INTRODUCTION

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires that each public institution of higher education evaluate its core curriculum at five-year intervals. This survey is used to analyze how the core curriculum reflects the required elements as specified in Coordinating Board rules and the guidelines entitled Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics.

The core curriculum includes a series of basic intellectual competencies (reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy) that are essential to the learning process in any discipline. Although students can be expected to come to the university with some experience in exercising these competencies, they often need further instruction and practice to meet university standards and, later, to succeed in both their major field of academic study and their chosen career or profession. Some of these intellectual competencies have traditionally been tied to specific courses required of all students during their first two years of college. For example, courses in college composition, together with mathematics have long been the cornerstone experience of the freshman year. But a single course or two-course sequence in college composition can do little more than introduce students to the principles and practices of good writing. Within the three to six semester credit hours of course work in the first semester, there is not enough time spend to guarantee proficiency. There are no required courses specifically dedicated to reading or to critical thinking. Thus, if a core curriculum is to prepare students effectively, it is imperative that these intellectual competencies be included among the objectives of many individual core courses and reflected in their course content.
Questions for this survey addressed Area Objectives, Perspectives, and Competencies. They were selected to touch upon as many of these elements as possible. These three types of elements may be represented by rows, columns, and depth of a three-dimensional cube. The following figure illustrates this cube. Questions were selected to address as many cells of the cube as possible.
The Spring 2005 Core Curriculum Survey was authorized by vote in the Core Curriculum Committee on April 15, 2005. After composing and formatting the survey items, the survey was approved by Dr. Cockrum on April 18th. The survey designed was to provide a snapshot of student perceptions about the content of various core curriculum courses at Sul Ross State University as they relate to the THECB Core Curriculum Assumptions and Defining Characteristics. The survey items were designed to provide a benchmark of information about the core curriculum courses that will provide the baseline for trends and predictions when combined with future surveys.

Because of the late date, the survey forms were printed and distributed to individual instructors or to departmental secretaries as rapidly as possible so that instructors could administer the surveys in conjunction with the course evaluations. After some surveys were distributed, the process was halted because of disagreement between committee members about the intent of the authorizing vote. This unfortunate turn of events limited the expected number of Core Curriculum classes from 85 to 21 and the number of responses from 1606 to 336. It will be December of 2006 before another opportunity arises to assess students along with course evaluations in a long semester. This limited number of responses must now be termed a pilot survey and this is a report on the results as of April 22, 2005.

**RESPONSES TO QUANTITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS**
The first 22 questions had a variety of Likert Scale choices. Results are displayed graphically along with the percent of responses of each choice for each question and for ALL participants. The scale of the bar graph is the same for each question. Citations on the right side of the charts are from the THECB [CORE CURRICULUM ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS](http://shire.sulross.edu/ire/survey/core/core.html). Red text is colored red for the purpose of this report and is not red in the original. These questions are designed to provide quantitative measures of how often the required elements are addressed in the core curriculum courses.
These responses indicate that core curriculum students read very little question addressing of the THECB Competency:

"READING:
Reading at the level means to analyze and a variety of printed materials -- both articles, and do articles, and do. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods of analyzing the matter of individual disciplines."
More than half of Core Curriculum students say the only wrote 1-3 pages.

This question is part of the TH Basic Competencies:

"WRITING:
Competency in writing includes the ability to clear, correct, coherent prose to purpose, context, and audience. Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are not automatic in composition, but the writer must understand that the composition itself makes sense. Therefore, the writer must know how to discover a topic, how to develop it, how to organize it, how to phrase it effectively to their audience."

Students need familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic, how to develop it, how to organize it, and how to phrase it effectively to their audience.

http://shire.sulross.edu/ire/survey/core/core.html
More than half Core Curriculum students say they only had 1-3 written assignments. In an average week semester, this question addresses part of THECB Basic Competency:

"WRITING: Competency is the ability to write clear, correct, coherent prose to purpose, OCC, and audience. Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are sine qua non in composition, the opposite of what the writer wants. Students need to be familiar with the process, including discovery, to discover a topic.

3. The number of written assignments I had to submit for this class was:

- More than 10: 10%
- 4-9: 26%
- 1-3: 52%
- None: 12%

http://shire.sulross.edu/ire/survey/core/core.html
how to develop their abilities can be only through practice and reflection.

"WRITING": Competency is the ability to write clear, correct, and coherent prose. It is also the ability to use appropriate language and structure to convey ideas effectively.

Core Curriculum students do not themselves as problems with grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and audience. 

Students need to be aware of their own writing weaknesses and work to improve them.
process includ to discover a to how to develop organize it, how phrase it effect their audience. abilities can be only through p and reflection.
Core Curriculm students do no themselves as problems with organization assi. This question is part of the TH Basic Competency in writing, which is the ability to clearly, correctly, and coherently produce text that is purposeful, concise, and appropriate for the audience. Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are not automatic, even if the composition itself makes sense. The writer of anything to students need to familiar with the processes involved in discovering, organizing, and phrasing content effectively for their audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
abilities can be only through planning and reflection.

Core Curriculum students do not themselves as problems with and aesthetics written assignments. This question is based on the THECB performance standard:

"6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;"

This also from the description of instruction and in the Core Curriculum:

"Education, as from training, a knowledge of contrasting views from human experience. Both the humanities and visual arts deal with the individual's reflection of the human situation analytical and ways."

http://shire.sulross.edu/ire/survey/core/core.html
Core Curriculm students believe they are giving proper credit to original resources in their written assignments.

This question is one of the THI Educational Objectives under the Communication component:

"6. To develop the ability to research, write a document paper and/or to oral presentation..."
Almost half of Curriculum students have no oral presentation at works out to an average of about 5 minutes, the longest oral presentation for who gave one.

Question address of the THECB competency:

"SPEAKING: Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate clearly, coherently, persuasive language appropriate to the occasion, and a

Developing this competency in acquiring poise in developing competence in speaking experience in presentations groups, to large and through th
About half of the Curriculum study they gave only presentations in class. This question addresses part of the THECB basic competency:

"SPEAKING:
Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate clearly, coherently, persuasively, and appropriately to an occasion, and a
Developing this competency in acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in presentations groups, to large and through th

9. The number of oral presentations I had to submit for this class was:

- More than 10: 0%
- 4-9: 7%
- 1-3: 50%
- None: 42%
Very little time using computer other technology to complete course requirements. This question is part of the TH Basic Competency.

"COMPUTER LITERACY:
Computer literacy at the college level is the ability to use computer-based technology to solve communication problems, and information. Educated student should have an understanding of limits, possibilities as well as the use of technology, and have the tools to evaluate and new technology as they become a
Over one-quarter Core Curriculum students indicate they have very participation in discussions. The question addressed was under the Communication component:

"4. To participate effectively in discussions with emphasis on listening, critical reflective thinking, and responding..."
One third of the students were not in small group discussions at all, and one quarter said they were not in small group discussions in every class. Analysis by discussion at which classes had multiple small group discussions in class. This question addresses one THECB Education Objectives and Communication component:

"4. To participate effectively in group work with emphasis on listening, critical thinking, reflective thinking and responding"

http://shire.sulross.edu/ire/survey/core/core.html
Almost half of Curriculum studies students participate in discussions with students from ethnicities. See analysis by ethnicity shown below in detail. This question addresses the perspective:

"1. Establish multiple perspectives on the individual relationship to society and the world in a culturally ethically diverse world;"

It also addresses the THECB Educational Objectives under SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES.

"12. To identify, understand different and commonalities..."
Over two thirds Core Curriculm students say they studied with others outside of class very rarely.
15. Assignments in this course required me to remember information delivered by the professor:

- Multiple times each class: 43%
- Once per week: 33%
- Once per month: 16%
- Once per semester: 3%
- Not at all: 5%
Over one-third Core Curricul students report to remember m from assigned once a month .
This question is part of the TH basic competen:

"READING: Reading at the level means to analyze a variety of printed materials -- both articles, and do. A core curriculum should offer the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing the material of individual disciplines."

16. Assignments in this course required me to remember material from assigned readings:

- Multiple times each class: 33%
- Once per week: 32%
- Once per month: 15%
- Once per semester: 7%
- Not at all: 13%
Over half of the Curriculum students report analyzing comparing, and solving problems once per month. This question is one of the THI Educational Objectives under SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES.

"10. To analyz critically assess develop creative solutions to policy problems..."
Over one-third Core Curricula students report encouragement of response, personal opinion, or personal evaluation on or less. This question addresses part THECB Basic Competency:

"CRITICAL THINKING:
Critical thinking embraces the application of both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to a matter in order to evaluate arguments to construct all strategies. Problem solving is one application of thinking, used to address an idea task."

This question addresses one THECB Educ
Objectives unc
Communicativ
component:

"4. To partici
effectively in with emphasis
listening, critic
reflective think
responding."

This question
addresses one
THECB Edu
Objectives unc
HUMANITIE
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"3. To respond
to works in the
humanities."
2. Stimulate a discussion and upon individual, political, economic and social aspects in order to understand ways in which responsible members of society:
21. This course included exposure or comparison to social or historic influences:

- Multiple times each class: 33%
- Once per week: 24%
- Once per month: 13%
- Once per semester: 8%
- Not at all: 23%

This question relates the THECB perspectives:

"2. Stimulate a discussion and upon individuals political, economic, social, and political aspects in order to understand ways in which society;" and "9. To recognize the application of reason and historical evidence in social research."
Questions 23-31 could be answered with one or more choices. The percent responding to each choice is displayed graphically for each question and for ALL participants. The scale of the bar graph is the same for each question. These questions are designed to provide quantitative measures of interrelationships between disciplines.
This question measured relationships between the Area Objective (columns of the cube). It may be seen that communication, social and behavioral sciences, and multicultural studies were used most and that the natural sciences were used the least.
This question measured relationships between the Perspectives (rows of the cube). It may be seen that the historical and logical perspectives were used most and the mathematical and aesthetic were used the least.
This question measured relationships between the Objectives in the area of Mathematics. It may be seen that the research material was used most often and mathematical models and mathematical symbols were used the least.
26. When the class worked in small groups:

- The professor gave specific guidelines: 47%
- I participated in the discussion: 54%
- We had difficulty agreeing what to do: 4%
- We wasted time: 6%
- Others in the group had better ideas than I did: 7%
- One person did most of the work: 5%
This question measured the use of personal creativity in several areas (columns of the cube). It may be seen that personal creativity was used mostly for written or oral presentations and least for performances or objects of art.
This question measured the use of technology against the competencies (depth of the cube). It may be seen that technology was used most to find information and least to solve problems.
This question measured learning again the competencies (depth of the cube). It may be seen that most learning was by listening and at least by practicing touch and motor skills.
This question measured the use of the Perspectives (rows of the cube). It may be seen that values were studied the most and the least used was art forms.
31. In this course, I:

- Used and/or practiced methods used by professions in the field: 49%
- Realized that professionals do not always agree: 32%
- Understood major issues and problems faced by professionals in the field: 41%