



Key Findings & Recommendations General Education Reports

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE &
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
ACADEMIC YEARS: 2021-22, 2022-23 & 2023-24

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Executive Summary: Key Findings of Entire General Education Program

At Francis Marion University, the delivery of courses related to general education is dispersed across multiple departments. The university has a smorgasbord of general education requirements. Each of these courses aligns with one or more of the institution's nine collegiate-level general education competencies/goals, which are sustained by the liberal arts tradition. All baccalaureate degree students are required to complete courses associated with the nine competencies/goals. SACSCOC Core Requirement (CR) 8.2b. specifies that the "institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results" in the areas of student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies/goals of its undergraduate degree programs. Over the past three academic years, an increasing number of departments/programs have identified, assessed and improved measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) within the guidelines of the Core Requirement 8.2.b. Furthermore, departments have an array of methodologies (e.g. pre- and post-assessments, or single-blind or double-blind reviews) and disaggregate results by course and academic level. This leads departments/programs with autonomy and direction for growth within the general education program.

Francis Marion University has increased attention to the assessment of student learning outcomes aligning with general education requirements and the nine general education goals/competencies. Assessing student learning outcomes for its general education requirements has improved the assessment of the Core Requirement (CR) 8.2.b. More departments/programs have tailored and aligned their reports by using the following components of a General Education Institutional Effectiveness Report: i.) FMU's nine revised General Educational Goals, ii.) Measurable Student Learning Outcomes addressing one or more General Education Goals, iii.) Both Direct and Indirect Methods using different levels of skills (i.e. Bloom's Taxonomy). With this component, Programs/Departments align methodology to SLOs using a common language of assessment across reports by using baseline, benchmark and target. Furthermore, the number of student participants has increased by including online courses, courses at the continuum and surveys, iv.) Results, and v.) Action Items.

Over the past four years, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness worked with various offices to merge two pre-existing (CASA survey and IE Survey) surveys and revise the final Senior Exit Survey given to all graduates upon completion of their degree. Among several areas of the survey, students rate the achievement of the nine competencies /goals on a 7-point Likert Scale from Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly. This tool is an indirect assessment of the 9 competencies/goals. To increase student participation (90% or higher) on a semester basis, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness collaborates with the offices of the Registrar, Information Technology, Student Affairs, and the Provost. This collaboration has improved the efficiency, accuracy, consistency and security of the data collection process. This process provides trends, disaggregated data and data representation to individual programs/departments as well collectively ensuring the overall assessment of the nine goals.

The analysis of the past three FMU's General Education Reports has provided much needed information to assess student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee has three main recommendations to enhance the assessment process of the general education program. Discussion and development of these recommendations is presented in this summary.

Phase I.A.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee's Review of the General Education Requirements:

Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2024) states:

Core Requirement 8.2.b, "The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the area **b**. of student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student Outcomes: General Education)." Page 68.

2024-2025 Francis Marion University Catalog (Page 59) states:

"FMU offers programs of study that encourage students to think critically and creatively, communicate clearly and honestly, develop appreciation of aesthetic values, and be concerned with the common good as well as their own interests. The educational goals are sustained by the liberal arts tradition and seek to provide all baccalaureate degree students with the following:

Goal 1. The ability to compose effectively with rhetorical awareness, integrate relevant research when appropriate, and produce developed, insightful arguments.

Goal 2. The ability to demonstrate comprehension of different forms of communication.

Goal 3. The ability to explain artistic processes and evaluate artistic product.

Goal 4. The ability to use fundamental math skills and principles in various applications.

Goal 5. The ability to describe the natural world and apply scientific principles to critically analyze experimental evidence and reach conclusions.

Goal 6. The ability to recognize historical processes, to identify historical periodization, and to explain historical connections among individuals, groups, and ideas around the world.

Goal 7. The ability to recognize diverse social and cultural practices and to articulate connections between individual behavior and sociocultural processes.

Goal 8. The ability to describe the governing structures and operations of the United States, including the rights and responsibilities of its citizens.

Goal 9. The ability to apply critical thinking skills to assess arguments and solve problems.

The General Education required of all students at FMU is designed to give students an introduction to the broad areas of knowledge essential to a successful life and career. Included in the General Education program are the choices in the humanities, the social sciences, the laboratory sciences, and basic communications. Through this program, students begin to acquire an awareness of the diverse cultures of the past and present. They also develop communication, conceptualization, and analytical and critical thinking skills. These general education requirements provide the foundation for the student's declared major."

The courses in *Table 1* are identified as satisfying General Education Requirements on pg. 60 from the 2024-25 Catalog. Each of the 6 Areas of Student Knowledge (Communications, Social Sciences, Humanities, Humanities/Social Sciences Elective, Mathematics and Natural Sciences with Laboratories) are associated by Sub-Area, Course Name and Number, as well as general education requirements assessing one or multiple General Education Goal(s).

Table 1: Courses which Satisfy FMU's General Education Requirements

General Education Requirements				Addressing Goals	
Area	Sub-Area	Course Name	Course Number	Course	Goal(s)
1.) Communications	a.	English	ENGL 101 ENGL 102	ENGL 101 or ENGL 102	1
	b.	Speech Communication	SPCO 101	SPCO 101	1 2 7 9
	c.	Foreign Language	MOLA 100 FNCH 101 FNCH 102 SPAN 101 SPAN 102		
2.) Social Sciences	a.	Political Science	POLI 101 POLI 103	POLI 101 POLI 103	8
	b.	Anthropology	ANTH 100 to ANTH 498		
		Economics	ECON 203 to ECON 497		
		Geography	GEOG 101 to GEOG 355		
		Sociology	SOCI 201 to SOCI 403 SOCI 497 SOCI 498	SOCI 201	7 9
	c.	Anthropology	ANTH 100 to ANTH 498		
		Economics	ECON 203 to ECON 497		
		Geography	GEOG 101 to GEOG 355		
		Political Science	POLI 101 to POLI 497	POLI 295	9
		Sociology	SOCI 201 to SOCI 498	SOCI 201	7 9
		Honors	HNRS 250 to HNRS 259		

3.) Humanities	A	Literature	ENGL 250 to ENGL 310 ENGL 316 ENGL 326 to ENGL 497	ENGL 250 ENGL 250G ENGL 251 ENGL 252	1 2 3 7 9	
	b.	History	HIST 101 to HIST 220 HIST 300 to HIST 499	HIST (100 Level Courses)	1 6 7	
	c.	Art	ARTH 101			
		Music	MUSI 101			
		Theatre	THEA 101			
	d.	African & African American Studies	AAAS 200			
		Art	ART 101 to ART 499			
		Gender Studies	GNDR 200			
		History	HIST 101 to HIST 220 HIST 300 to HIST 499	HIST (100 Level Courses)	1 6 7	
		Literature	ENGL 250 to ENGL 310 ENGL 316 ENGL 326 to ENGL 497	ENGL 250 ENGL 250G ENGL 251 ENGL 252	1 2 3 7 9	
		Modern Languages	MOLA 100			
		Music	MUSI 100 to MUSI 499			
		Philosophy & Religious Studies	PRS 201 TO PRS 499			
		Theatre	THEA 101 to THEA 497			
		Honors	HNRS 260 to HNRS 269			

4.) Humanities/Social Science Elective	African & African American Studies	AAAS 200		
	Anthropology	ANTH 100 to ANTH 498		
	Art	ART 101 to ART 499		
	Economics	ECON 203 to ECON 497		
	Gender Studies	GNDR 200		
	Geography	GEOG 101 to GEOG 355		
	History	HIST 101 to HIST 499	HIST (100 Level Courses)	1 6 7
	Literature	ENGL 250 to ENGL 310 ENGL 316 ENGL 326 to ENGL 497	ENGL 250 ENGL 250G ENGL 251 ENGL 252	1 2 3 7 9
	Modern Languages	MOLA 100		
	Music	MUSI 100 to MUSI 499		
	Philosophy & Religious Studies	PRS 201 TO PRS 499		
	Political Science	POLI 101 to POLI 497		
	Psychology	PSYC 206 to PSYC 499		
	Sociology	SOCI 201 to SOCI 498	SOCI 201	7 9
Theatre	THEA 101 to THEA 497			
Honors	HNRS 250 to HNRS 279			
5.) Mathematics	Mathematics	MATH 111 MATH 121 to MATH 530	MATH 111	4

6.) Natural Sciences	a.	Biology	BIOL 102 to BIOL 415 BIOL 440 to BIOL 615	BIOL 103 BIOL 104	5
		Environmental Science	ENVR 101	ENVR 101	5
	b.	Chemistry	CHEM 111 to CHEM 204 CHEM 301 to CHEM 313	CHEM 111	4 5
		Physics	PHYS 200 to PHYS 202 PHYS 215 & PHYS 216 PHYS 312 & PHYS 314 PHYS 316 PHYS 416 & PHYS 417		
		Physical Science	PSCI 101 to PSCI 150	PSCI 101	1 5 9
	c.	Astronomy	ASTR 201 to ASTR 203		
		Biology	BIOL 102 to BIOL 415 BIOL 440 to BIOL 615	BIOL 103 BIOL 104	5
		Chemistry	CHEM 111 to CHEM 204 CHEM 301 to CHEM 313	CHEM 111	4 5
		Physics	PHYS 200 to PHYS 202 PHYS 215 & PHYS 216 PHYS 312 & PHYS 314 PHYS 316 PHYS 416 & PHYS 417		
		Physical Science	PSCI 101 to PSCI 150	PSCI 101	1 5 9
		Psychology	PSYC 206 PSYC 216		
		Honors	HNRS 280 to HNRS 289		

Note:

- B.S.N students may count Psychology 334 as a social science elective.
- Art Education students may count ARTH 221 as Humanities and Secondary Math Education students may count Math 315 as Humanities Elective.
- Credit toward graduation may not be earned in both Physical Science 101-102 and any chemistry course or any physics course.

Recommendation One: Recommend that each department/program identify goal(s) addressed by each general education course. If no goal is addressed, then it is not part of the General Education Requirements.

Phase I.B.

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Committee's Review of the Assessment Process:

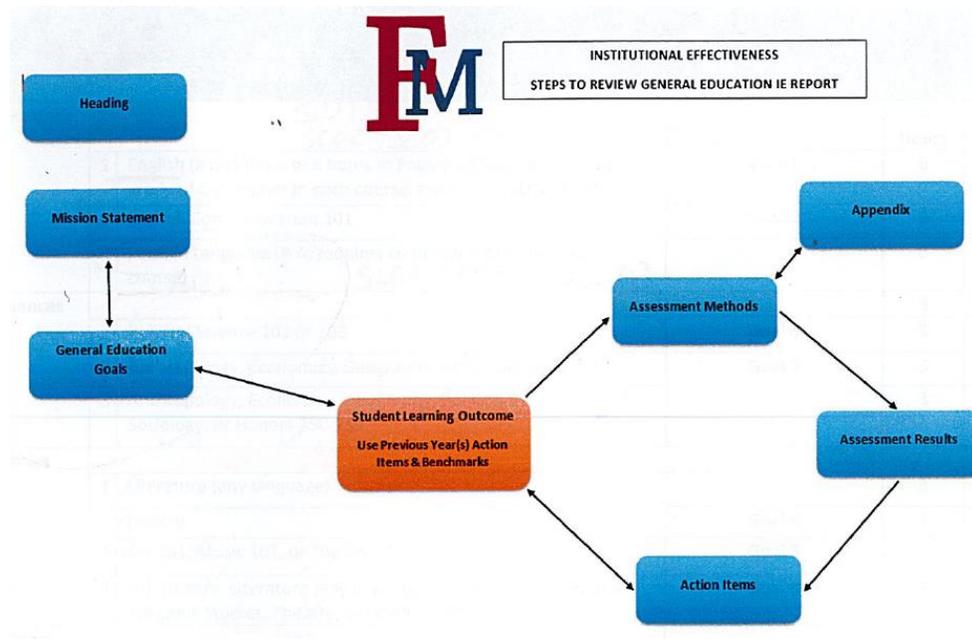
Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2024) states:

Core Requirement 8.2.b, “The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the area *b*. of student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student Outcomes: General Education).” Page 68.

The IE Committee discussed current practices to assist each Program/Department build a process for assessing General Education Goal(s)/Competency(ies) and develop a General Education IE Report. To support each program/department, the IE Committee:

- Has and will continue to provide individual meeting(s) for IE Preparers.
- Will provide Professional Development Workshop(s) for building General Education IE Reports for on-campus; off-campus; distance education and transfer students.
- Has developed a mapping (*see Map 1 below*) of a General Education IE Report, as well as a Quick Facts Sheets for standardized components (*see Table 2*) of a General Education IE Report with both direct and indirect assessments. The components of a General Education IE Report are i.) Heading, ii.) Mission Statement, iii.) General Education Goals, iv.) Student Learning Outcomes, v.) Methods, vi.) Results, and vii.) Action Items.

Map 1: Mapping of a General Education IE Report





Components & Quick Facts of a General Education IE Report
I.E. Office & I.E. Committee
Francis Marion University
Spring 2025



Table 2: Components & Quick Facts of a General Education IE Report

Components	Quick Facts
Heading	Year Name of Preparer(s)
Mission Statement	Limit to one short paragraph. Align with University’s Mission Statement/Strategic Plan.
General Education Goal(s)	Should include AT LEAST 1 GOAL related specifically to student learning. FMU has 9 General Education Goals. Align with Program/Department mission statement.
Student Learning Outcomes	Focus on the intended abilities, knowledge, values, and attitudes a student should demonstrate after having used certain services or having participated in an activity. What to assess? Student Learning Outcomes Knowledge Outcomes – Core of concepts and material knowledge Skills Outcomes – What a student can do? Attitudes and Values Outcomes – Those faculty believe to be important Behavioral Outcomes – Behaviors crucial to the course curriculum’s impact Selecting Measurable Outcomes – Use Bloom’s Taxonomy for Categorizing Learning Outcomes. Identify Student Learning Outcomes addressing General Education Goals (part or entire goal; or multiple goals). Align with General Education Goal(s).
Method	Restate each Student Learning Outcome. State the assessment method used to measure each Student Learning Outcome. State whether the method is Direct or Indirect Assessment . Direct Assessment – Evidence on Student Performance that demonstrates the learning itself. Indirect Assessment – Evidence how students feel about learning and their learning environment rather than actual demonstration of outcome achievement. State procedure or method used to assess each Student Learning Outcome. How and by whom are the findings analyzed in order to take possible action on the findings?

Components	Quick Facts
Method Continue	Identify <p>Baseline – (Past) Results from previous year(s). If no baseline report N/A. If there are multiple years of data, take the average to create a baseline.</p> <p>Benchmark – (Present) What result(s) you would like to accomplish in this academic year.</p> <p>Target – (Future) What result(s) you would like to accomplish in the future say 3 or 5 or 10 years.</p> <p>Align with Student Learning Outcomes.</p>
Assessment Results	Restate Student Learning Outcomes Discuss assessment results Discuss relationship of results to benchmark and target. Indicate if baseline, benchmark and target were achieved. State Number of students assessed per Student Learning Outcomes. Total number of students in the course(s). <p>Align with Method(s).</p>
Action Items	What surprised you about the data? What factors may explain the data? Are we reaching out to the right group? What can we do to improve performance? What barriers might exist? <p>Identify areas to monitor, remediated, or improved.</p> <p>NO vague action items/plans: (e.g. If benchmark is met, no action is needed).</p> <p>Align with results.</p>
Appendix	Insert tools used to assess Student Learning Outcomes

Recommendation Two: Recommend that the IE Committee continue to assist each Program/Department build a process for assessing General Education Goal(s) and to develop a General Education IE Report.

Phase I.C.

Institutional Effectiveness Committee’s Review and Discussion of a Common Assessment Language:

Francis Marion University’s Senior Exit Survey is an indirect assessment of the nine General Education Competencies/Goals. This tool assesses its collegiate-level general education competencies/goals of its undergraduate degree programs immediately after completion of a student’s academic career at Francis Marion University. The IE Committee reviewed the last 4 years of the Senior Exit Survey (*see figures 3 to 12 found in the General Education Report 2023-24*) of students’ perceptions of the 9 General Education Goals/Competencies.

The IE Committee determined that the 9 General Education Competencies will have a:

- **Baseline** of 86.1%, which is an average percentage of last year’s students’ positive perception of the nine goals (*See Figure 1 for the representation of 9 Goals & Figures 3 to 11 for the individual goals*).
- **Benchmark** 85.4%, which is an average percentage of the past 4 years of students’ positive perception of the nine goals (*see Figure 2*).
- **Target** of 88%, which is the average percentage of students’ positive perception of the nine goals. (Reached in the next 3 years).

Figure 1: Students’ Perception of Mastery of the General Education Competencies (2023-24)

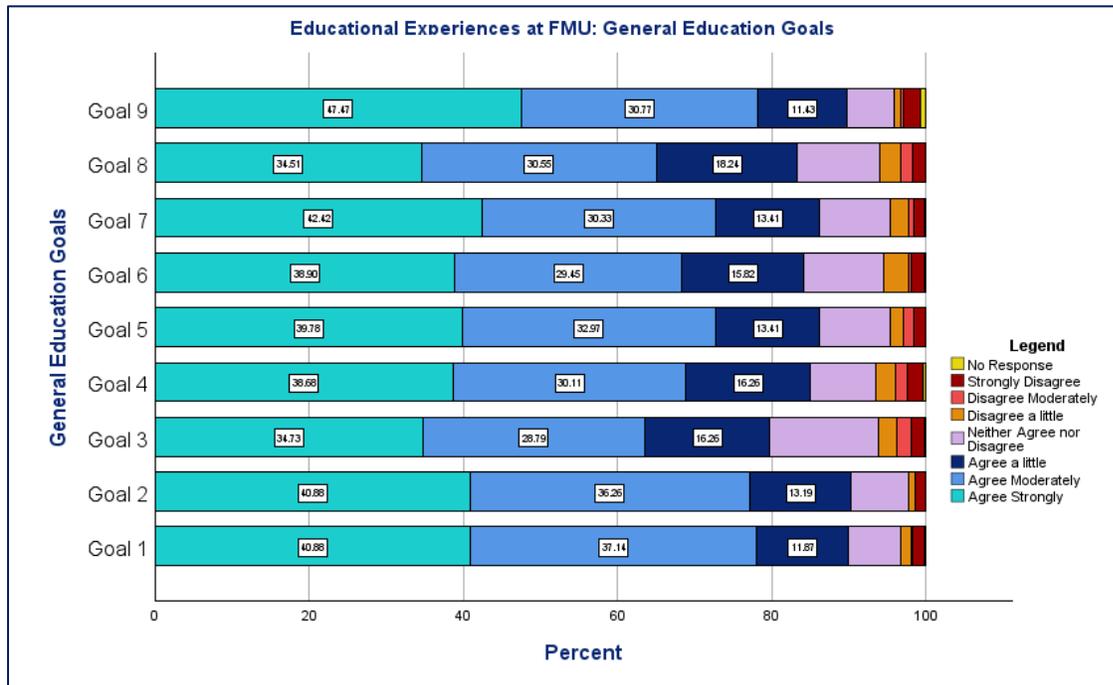


Figure 2 Students' Perception of the 9 Goals/Competencies (Average by Academic Year)

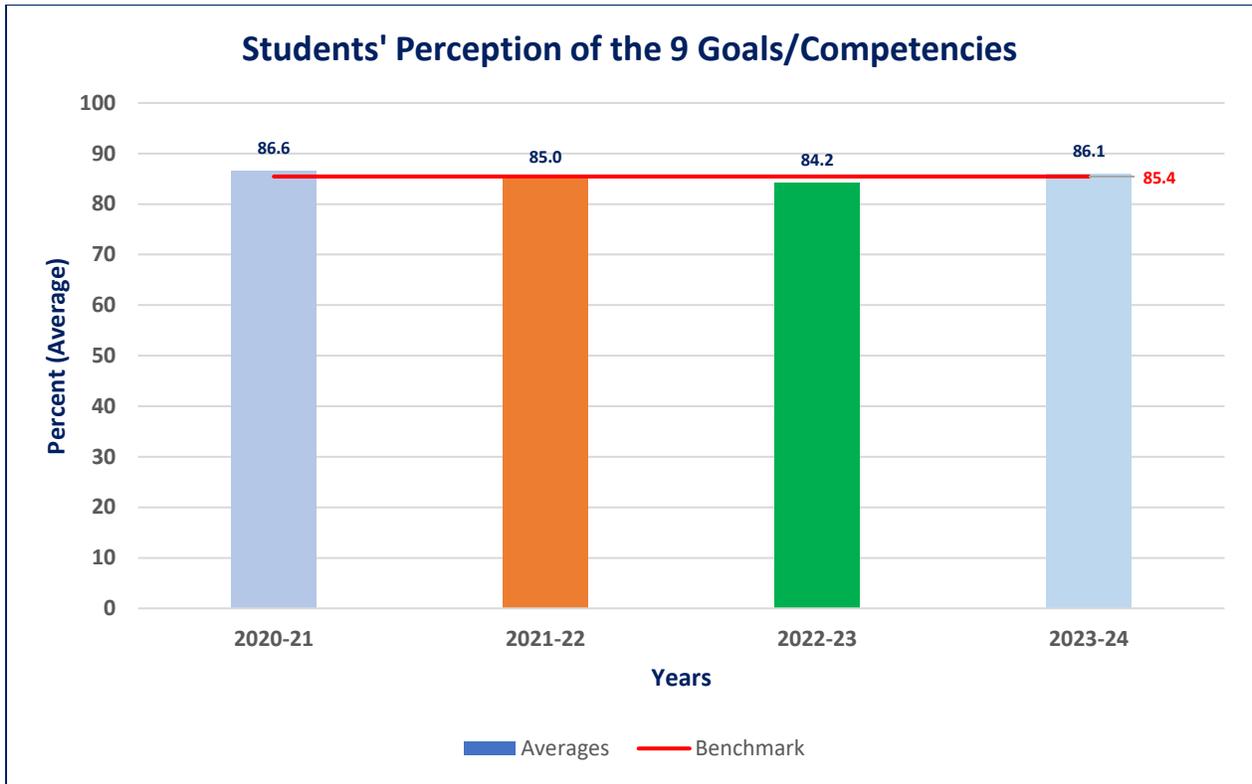


Figure 3: Goal 1

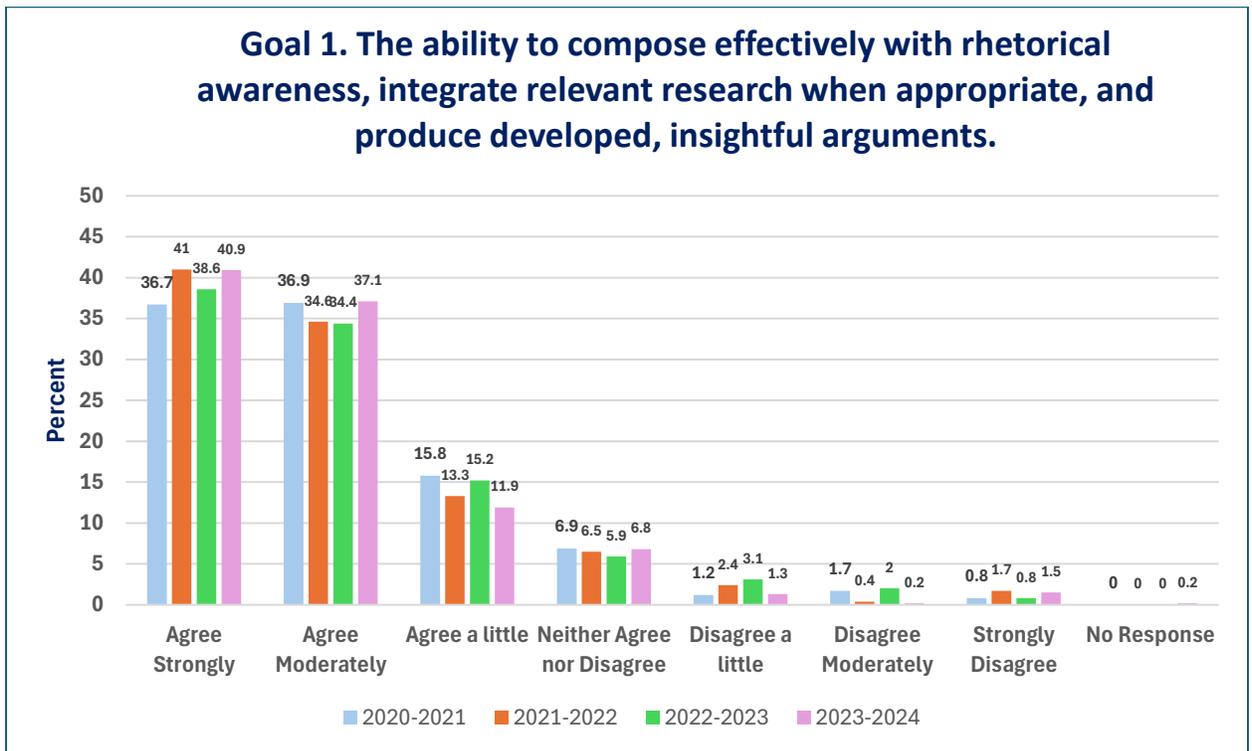


Figure 4: Goal 2

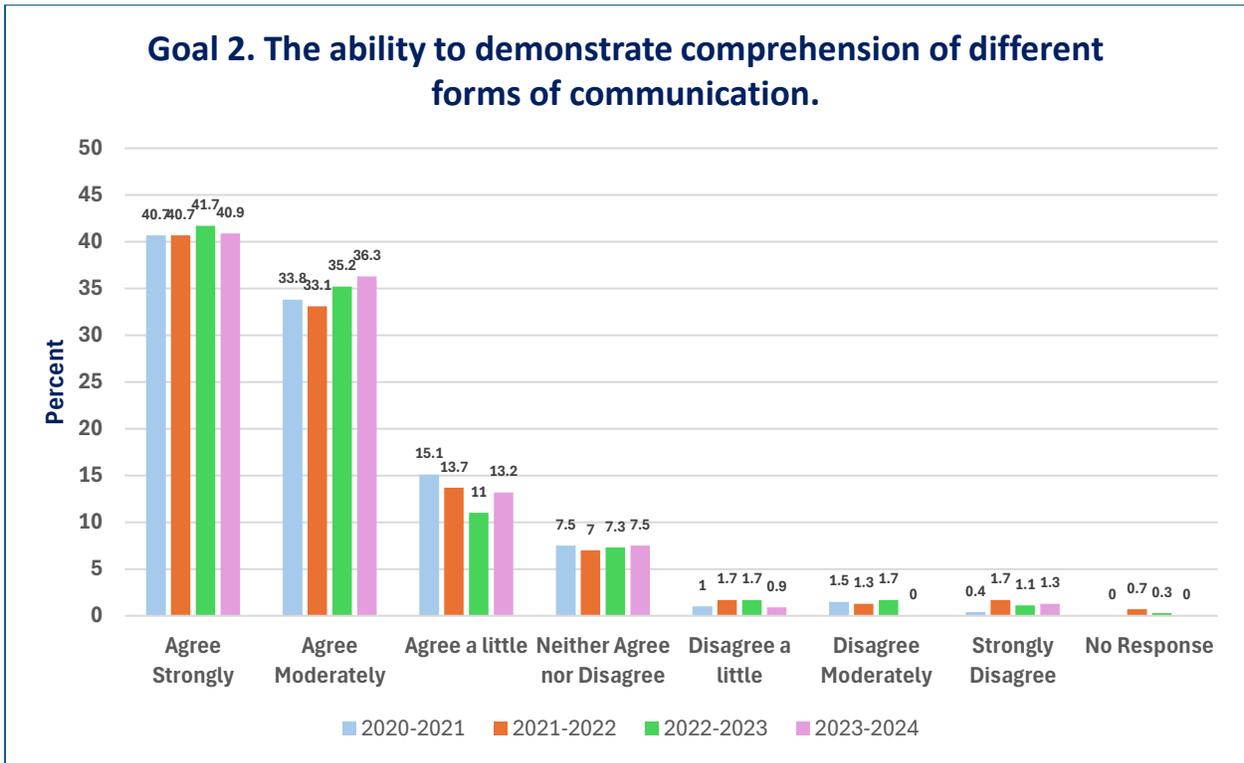


Figure 5: Goal 3

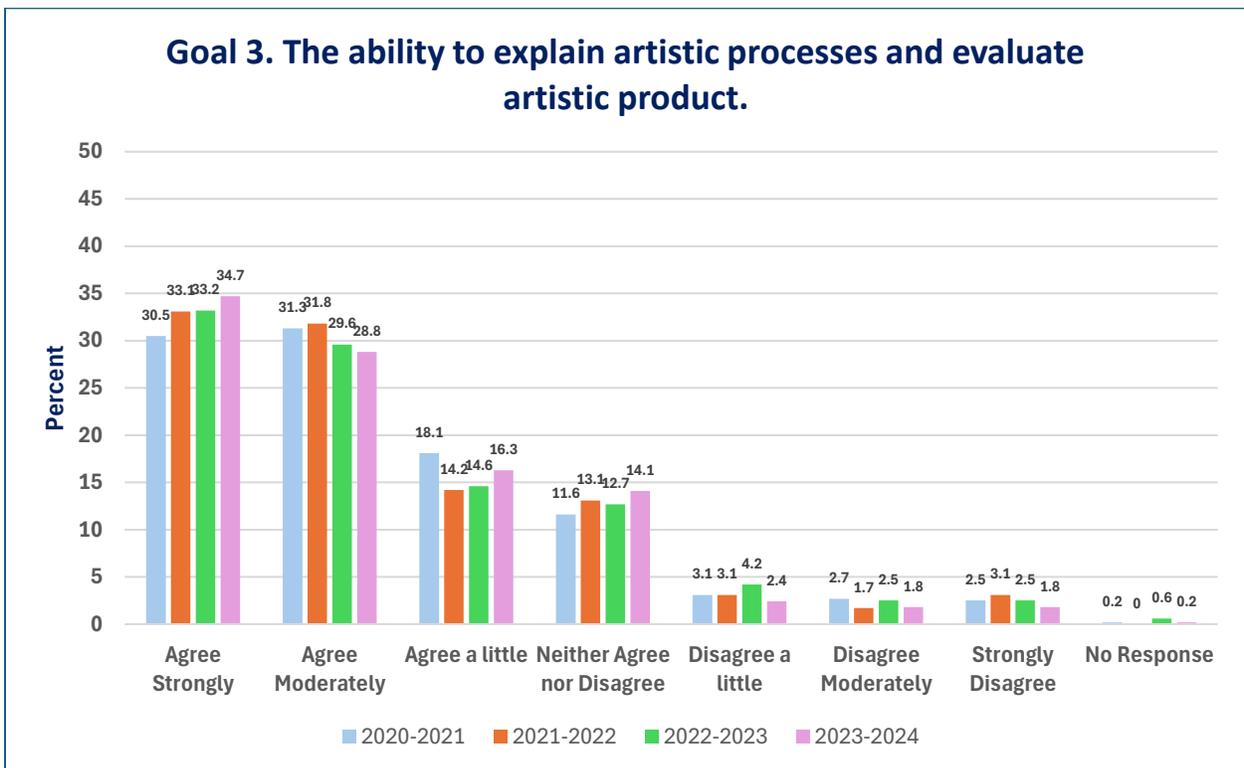


Figure 6: Goal 4

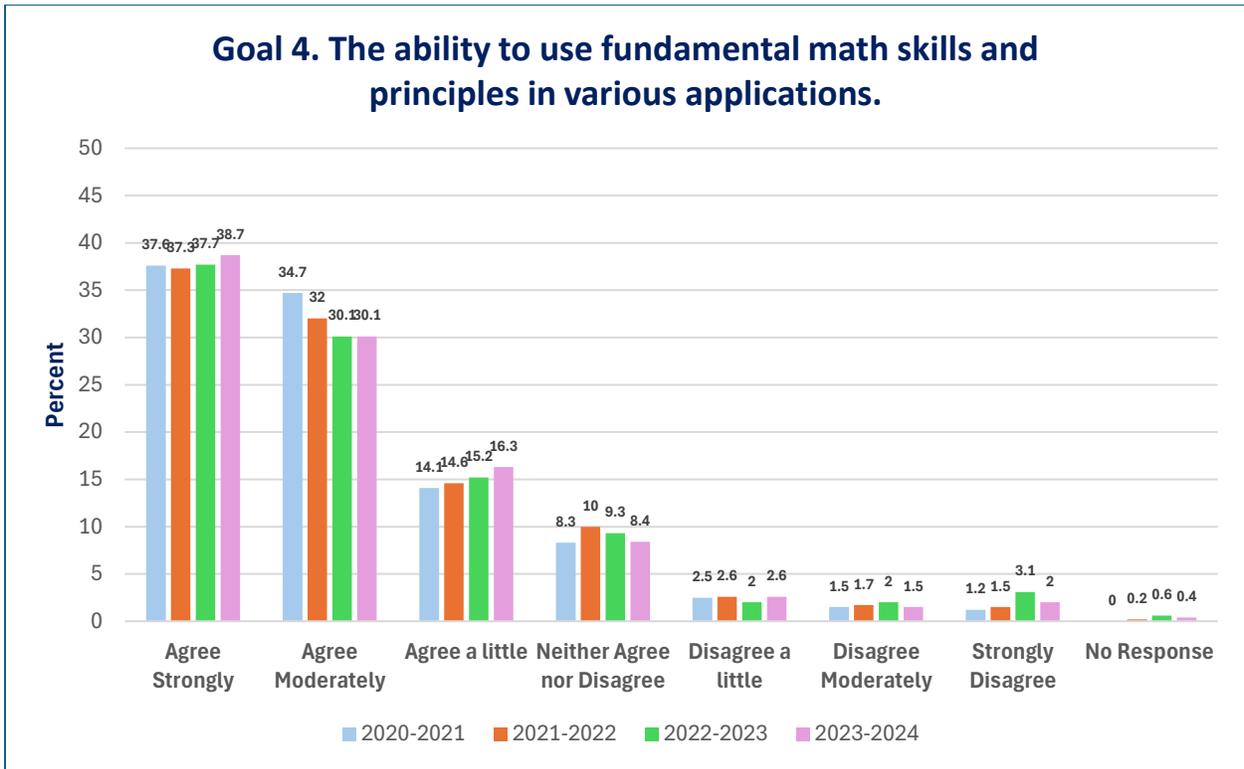


Figure 7: Goal 5

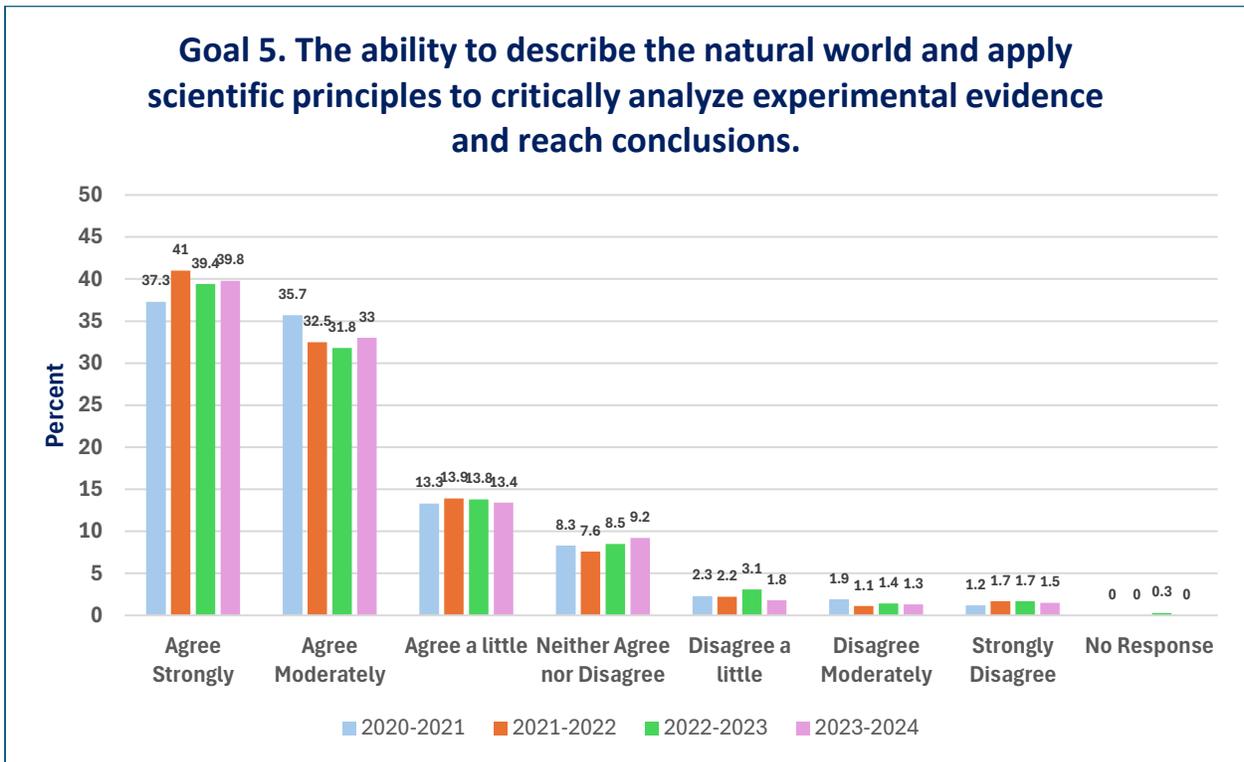


Figure 8: Goal 6

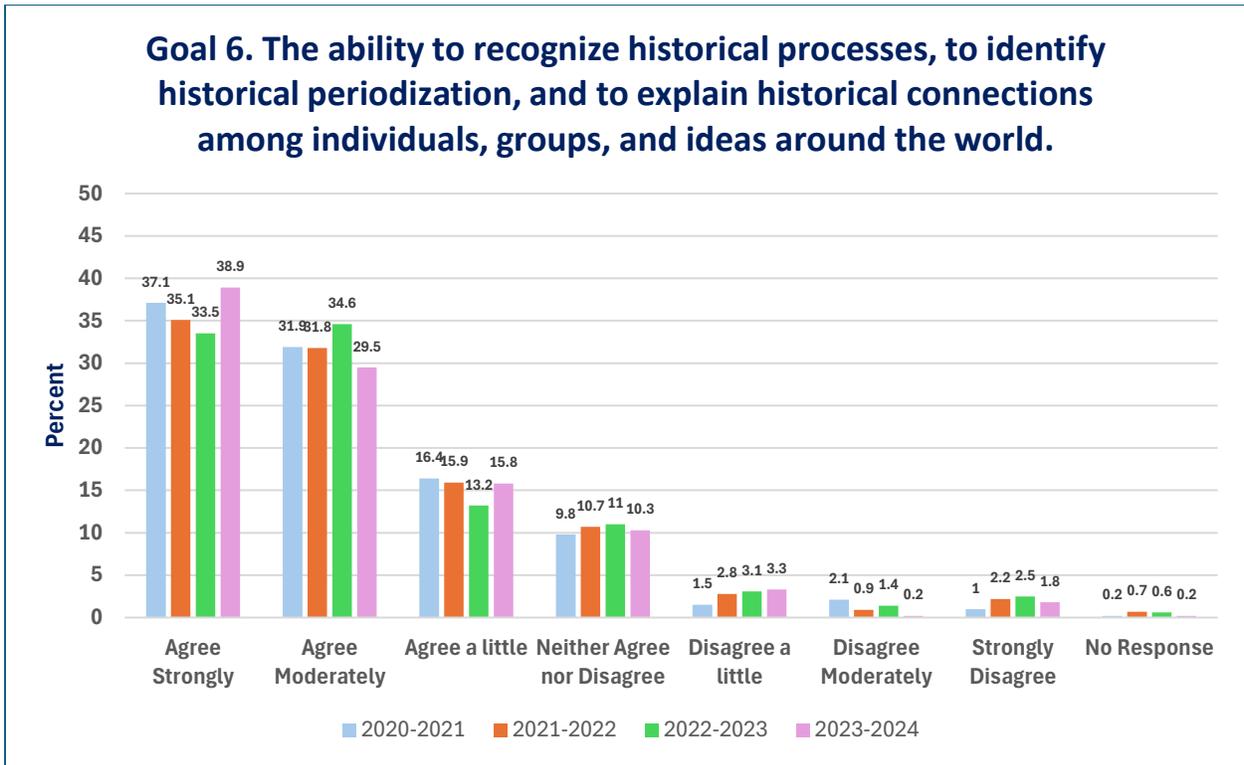


Figure 9: Goal 7

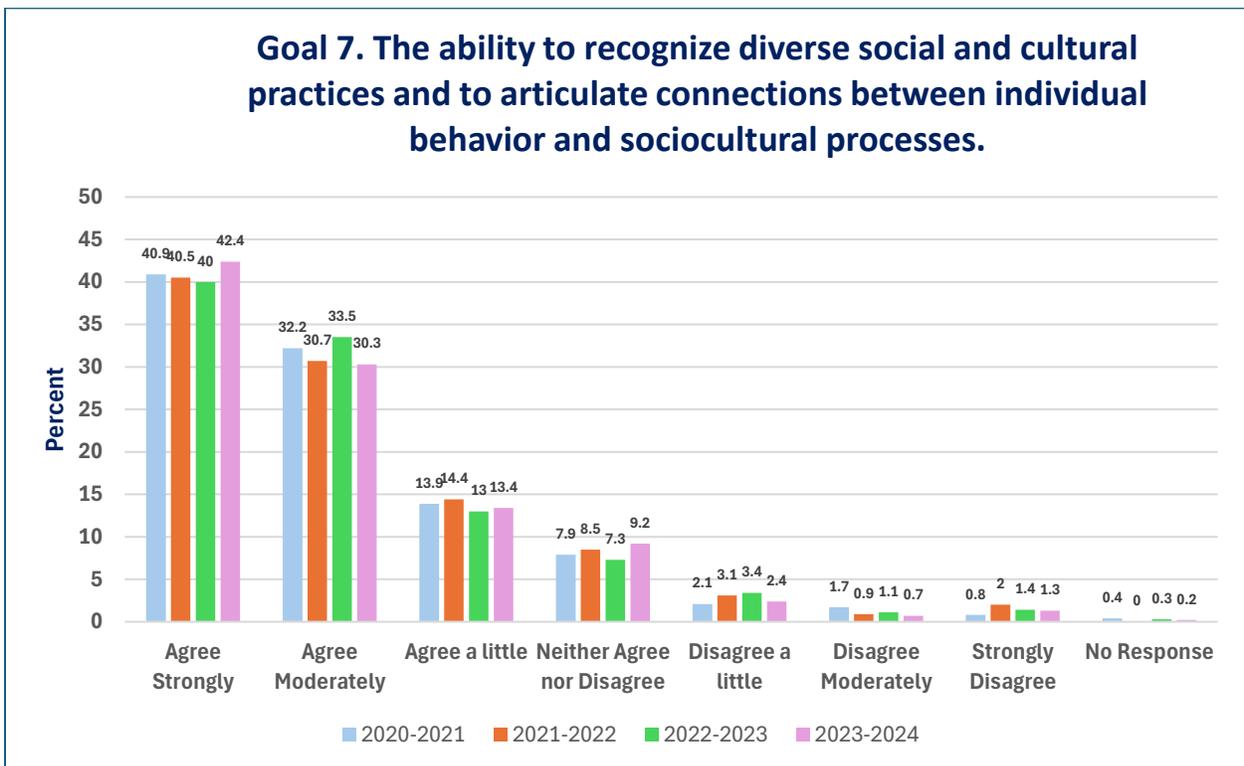


Figure 10: Goal 8

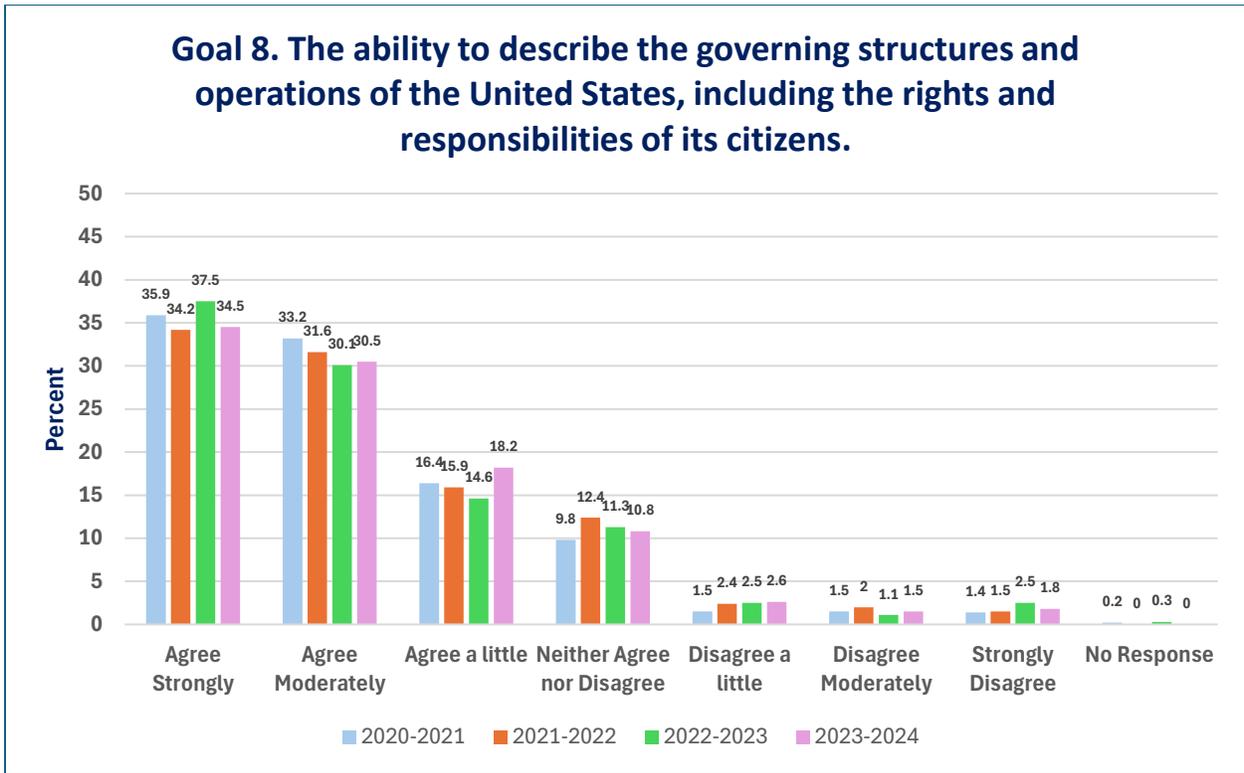
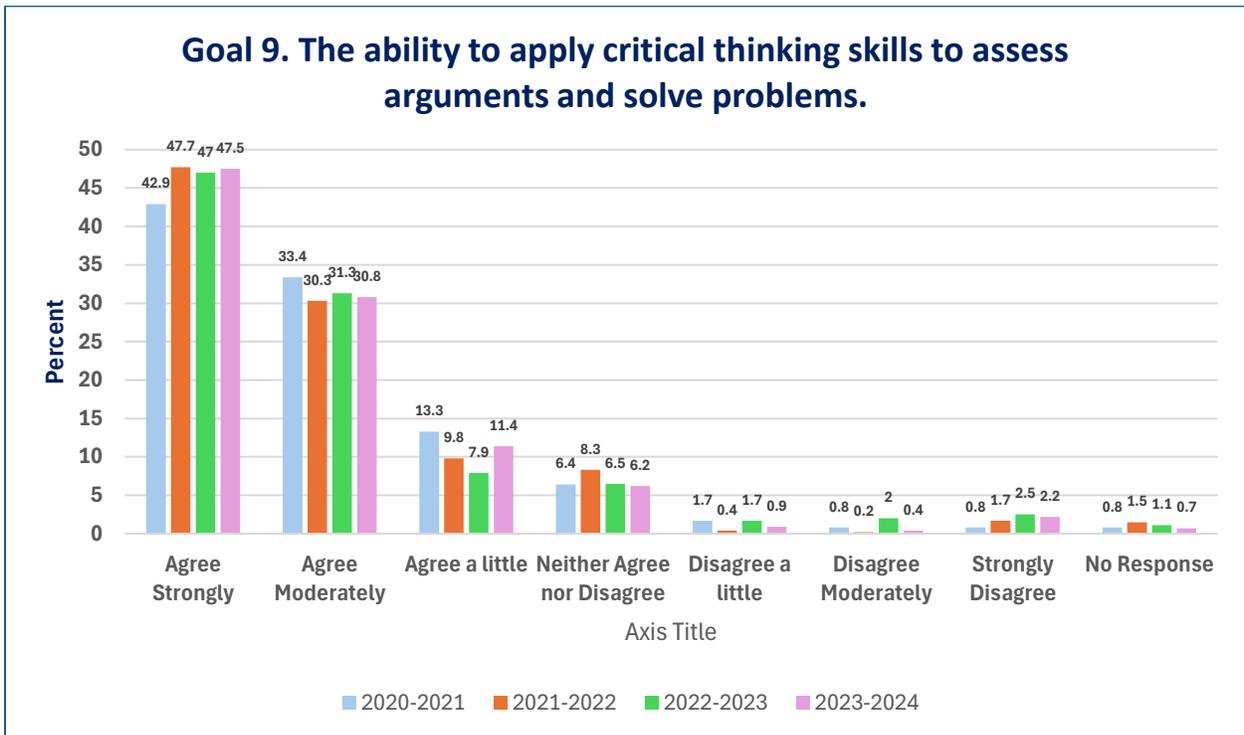


Figure 11: Goal 9



Recommendation Three: Recommend that the IE Committee review the last 4 years of the Senior Exit Survey data and determine Baseline, Benchmark and Target for the University's Nine Competencies.