

General Education Program Assessment Results 2023-24

Introduction

UTC completed the reimagining General Education Program process and approved new program outcomes for implementation in Fall 2023. In alignment with the assessment timeline that was established as part of the new Program, Communicate Effectively and Cultivate Inclusion were selected for assessment. The following report describes the assessment tools, artifact collection, assessment methodology, and results from the 2024 assessment. During this annual process, faculty assessors were able to build upon prior lessons from earlier years of program assessment, as well as utilize the locally developed rubrics to determine the level of student learning over the past year.

General Education Outcomes

Each general education course is aligned to at least one of UTC's four broad general education student learning outcomes:

- 1. Communicate effectively according to purpose using written, oral, and/or audio-visual methods.
- 2. Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims.
- 3. Cultivate inclusion by recognizing, examining, and reflecting on the diversity of cultural and individual experiences.
- 4. Create, innovate, and adapt to take charge of your own learning.

Assessment Tool

During Summer 2021, the Reimagining General Education (RGE) Committee developed a rubric modeled after the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Oral Communication and Written Communication rubrics, as well as the University of South Florida Communication Rubric. UTC's Communicate Effectively Rubric (Appendix A) is comprised of four dimensions: *Context and Purpose, Clarity of Message, Content of Message,* and *Evidence/Sources*. Each dimension has four performance levels including Proficient, Developing (strong), Developing (weak), and Novice. Evaluators are encouraged to assign "not applicable" to a dimension of the work sample when it is not possible to assess.

In addition to the Communicate Effectively Rubric, UTC developed a Cultivate Inclusion Rubric (Appendix B). This rubric was adapted from AAC&U's Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric. UTC's Cultivate Inclusion Rubric is comprised of six dimensions: *Cultural Self-Awareness, Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks, Empathy, Identity Development, Curiosity,* and *Openness*. Each dimension has four performance levels including Proficient, Developing (strong), Developing (weak), and Novice. Evaluators are encouraged to assign "not applicable" to a dimension of the work sample when it is not possible to assess.

Artifact Collection

Artifact collection was accomplished via the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). All faculty members teaching a general education course aligned with the Communicate Effectively and/or



Cultivate Inclusion student learning outcomes were notified that they were selected to participate in the annual General Education Program assessment process. Faculty members identified a specific assignment in the course that gives students an opportunity to address the specific student learning outcome. The assignment could be any paper or project that could be submitted to Canvas as an attached file. When the assignment was due, students were prompted to submit their work to the designated General Education module in Canvas. Utilizing the Canvas module streamlined collection of the student work and linked the artifact to a specific learning outcome.

At the end of the Fall 2023 term, faculty uploaded student work from Canvas to the General Education Assessment SharePoint site. Sixty courses (88 classes) submitted student work for assessment. From the submitted student work, 57.3% met the criteria for assessment with the Communicate Effectively or Cultivate Inclusion Rubric. Some student work could not be assessed due to length of artifact, format of artifact, or format of submission. Altogether, 754 student artifacts (354 with the Communicate Effectively Rubric and 400 with the Cultivate Inclusion Rubric) were assessed in 15 different subjects, comprised of 52 individual classes. The full list of courses represented can be found in Tables 1 and 2. Those with a sample size of zero are included to show the variety of courses for which artifacts were submitted, even though none were usable for assessment purposes. Although the artifacts were from the Fall 2023 term, assessment took place during Spring 2024.

Table 1. Fall 2023 Course Representation – Communicate Effectively

Communicate Effectively				
Course Subject	Course Number	Course Title	Sample Size	
ANTH	1200	Cultural Anthropology	0	
CLAS	2000	Everyday Life in the Roman Empire	0	
CRMJ	1100	Introduction to the Criminal Justice System	5	
ENGL	1150	Western Humanities II	45	
ENGL	1310	Values in 20th-Century American Fiction	39	
ENGL	1330	Introduction to Literature	9	
ENGL	2280	Children's Literature	24	
ENGL	2510	Popular Fiction	6	
ENGL	2700	Creative Writing	5	
ESC	1510	Introduction to Environmental Science II	0	
GEOG	1010	Physical Geography	0	
GEOL	1025	Geology of the National Parks	0	
GEOL	1040	Cultural Geography	0	
GEOL	2250	Oceanography	0	
HIST	1110	World History from Origins to 1400	0	
HIST	1120	World History from 1400 to the Present	37	
HIST	2010	United States to 1865	9	
HIST	2020	United States since 1866	5	
HIST	2100	Research and Writing in History	0	



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HIST	2370	Under Hitlers Shadow Europe 1920-1945	0
LAT	2010	Intermediate Latin I	0
MLNG	1750	World Cinema: Visualizing Latin American Cultures	0
LTAM	1750	Introduction to Latin	6
MUS	1110	Intro to Music	25
MUS	3170	Survey of Music	0
PHIL	2350	Popular Culture, Religion and Philosophy	16
PSPS	1010	American Politics	4
PSPS	1030	Controversies in Public Policy	8
PSPS	2700	Comparative Government	4
PSPS	1020	World Politics	6
SOC	1250	Sociology of Social Problems	10
SOC	1510	Introduction to Sociology	28
SPAN	1010	Elementary Spanish I	0
SPAN	1020	Elementary Spanish II	0
SPAN	2110	Intermediate Spanish for Conversation I	0
THSP	1090	Public Speaking	0
THSP	1110	Introduction to the Theatre	0
WGSS	2220	Women's Health Issues	6
IARC	1200	Survey of Architecture	0
SOCW	2100	Matters of Ethnicity	0
MGMT	2130	Statistics for Business	0
UHON	1010	Humanities I	9
UHON	3620	Topics in Humanities and Fine Arts	14
UHON	3630	Topics in Natural Science	30
UHON	3640	Topics in Behavioral and Social Science	4

Table 2. Fall 2023 Course Representation – Cultivate Inclusion

Cultivate Inclusion				
Course Subject	Course Number	Course Title	Sample Size	
CLAS	2000	Everyday Life in the Roman Empire	7	
ENGL	2280	Children's Literature	31	
ENGL	2510	Popular Fiction	10	
ENGL	2700	Creative Writing	6	
ENGL	1310	Values in 20th-Century American Fiction	20	
ENGL	1330	Introduction to Literature	10	
ENGL	2080	Work and Play in the 21st Century	1	



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ENGL	1150	Western Humanities II	20
HIST	1120	World History from 1400 to the Present	13
HIST	2010	United States to 1865	14
HIST	2020	United States since 1866	31
HIST	2100	Research and Writing in History	18
HIST	2370	Under Hitlers Shadow Europe 1920-1945	4
LTAM	1250	Introduction to Latin American Studies	2
MUS	1110	Intro to Music	74
MUS	3170	Survey of Music	12
PSPS	1010	American Politics	11
PSPS	1020	World Politics	10
PSPS	2700	Comparative Government	26
REL	1050	Intro to Islam	7
SOC	1250	Sociology of Social Problems	10
SOC	1510	Introduction to Sociology	41
SPAN	1010	Elementary Spanish I	5
THSP	1090	Public Speaking	6
WGSS	2220	Women's Health Issues	1
SOCW	2100	Matters of Ethnicity	5
UHON	1010	Humanities I	1
UHON	3620	Topics in Humanities and Fine Arts	4
	•	•	•

Methodology

For each course, a random sample of student work was selected from the Canvas module. Not all artifacts could be utilized due to fit with rubric, artifact length, or quality of reproduction. Faculty volunteers were solicited by email and 20 faculty volunteered. Two faculty scorers were lost based on timing of required norming session, leaving 18 volunteers. Half of the scorers had experience with this specific assessment process or other closely related processes, ensuring a good mix of experienced and new volunteers. Each faculty member was awarded a \$350 stipend for participating in a training session and completing the assessment of assigned artifacts. Prior to the training session, each assessor received a packet of sample student artifacts, scoring sheet, and either the Communicate Effectively or Cultivate Inclusion Rubric.

To enhance interrater reliability, a representative of UTC's Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) provided a 4-hour training session on best practices for assessing student work with the rubrics. The bulk of this training session was centered on norming the results with all scorers. To better accommodate schedules, the training was held virtually in February 2024.

Each artifact was scored by two faculty members. If results were spread too far across the spectrum between Capstone 4 and Benchmark 1, those artifacts were assessed again by OAA staff members or the Director of General Education.



Results

In order to be included in the results section, an individual artifact had to have a minimum of 75% interrater reliability. While all dimensions of included artifacts were assessed this year using the Communicate Effectively or Cultivate Inclusion Rubric, a small number of artifacts were given a "not applicable" score for the *Evidence and Sources* dimension, using the Communicate Effectively Rubric.

Communicate Effectively

Results from the assessment of the Communicate Effectively outcome were distributed across all levels of competency. Students, on average, were most likely able to demonstrate *Context and Purpose* (82% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 28.5% at the Proficient (4) benchmark) and had the most difficulty in the *Evidence and Sources* dimension (49.9% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 13.5% at the Proficient (4) benchmark). Figure 1 provides the full range of student performance on all four dimensions and Figure 2 summarizes the percentage of students above the Novice (1) benchmark.

Figure 1. Results for Communicate Effectively Outcome 2024

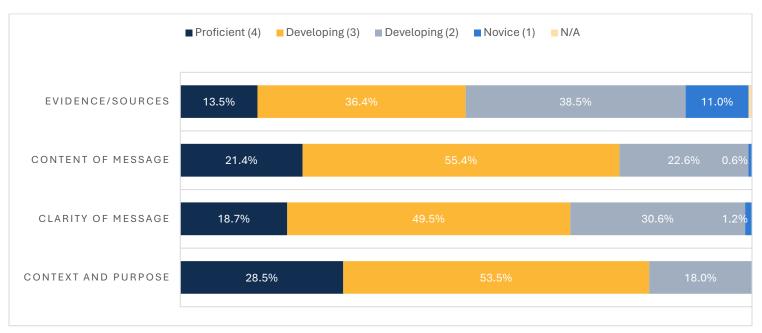
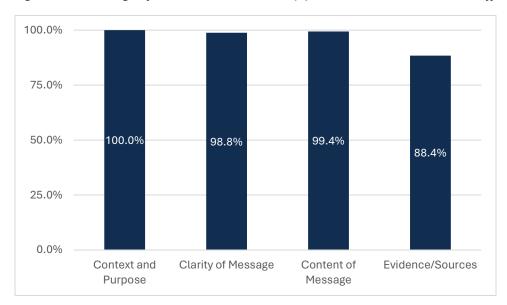


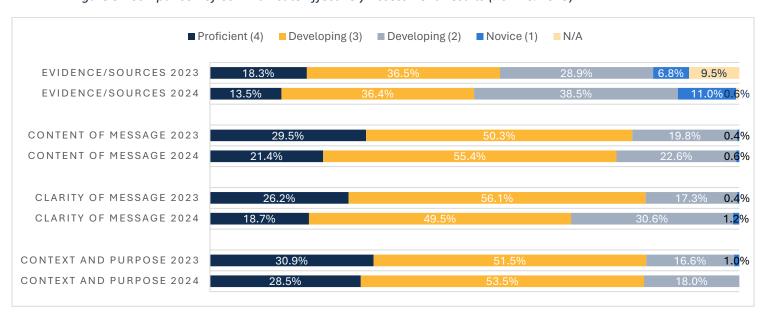


Figure 2. Percentage of Students above Novice (1) Benchmark – Communicate Effectively 2024



When looking at the comparison between the effective communication outcomes for the last two years, while there has not been improvement overall in all four dimensions, the percentage of students with *Evidence/Sources* "not applicable" decreased from 9.5% in 2023 to 0.6% in 2024 (Figure 3). While there were fewer students at the Proficient (4) benchmark in 2024, the number of students above the Novice (1) benchmark increased in both the *Context and Purpose* and *Evidence/Sources* dimensions.

Figure 3. Comparison of Communicate Effectively Assessment Results (2024 & 2023)





Cultivate Inclusion

Results from assessment of the Cultivate Inclusion outcome are distributed across all levels of competency. Students, on average, were most likely able to demonstrate *Empathy* (73.4% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 18.6% at the level of Proficient (4)) and had the most difficulty in the *Curiosity* dimension (64.9% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall and 11.7% at the level of Proficient (4)). Scores for each dimension are similar, although more students performed at the Novice (1) benchmark on the *Knowledge of Cultural Worldview* dimension than on other dimensions. Figure 4 provides the full range of student performance on all four dimensions and Figure 5 summarizes the percentage of students above the Novice (1) benchmark.

Figure 4. Results for Cultivate Inclusion Outcome 2023

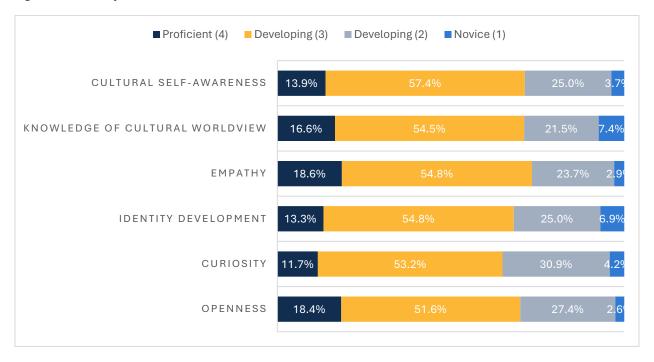
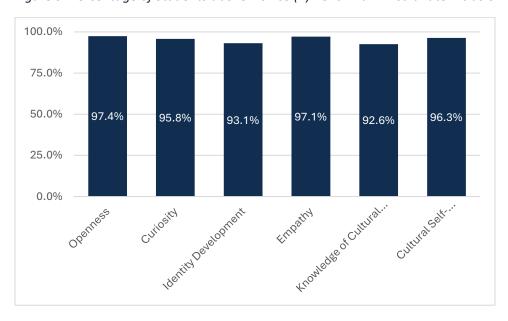




Figure 5. Percentage of Students above Novice (1) Benchmark – Cultivate Inclusion 2024



Recommendations

UTC again gained insights and developed recommendations for enhancing programmatic General Education assessment. Interrater reliability was high for both the Communicate Effectively Rubric scores and the Cultivate Inclusion Rubric scores, although initially, some assessors struggled with select dimensions of the Cultivate Inclusion Rubric. Artifacts with less than 75% interrater reliability were removed from the analysis. This included 27 Communicate Effectively artifacts and 24 Cultivate Inclusion artifacts.

OAA and the Director of General Education heard from faculty assessors regarding their difficulties with the Cultivate Inclusion Rubric, and one assessor was not able to complete scoring due to these difficulties. Feedback from faculty will certainly be taken into consideration as the General Education assessment process moves forward, and adjustments can be made to the rubrics to facilitate a more effective assessment process overall.

Additional strategies to support improvement could include raising campus awareness of the results of General Education assessment and hosting workshops on assignment creation focusing on dimensions where students had lower scores. Lastly, continuation of developing local experts on the assessment process is vital to continued success. OAA, along with the Director of General Education, is now responsible for this assessment process. As the General Education program moves forward, OAA team members will remain involved, thereby continuing to build a team of experts who enhance the evolution of the process. The more UTC faculty and staff involved in the process, the more robust and successful the assessment of the General Education program will be. The process of continuous improvement is in place in the General Education program, as it is with all academic programs, to support student success.



General Education Outcome 1: Communicate effectively according to purpose using written, oral, and/or audio-visual methods. Framing language: For the purpose of this rubric, principles of effective communication can be understood by describing how effective communicators work. Effective communicators understand their goal or purpose and consider the immediate and/or broader context when creating a message. Effective communicators are clear in their messaging by thoughtfully choosing an appropriate medium, organizing the message to meet the audience's needs, and using audience-appropriate language and formatting. Effective communicators provide compelling content that the audience needs or wants to process, and they anticipate audience response and invite it where appropriate. Finally, effective communicators use credible sources appropriate for their purpose and audience and recognize the context in which they were created. Examples of credible sources include but are not limited to academic sources, reliable media reports, primary source documentation, and powerful personal testimony. While we acknowledge that effective communication can be used toward unethical ends, our focus is on assessing and promoting ethical attempts at communication.

	Proficient (4)	Developing (3)	Developing (2)	Novice (1)
Context and	Student demonstrates a	Student demonstrates an	Student demonstrates a partial	Student demonstrates a minimal
Purpose	thorough understanding of	adequate understanding of	awareness of principles of	understanding or awareness of
	principles of communication	principles of communication by	communication by	context, audience, and purpose of
	by fully engaging context,	mostly engaging context,	acknowledging context,	message.
	audience, and purpose of	audience, and purpose of	audience, and/or purpose of	
	message.	message.	message.	
Clarity of message	Student's use of conventions,	Student's use of conventions,	Student's use of conventions,	Student's use of conventions,
	organization, and/or creativity	organization, and/or creativity	organization, and/or creativity	organization, and/or creativity
	delivers message in a concise	delivers message in a mostly	delivers message in an	delivers message in an incoherent
	and/or coherent way.	concise and/or coherent way.	inconsistent way.	way.
Content of	Student uses appropriate and	Student uses mostly	Student uses somewhat	Student uses inappropriate and
message	relevant content to create a	appropriate and relevant	appropriate and relevant	irrelevant content to create an
	compelling message.	content to create a somewhat	content to create an	unacceptable message.
		compelling message.	acceptable message.	
Evidence/Sources	Student demonstrates skillful	Student demonstrates mostly	Student demonstrates	Student rarely demonstrates
	use of high-quality, credible,	skillful use of high-quality,	occasional skillful use of high-	skillful use of high-quality,
	and relevant sources.	credible, and relevant sources.	quality, credible, and relevant	credible, and relevant sources.
			sources.	

Inspiration drawn from:

- AAC&U Oral Communication Rubric: https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/OralCommunication.pdf
- AAC&U Written Communication Rubric: https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/WrittenCommunication.pdf
- University of South Florida Communication Rubric: https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/documents/academic-programs/communication-simple-and-detailed-rubric.pdf



General Education Outcome 3: Cultivate inclusion by recognizing, examining, and reflecting on the diversity of cultural and individual experiences.

Framing language: We live in multicultural society with a shared future. As such, it is important for students to be inclusive of different cultures. To cultivate inclusion, students need to develop cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural world views, empathy, curiosity, and openness. It's also imperative that students go beyond experiencing new cultures and develop self-awareness and identity in order to respect diversity as essential to community success.

Glossary:

- Culture: All knowledge and values shared by a group.
- Cultural norms: Boundaries within which an individual operates in order to feel a sense of belonging to a society or group, based on the values shared by that society or group.
- Cultural biases: The tendency to interpret and judge phenomena in terms of the distinctive values, beliefs, and other characteristics of the society or community to which one belongs. This sometimes leads people to form opinions and make decisions about others in advance of any actual experience with them.
- Worldview: Worldview is the cognitive and affective lens through which people construe their experiences and make sense of the world around them.
- Empathy: "Empathy is the imaginary participation in another person's experience, including emotional and intellectual dimensions, by imagining his or her perspective (not by assuming the person's position)". Bennett, J. 1998. Transition shock: Putting culture shock in perspective. In Basic concepts of intercultural communication, ed. M. Bennett, 215-224. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Emotional dimensions: The emotional dimension recognizes awareness and acceptance and healthy expression of one's feelings such as happiness, hope, love, joy, sadness, anger, fear, and/or stress.
- Intercultural experience: The experience of an interaction with an individual or groups of people whose culture is different from your own.
- Intercultural/ cultural differences: The differences in rules, behaviors, communication, and biases based on cultural values that are different from one's own culture.

	Proficient (4)	Developing (3)	Developing (2)	Novice (1)
Cultural self-	Articulates insights into own	Recognizes new perspectives	Identifies own cultural norms and	Shows minimal awareness
awareness	cultural norms and biases (e.g.	about own cultural norms and	biases (e.g. with a	of own cultural norms and
(Knowledge /	questioning cultural norms and	biases (e.g. not looking for	strong preference for those rules	biases (even those shared
Recognizing)	biases; demonstrating awareness	sameness; comfortable with	shared with own cultural group	with own cultural
	of how her/his/their experiences	the complexities that new	and seeks the same in others.)	group(s)) (e.g.
	have shaped these norms, and	perspectives offer.)		uncomfortable with
	recognizing and responding to			identifying
	cultural biases, resulting in a shift			possible cultural
	in self-description.)			differences with others.)



		Accreditation and Asse		
Knowledge of	Demonstrates sophisticated	Demonstrates adequate	Demonstrates partial	Demonstrates surface
cultural worldview	understanding of the complexity	understanding of the	understanding of the complexity	understanding of the
frameworks	of elements important to	complexity of elements	of elements important to	complexity of elements
(Knowledge /	members of other cultures in	important to members of other	members of	important to members of
Recognizing)	relation to its history, values,	cultures in relation to history,	other cultures in relation to	other cultures in relation
	politics, verbal and nonverbal	values, politics, verbal and	history, values, politics, verbal	to its history, values,
	communication styles, economy,	nonverbal communication	and nonverbal communication	politics, verbal and
	or beliefs and practices.	styles, economy, or beliefs	styles, economy, or beliefs and	nonverbal communication
		and practices.	practices.	styles, economy, or beliefs
				and practices.
Empathy	Interprets intercultural	Recognizes intellectual and	Identifies components of other	Does not recognize the
(Skills / Examining)	experience from their own	emotional dimensions of more	cultural perspectives but	intellectual and emotional
	perspective and multiple	than one worldview and	responds in all situations with	dimensions of others.
	worldviews and demonstrates	sometimes uses more than one	own	
	ability to act in a supportive	worldview in interactions.	worldview.	
	manner that recognizes the			
	feelings of other cultural groups.			
Identity	Identifies, reflects and articulates	Identifies, reflects and	Identifies, reflects and articulates	Does not recognize how
Development	sophisticated understanding of	articulates adequate	partial understanding of one's	membership in cultural
(Skills/Examining)	one's membership in social and	understanding of one's	membership in social and cultural	groups affects behavior,
	cultural groups and how	membership in social and	groups and how membership	attitudes, and self-
	membership affects behavior,	cultural groups and how	affects behavior, attitudes, and	awareness Demonstrates
	attitudes, and self-awareness.	membership affects behavior,	self-awareness. Demonstrates	no recognition of the
	Thoroughly recognizes the multi-	attitudes, and self-awareness.	limited recognition of the multi-	multi-dimensional
	dimensional attributes of identity.	Partially recognizes the multi-	dimensional attributes of	attributes of identity.
		dimensional attributes of		
		identity.	identity.	
Curiosity	Asks complex questions about	Asks deeper questions about	Asks simple or surface questions	Demonstrates minimal
(Attitudes/Reflecting)	other cultures, seeks out and	other cultures and seeks out	about other cultures.	interest in learning more
	articulates answers to these	answers to these questions,		about other
	questions that reflect and include	but reflection and integration		cultures.
	multiple cultural perspectives.	of multiple cultural		
		perspectives is limited.		



Openness	Initiates and develops	Begins to initiate and develop	Expresses openness to most, if	Has difficulty interacting
(Attitudes/Reflecting)	interactions with culturally	interactions with	not all, interactions	with culturally different
	different people. Suspends	culturally different people.	with culturally different people.	people and suspending
	judgment in valuing her/ his/their	Begins to suspend judgment in	Has difficulty suspending any	any judgment in
	interactions with culturally	valuing her/ his/their	judgment in her/ his/their	her/ his/their interactions
	different people.	interactions with	interactions with culturally	with culturally different
		culturally different people.	different people, and is aware of	people, but is unaware of
			own judgment and expresses a	own judgment.
			willingness to change.	

Inspiration drawn from:

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric: https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/InterculturalKnowledge.pdf