

**General Education Pilot Study – Spring 2008**  
**Report**

Prepared by  
The Assessment Coordinating Council

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# The University of Arizona

## General Education Pilot Study – Spring 2008

### Executive Summary

Tier Two faculty were invited to participate in the General Education Learning Outcomes pilot study in the spring 2008 semester, with the goal of gathering information on:

- (1) The overall preparation of students in Tier Two classes, after they completed their Tier One requirements,
- (2) Faculty assessment of the importance of the skills specified in the *Overall Learning Goals & Objectives* of General Education for students' success in their Tier Two course, and
- (3) Faculty definitions of "critical thinking" in their Tier Two course(s) and how they assess it.

The study asked faculty to complete a short online survey about their current students' preparedness for their course, the importance of general education outcomes, and their definition and means for assessing critical thinking in their class. In addition, the ACC developed a writing assignment to assess students' writing after their Tier One courses and asked faculty to encourage their students to complete the assignment and submit it to a D2L drop box. The process provided an opportunity for faculty to gather feedback about what their students learned from their Tier One courses as well as samples of student writing for independent scoring outside of the class.

Highlights from the study:

- Twenty-six faculty members participated in the study, with the greatest number teaching Humanities courses (10). Six faculty members taught Individuals & Societies, with an even number of five faculty members teaching in both Arts and Natural Science.
- The majority of faculty assessed the learning goal, "use information sources ethically and responsibly" as *essential to very important* (88%), but found that their students were largely *somewhat prepared to not prepared* (78%).
- Faculty assessed the learning goal, "interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects", as the least *essential to very important* (45%). However, they found the smallest percentage of their students, *somewhat prepared to not prepared* (37%). In comparison, they found the majority of their students ranging from 94% to 68%, *somewhat prepared to not prepared*, for all other learning goals.
- In general, faculty appeared to show an overwhelming concern *with the lack of* students' critical thinking and students' poor quality of writing of in Tier Two General Education courses.
- Multiple issues surrounded faculty concerns in student performance: class size, poor 'new' media literacy, an inability to use sources reliably and effectively, an over reliance on the Internet for all research—and related to this was faculty belief that the majority of courses rely on writing to evaluate critical thinking (i.e., the term paper is most popular).
- Faculty reported a wide range of explanation for low student preparedness, speculating on cause ranging from poor K-12 preparation to weak freshmen courses, to soft Tier One courses, and to no prerequisites for the Tier Two course.
- Faculty indicated that critical thinking skills more often assessed by in-class discussions and by writing (e.g., term papers, short essay answers, and short essays).

# The University of Arizona

## General Education Pilot Study – Spring 2008

During late fall 2007 and early spring 2008, the Leadership Team on Outcomes Assessment [the name has since been changed to the Assessment Coordinating Council (ACC)] used findings from the Feasibility Study to design a General Education Pilot Study spring 2008. The goal was to test and further refine a course-embedded approach to outcomes assessment for the campus. The study consisted of a faculty survey and a voluntary writing assignment for students.

In spring 2008, Tier Two instructors were invited to participate in a General Education Pilot Study (see Appendix A). The study consisted of two parts. First, instructors were asked to complete a survey (see Appendix B) to gather information about:

1. the overall preparation of students for their Tier Two classes after they have completed their Tier One requirement,
2. how faculty rate the importance of the skills specified in the “Overall Learning Goals and Objectives” of the General Education program, and
3. how faculty define and assess critical thinking in their Tier Two classes.

Faculty also were asked to encourage their students to complete a writing assignment that was designed to gather information about students’ perceptions of what they have learned in their Tier One General Education courses at the UA. Originally, participating instructors were asked to embed an agreed upon assignment at the beginning of the semester. The idea was to have the assignment be included as a ‘regular’ assignment along with the instructors’ other course requirements. Due to time constraints and other circumstances beyond the control of the Team, it was unable to implement that part of the Pilot as planned. The Team acknowledged that instructors were likely too far into the semester to require an additional assignment of students. Thus, students were asked to complete the assignment on a voluntary basis. Although this was not ideal, the Team decided to proceed with the study in hopes that it would provide useful information for a study of larger scale.

### Implementation of the Pilot Study

The faculty survey was administered by the Learning Technologies Center using the D2L course management system. Table 1 shows faculty participation by Tier area (Arts, Humanities, Individuals & Societies, and Natural Science). All Tier Two instructors for spring 2008 were invited to participate in the Pilot. The survey sample percentages for INDV and NATS were similar to their respective populations while the sample percentage for HUM was underrepresented and the percentage for ARTS was overrepresented. The response rate for the survey was 18%.

**Table 1 – Faculty Participation by Tier Area – General Education Faculty Survey – spring 2008**

<b>Tier Area</b>	<b>Sample n</b>	<b>Sample %</b>	<b>Population N</b>	<b>Population %</b>
Arts (ARTS)	5	19%	43	30%
Humanities (HUM)	10	38%	33	23%
Individuals & Societies (INDV)	6	23%	40	28%
Natural Science (NATS)	5	19%	25	18%
Totals	26		141	

## Results

### *Quantitative Summary*

The levels of importance of the learning goals for general education courses and level of student preparedness for success in their spring 2008 Tier Two course were assessed by faculty. Table 2 provides a summary of key findings. (See Appendix C for a comprehensive quantitative summary). The numbers in the first column show the percentage of faculty who selected ‘Essential’ or ‘Very important’ when asked “How important is each of the following areas to a student’s ability to succeed in your class this semester?” The second column displays the percentage of faculty who chose ‘Somewhat prepared’ or ‘Not prepared’, when asked to “rate the level of students’ preparedness for your course this semester in the following areas:” Generally, participating faculty report a high level of importance for most of the general education outcomes but low levels of student preparedness for most.

**Table 2 – Faculty Assessment of Importance and Level of Student Preparedness for their Tier Two Class**

<b>General Education Learning Goals</b>	<b>Essential/ Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat prepared/ Not prepared</b>
Use information sources ethically and responsibly	88%	78%
Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.	76%	84%
Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.	76%	68%
Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.	71%	68%
Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.	71%	68%
Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.	68%	70%
Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.	66%	77%
Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.	63%	94%
Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.	54%	84%
Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.	45%	37%

## ***Content Analysis***

A content analysis was used to summarize faculty responses to several open-ended questions that were included on the survey. The questions and summary of responses follow.

### **“In your own words, explain what constitutes good "critical thinking" in your field and in your course.”**

- comfortable raising questions, questioning beliefs, questioning of assumptions by asking what, how, why and who benefits)
- uses information in addition to personal responses to reflect on meaning, assemble information from various topics and show relationships, applications, explain evidence, present primary materials and examine through theoretical lens, use secondary sources and take a position, interrogate texts, asks fundamental questions regarding sources of ideas, finding underlying principles, developing solutions with logical reasoning, finding abstract structures behind the artifact/text

### **“How do you know your students are doing this?”**

- Participation in class Discussion, debate in Class
- Small groups, workshops of papers
- Evaluation of written work

### **“How do you assess critical thinking?”**

- Long papers/term Papers (8-10 pages, theory applied, comparisons)
- Essay exams
- Short essays

Faculty described a range of assignments that supporting the assessment of critical thinking in their Tier Two classes:

- Major 8-10 page paper comparing two feature length films using concepts discussed in lectures/reading (INDV)
- Small pop culture critique assignments that involve applying concepts from lectures/reading to own experiences with various pop culture artifacts (INDV)
- Weekly one page critical thinking paper (HUM)
- Writing assignment that meshes literal meaning of words from poetry segment of Afro-Hispanic Lit class with cultural and political history of blacks as well as truisms about a poet – to arrive an interpretation (HUM)
- Insertion of “concept questions” into all lectures and have students consider them using the “think-pair-share” technique and “radio responders” (NATS)
- On-line tutorials as homework with software that tracks student performance (NATS)
- Term paper on an individual star (NATS)
- Artist’s statements to accompany studio projects (ARTS)
- Awarding a “TBD” grade so students can correct major conceptual errors that affect their solutions (NATS)
- Weigh assignments more at end of semester than beginning to reward individual progress (HUM)

In addition to their assessments of student preparedness and importance of general education learning goals, faculty were invited to provide any additional comments they may have had about the goals and their importance for student success in their class. A summary of the comments are provided below.

## **A. Think Critically**

### **Student Preparedness**

- Large range of student preparedness and motivation, ability to engage in critical thinking, raise questions, engage in discussions,
- Faculty noted a number of strengths: students like the subject matter, students respond to discussion topics
- Faculty also noted a number of weaknesses: critical thinking and analytical skills, want instructor to provide answers, prefer memorizing information to thinking, see data as absolute and unquestioned, can't think about chance and probability

### **Importance**

- Faculty indicated that ability to question data, make inferences, and theorize are very important. Faculty perceive students' need to be motivated to think critically.

## **B. Communicate Effectively**

### **Student Preparedness**

- Faculty report poor writing skills including, poor grammar, poor organization, and poor logic. Faculty indicated that students are unable to produce well thought out arguments.
- Students appear to be unfamiliar with different forms of writing across the curriculum

### **Importance**

- Faculty placed a high level of importance on written communication.
- Students appear to need feedback to improve their writing
- Multimedia presentations (only with smaller classes)

## **C. Understand and Value Differences**

### **Student Preparedness**

- Uncritical about differences (don't know continents where particular countries are located, unfamiliar with linguistic and cultural diversity, struggle to express ideas and understand others' positions on same issues)
- Deficiency in models of thinking (sees others who are different as "deficient")
- Minimalist thinking (only interested in what is on exam)

### **Importance**

- Subject matter deals with popular culture, dominant cultures and subcultures, power, need to know historically how human nature was addressed, focus is on women in Western culture)

## **D. Use Information Effectively**

### **Student Preparedness**

- Inability to use Internet reliably and effectively (overwhelming concern that students can't evaluate among credible and unreliable internet sources, can't tell the difference between Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica, can't write a quality research paper with only internet sources, can't conduct research beyond a web search, no New Media literacy taught)
- Deficient scholarship skills (can't cite sources, evaluate sources, document research carefully, plagiarism)

## **Importance**

- According to faculty, show weakness in the source they select for research paper (Wikipedia generation, library moving away from print books, gullibility of students, improper use of sources affects quality of paper and the grade)
- Academic Integrity (poor academic skills mean students can't sort and assess sources, group/team work a problem with sources). Ethical Imperative to Reflect on Information (especially when studying developing countries, difference, relative to one's own situation)

The final question on the survey provided an opportunity for participating faculty to share additional information about their experience with students in their Tier Two class. The question and a summary of responses follow.

### **“What else would you like us to know about your experience with students in your Tier Two courses?”**

- Tier Two faculty noted that students are engaged with the course material: make connections, enthusiastic about other ways of knowing, aware and open, capable and motivated.
- According to participating Tier Two faculty, students are better prepared in Tier Two courses than in Tier One courses: to think, write, better motivation, better attendance.
- Faculty expressed some concerns about Tier One prerequisites for Tier Two: too much time needed for review, Tier One too soft, no learning-center education or interactive learning, honors students slowed down

## **Summative Comments**

- Faculty appear to be overwhelmingly concerned with the lack of critical thinking and with the poor quality of writing of students in Tier Two General Education courses at The University of Arizona.
- There are multiple issues braided into these: class size, poor new media literacy, inability to use sources reliably and effectively, over reliance on the internet for all research. Related to this is the fact that the majority of courses rely only on writing (the term paper is most popular) to evaluate critical thinking.
- Faculty write about the wide range of preparedness, speculating on causes (from poor K-12 preparation to weak freshmen courses to soft Tier One courses to no prerequisites for the Tier Two course).
- Motivation is a recurring theme, particularly in NATS courses.
- Most students are assessed by participation in class discussion and by writing (term papers, short essay answers, short essays). Some of the most creative assignments were in the NATS classes.

Four instructors (two from Natural Science and two from Humanities) agreed to ask their students to complete the writing assignment (see Appendix D). A total of 99 assignments were collected; the majority of the assignments were received from students enrolled in a NATS class for which the instructor gave extra credit. The assignment will be scored using the writing rubric that was developed for the study. This report will be appended to include the results of the writing assessment.



## Appendix A

Dear Tier Two Faculty:

General Education faculty have always been known as incubators for innovation. It is in that spirit that the Leadership Team on Outcomes Assessment at The University of Arizona now turns to you for assistance in gathering pilot data regarding student learning outcomes in general education.

In the spring 2008 semester the Team invites Tier Two faculty to participate in a General Education Learning Outcomes pilot study. Our goal is to gather preliminary data regarding (1) the overall preparation of students for your Tier Two classes after they have completed their Tier One requirements, (2) your rating of the importance of the skills specified in the Overall Learning Goals & Objectives for General Education for students' success in your Tier Two course, and (3) your definitions of "critical thinking" and how it is assessed in your Tier Two course(s).

We are asking you to provide us with data through two processes:

\* Please share your thoughts with us about your current students' preparedness for your course by completing a short, online survey. We would like to receive your responses by April 1. We estimate that you should be able to complete this survey in 15-20 minutes. The survey is being administered in D2L. To access the survey:

-- Go to: <http://d2l.arizona.edu> . Click on the UA NetID Login button and enter your UA netid and password.

-- On the D2L My Home screen, scroll down in the My Academic Courses box until you find "Non Term Related". Click on the + sign to the left of that title. Then click on the + sign to the left of "Projects". Then click on "Faculty Survey".

-- Click on the "Surveys" link in the navigation bar at the top of the next screen. Then click the blue link for the "General Education Survey".

-- There are 4 pages in the survey. Use the small blue arrows to move from page to page, then click the Submit button when you have finished with page 4. Your survey is not complete until you click Submit.

\*\* We have developed a writing assignment to help us assess your students' writing after their Tier One courses. Please consider asking the students in your current Tier Two course(s) to complete a voluntary writing and submit it electronically to a D2L drop box. We estimate that students should be able to complete this assignment in 30 minutes. The value of this for you as an instructor will be the opportunity to see what your students say they are bringing from Tier One into your course/s. Please let us know by March 28 if you will ask your students to participate as the electronic submission will be made available to your students after you notify us of your decision to participate. We would like to have all student responses posted to the web collection site by April 14.

Please consider participating in both parts of this pilot study. Although we would like for all Tier Two faculty to complete both processes, you may choose to only do one or the other. The more we know from such a process, the more we can inform you about your students and the General Education program.

If you are willing to ask your students to do the writing assignment or have any questions about the survey or the project, please contact Gwen Johnson [gwj@u.arizona.edu](mailto:gwj@u.arizona.edu) or Beth Harrison [eharriso@email.arizona.edu](mailto:eharriso@email.arizona.edu) . Or you may contact any member of the LTOA listed at the end of this email. It is not necessary to contact anyone in order to complete the survey. Simply follow the instructions given above.

We look forward to working with you this semester.

Kind regards,

The 2007-08 Leadership Team on Outcomes Assessment

Gail Burd, Associate Dean, College of Science

Malcolm Compitello, Head, Department of Spanish & Portuguese

Anne-Marie Hall, Director, Writing Program

Beth Harrison, Director, University Learning Center

Jerry Hogle, Interim Vice President for Instruction

Gwendolyn Johnson, Director of Assessment, Institutional Research & Planning Support

Deborah Levine-Donnerstein, Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology

Brigid Murphy, Vice Provost, Pima Community College

Dennis Ray, Professor, Department of Plant Sciences

Randy Richardson, Professor, Department of Geosciences

Jim Riley, Associate Professor, Department of Soil, Water & Environmental Science

Jim Shockey, Associate Dean, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

Glenda Wilkes, Director, Academic Retention Initiatives & Learning Services

Amy Williamsen, Professor, Department of Spanish & Portuguese

## Appendix B

### Faculty Survey

Please respond to this three-part survey about your Tier Two class in spring 2008. If you teach more than one Tier Two class, complete the survey for the largest Tier Two class that you are teaching. Results from the survey will provide a better understanding of:

- How well the Tier One classes related to your area of Tier Two teaching are preparing students in the areas identified in the Overall Learning Goals and Objectives for General Education (think critically, communicate effectively, understand and value differences, and use information effectively)
- What kinds of preparation you think are most important in order for students to be successful in your Tier Two course

As you respond to this survey please keep in mind that as they have been defined by the UWGEC, Tier Two courses are expected to be introductions to specific academic disciplines but cannot be designed as introductory courses in a major. In addition, while students are strongly encouraged to complete their Tier One courses before Tier Two, Tier Two instructors may not designate any specific Tier One course/s as prerequisites for their Tier Two course/s. This means you should not expect your students to bring particular disciplinary knowledge to your Tier Two course.

#### **1. Rate the level of students' preparedness for your course this semester in the following areas:**

**Response options: 1- Extremely well prepared 2- Well prepared 3- Prepared  
4-Somewhat prepared 5-Not prepared**

#### **Think Critically**

-Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.

-Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.

-Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

#### **Communicate Effectively**

-Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.

-Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.

-Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

#### **Understand and Value Differences**

-Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.

-Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

#### **Use Information Effectively**

-Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.

-Use information sources ethically and responsibly.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

**2. How important is each of the following areas to a student's ability to succeed in your class this semester?**

**Response options    1-Essential   2-Very important   3-Important  
4-Somewhat important   5-Not important at all**

**Think Critically**

-Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.

-Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.

-Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

**Communicate Effectively**

-Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.

-Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.

-Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

**Understand and Value Differences**

-Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.

-Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

**Use Information Effectively**

-Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.

-Use information sources ethically and responsibly.

-Please add any comments on this area here:

**3. In your own words, explain what constitutes good "critical thinking" in your field and in your course. How do you know your students are doing this? How do you assess critical thinking?**

**4. What else would you like us to know about your experience with students in your Tier Two courses?**

Appendix C

**General Education Faculty Survey – Spring 2008 - Survey Results**

<b><i>Rate the level of students' preparedness for your course this semester in the following areas:</i></b>				
<b>Think Critically</b>				
Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Prepared	4	15%	16%
	Somewhat Prepared	14	54%	56%
	Not Prepared	7	27%	28%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		26		
Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	
	Well Prepared	3	12%	
	Prepared	3	12%	
	Somewhat Prepared	15	58%	
	Not Prepared	5	19%	
	Not Applicable	0	0%	
		26		
Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	
	Well Prepared	1	4%	
	Prepared	3	12%	
	Somewhat Prepared	11	42%	
	Not Prepared	11	42%	
	Not Applicable	0	0%	
		26		

<b>Communicate Effectively</b>				
Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	2	8%	10%
	Prepared	10	38%	53%
	Somewhat Prepared	5	19%	26%
	Not Prepared	2	8%	11%
	Not Applicable	7	27%	
		26		
Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	3	12%	12%
	Prepared	5	19%	20%
	Somewhat Prepared	13	50%	52%
	Not Prepared	4	15%	16%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		26		
Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	3	12%	12%
	Prepared	8	31%	33%
	Somewhat Prepared	13	50%	50%
	Not Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Not Applicable	2	22%	
		26		

## Understand and Value Differences

Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.	Extremely Well Prepared	1	4%	4%
	Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Prepared	6	23%	27%
	Somewhat Prepared	9	35%	41%
	Not Prepared	6	23%	27%
	Not Applicable	4	15%	
		26		
Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.	Extremely Well Prepared	2	8%	8%
	Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Prepared	5	19%	21%
	Somewhat Prepared	13	50%	54%
	Not Prepared	4	15%	16%
	Not Applicable	2	8%	
		26		

## Use Information Effectively

Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	1	4%	4%
	Prepared	1	4%	4%
	Somewhat Prepared	11	42%	46%
	Not Prepared	11	42%	46%
	Not Applicable	2	8%	
		26		
Use information sources ethically and responsibly.	Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Well Prepared	0	0%	0%
	Prepared	8	31%	32%
	Somewhat Prepared	9	35%	36%
	Not Prepared	8	31%	32%

	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		26		
<b><i>How important is each of the following areas to a student's ability to succeed in your class this semester?</i></b>				
<b>Think Critically</b>				
Exercise synthetic, analytic and/or computational reasoning as needed to solve problems.	Essential	8	31%	33%
	Very Important	5	19%	21%
	Important	4	15%	17%
	Somewhat Important	5	19%	21%
	Not Important at all	2	8%	8%
	Not Applicable	2	8%	
		26		
Raise salient questions about the evidence, inferences, and conclusions of inquiries, including one's own inquiries.	Essential	9	35%	
	Very Important	8	31%	
	Important	6	23%	
	Somewhat Important	3	12%	
	Not Important at all	0	0%	
	Not Applicable	0	0%	
		26		
Infer and assess the ambiguities, assumptions, values, and purposes at issue in inquiries, including one's own work.	Essential	10	38%	40%
	Very Important	9	35%	36%
	Important	4	15%	16%
	Somewhat Important	2	8%	8%
	Not Important at all	0	0%	0%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		26		
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>				



Interpret and clearly present information in varied formats, including graphs, charts, and multimedia projects.	Essential	3	12%	15%
	Very Important	6	24%	30%
	Important	4	16%	20%
	Somewhat Important	4	16%	20%
	Not Important at all	3	12%	15%
	Not Applicable	5	20%	
		25		
Compose correct and clear written material in multiple formats such as research logs, researched reports, exam answers, and reflective essays.	Essential	10	40%	
	Very Important	9	36%	
	Important	3	12%	
	Somewhat Important	2	8%	
	Not Important at all	1	4%	
	Not Applicable	0	0%	
		25		
Improve written and visual documents in response to feedback.	Essential	8	32%	33%
	Very Important	9	36%	38%
	Important	2	8%	8%
	Somewhat Important	5	20%	21%
	Not Important at all	0	0%	0%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		25		

### Understand and Value Differences

Assess how different modes of inquiry and expression are appropriate in varied cultural and disciplinary contexts.	Essential	6	24%	28%
	Very Important	9	36%	43%
	Important	2	8%	10%
	Somewhat Important	2	8%	10%
	Not Important at all	2	8%	10%

	Not Applicable	4	16%	
		25		
Examine how differences in cultural and individual viewpoints expand our understanding of human experience.	Essential	8	32%	36%
	Very Important	7	28%	32%
	Important	3	12%	14%
	Somewhat Important	3	12%	14%
	Not Important at all	1	4%	4%
	Not Applicable	3	12%	
		25		
<b>Use Information Effectively</b>				
Access and evaluate the reliability of information from varied sources, including internet and library resources.	Essential	6	24%	25%
	Very Important	9	36%	38%
	Important	6	24%	25%
	Somewhat Important	3	12%	12%
	Not Important at all	0	0%	0%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		25		
Use information sources ethically and responsibly.	Essential	12	48%	50%
	Very Important	9	36%	38%
	Important	1	4%	4%
	Somewhat Important	2	8%	8%
	Not Important at all	0	0%	0%
	Not Applicable	1	4%	
		25		

## Appendix D

### Prompt for Student Writing Assignment

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the General Education writing assessment.

The University of Arizona is engaged in on-going efforts to evaluate and improve the quality of the undergraduate education it offers. The following writing assignment is designed to do two things:

- to help you reflect upon what you have learned in the INDV/TRAD/NATS courses you have taken, and
- to help both your instructor and the university understand what students are learning from their Tier One experience about themselves as learners.

#### **Directions:**

Answer the following two prompts in essay format, about 2-3 paragraphs per question, and submit your writing electronically to {specific web site for INDV/NATS/TRAD writings}.

You might want to take 10-15 minutes for each part, for a total of 20-30 minutes to do this writing. Think of your audience as the faculty at UA.

- I. Discuss one or two significant things you learned in your Tier One INDV/NATS/TRAD course. Give specific examples in your answer so that any faculty member at UA could understand your answer.
  - Be sure you elaborate on why these things you learned are important to you.
- II. Discuss one or two things you now know about yourself as a learner after having taken your INDV/NATS/TRAD courses. You might want to discuss specific behaviors or habits, attitudes, study skills, or thought processes that you now know work (or don't work) for you.
  - As you discuss your learning processes, be sure you elaborate on why these processes work (or don't work) for you.