SOUTHWEST TEXAS COLLEGE

Core Assessment Report

Academic Year 2025-2026

Office of Strategic Innovation and Research
Assessment Division

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Southwest Texas College (SWTX) submitted the Core Curriculum Implementation and Assessment Plan to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as mandated by the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.30. This mandate requires public institutions to assess core objectives continually, reporting results every ten years in alignment with accreditation reaffirmation. The rule reads as follows:

"Each public institution of higher education shall evaluate its core curriculum through the assessment of the core objectives on an ongoing basis, reporting the results of the assessment to the Board every ten years on the schedule that accords with the institution's accreditation reaffirmation self-study report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor. The evaluation and report must include:

> *(1) a description of the assessment process for each of the six core objectives;*
> *(2) an explanation of measures, methodology, frequency and the timeline of assessment activities;*
> *(3) the criteria and/or targets used to benchmark the attainment of the six core objectives,·*
> *(4) the results of the assessment, including evidence of the level of attainment targeted and achieved for each of the six core objectives;*
> *(5) an analysis of the results, including an interpretation of assessment information; and*
> *(6) any actions planned, including how the results and analysis of the assessment process will be used to improve student learning and achievement."*

This updated report reviews SWTX's ongoing assessment process, methods, and outcomes for general education core objectives. The assessment has included benchmarks set for core curriculum competencies, which are outlined below.

	Critical Thinking	Communication	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Personal Responsiblity	Social Responsibility
Artifact Assessment Rubrics	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher

Since the plan's inception, Southwest Texas College has been engaged in annual assessment processes that have measured how well students are achieving the core objectives of the general education. During Faculty Convocation, The Dean of Liberal Arts and Division Chairs review core objective assessment results with faculty and consider areas of improvement and intervention.

STRATEGIC ARTIFACT ASSESSMENT

In each core course, designated core assignments generate student "artifacts," documented on the course syllabus as evidence of authentic student work. A random sample of artifacts, submitted by students who have completed at least 80% of the core requirements, undergoes assessment twice a year by multidisciplinary faculty teams using rubrics designed by an Ad Hoc Committee.

Students upload these artifacts to Canvas for initial review and grading by course faculty. The Office of Strategjc Innovation and Research subsequently collects and distributes the artifacts for further assessment. Faculty raters, trained in artifact evaluation, rubric use, calibration, and the Watermark Assessment Projects system, conduct the assessments. As outlined in the original assessment plan, a minimum of 100 artifacts are to be sampled annually, with an actual target of 200 artifacts per year. The results of these assessments are distributed annually to the Dean and faculty within the College of Liberal Arts.

A total of 262 student artifacts has been assessed in the 2025- 2026 academic year. The table below shows the number of artifacts assessed per semester. See the chart below for details:

Academic year	Number of artifacts
Fall 2025	127
Spring 2026	136
Total :	263

Between Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, a total of 263 artifacts were assessed. In Fall 2025 there were a total of 127 and for Spring 2026, 136 artifacts. The next chart reflects the information by semester:

The next chart reflects the information by semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective						
Core Skill	Fall 2025		Spring 2026		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Communication Skills	36	28.3	36	26.7	72	27.5
Critical Thinking	35	27.6	36	26.7	71	27.1
Personal Responsibility	23	18.1	22	16.3	45	17.2
Empirical and Quantitave Skills	8	6.3	12	8.9	20	7.6
Social Responsibility	17	13.4	16	11.9	33	12.6
Teamwork	8	6.3	14	10.4	22	8.4
Total	**127**	**100**	**136**	**101**	**263**	**100**

In both semesters, the data collection showed the highest number of artifacts came from Core classes assessing Communication Skills (27.5%) and Critical Thinking (27.1%), followed by Personal Responsibility (17.2%), Social Responsibility (12.6%), Teamwork (8.4%), and Empirical and Quotative Skills (7.6%). A deeper analysis will be presented after Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 information.

Overall, the results indicate a continued emphasis on Communication Skills and Critical Thinking, alongside increased assessment representation for Teamwork and Empirical and Quantitative Skills. These findings provide an opportunity to review the balance of Core Skill assessment across courses and programs, particularly for skills with lower representation. Because the data reflects artifact counts rather than student proficiency scores, additional analysis of assessment ratings is needed to determine the extent to which students are achieving the expected learning outcomes.

The next data collection shows the percentages obtained for the Fall 2025 semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective		
Core Skill	Fall 2025	
	Count	%
Communication Skills	36	28.3
Critical Thinking	35	27.6
Personal Responsibility	23	18.1
Empirical and Quantitave Skills	8	6.3
Social Responsibility	17	13.4
Teamwork	8	6.3
Total	**127**	**100**

During Fall 2025, a total of 127 assessments were completed across the institution's six core skills. Communication Skills represented the largest proportion of assessments at 28.3% (36 assessments), followed closely by Critical Thinking at 27.6% (35 assessments). Together, these two skills accounted for more than half of all assessments conducted during the semester, indicating a strong institutional focus on students' ability to communicate effectively and apply analytical reasoning.

Personal Responsibility accounted for 18.1% (23 assessments) of the total assessments, reflecting continued efforts to evaluate students' accountability, ethical behavior, and self-management skills. Social Responsibility represented 13.4% (17 assessments), demonstrating the institution's commitment to assessing civic engagement, cultural awareness, and community involvement.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills and Teamwork each accounted for 6.3% (8 assessments) of the total assessments, making them the least frequently assessed core skills during the semester. While these skills remain essential components of student learning and workforce readiness, their lower representation suggests opportunities to increase assessment activities and artifact collection in future cycles to ensure a more balanced distribution across all core competencies.

Overall, the assessment distribution demonstrates a strong emphasis on Communication Skills and Critical Thinking while identifying areas for growth in the assessment of Empirical and Quantitative Skills and Teamwork.

Continued efforts to encourage broader participation across all core skill areas will help ensure comprehensive measurement of student learning outcomes and support ongoing institutional improvement.

The chart below explains the information collected in Spring 2026 semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective		
Spring 2026		
Core Skill	Spring 2026	
	Count	%
Communication Skills	36	26.5
Critical Thinking	36	26.5
Personal Responsibility	22	16.2
Empirical and Quantitave Skills	12	8.8
Social Responsibility	16	11.8
Teamwork	14	10.3
Total	**136**	**100**

lIn Spring 2026, Communication Skills (26.7%) and Critical Thinking (26.7%) were the most frequently assessed objectives, together accounting for 53.4 of all evaluations. This indicates a strong institutional emphasis on developing students' ability to communicate effectively and apply critical reasoning across disciplines.

The remaining four core skills, Personal Responsibility (16.3%), Social Responsibility (12.6%), Teamwork represents (10.4%) and Empirical and Quantitative Skills (8.9%) this last skill is the least found in the artifacts collected.

The distribution indicates that assessment activities were concentrated primarily on Communication Skills and Critical Thinking. Although all six Core Skills were represented, the differences in artifact counts suggest an opportunity to review whether assessment activities adequately address each skill across courses and programs.

CORE SKILLS BY SCORES

Artifact assessment scores will be reported in two ways: by the percentage of students scoring 2 or higher and by the average rubric score for each core objective. The original implementation plan set a target of 70% of artifacts achieving a score of 2.0 or higher. This report also includes an analysis of average scores to further interpret student learning. In cases where significant discrepancies arise between the scores provided by the two initial raters, a third rater may be introduced to ensure consistency and objectivity in the scoring process. This additional step helps to maintain the integrity of the assessment and provides a more accurate reflection of student achievement.

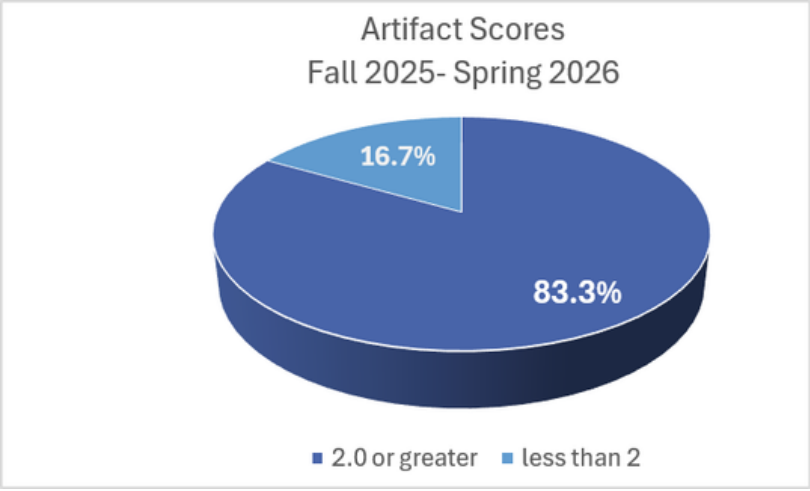
Communication Skills

The number of artifacts assessed each year for Communication Skills, Fall 2025 to Spring 2026, were 36 each semester.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this core competency has been met in in the Academic year 2025- 2026. The chart below explains the distribution:

		Communication Skills					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
Academic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	60	83.3	12	16.7	72	100

The next diagram shows the distribution in percentages



During the 2025-2026 academic year, 83.3% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 16.7% were below 2. Over the entire period, there were a total of 72 counts.

Critical Thinking

The number of artifacts assessed each year for Critical Thinking, Fall 2025 to Spring 2026, range from 35 to 36.

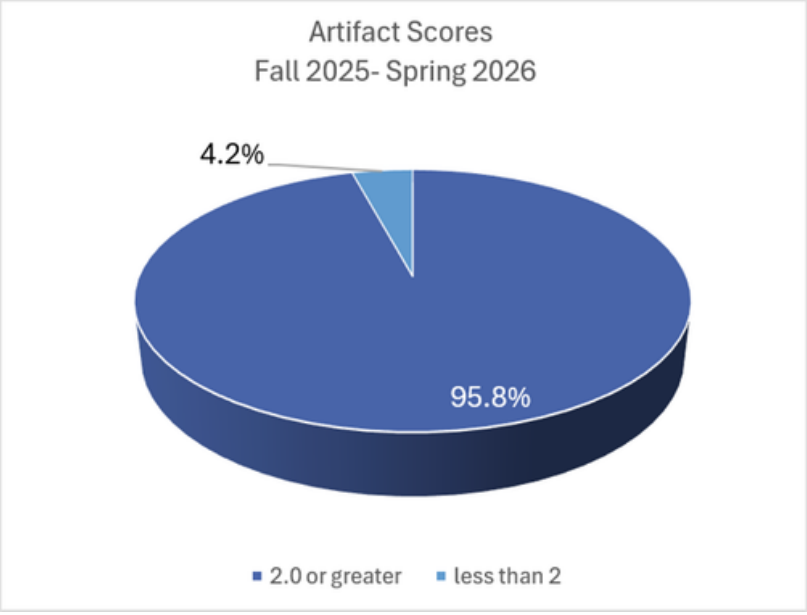
The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this core competency has been met in in the Academic year 2025-2026.

		Critical Thinking					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
Academic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	68	95.8	3	4.2	71	100

During the 2025–2026 academic year, 71 artifacts were assessed for Critical Thinking. Of these, 68 artifacts (95.8%) achieved a rating of 2.0 or greater, while only 3 artifacts (4.2%) received ratings below 2.0.

These results indicate a strong level of achievement in Critical Thinking, with nearly all assessed artifacts meeting or exceeding the established rating threshold. This suggests that students are generally demonstrating the expected critical thinking skills, including the ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and develop reasoned conclusions.
Overall, Critical Thinking demonstrated the highest proportion of artifacts meeting the established benchmark among the results presented so far. Continued emphasis on analytical assignments, problem-solving activities, and evidence-based reasoning is recommended to sustain these positive outcomes and provide targeted support for students whose work falls below the expected level.

The next diagram shows the distribution in percentages



Personal Responsibility

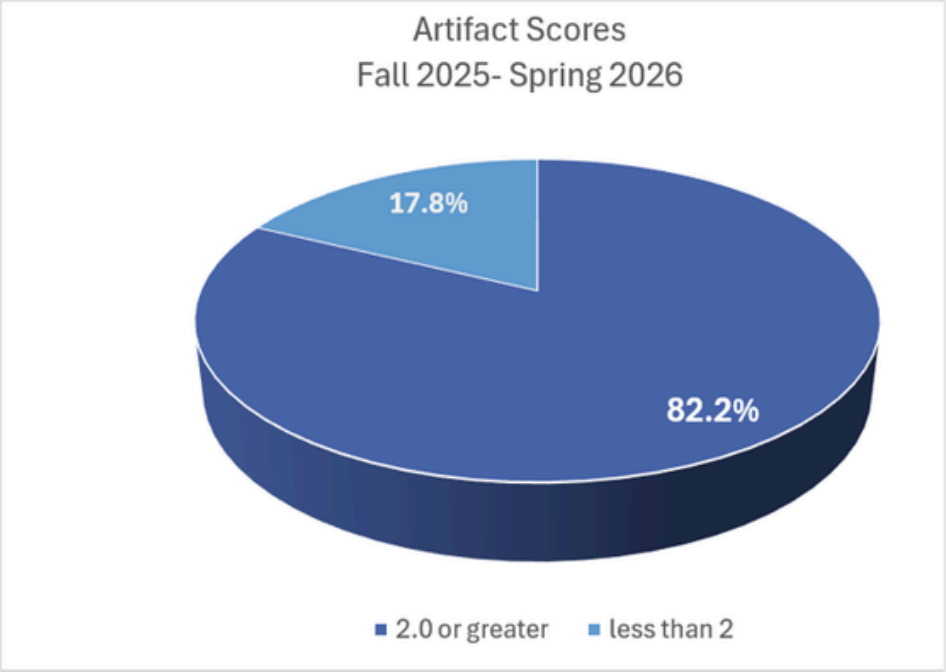
The number of artifacts assessed for Personal Responsibility has ranged from 22 to 23. The percent of Personal Responsibility artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher showed 82.2% in 2025- 2026.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was met in 2025-2026.

		Personal Responsibility					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
Academic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	37	82.2	8	17.8	45	100

During the 2025-2026 academic year, 82.2% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 17.8% were below 2. Over the entire period, there were a total of 37 counts at or above 2.0 and 8 counts below 2, resulting in a combined total of 45 counts.

The next diagram shows the distribution in percentages:



Overall, 82.2% of assessed students met or exceeded the established performance benchmark.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills

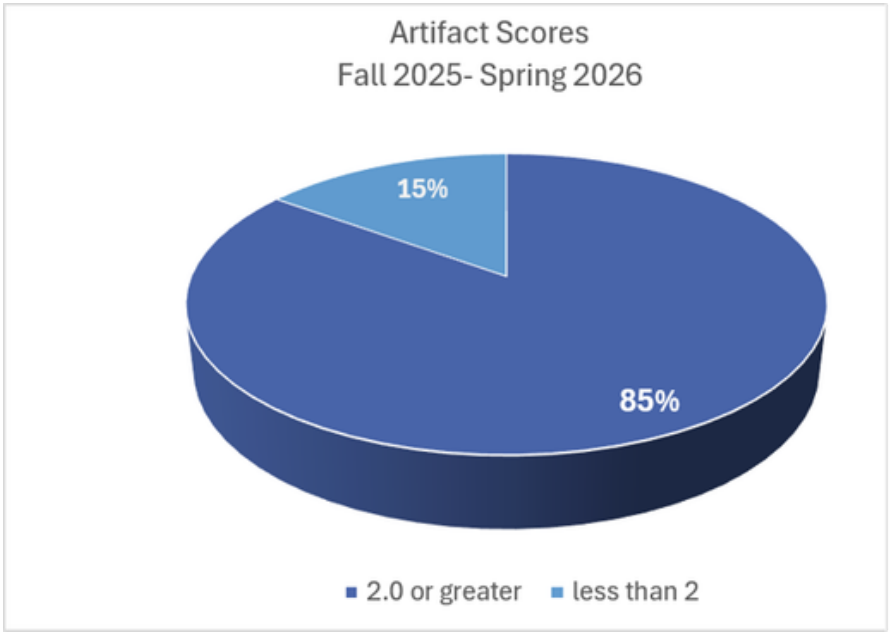
The number of artifacts assessed for Empirical and Quantitative Skills was 20.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency has been met in the academic year 2025- 2026.

		Empirical and Quantitative Skills					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
Academic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	17	85	3	15	20	100

During the 2025-2026 academic year, 85% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 15% were below 2. Over the entire period, there were a total of 17 counts at or above 2.0 and 3 counts below 2, resulting in a combined total of 20 counts.

The next diagram shows the distribution in percentages:



While the high percentage of students meeting the benchmark suggests that current instruction and curriculum are generally effective, the presence of one-quarter of students below expectations indicates a need for targeted support and intervention.

Overall, the findings reflect solid performance with room for improvement, particularly in addressing the needs of lower-performing students through focused instructional strategies and continued monitoring in future semesters.

Social Responsibility

The number of artifacts assessed for Personal Responsibility has ranged from 16 to 17. The percent of Personal Responsibility artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher showed 78.8% in 2025-2026. A total of 33 artifacts were assessed for Social Responsibility.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was met in 2025-2026.

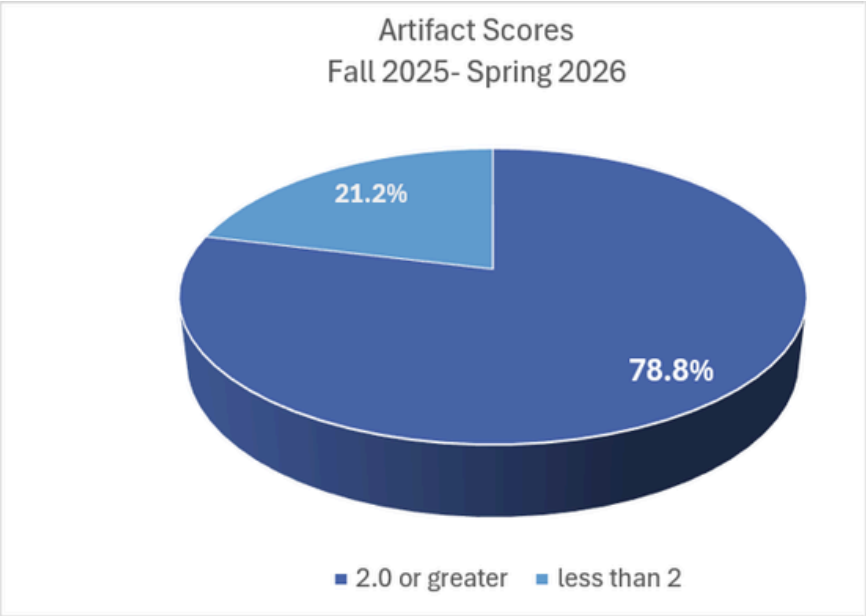
		Social Responsibility					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
cademic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	26	78.8	7	21.2	33	100

During the 2025-2026 academic year, 78.8% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 21.2% were below 2. Over the entire period, there were a total of 33 counts at or above 2.0 and 3 counts below 2, resulting in a combined total of 20 counts.

These results indicate that most assessed artifacts met the established rating threshold for Social Responsibility. However, approximately one-fifth of the artifacts fell below the expected level, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen students' development of this Core Skill. Reviewing the artifacts with lower ratings may help identify common areas of difficulty and inform instructional strategies and learning activities designed to improve student performance.

Overall, the findings suggest that Social Responsibility is being demonstrated in most assessed artifacts, while continued assessment and targeted improvement efforts are recommended to increase the proportion of artifacts meeting or exceeding the established benchmark.

The graphic below shows the distribution:



These findings indicate that instructional strategies and curriculum alignment are effective in promoting student success in social responsibility skills.

However, the presence of nearly one-fifth of students below the benchmark highlights an opportunity for targeted intervention and continued monitoring.

Overall, the data reflects a positive trend in student achievement, while emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of lower-performing students to ensure consistent success across the cohort.

Teamwork

The number of artifacts assessed for Teamwork has ranged from 8 to 14. The percent of Personal Responsibility artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher showed 86.4% in 2025-2026. A total of 22 artifacts were assessed.

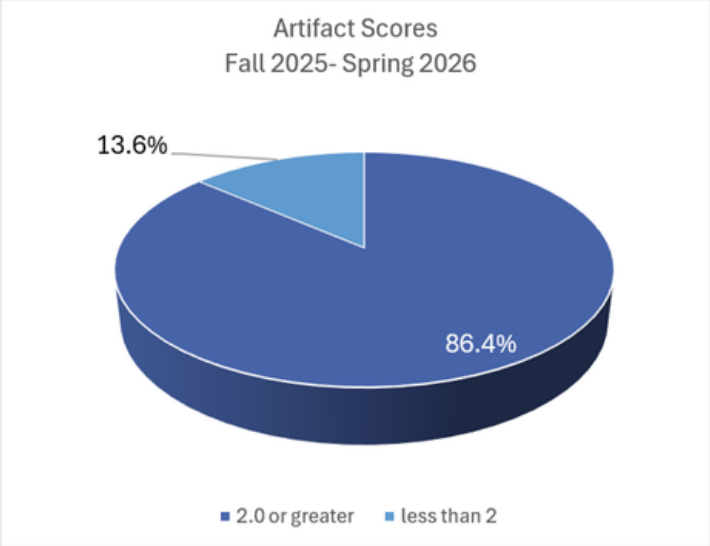
The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was met in 2025-2026.

		Teamwork					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
Academic year	2025-2026	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Total	19	86.4	3	13.6	22	100

Of these, 19 artifacts (86.4%) achieved a rating of 2.0 or greater, while 3 artifacts (13.6%) received ratings below 2.0.

These results indicate that most assessed artifacts met or exceeded the established rating threshold for Teamwork, suggesting positive outcomes in students' demonstrated ability to collaborate. However, the 13.6% of artifacts below the benchmark highlights an opportunity to strengthen collaborative learning experiences and teamwork skills.

Overall, the findings reflect a favorable assessment of Teamwork. Continued use of collaborative activities, clear expectations for group participation, and targeted support for areas identified in lower-rated artifacts may help increase student achievement and ensure more consistent demonstration of this Core Skill.



MEAN SCORES BY CORE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

The following tables detail the mean scores for core competency and each core objective for the last year, from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026 due the date of this report.

Communication Skills

Communication Skills (CS) are defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as encompassing "effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication." The chart provides an overview of the data collected:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Communication- Written, Oral or visual	2.7	2.5
Average	2.7	2.5
Number of artifacts	36	36

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking Skills (CT) are defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as components that include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information . The following figure summarizes the collected data:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Critical Thinking	2.6	3.2
Average	2.6	3.2
Number of artifacts	35	36

Personal Responsibility

Personal Responsibility (PR) is defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as encompassing the "ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making." The image below represents the results from both semesters:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Ethical Reasoning, Ethical decision making	2.0	3.0
Average	2.0	3.0
Number of artifacts	23	22

Empirical and Quantitative Skills

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQ) are defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as encompassing the "manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions."

The following chart presents the criteria for the Academic Year 2025- 2026:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Application and Analysis	2.2	3.0
Average	2.2	3.0
Number of artifacts	8	12

Social Responsibility

Social Responsibility (SR) is defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as encompassing "Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities."

The next chart shows the data for each criterion in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Knowledge. Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks	2.4	2.2
Average	2.4	2.2
Number of artifacts	17	16

Teamwork

Teamwork Skills (TW) are defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as encompassing the "ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal."

The following data presents the criteria for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026:

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Teamwork	2.6	2.5
Average	2.6	2.5
Number of artifacts	8	14

MEAN SCORES BY CORE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA- SUMMARY

ARTIFACT ASSESSMENT BY CORE OBJECTIVE- MEAN SCORES

Communication Skills

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Communication- Written, Oral or visual	2.7	2.5
Average	2.7	2.5
Number of artifacts	36	36

Empirical and Quantitive Skills

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Application and Analysis	2.2	3.0
Average	2.2	3.0
Number of artifacts	8	12

Critical Thinking

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Critical Thinking	2.6	3.2
Average	2.6	3.2
Number of artifacts	35	36

Social Responsibility

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Knowledge. Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks	2.4	2.2
Average	2.4	2.2
Number of artifacts	17	16

Personal Responsibility

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Ethical Reasoning, Ethical decision making	2.0	3.0
Average	2.0	3.0
Number of artifacts	23	22

Teamwork

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026
Teamwork	2.6	2.5
Average	2.6	2.5
Number of artifacts	8	14

COMPARISON OF CORE SKILLS SCORES BY SEMESTER

The comparison of mean scores between Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 shows improvements in three of the six Core Skills assessed. Personal Responsibility demonstrated the largest improvement, increasing from 2.0 to 3.0 points, followed by Empirical and Quantitative Skills, which increased from 2.2 to 3.0, and Critical Thinking, which rose from 2.6 to 3.2. These gains suggest positive progress in students' demonstrated ethical reasoning, analytical application, and critical thinking abilities.

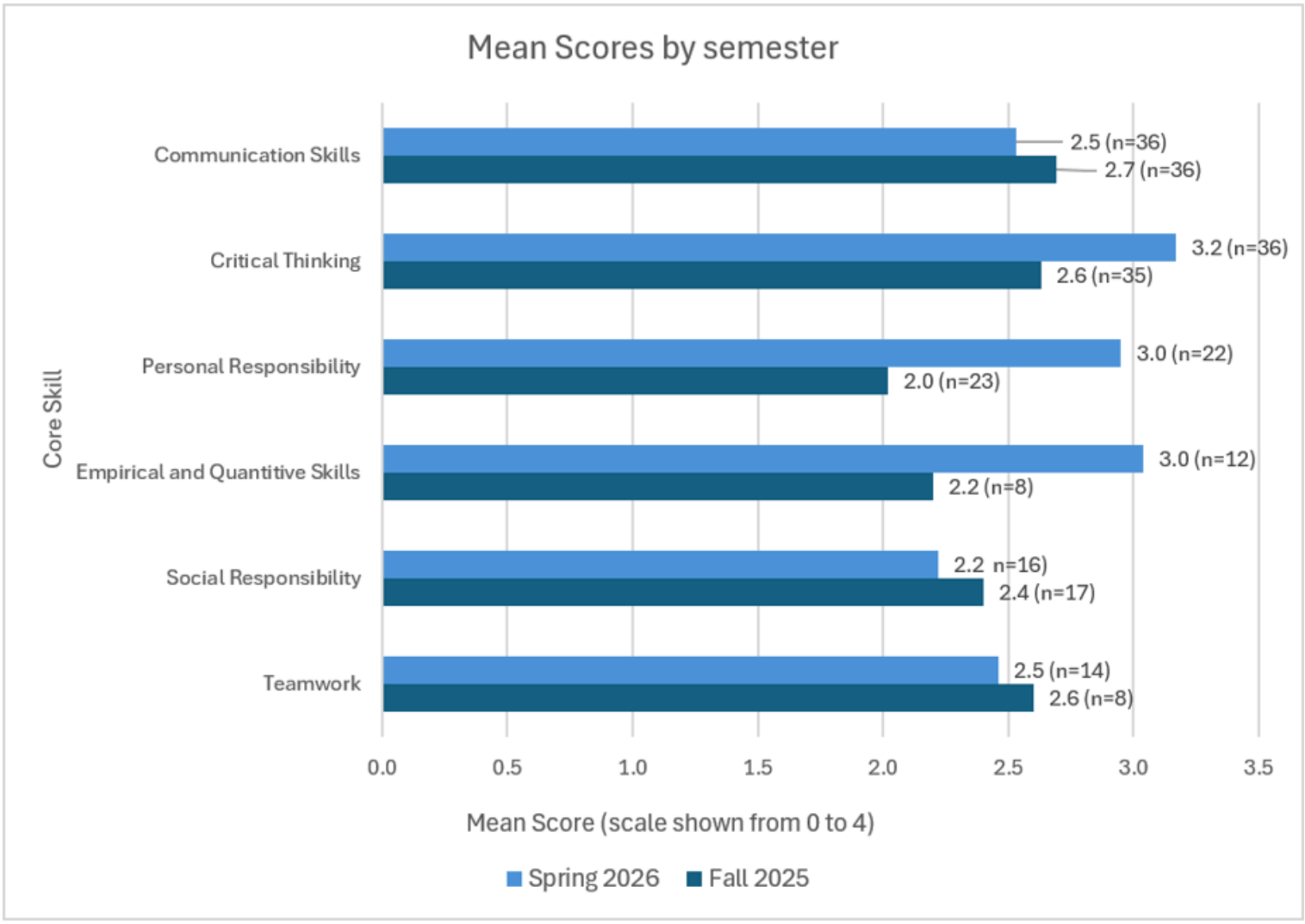
In contrast, Communication Skills decreased slightly from 2.7 to 2.5, Social Responsibility declined from 2.4 to 2.2, and Teamwork decreased from 2.6 to 2.5. Although these changes are relatively small, they indicate areas that may benefit from continued monitoring and targeted instructional strategies. The next chart shows the fluctuation in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026:

Core Skill	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Change
Communication Skills	2.7	2.5	−0.2
Critical Thinking	2.6	3.2	0.6
Personal Responsibility	2	3	1
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	2.2	3	0.8
Social Responsibility	2.4	2.2	−0.2
Teamwork	2.6	2.5	−0.1

Overall, the results reflect positive progress across several Core Skills, particularly Personal Responsibility, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, and Critical Thinking.

Continued assessment efforts should focus on sustaining these improvements while identifying opportunities to strengthen Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, and Teamwork.

COMPARISON OF CORE SKILLS SCORES BY SEMESTER



The data suggest a positive trend in student performance across several Core Skills, particularly in Personal Responsibility, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, and Critical Thinking.

Moving forward, the institution should continue to support these areas of strength while implementing targeted actions to improve outcomes in Communication Skills, Social Responsibility, and Teamwork.