



## **Blackboard Outcomes Learning Assessment Evaluation and Implementation**

### **LASS Committee Convened (2011 –2012)**

For about one-year during 2011 and 2012, a University committee held periodic meetings to discuss an enterprise-wide solution for learning assessment that also included company demonstrations. This was in response to faculty requests to simplify the process of sampling student work and analyze the results in order to assess achievement of student learning outcomes across programs (undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs as well as student services and in administrative units). This was also in response to the University's need to assess the Institutional Learning Outcomes being developed during this time and to help aggregate program data.

### **Product Selection (2012-2013)**

Jodi Servatius, Professor Emerita from Educational Leadership, and prior Dean of the College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS), joined the project in September 2012 to identify existing products to meet the needs for secondary review of artifacts for student learning outcomes that would integrate with the current learning management system and be cost effective. A subcommittee formed, and working with the purchasing department they developed a Request for Bids (RFB) from vendors. The bid was published in November 2012 allowing 6 weeks for respondents to reply using Bidsync – a government bidding system. The RFB was sent to approximately 12 companies who had products that potentially met the University's needs.

CSUEB received approximately 6-8 bids which significantly differentiated in price ranging from \$50,000 to \$600,000. The vendors were narrowed down to the three that best matched the criteria of: 1) cost effectiveness, 2) ease of integration, and 3) utility.

The subcommittee conducted video conference calls with the three vendors to help review and evaluate their proposals in more depth. After the review, the committee recommended Blackboard Outcomes in January 2013 which was approved by University leadership for adoption. The relevant University departments worked together with the requirement specifications, bidding process, and implementation. These included Information Technology (IT), which formulated specifications, and Purchasing, which helped with the bidding process.

### **Blackboard Outcomes Implementation (Summer 2013)**

Ian Gordon from Blackboard was assigned as the consultant to CSUEB. He conducted on-site meetings in June and October of 2013. The meeting in June included an overview of Blackboard Outcomes for University Colleges. Ian also met with three program areas - General Education (GE), CEAS, and the College of Business (CBE) – who volunteered as pilots.

### **Pilot Program Planning (Summer 2013)**

In the summer of 2013, GE, CEAS, and CBE established program goals and timelines to collect artifacts and deploy surveys for the fall 2013, winter 2014, and spring 2014 quarters.

*Project 1: GE/ ILO Critical Thinking Assessment Project*

Susan Opp, Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies, developed and distributed a funded opportunity for CSUEB faculty to participate in a year-long cross-disciplinary project. This GE/Institutional Learning Outcomes pilot invited University-wide tenure track and lecture faculty who taught upper division general education courses and/or upper division courses in the major which contained a critical thinking learning outcome to work collaboratively on the assessment of student learning outcomes for critical thinking through spring 2014. In July of 2013, 20 tenure track and adjunct faculty representing all University colleges were accepted into the project.

During this time, Julie Stein, an Instructional Design Specialist, was brought on board for project work related to the Critical Thinking Assessment Project (CTAP) and assessment of other Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) and Blackboard (Bb) Outcomes projects planned for the academic year. Julie's 25 years in both corporate learning and educational teaching environments with a focus on effective curriculum design and outcomes assessment made her a good match for the needs of the University and the projects.

Also during this time, a CTAP support group formed that included Donna Wiley, Senior Director of Graduate Studies and Academic Programs, Sally Murphy, Senior Director of Undergraduate Studies and General Education, Jodi Servatius, project consultant, Tamra Donnelly, Academic Programs and Accreditation Specialist, and Jennifer Eagan, Professor of Philosophy and a CTAP project member. The team met and communicated over time to plan for the faculty training, establish parameters based on the needs and resources of the University, and identify methods to best support faculty during the project.

On August 6, 2013, CTAP faculty and support team met for a one-day workshop to review project objectives (see Exhibit 1), get an overview of how the project fit into the mission and objectives for the University and their programs, receive an overview of the critical thinking competency, receive training on rubrics development, norm on the critical thinking competency using upper division critical thinking artifacts, begin the development of a shared critical thinking (CT) rubric, and receive tools for designing effective assignments.

*Project #2: College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS)*

CEAS established the goal for secondary scoring of program learning outcomes (PLOs) by assessing signature assignments using rubrics in Kinesiology (KIN), and Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism (HRT) courses. Their second goal was to conduct and analyze graduate student exit surveys.

*Project #3: College of Business and Economics (CBE)*

CBE established an initial goal for secondary scoring of PLOs by assessing assignments using an ethics rubric in an MBA course.

**Pilot Projects Launch (Summer - Fall 2013)**

The Blackboard Outcomes support team began meeting bi-monthly to review and trouble-shoot technical and other issues related to Blackboard Outcomes projects.

*Project 1: GE/ILO Critical Thinking Assessment Project*

The development of the shared critical thinking rubric went through a number of steps:

Step 1: Faculty workshop on August 6, 2013. First, project faculty received training on rubrics development and an overview of the critical thinking competency from a Philosophy professor. Next, using the AAC&U VALUE Critical Thinking rubric as a starting point as well as other relevant critical thinking rubrics, faculty worked in small groups developing a CSU East Bay critical thinking rubric. (A make-up workshop was conducted on September 12 for faculty who were unavailable on August 6.) The end-of-workshop evaluations from faculty indicated they found the overview of the critical thinking competency by one of their peers and the norming sessions especially helpful (*see Exhibit 2*).

Step 2: Faculty input on Wiki: A shared space was created in the Blackboard “Organization” feature for project faculty, the CTAP support team, and relevant IT and Faculty Support Services to communicate, share project information, access resources for assignment design, and to collaborate. Using a shared space in the Wiki portion of the online organization, the work on the critical thinking rubric that faculty completed on August 6 was placed in this Wiki and faculty continued their collaboration on the rubric for several weeks - the results of which were equivalent to eight pages in length (*see Exhibit 3*).

CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric 10/5/13				
Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion, <del>or</del> conclusion or alternative creative vision.				Jeff
Criteria	4	3	2	Do we interpret this column as a slight improvement over Missing? Or does this column include that category?1
<p><b>Explanation of issues</b></p> <p>1. Clearly, concisely, logically, and succinctly explains issues/problem(s) for full understanding of topic.</p> <p>and briefly describes thesis and steps to prove it.</p>	<p>Issue/problem(s) to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding.</p> <p>Logically ties points together by posing relevant and creative statements or questions about them.</p>	<p>Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated, described, and adequately clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omission of all relevant background information.</p> <p>Questions or statements are clearly formulated and relevant.</p>	<p>Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated, but description lacks clarity and is poorly defined. Background information is irrelevant or omitted. Relevance and clarity of statements or questions is uneven.</p>	<p>Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated illogically, without clarification or description. Background information is omitted. No attempt to form clear or relevant questions or statements.</p>

Page 1 of Faculty Collaboration of Critical Thinking through Wiki on Blackboard

**Step 3:** The rubric was consequently condensed by the CTAP support team accounting for all input by synthesizing common themes and by creating an accompanying framing document for clarifications about the rubric (*see Exhibit 4*).

**Critical Thinking Assessment Project**  
**Rubric Fall 2013**

Description: Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.				
	4	3	2	1
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issues are stated clearly providing all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issues are stated providing sufficiently relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issues are stated providing some relevant information necessary for understanding.	Issues are not clearly stated.
<b>Quality of Evidence</b>	Provides information from appropriate source(s) to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Provides information from appropriate source(s) for an adequate analysis or synthesis.	Provides little information from appropriate source(s) for analysis or synthesis.	Lacks information from appropriate source(s) for analysis or synthesis.
<b>Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints</b>	Thoroughly analyzes strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' assumptions; carefully evaluates context and alternative viewpoints.	Analyzes strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' assumptions; evaluates context and alternative viewpoints.	Minimally analyzes strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' assumptions; minimally evaluates context and alternative viewpoints.	Fails to analyze strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' assumptions; does not evaluate context and alternative viewpoints.
<b>Statement of position</b>	Clearly states position.	States position.	Position unclear.	Position not stated.
<b>Conclusions, implications, and consequences</b>	Conclusions, implications, and consequences flow from student's analysis.	Conclusions, implications, and consequences generally flow from student's analysis.	Conclusions, implications, and consequences minimally flow from student's analysis.	Conclusions, implications, and consequences do not flow from student's analysis.

### Final Critical Thinking Rubric used in Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 Assessment

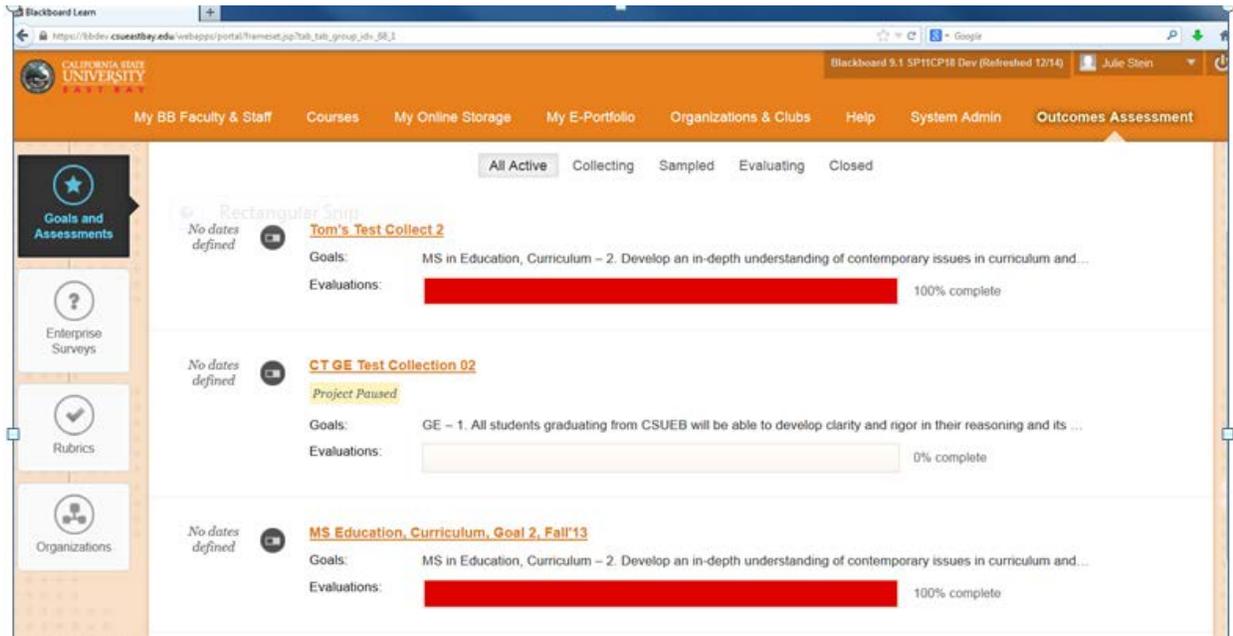
**Step 4:** Faculty received training and support on downloading the rubric, setting up the assignment, and aligning the assignment to the institutional, General Education (GE) and PLOs as appropriate. The training to faculty on the use of Blackboard Outcomes was provided based on faculty preferences in a variety of formats including small workshops, videos, documentation (*see Exhibit 5*), one-on-one assistance, and phone support.

Faculty also received additional online and paper-based support materials on designing high quality assignment instructions including well written prompts to help elicit student responses directed at the rubric criteria and the level of performance assignment (*see Exhibit 6*). CTAP faculty also placed their critical thinking related assignments in the shared Blackboard site to share ideas with other faculty to build stronger assignments and increased accountability for their work.

An update meeting was conducted on November 8, 2013 to help CTAP faculty understand how the University Blackboard Outcomes projects related to each other, review progress on the CTAP objectives and project deliverables for Fall 2013, Winter, and Spring 2014, review Bb Outcomes and identify how to

align course assignment to the CT ILO, share key course assignment(s) that elicited critical thinking, and articulate how the CT Assessment support team could help faculty in winter quarter (*see Exhibit 7*).

During this time, the CTAP support team, the CEAS pilot team, and the Blackboard Faculty Support group ran a number of tests in Blackboard Outcomes related to the artifact collection and evaluation process to ensure that the system worked smoothly and that training and instructions were complete and accurate.



### **Example of Tests of Artifact Collection and Evaluation Process in Blackboard Outcomes**

*Project #2: College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS)*

CEAS participated in project support meetings, department overview meetings, and planning for conducting pilot collections and surveys.

*Project #3: College of Business and Economics (CBE)*

CBE maintained contact with the CTAP project team during the fall quarter.

### **Pilot Projects Continue and New Projects Launch (Winter 2014)**

*Project 1: GE/ILO Critical Thinking Assessment Project*

Using best practices for assessment and some guidance from Blackboard consultants, the critical thinking support team established a number of assessment parameters for the project.

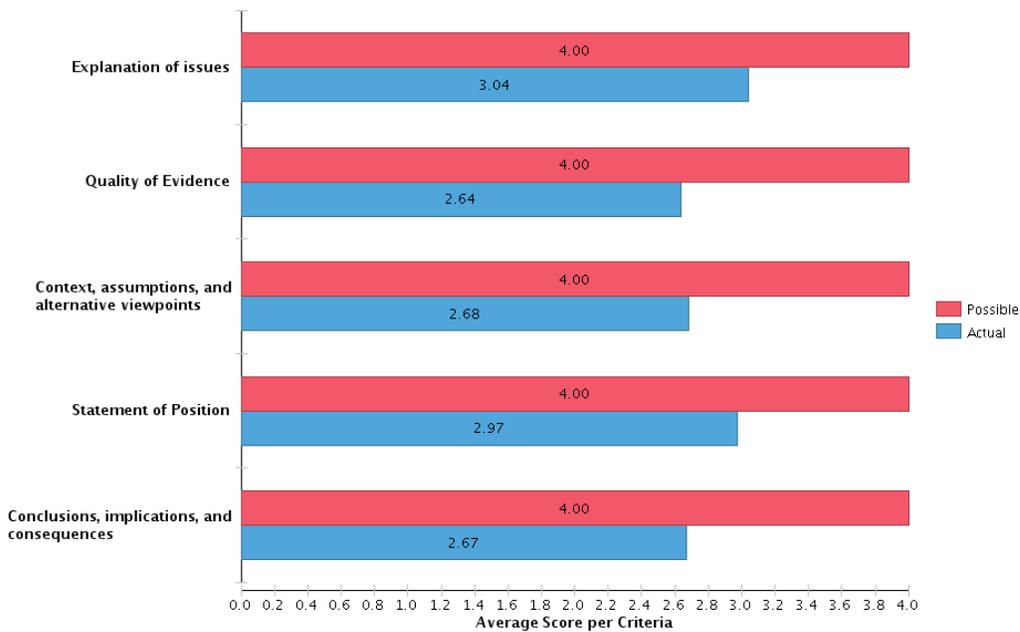
The GE Subcommittee was identified as the appropriate University group to assess the artifacts for critical thinking upper division GE assignments, and the ILO Subcommittee was identified as the group to assess the assignments from upper division courses with a critical thinking PLO.

The GE Subcommittee was the first group to meet. The committee members underwent two norming sessions evaluating a range of papers in the collection, and led by an experienced assessor in the English department. The committee then worked together in a computer lab with technical and project support assessing 27 artifacts from 5 courses. Because this was the first assessment, each artifact was evaluated 3

times for a total of 81 assessments and the GE Subcommittee members tracked their feedback on the evaluation process using a tracking form (*see Exhibit 8*).

**Rubric Analysis**

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)



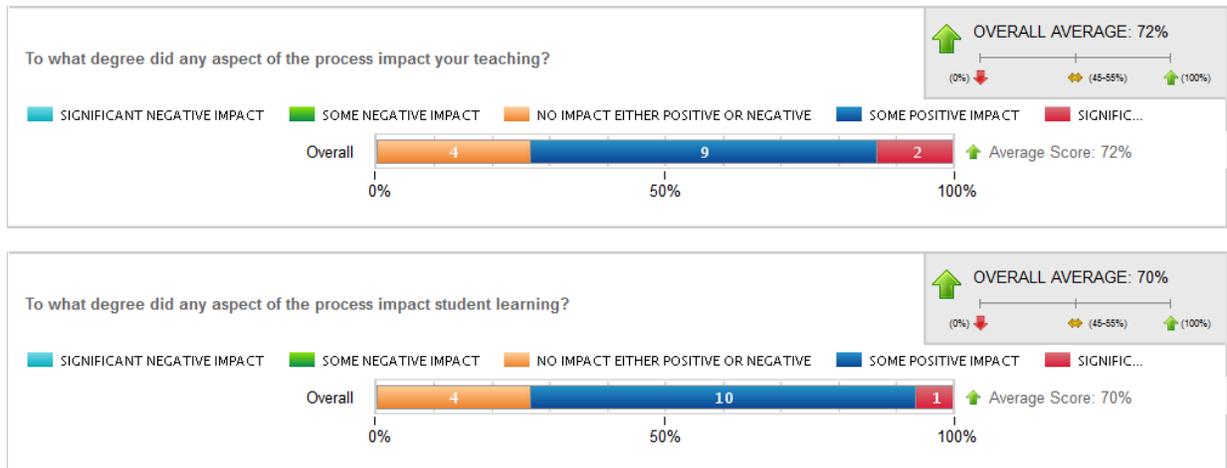
**GE Critical Thinking Assessment Results From 27 Artifacts in 5 Upper Division GE Courses**

The ILO Subcommittee conducted a norming session led by Sarah Nielsen, Associate Professor in English, prior to their evaluation process which was also completed together in a computer lab. They completed 128 evaluations – assessing 64 artifacts from 14 courses – each twice.

To obtain initial feedback from the fall 2013 project to fine-tune winter and spring assessment, CTAP faculty were surveyed on their experience with the project using the Enterprise Survey tool in Blackboard Outcomes. 11 survey questions were asked including perceptions about the level of difficulty with the Blackboard Outcomes process, the impact on teaching and learning, and their suggestions to improve the process.

A meeting was conducted with CTAP Faculty on February 28, 2014 at which participants evaluated faculty feedback from the Critical Thinking Assessment Project Faculty survey, reviewed the fall 2013 upper division GE assignment assessment results and discussed implications, discussed ILO subcommittee plans for review of non-GE assessment, discussed how results could be used for closing the loop, and reviewed their spring 2014 deliverables (*see Exhibit 9*).

Highlights from the meeting included the feedback from faculty about the process which was primarily positive including the impact on student learning. The meeting discussion included mixed feedback on whether one common critical thinking rubric could fit all of the cross-disciplinary assignments given the subtle (or not so subtle) differences in the critical thinking criteria for the range of discipline requirements.



**CTAP faculty Survey Results: Over 70% Positive Impact on Teaching and Learning with use of rubric**

*Project #2: College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS)*

CEAS conducted three pilot projects for: 1) Hospitality Recreation and Tourism (HRT), 2) Kinesiology, and 3) Education.

Two Blackboard Outcomes PLO pilots were completed by the Hospitality Recreation and Tourism (HRT) Department. The first pilot used two sections of REC 3000, Philosophy of Leisure, taught in the 2013 fall term. The second pilot involved two sections of HOS 4540, Fiscal Leadership for Operational Managers, which was taught in the 2014 winter term. The second Outcomes PLO pilot project was performed by the Kinesiology (KIN) Department using a section of KIN 3740, Philosophical Foundations of Kinesiology, taught in the 2014 winter quarter. For the third project, the CEAS Accreditation Team used the new Blackboard Outcomes Enterprise Survey system to conduct exit surveys with 500 completers of 12 programs in the Teacher Education program about the attitudes on the quality and effectiveness of their training at CSU East Bay.

*Project #3: College of Business and Economics (CBE)*

After a reassessment of their goals, CBE revised their pilot to be an assessment of the MGMT 4650 capstone course (including all course sections) to be launched in spring 2014 using the critical thinking rubric.

*Project #4: Diversity and Social Justice (DSJ) Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and*

*Project #5: Written Communication (WC) ILOs*

Two interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) formed in the winter 2014 quarter for the assessment of two Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)- Diversity and Social Justice and Written Communication. Within both of the FLCs, the goal was to collaborate in the development of an ILO rubric and assess student work for the presence of these competencies. Each FLC was led by two Faculty in Residence (FIRs) - instead of the customary one - to strengthen the support (*see Exhibit 10*).

The outcomes for these FLCs were to:

- Develop a shared rubric to assess student work within a course
- Use the assessment process to inform preparation of their program's CAPR annual report and/or 5-year program review
- Provide feedback on how the process can be improved for future assessments of other ILOs

- Share materials they have developed broadly with CSUEB faculty including a variety of sample assignments and pedagogical approaches that apply across disciplines
- Use what has been learned from the process in scholarly writing about students' development of understandings within their discipline
- Report on FLC work at the Northern California Spring Symposium held at CSUEB on April 18, 2014

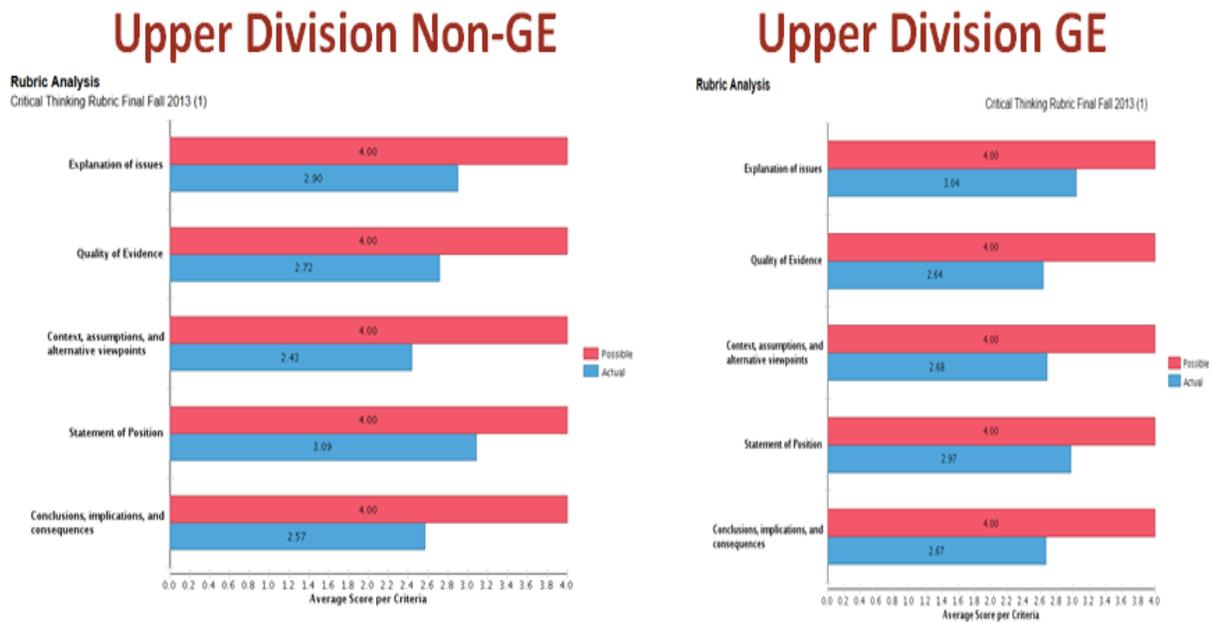
The FLCs and FIRs received ongoing project support from members of Academic Programs and Graduate Studies (APGS) and Faculty Support Services attending their FLC meetings and providing relevant materials for rubric development such as the AAC&U VALUE rubrics. The FLCs completed draft rubrics during the winter quarter.

## Spring 2014

### *Project 1: GE/ILO Critical Thinking Assessment Project*

The GE subcommittee used the attached final report to analyze the results of the committee artifact evaluations that had been aligned in the winter quarter (*see Exhibit 11*).

The ILO Subcommittee completed the evaluations and analyzed the results including the comparison of non-GE to GE assessment results (*see Exhibit 12*).



Project faculty completed reflections on their participation in the project that outlined what was gained that helped them close the loop for their program's annual CAPR report, what was gained that helped with the assessment of student learning as well as other educational processes, and identified specific changes they recommended to the critical thinking rubric. Included in a project wrap-up email from Donna Wiley was a summary of their responses including sample quotes (*see Exhibit 13*).

*“During the course of the critical thinking rubric project, the quality of work submitted by the students was much higher than in quarters past. I also feel that the rubric helped me to grade the*

*papers more consistently and helped me to hold the students to a higher standard, which helps them to reach higher levels of achievement in their future courses.”*

College of Business Management Faculty, Critical Thinking Assessment Project

Along with other CSU East Bay and CSU faculty, project faculty attended the Spring Symposium on the Assessment of Core Competencies, where *Closing the Loop on Assessment of Critical Thinking: CSUEB ILO Assessment Team Process and Findings* was followed by break-out sessions with faculty (see *Exhibit 14*).

Hard copies of letters of appreciation were mailed by Donna Wiley, Senior Director of Graduate Studies and Academic Programs to each faculty participating in the project outlining the value of their contribution. Copies were sent to the provost and the appropriate dean and chair (see *Exhibit 15*).

#### Presentation at WASC Academic Resource Conference

On April 24, at the WASC Academic Resource Conference in Los Angeles, Tamra Donnelly, Academic Programs & Accreditation Specialist, Sarah Nielsen, Department of English, and Julie Stein, Instructional Design Specialist co-presented *Engaging Faculty in Developing and Applying a Campus-Wide Rubric for Assessing Critical Thinking*. The steps were presented that were involved in successfully developing an institution-wide rubric to assess critical thinking – an ILO at CSU East Bay, as well as a WSCUC core competency. Those steps included engaging faculty, drafting a rubric, creating support for faculty, maintaining faculty engagement and effort as the draft was tested and refined, and leveraging existing norms, systems, and processes. (see *Exhibit 16*). The presentation was well attended and well received and included a campus self-evaluation tool to help other institutions leverage their strengths implementing assessment (see *Exhibit 17*).

#### *Project #2: College of Education and Allied Studies (CEAS)*

CEAS completed the three pilot projects for: 1) Hospitality Recreation and Tourism (HRT), 2) Kinesiology, and 3) Education.

#### *Project #3: College of Business and Economics (CBE)*

The College of Business and Economics completed the pilot assessment of three sections of MGMT 4650 and one section of MGMT 4500 using the critical thinking rubric developed by the University. This included information sharing with participating faculty and completing a norming session for the evaluators.

#### *Project #4: Diversity and Social Justice (DSJ) Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)*

##### *Project #5: Written Communication (WC) ILOs*

Rubrics drafts were finalized for Diversity and Social Justice and Written Communication. FLC members presented their process and results at the Spring Symposium on Assessment of Core Competencies.

#### *Project #6: Health Sciences (New Implementation Project)*

Lead by Jason Smith, Assistant Professor in Health Sciences and PI for the project, Health Sciences assessed the PLO for knowledge integration and synthesis and the ILO for thinking and reasoning in these courses: HSC 2200, HSC 3300, HSC 3350, HSC 3550, and HSC 4550 using Blackboard Outcomes during Spring 2014. The department received training and guidance from the Blackboard Outcomes support team. At the request of Health Sciences who wished to pursue scholarly work as a result of the project, an application was submitted to the campus Institutional Review Board, which approved the request (see *Exhibit 18*).

*Project #7 College of Business and Economics (CBE) Critical Thinking Faculty Survey*

As a consequence of participating in the Critical Thinking Assessment project, Jeff Newcomb, faculty in Marketing & Entrepreneurship, developed a critical thinking survey for CBE faculty and students to examine the methods used to assess critical thinking in business. The survey was targeted to be distributed in late spring 2014 or early fall.

*Transition from Pilot to Implementation*

A number of activities were initiated to support the transition to a larger-scale implementation of Blackboard Outcomes. This included:

- Longer term strategic planning for Phase 1 Implementation for 2014-15 academic year, and the design of an organizational structure for ongoing leadership, coordination, and support for assessment.
- Work with Academic Senate and Faculty Development to develop long term assessment related policies, processes, and faculty development.
- The development of a University communication plan.
- The development of the *Faculty Guide for Implementing Blackboard Outcomes for Learning Assessment*.
- The extension of the contract with Blackboard for completion of promised scope of services.
- Work with the College of Science (CoS) and the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (CLASS) to identify all programs who wish to utilize Blackboard Outcomes as a tool in their program assessment process and help them implement its use.