. In my area, I think we tend to forget that we have such a vast collection from which to draw information to enhance our classes.	4/1/2015 9:16 AM
5	Liaisons between counseling and the divisions that prove to be productive will benefit the students.	3/26/2015 9:46 AM
6	It is WAY WAY overdue that all areas on campus have a counselor that advises students for specific areas such as they have in automotive. I hear constant uninformed students telling of misinformation from counselors.	3/25/2015 5:41 PM

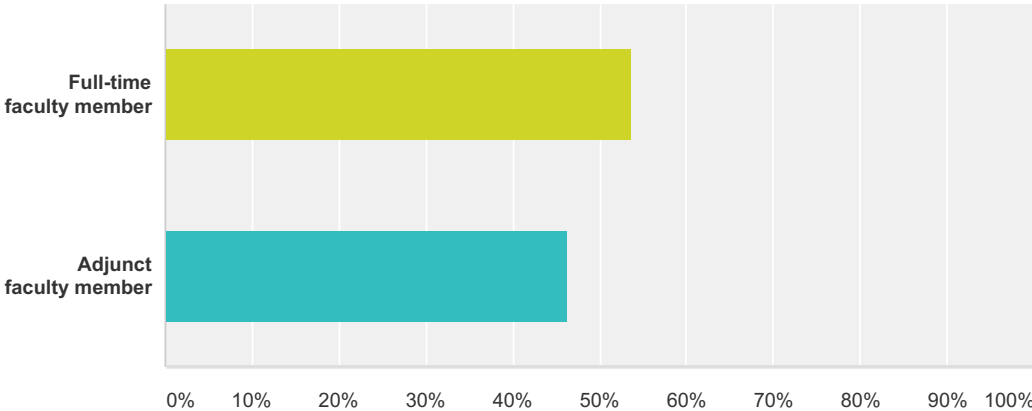
Q10 If you selected Counseling liaisons for a program or division from Q9 (above question), please indicate the program/division you would like to see a liaison.

Answered: 11 Skipped: 61

#	Responses	Date
1	Mathematics	4/3/2015 12:14 PM
2	Speech	4/1/2015 11:06 PM
3	FPA/ART	4/1/2015 8:22 PM
4	STEM science & math (biology, chemistry, physics, etc)	4/1/2015 4:40 PM
5	NPS	4/1/2015 3:42 PM
6	Language Arts	4/1/2015 9:35 AM
7	History and Humanities	3/31/2015 10:45 AM
8	Natural/Physical Sciences	3/26/2015 3:41 PM
9	MHS	3/26/2015 9:46 AM
10	fine and performing arts	3/25/2015 5:41 PM
11	N/A	3/25/2015 4:25 PM

Q11 Are you a full-time or adjunct faculty member?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 18



Answer Choices	Responses
Full-time faculty member	53.70% 29
Adjunct faculty member	46.30% 25
Total	54