

## Assessing the Core Competencies: Critical Thinking Assessment Project Overview

### Project Objectives

Participating faculty who are teaching upper-division general education courses and/or upper-division courses in the major which contain a critical thinking learning outcome will work collaboratively on the assessment of student learning outcomes for critical thinking. Faculty will:

- As a group, develop an institution-wide critical thinking rubric to assess students' attainment of critical thinking (see CSUEB ILOs)
- Refine (or develop) a course assignment that demonstrates students' critical thinking capacities
- Using the common critical thinking rubric, participate in sessions to norm and assess assignments
- Adopt a group rubric that can be applied to assignments in their class
- With instruction provided, set up chosen assignment in the Assignments feature of Blackboard
- Participate in course, program-level, and campus-wide discussions (project meetings, department meetings, symposium) to review results, draw conclusions, and develop recommendations for curriculum redesign and/or instructional program improvements
- Be able to use this assessment process to inform the preparation of program's CAPR annual report (and/or five year report)
- Provide feedback on how project process worked and the usefulness of using a common rubric (process to be used in future years, when additional ILOs will be assessed)

### Faculty

David Baggins, CLASS, Political Science  
Mary Anne Brady, CBE, Management  
Lonny Brooks, CLASS, Communication  
Lynn Comerford, CLASS, Human Development  
Patricia Drew, CLASS, Human Development  
Jennifer Eagan, CLASS, Philosophy  
Cyndi Eppler, CEAS, HRT  
David Fencsik, COS, Psychology  
Maria Gallegos, COS, Biology  
Chandra Ganesh, COS, Nursing & Health Sciences

Kai Greene, CLASS, Comm. Science & Disorders  
Nina Haft, CLASS, Theatre and Dance  
Donna Hamlin, CBE, Management  
Caron Inouye, COS, Biology  
Monique Manopoulos, CLASS, MLL - French  
Peter Marsh, CLASS, Music  
Jeff Newcomb, CBE, Marketing & Entrepreneurship  
Xeno Rasmusson, CLASS, Human Development  
Nancy White, CEAS, HRT  
Doris Yates, CEAS, HRT

### Project Committee

Sue Opp	Project Sponsor
Donna Wiley	Project Director
Jodi Servatius	Curriculum & Assessment Consultant
Sally Murphy	General Education Consultant
Julie Stein	Instructional Design Specialist
Tamra Donnelly	Project Coordinator

*Exhibit 1*

<b>Date (s)</b>	<b>Activity/Milestone</b>
<b>8/6 faculty deliverable</b>	Refinement of rubric for assessing critical thinking
To be scheduled	Make-up session: Critical Thinking Assessment Project workshop
<b>Summer 2013 faculty deliverable</b>	Plan for how you will assess critical thinking in one or more of your classes in Fall 2013 and/or Winter 2014
Oct. - Dec	Artifact collection process for Fall 2013 classes
<b>Fall 2013 faculty deliverable</b>	Assignment developed; if class taught in fall quarter, rubric applied to assignment in Blackboard
Mid Jan./early Feb.	Review and assessment of student work from Fall 2013 classes
Jan. – Mar.	Artifact collection process for Winter 2014 classes
<b>Winter 2014 faculty deliverable</b>	Results from Fall 2013 classes analyzed and documented, and recommendations for making course and/or program improvements identified; If class taught in Winter 2014, rubric applied to assignment in Blackboard.
Mid Apr./early May	Review and assessment of student work from Winter 2014 classes
Spring 2014 Assessment Symposium	Participate in Spring Symposium – Assessing Information Literacy and follow-up on Assessment of Critical and Creative Thinking
<b>Spring 2014 faculty deliverable</b>	Results from winter quarter analyzed and documented, and recommendations for making course and/or program improvements identified; Prepare and submit assessment results for program’s or GE’s CAPR annual report (or, if due, the 5 year CAPR report).

**Critical Thinking Assessment Project  
Workshop Evaluation August 6, 2013**

- 1. Compared to how you felt this morning, do you feel more clear now about the purposes of the Critical Thinking Assessment Project and your role in it?**
  - 10/11 wrote yes.
  - More confused maybe, but in a good way.
  - Absolutely
  - I am more prepared for the assignment
  - Yes, much more clear.
  - Yes, very much so.
  - The project is very clear now.
  - Yes, the presentations and discussions were very helpful.
  
- 2. What was especially effective today that will help you be successful with this project?**
  - Discussion about the meaning of critical thinking and rubrics
  - Reading paper and applying
  - Sharing information
  - Compare/contrast with other thoughtful people
  - Explanation and how to for setting up resources in BB
  - Initial overview on definition of critical thinking
  - Review by philosophy professor on definition/history of critical thinking
  - The discussions about rubrics and critical thinking that stemmed from doing the evaluation of the student paper. The presentation by Jen Eagan.
  - Discussions about rubrics, how to modify and change to meet your needs.
  - I think that what was effective was meeting and learning from peers in different disciplines.
  - The rubrics and discussion of them
  - Sticky notes on the value rubric helped visualization
  
- 3. What was unclear or less helpful?**
  - Logic presentation? Not very logical
  - Not knowing what the assignment was (given to the student) when we evaluated the paper
  - Nothing.
  - I just don't understand how as a group we will reach consensus. I hope we do!
  - Some of the terminology appeared vague but less so now.
  - Not sure we were always focused on ILOs.
  - How all this will work on Blackboard.
  - I use Turn-it-in a lot and feel this might double my effort once on BB again in where I usually give comments on articles.
  
- 4. What additional information or resources would be helpful?**
  - Blackboard tutorial related to assignment
  - BB specific examples
  - More Blackboard info - what other tools in BB could lend itself to rubrics

Exhibit 2

- Time to share how teachers plan to apply critical thinking in classes
- More of the same
- Definitely, I need training with "Assignment" and "Rubrics" on BB before the quarter starts. I hope that can be arranged.
- Help grading with a rubric in Blackboard - a group workshop would be great.
- BB training
- More on BB training
- Rubrics

**5. What else would you like to share?**

- Delighted and happy to be part of project. I spend much of my classroom time trying to encourage critical thinking - with some success!
- Great day!
- Thank you.
- Other website/sources on critical thinking
- I am looking forward to this.
- It was fun.
- (Note from evaluation rubric). Don't want creative thinking to be perceived as tangential. I feel strongly that this enhances our understanding of critical thinking. This could make our work more relevant, not less.

	<b>4 Great</b>	<b>3 Pretty Good</b>	<b>2 So-So</b>	<b>1 Not so Great</b>
Here's how I am feeling about my current understanding of the Critical Thinking Assessment Project and my role in it		3.27		
This is how well I think I understand ILOs, PLOs and SLOs		3.61		
Here's how I would describe my current level of understanding of Critical and Creative Thinking		3.16		
This is how I feel about the rubric we ended with today		3.16		
Right now, when I think about working on this project this year, I feel...		3.40		

CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric 10/5/13				
<p>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 or alternative creative vision.</p>				<p>Jeff</p>
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>
<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>2. Demonstrates ability to explore and/or implement key concepts including credible sources from required course materials</p> <p>1. Selects appropriate high quality academic data and/or information to</p>	<p>Information is taken from high quality academic/credible source(s) as appropriate with enough thorough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis of topic.</p> <p>Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.</p> <p>COMMENT: Provide an example of what we mean by thorough in the rubric itself</p>	<p>Most Information is taken from includes academic/credible source(s) as appropriate with enough adequate interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.</p> <p>Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.</p>	<p>Some Information is taken from quality academic source(s) with some limited interpretation/evaluation(,) but not enough to Does not develop a coherent analysis or synthesis of topic.</p> <p>Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.</p>	<p>Little/no Information is taken from quality academic source(s) without any but lacks interpretation/evaluation of topic.</p> <p>Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.</p>

<p>support a point of view, hypothesis, conclusion (to do this, wouldn't the student need to have already stated what the point of view, hypothesis etc. is? Should row 4 be moved above this row?)</p>	<p>perhaps?</p> <p>All arguments related to text interpretation are supported by elements of text analyzed.</p>			
<p>Evaluates quality of evidence (does this "Evaluates quality . . ." belong here or in the conclusion row?)</p>	<p>Monique</p>			
<p>I don't think so, since the evidence belongs to the premises used to support the conclusion.</p>	<p>Maria</p>			
<p>Consider ... "Collects, evaluates an synthesizes evidence using both quantitative and qualitative methods" -- explicitly calling out the "quant" as well as the "qual" helps</p>	<p>Jen</p>			
<p><b>Influence of context and assumption</b></p> <p>1. Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes strengths and</p>	<p>Lynn</p> <p>Nearly thorough (systematic and methodical) analysis of strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' relevant theories and/or assumptions and carefully evaluates</p>	<p>Lynn</p> <p>Minimally identifies strengths and weaknesses of one's own and others' of relevant theories and/or assumptions. Demonstrates an understanding of several relevant</p>	<p>Lynn</p> <p>Questions some assumptions. Uneven treatment of strengths and weaknesses, Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. Minimally May be more aware of others' assumptions lacks</p>	<p>Lynn</p> <p>Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Fails to identify strengths and weaknesses of one's own and another's</p>

<p>weaknesses of one's own and others' relevant theories and/or assumptions. Grapples with -Demonstrates the ability to provide insightful and/or alternative viewpoints, compare/contrast, uncertainty, and contradictions on topic</p> <p>2. Identifies and analyzes a breadth of assumptions as valid and/or reasonable.</p> <p>and/or weaknesses in position</p> <p>(does this "and/or . . ." belong here or in the conclusion row? In any case it seems seimilar to "Evaluates quality of evidence" above so it could be written more precisley - ie. weaknesses in position as they relate to the underlying assumptions)</p> <p>For me, the conclusion part is about the student's claim rather than their analysis of</p>	<p>the relevance of contexts when presenting discussing/supporting a position.</p>	<p>contexts when presenting supporting a position.</p>	<p>demonstration of than one's own (or vice versa).views on topic</p>	<p>assumptions.</p> <p>Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position, does not include specific information on topic.</p>
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Maria

Maria

Jen

someone else's argument, which to me seems to be part of the evidence/analysis that they are using to set up their claim.

How about... "Acknowledges or indicates awareness of personal bias" -- for critical thinking & good decision-making, open-mindedness and self-awareness are helpful

**Statement of student's or author's position (perspective, viewpoint, thesis/hypothesis )**

Maria

**Comment: I include "or author's" to reflect the fact that some students may be critically evaluating other's perspectives, viewpoints, theses/hypotheses.**

Jen

**I like this addition. Good edit! I like it also!**

**COMMENT: I would like to see this moved up (Row # 2) after**

Chandra

Clear, thoughtful and creative original position (perspective, viewpoint thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities and patterns and key concepts of an issue.

Acknowledges the position (perspective, viewpoint/thesis/hypothesis) with supportive evidence.

Clearly provides 'Others' points of view and are acknowledged/synthesized within position (perspective, viewpoint, thesis/hypothesis) in a logical and concise manner.

Demonstrates awareness of how author's and others' POV are historically shaped by values and other contexts.

Nina

Specific clear, thoughtful, original position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis); takes into account the complexities and patterns of an issue are presented.

Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).

Specific original position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) somewhat clear, acknowledges different sides of an issue, but not thoroughly (systematically or historically) explored.

Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated unclearly, but is simplistic and obvious, but limited in scope

<p><b>Explanation of Issues--you end with a thesis statement. That basically identifies the central piece of the paper.</b></p> <p><b>The Evidence then supports or disputes this central thesis I agree!</b></p> <p><b>Yes</b></p>				
<p><b>Conclusions and/or related outcomes (implications and consequences).</b></p> <p><b>COMMENT: In this row, are we evaluating student's ability to tie everything together?</b></p> <p><b>If yes, I would imagine that a student would be evaluating the quality of the evidence, weaknesses in a position and in general making a final conclusion based on both evidence AND assumptions. Or discussing the implications and/or consequences of the quality and validity of the evidence and assumptions. My two cents. Ignore</b></p>	<p>Conclusions, stated implications, related outcomes (consequences and implications) are presented in a logical manner and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place concepts/evidence and perspectives in a coherent and/or creative order.</p> <p>Meaningful conclusions provide unique and informed insights that flow naturally from student's evaluation and ability to provide evidence and perspectives supporting conclusion (seems redundant to previous statements)</p> <p><b>COMMENT: I like the 1st paragraph better than second. Don't think it is necessary to include both</b></p> <p><b>Comment: I prefer the 2nd</b></p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are not identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are not reflective of information presented oversimplified and possibly irrelevant</p>

Maria

Chandra

Monique

if desired.

one because it is more concise.

I think here that we are not talking about the conclusion of a paper, but about the ultimate claim (or series of claims) the student makes. Presumably, the student isn't making claims based on assumptions (I'm sure that's not what you meant), but exposing assumptions?

Jen

Perhaps what we mean here is the "reasoning" component, i.e., how well the author links the evidence to the claim/hypothesis. I agree.

Yes -- plus, how the author understands the broader perspective or big picture of a conclusion or recommendation. Does "systems thinking" apply?

Jeff

Objectively weighs the strengths and weaknesses of alternatives and points used for a position or conclusion.

Donna

## Viewer Comments (6)

Made by [David Baggins](#) on 8/30/2013 at 10:40 AM, PDT.

I think critical thinking requires some nod to the world of research. So I would have as one criteria, demonstration of awareness of how research could be done using published professional literature to validate the argument. What questions would student research if this paper was expanded into a fuller publication?

[Show Replies \(1\)](#)|[Reply](#)

Made by [Kai Greene](#) on 9/18/2013 at 9:35 AM, PDT.

Our field of speech-language pathology has recently placed a large emphasis on evidence-based practice (EBP). This serves as a reminder to apply critical thinking skills in terms of evaluating effectiveness and efficacy to current methods of treatment and diagnostics. A further component involves respecting client's cultural and linguistic background. Therefore an EBP incorporates many components that require critical thinking skills.

[Input from 9/16 project faculty make-up workshop added](#)

Made by [Julie Stein](#) on 9/19/2013 at 8:08 AM, PDT.

"Explanation of Issues" and "Evidence" criteria categories were updated from the 9/16 project faculty make-up workshop.

[Evidence](#)

Made by [Jennifer Eagan](#) on 9/26/2013 at 9:58 AM, PDT.

Sure, evidence is obviously important. I think critical thinking is much more about what someone does with the evidence than with the evidence itself. Info literacy is a related and obviously important, but distinct skill. For example, in developing evidence-based practices, people have to choose what evidence they use (of course it should be comprehensive, but we're always limited to a data set that in front of us) and then they have to interpret it. We often talk as though evidence compels us towards one certain and definite conclusion, but it doesn't.

I think that critical thinking is about how we make the case between the evidence and the conclusions we draw from it. If I think the evidence points to a certain practice or solution, then I have to make the case connecting the dots. I think climate change is a good example. Almost everyone agrees that planet is warming, but they question the cause (which is correlational). Even folks who agree that the cause is humans, they deeply disagree on what to do about the facts in evidence. The same set of evidence can be used to support opposing claims, it depends on the inference (connection) that the author makes between the evidence and their conclusion.

Obviously, better evidence makes for stronger arguments and evidence has to be vetted, but that doesn't necessarily affect how we evaluate an argument. Arguments with false claims can be valid or strong, depending on the connection to the evidence provided.

Made by [Doris Yates](#) on 9/30/2013 at 8:09 AM, PDT.

Hi All:

The comments in blue are my suggested edits.

Doris Yates

Made by [Nina Haft](#) on 10/4/2013 at 7:20 AM, PDT.

Great comments here, thanks!

Mine are highlighted in purple....

I realize we have not reached consensus about where creative thinking fits into this rubric, but it is not only important to me, but it is a component of the ILO. It is also a crucial ingredient of the outcomes we seek - new, innovative, insightful solutions to important and relevant problems. Creative thinking skills are key to achieving such outcomes. It is not only in artistic output that I see the implications. We have all had a student pose unusually innovative questions, or arrive at startlingly original solutions to problems, and this does not happen in a vacuum. What makes these ideas so profound is that they emerge from a particular kind of analytical process, combined perhaps with more synthetic, metaphorical and systems-type thinking. That's how we got the internet, among other things....

**Wiki Contributors**

David Baggins  
Lonny Brooks  
Lynn Comerford  
Jennifer Eagan  
Maria Gallegos  
Kai Greene  
Chandra Ganesh  
Nina Haft  
Donna Hamlin  
Caron Inouye  
Monique Manopoulos  
Jeffrey Newcomb  
Nancy White  
Doris Yates

## CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric Framing Language

### Definition

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.

### Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life. This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues.

### Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- **Assumptions:** Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from [www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions))
- **Context:** The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.

### Assignment Instructions: *What goes into the assignment instructions for further clarification of rubric criteria*

1. **Explanation of issues:** Degree of brevity or thoroughness sought;
2. **Quality of Evidence:** defines credible sources; requires evidence-based practice (EBT) or working with a prescribed set of evidence; identifies quantitative and qualitative methods; prescribes levels and ranges of evidence; provides examples for students
3. **Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints:** degree to which analysis is systematic, methodical, or metaphorical and compares and contrasts and that uncertainty and contradictions are addressed; degree to which one's own awareness and personal bias are addressed; valid/reasonable assumptions are defined/ identified; judges quality of argument; describes reasoning; demonstrates flexibility of thought; open minded about alternatives; proposes alternative positions (perspective, theses, hypothesis) and/or consequences of assumptions
4. **Statement of position:** Student "position" appropriate to analysis; perspective at start, after experience; observations demonstrate awareness of author's perspective as shaped by values, historical, and other contexts; differentiation of student or author's position, perspective, viewpoint, thesis, or hypothesis
5. **Conclusions, implications, and consequences:** application of systems thinking; objectivity; additional questions students would research if paper expanded; further research called for to improve the paper and/or further evaluate; demonstrates meta skills - thinking about thinking

### Additional Rubric Criteria for Course Assessment: *What may be added into the additional rubric category(ies) and/or instructions for course assignment*

- **Writing:** position supports thesis; clarity of organization of writing; making sense of flow of ideas; clarity of voice; articulation logically moves from first section to last section
- **Creativity:** innovative thinking, risk, untested thinking, original thinking, being outside one's comfort zone
- **Integrative Learning:** transfer concepts, methods, solutions across disciplines
- **Inquiry and Analysis:** analysis, observations, organization, synthesis, focus, patterns

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.

## Instructions to Align Assignment to Learning Outcomes

**Title: CT Assessment Faculty Assignment Alignment Due Tuesday, December 10th**

Dear CT Assessment Faculty,

Many thanks for your work, input, and feedback so far! With the learning outcomes just made available on Blackboard this afternoon, we are ready for this last critical step for the fall quarter on the project which is to align your course(s) assignment to the critical thinking Outcome (ILO), your department program learning outcome(s) (PLO) and upper division GE outcomes (as appropriate) on Blackboard.

**The due date is Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**. If you would like one-on-one support, I am on-site today (as late as needed) and can come to your office. You can also call me at 925.872.6828 or email me between now and the due date to arrange phone support. Later this afternoon, I will be posting a video on the shared Blackboard site so that you can see the process.

Bernie is off-site through Friday; however, he has scheduled Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 1:00pm – 3:00 pm for you to drop-in for one-on-one help. I am in the process of verifying additional time he can provide drop-in support on Monday.

### **Step 1: Align course assignment to Critical Thinking Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)**

1. Go to the section of the course in which you have set up the critical thinking assignment, and mouse over the title (the line that starts with the icon with the ruler and pencil). You will see an arrow appear for a drop-down menu. From that menu select, “Add Alignments” from the right side of your assignment on the pull-down menu.
2. From the “Discover Goals” screen that opens, on the left panel titled “Goal Set Type” select the “All Institutional Learning Outcomes” option.
3. Under “Goal Set” select “Institutional Learning Outcomes.”
4. On the right side of the screen, under “Criteria Summary” select “Institutional Learning Outcomes – 1. Thinking and Reasoning.”
5. Finally on the lower right of the screen, select the gray colored “Submit” button. “Active Goals” will appear on the front of the assignment verifying the alignment to the ILO.

*You have successfully aligned the assignment to the ILO. Next, you need to align your assignment to your department’s program learning outcome(s) (in preparation for CAPR) and/or upper division GE critical thinking learning outcome. See the attached CT Faculty PLOs CT Assessment course match to PLO and/or upper division GE outcomes.*

### **Step 2: Align course assignment to Program Critical Thinking Learning Outcome(s) and other Associated Outcome(s)**

1. From the same section of the course that you just aligned the assignment to the ILO select, “Add Alignments” again.
2. On the left panel titled “Goal Set Type” select your college.
3. Under “Goal Set” select your department.

## Exhibit 5

4. On the right side of the screen, under “Criteria Summary” select your department’s critical thinking program learning outcome(s) and any other program learning outcomes associated with the course.
5. Finally on the lower right of the screen, select the gray colored “Submit” button. “Active Goals” will appear on the front of the assignment verifying the alignment to the department PLO(s).

*You have successfully aligned the assignment to your department’s PLO’s. Next, Jen Eagan, Cyndi Eppler, Donna Hamlin, and Doris Yates need to align your assignment to upper division GE critical thinking learning outcome.*

### **Step 3: Align course assignment to upper division GE Critical Thinking Learning Outcome (Jen, Cyndi, Donna, Doris Only)**

1. From the same section of the course select, “Add Alignments” again.
2. On the left panel titled “Goal Set Type” select “Inter College Programs.”
3. Under “Goal Set” select “General Education Program.”
4. On the right side of the screen, under “Criteria Summary” select “GE-1” (the only goal that is populated with text.)
5. Select “Submit.” “Active Goals” will appear on the front of the assignment verifying the alignment to the GE outcome.

### **Step 4: Email me (Julie Stein) to verify that you have completed the process**

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#### **What Happens Next?**

After Bernie Salvador has checked the assignment alignment by entering your course, this month we will be testing the assessment process. In January and February, the GE Subcommittee will meet to learn about the new BB process, norm to the CT rubric, assess the artifacts, and review the results. We will be scheduling a meeting with you later in the winter quarter to review the CT ILO assessment results, get your feedback on applying the CT rubric in your course, and have an initial discussion about using this process to inform the preparation of your program’s annual report for CAPR.

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# CHAPTER 10

## Creating an Effective Assignment

### Some Valuable Ideas You'll Find in This Chapter

- Every assignment should help students achieve important learning goals.
- Give students a variety of assignments, not just traditional essays and research papers.
- Ask yourself if students will learn significantly more from a thirty-page assignment than a five-page assignment—enough to justify the time that they and you will spend on it.
- Break apart large assignments into pieces that are due at various times.
- Address plagiarism consistently and collaboratively across campus through education as well as consequences.

When we ask students to write an essay, complete a research project, create a work of art, use laboratory materials, or give a speech, providing clear instructions and guidance on what students are to do and why will help them learn what we value. This is where prompts—the subject of this chapter—come in.

What Is a Prompt? \_\_\_\_\_

A prompt is simply an assignment: the statement or question (usually written) that tells students what they are to do in a performance

assessment (Chapter Two), essay test question, and virtually everything else we ask students to do except to complete objective tests and rating forms.

There are two basic kinds of prompts. *Restricted response* prompts ask everyone to provide pretty much the same response, just in his or her own words. An example is giving all students the same chart and asking them to write a paragraph summarizing its major points. Many mathematics problems and science laboratory assignments are restricted response prompts.

*Extended response* prompts give students latitude in deciding how to complete the assignment. Their completed assignments may vary considerably in organization, style, and content. Suppose that students are asked to speculate, with appropriate justification, on how our daily lives might be different today if the United States had never engaged in space exploration. The visions and supporting evidence in equally outstanding papers might vary a great deal.

## Why Are Good Prompts Important? \_\_\_\_\_

Carefully crafted prompts are critical parts of the teaching-learning process because, regardless of what we state in syllabi or say in class, the assignments we give students are the most powerful way we communicate our expectations to them. A good prompt inspires students to give the assignment their best effort and thereby achieve the assignment's learning goals. With a poorly written prompt, students may complete an assignment without learning what we want them to learn.

Suppose that history faculty want students to be able to analyze the impact of a noteworthy individual on the outcome of World War II. They ask students simply to write a term paper on "a person involved with World War II," with no further guidance or direction. Some students might complete the assignment by summarizing the life history of an individual, doing nothing to develop—or demonstrate—their analysis skills. When faculty review the papers for assessment purposes, they may find little evidence of analysis skill, not because students are poor at analysis but because this assignment never explicitly asked the students to analyze.

## Identifying Specific, Important Learning Goals for the Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Begin creating a good prompt by deciding what you want students to learn from the assignment. The assignment should focus students on the skills and conceptual understandings that you

consider most important. For a writing assignment, identify the specific kinds of writing skills that you most want students to strengthen. The best way to identify the learning goals you want students to achieve by completing the assignment is to develop a rubric (Chapter Nine).

A good assignment sets challenging but realistic expectations. Often when students know exactly what they need to do to achieve a high score, they will rise to meet that standard, even if it means accomplishing things to which they never thought they could aspire. Ask students to demonstrate not just simple understanding but also thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and creativity. Focusing on these kinds of skills makes the assignment more challenging, worthwhile, and interesting and promotes deeper learning. If you give students a copy of the rubric you will use to evaluate their completed assignments, as suggested in Chapter Nine, make sure that it states clearly what you consider outstanding work.

## Creating a Meaningful Task or Problem Corresponding to Those Goals

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Once you have clarified the key learning goals of an assignment, identify a task that corresponds to those goals and will help your students achieve them. (A writing assignment would obviously be a poor way to learn presentation skills!) Chapter Three discussed the importance of giving students a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning. Table 10.1 lists examples of assignments beyond the usual term paper or essay. Most of these assignments are performance assessments (Chapter Two) that ask students to demonstrate skills—often in realistic settings—rather than simply describe or explain those skills.

Textbooks and other curricular materials may give you some ideas for assignments, but a better approach is to think of a real-life task. Such assignments engage students and help them see that they are learning something worthwhile. Try “you are there” scenarios: “You are an expert chemist [statistician, teacher, anthropologist, or whatever] asked to help with the following situation . . .” Such role playing need not be realistic: “You are one of President Andrew Jackson’s closest advisors . . .”; “You are a member of the first space team traveling to Mars . . .”

Exhibits 10.1 and 10.2 are examples of prompts that abide by most of the suggestions that follow. More examples are in *Effective Grading* (Walvoord & Anderson, 1998) and *Learning-Centered Assessment on College Campuses* (Huba & Freed, 2000).

**Table 10.1.** Examples of Assignments Beyond Essays, Term Papers, and Research Reports

---

Abstract or executive summary
Advertisement or commercial
Annotated bibliography
Autobiography or realistic fictional diary from a historical period
Briefing paper
Brochure or pamphlet
Campaign speech
Case study or analysis
Client report
Collaborative group activity
Database
Debate or discussion (plan, participation, or leadership)
Debriefing interview preparation
Dramatization of an event or scenario, in writing or a presentation
Editing and revising a poorly written paper
Evaluation of opposing points of view or the pros and cons of alternative solutions to a problem
Experiment or other laboratory experience
Field notes
Game invention
Graph, chart, diagram, flowchart, or other visual aid
Graphic organizer, taxonomy, or classification scheme
Handbook or instructional manual
Journal or log (Chapter Twelve)
Letter to an editor or business
Model, simulation, or illustration
Narrative
Newspaper story or news report on a concept or from a historical period
Oral history recording of an event
Plan to research and solve a problem
Plan to conduct a project or provide a service
Portfolio (Chapter Thirteen)
Poster, display, or exhibit
Presentation, demonstration, or slide show
Process description
Proposal for and justification of a solution to a problem
Reflection on what and how one has learned (Chapter Twelve)
Review and critique of one's own work, that of a peer, a performance, an exhibit, a work of art, a writer's arguments, or how something could have been done better
Selected portions of an essay or term paper (for example, only the problem statement and the review of literature)
Survey, including an analysis of the results
Teaching a concept to a peer or child
Video or audio recording
Web site

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### Exhibit 10.1. A Prompt for a First-Year Composition Essay Assignment

In *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker, Celie and her husband Albert, known simply as Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, have a heated exchange in which Celie reveals to him that she is leaving him to move to Memphis to start her own business. Afterward, he retorts with the following remarks: "Look at you, you black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman . . . You nothing at all."

Some men who have engaged in physical and mental abuse of women have been asked to attend a program on abuse. As part of the program, they will be asked to read an essay in which you persuade them not to engage in the kind of behavior that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ displays.

Write this essay. Keep in mind that most of the men will be unfriendly or hostile to your ideas, so you must really convince them with your arguments.

Your essay will be graded in terms of content, organization, style/expression, and grammar/mechanics.

---

*Source:* Adapted with permission from a prompt by Lena Ampadu, associate professor of English, Towson University.

## Choose an Assignment That's a Worthwhile Use of Learning Time

Consider carefully whether the time students put into your assignment will yield an appropriate payoff in terms of their learning. Will they learn twice as much from an assignment that takes twenty hours of out-of-class time as from one that takes ten hours? Will students learn significantly more from a thirty-page paper than from a five-page paper (which may take you one-sixth the time to evaluate)? Sometimes your learning goals may not demand a traditional term paper or research project. Students may achieve learning goals just as effectively by completing a research proposal or a relatively short annotated bibliography.

## Aim Students at the Desired Outcome

Give your students clear, written directions and scaffolding on which they can successfully create their best work. Begin the prompt with an introductory sentence that's an overview of what you want them to do, and then answer the questions in Table 10.2.

While good prompts are often generous in the guidance they give to students, some faculty like to give purposefully vague assignments because they want students to learn how to figure out the assignment on their own. This practice can be fine, but only if:

- One of the learning goals of the assignment is to learn how to choose, define, or clarify a problem or issue; *and*

### Exhibit 10.2. A Prompt for an Educational Research Problem Statement

To help you be an intelligent consumer of educational research, your major task in this course will be to write a proposal to conduct an educational research project. You won't actually conduct the research, but by writing a proposal you will demonstrate that you understand what good-quality research is. You will also be able to learn more about a topic in education that interests you.

The first part of the research proposal is a statement of the problem to be investigated and will constitute 15 percent of your final grade. If you submit the statement before the due date, I will critique your work and give you a tentative grade. If you're satisfied with that grade, you may stop work, and if you'd like to improve your grade, you may submit a revision by the due date.

The statement of the problem should:

- Be no longer than two pages
- Include a statement of the research problem to be investigated, the reasons you chose this topic, and what you hypothesize would be the results of your research
- Include definitions of any key terms relevant to your topic, woven into the discussion rather than listed separately
- Be accompanied by a completed reflection page that shows evidence of serious thought.

An *outstanding (A)* paper has the following characteristics:

- It meets all the *content requirements* of the assignment, as described above.
- It is *error free*: For example, it has no erroneous conclusions or misunderstandings of research concepts.
- It uses *appropriate language*. Sentence and paragraph structure and vocabulary are all simple ("because" instead of "due to the fact that"). Unemotional, professional terms and phrasings are used (*not* "I was amazed to find . . ."). There are no contractions.
- It is *well written*. It is clear, understandable, and well organized, with an appropriate flow and headings. There are sound rationales for conclusions and decisions, evidence of serious thought, and no inconsistencies in what is said.

A *good (B)* paper is well done, but with some significant flaws not in an A paper (such as some errors or unclear statements).

An *adequate (C)* paper meets the content requirements, and its major points can be understood, but it has several significant flaws not in an A paper (for example, the content is not uniformly clear or consistent, or the paper has minimal discussion.).

An *inadequate (F)* paper seriously fails to meet most of the characteristics of an A paper. Most critically, it does not meet the content requirements and/or is so poorly written that its major points cannot be understood.

- Students have opportunities to learn and practice these skills before tackling the assignment; *and*
- This learning goal is reflected in the rubric (Chapter Nine) used to evaluate the assignment.

Good prompts for major assignments such as portfolios or term projects can run a page or more. Brevity is important,

**Table 10.2.** Questions to Address in a Prompt for an Assignment

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*Why are you giving students this assignment?*

What is its purpose?

What do you expect students to learn by completing it? For example, are students simply to summarize information or use the information to persuade? Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Anderson (1998) point out that the title of an assignment is a powerful way to convey to students what you want them to do. They suggest using terms like *argumentative essay*, *original research project*, or *sociological analysis*, which make the assignment clearer than the usual *term paper*.

*What should the completed assignment look like?*

Who is the (perhaps hypothetical) audience for the assignment: academicians, people working in a particular setting, or the general public?

What skills and knowledge do you want students to demonstrate?

Explain terms that may be fuzzy to your students even if they are clear to you, such as *compare*, *evaluate*, and *discuss*.

What should be included in the completed assignment?

How should students format the completed assignment?

*How are students to complete the assignment? How do you expect them to devote their time and energy?*

How much time do you expect them to spend on this assignment? If this is a class assignment, how much will it count toward their final course grade?

If the assignment is to write something, what is an optimal length for the paper?

What readings, reference materials, and technologies are they expected to use?

Can they collaborate with others? If so, to what extent?

What assistance can you provide while they are working on the assignment? (Are you willing to critique drafts, for example?)

*How will you score or grade the assignment?* The best way to communicate this is to give students a copy of the rubric that you will use to evaluate completed assignments.

---

however, when you are asking for very short responses such as minute papers (Chapter Twelve) or when you are giving timed in-class assignments such as an essay exam. In these situations, every minute counts, and time spent reading your prompt is time that can't be spent thinking or responding.

### Break Apart Large Assignments

Rather than distribute a major assignment on the first day of class and collect the papers on the last day, break the assignment into pieces that are handed in or checked at various points during the course. You might ask students to submit an outline of a research paper first and then an annotated bibliography. This kind of approach helps students manage their time and, more important, gets those heading in a wrong direction back on track before it's too late for them to salvage their project. Breaking an assignment into pieces can also discourage plagiarism, as discussed below, and it makes your job of evaluating the completed assignments more manageable.

Depending on your students' needs, your goals, and your time constraints, at these checkpoints you might:

- Simply check off that this portion of the project is complete or in progress
- Review and comment on this portion of the project
- Have student peers evaluate this portion of the project using a rubric that you provide
- Give this portion of the project a tentative grade (pending subsequent revisions) or a final grade

### Encourage Students to Reflect on Their Work

Reflection can promote deep, lasting learning, so consider asking students to submit written reflections with at least some of their assignments. Chapter Twelve discusses this further.

### Countering Plagiarism \_\_\_\_\_

The work of others is so readily available today that student plagiarism is a growing concern. Although there is no way to eliminate plagiarism, the strategies in Table 10.3 (Carroll, 2004) may help.

### Time to Think, Discuss, and Practice \_\_\_\_\_

1. Choose one of the following (poorly written!) prompts:
  - Compare the writing styles of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway.
  - Compare the Republican and Democratic parties.
  - Describe the operation of a microscope.
  - Research the demographics of various ethnic groups in the United States.
  - Compare the strengths, weaknesses, and uses of quantitative and qualitative assessment.
2. Choose one person in your group to play the role of the faculty member who wrote the prompt. That person will answer your group's questions about the course or program for which the prompt was written and the learning goals that the prompt is intended to assess.

**Table 10.3.** Strategies to Counter Plagiarism*Use detection judiciously.*

After papers are turned in, ask students to summarize them.

Use online tools such as Google to search for similar passages.

Interview students or ask them to write reflectively about the process they used to write the paper.

Review papers for out-of-character work; abrupt changes in language, referencing systems, or vocabulary; fully finished works with no evidence of research and writing processes; and anachronisms or only dated references

*Explicitly teach and model academic rules, values, and conventions.*

Provide plenty of instruction and assignments that help students understand exactly what plagiarism is. Focus on what students should do rather than what they should not do. Test their understanding through realistic test questions and assignments on plagiarism.

Model academic integrity in your own examples, lectures, and discussions by citing the sources to which you refer.

Provide opportunities to practice and receive feedback on academic integrity.

*Provide opportunities for students to learn, practice, and get feedback on research and writing skills.*

Teach research and writing skills as they apply to your discipline.

*Use fair assessment practices* (Chapter Three).

*Give clearly articulated assignments that are plainly linked to key learning outcomes* (Chapter Eight).

Vary the kinds of assignments you give.

Give creative assignments that don't lend themselves to plagiarism. Assign oral or visual presentations rather than written papers; break large assignments into small pieces; or give assignments that ask students to relate concepts learned to personal or local experiences.

*Work with your colleagues to make a concerted and consistent effort to address plagiarism.*

Develop and implement appropriate and consistent policies for all students and programs.

Be consistent in how plagiarism policies are explained, applied, and enforced.

Provide timely, transparent, and defensible penalties.

3. Identify what makes the prompt ineffective.
4. With input from the role-playing group member, rewrite the prompt so it meets the criteria of good prompts.

## Recommended Readings

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The following readings are recommended along with the references cited in this chapter.

- Cashin, W. E. (1987). *Improving essay tests* (IDEA Paper No. 17). Manhattan: Kansas State University, Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development.
- Chicago Board of Education. (2000). *Performance assessment tasks*. Retrieved September 16, 2008, from [http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas\\_and\\_Rubrics/Assessment\\_Tasks/assessment\\_tasks.html](http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas_and_Rubrics/Assessment_Tasks/assessment_tasks.html).
- Cizek, G. J. (2003). *Detecting and preventing classroom cheating: Promoting integrity in assessment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Assessing Student Learning

- Coalition of Essential Schools. (1998). How to analyze a curriculum unit or project and provide the scaffolding students need to succeed. *Horace*, 15(2). Retrieved September 16, 2008, from [www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces\\_res/85](http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/85).
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# Critical Thinking Assessment Project

**Faculty Update Meeting**  
**November 8, 2013**

## CT Faculty Update Meeting Outcomes

- Understand how the University Blackboard Outcomes projects relate to and support each other
- Review progress on CT Assessment Project objectives and project deliverables for fall 2013, winter, and spring 2014
- Review of Bb Outcomes and identify how to align your course assignment to the CT ILO
- Share your key course assignment(s) and articulate how the CT Assessment support team can help you in winter quarter

# Overview of Bb Outcomes Implementation Process

- Pilot Phase: Summer 2013 through Spring 2014
  - Technical installation of the new Bb version that incorporates Outcomes (ITS)
  - Population of system with all university programs and related student learning outcomes (e.g. ILO's, PLO's, accreditation standards, etc.) – PEM, APGS and ITS
  - Three pilot assessment projects
    - CBE BS Business Administration and MBA program
    - CEAS MS Education, HRT and Kinesiology
    - Critical Thinking – GE and Critical Thinking Assessment Project
  - Planning 2 day onsite Jan/Feb for “Assessment day” (Day 1) & Assessment Results, Project Debrief, Planning (Day 2)
  - Results of Critical Thinking pilot presented at Spring Critical Thinking Symposium



# Outcomes Assessment Pilot Next Steps – Long-term

## For GE/ILO, CEAS, CBE:

- Continue assessment projects based on assessment plans
- One or two outcomes per year

## For other programs:

- Work with CoS & CLASS to identify initial pilot programs
- University communication plan for 'successes' and examples from GE/ILO, CEAS & CBE
- Work with Academic Senate and Faculty Development to develop long-term assessment-related policies, processes, faculty development, etc.

# CT Assessment Project Objectives

*Participating faculty who are teaching upper-division general education courses and/or upper-division courses in the major which contain a critical thinking learning outcome will work collaboratively on the assessment of student learning outcomes for critical thinking. Faculty will:*

- As a group, develop an institution-wide critical thinking rubric to assess students' attainment of critical thinking (see CSUEB ILOs)
- Refine (or develop) a course assignment that demonstrates students' critical thinking capacities
- Adopt the group rubric (core dimensions) for use in specified class with chosen assignment
- With instruction provided, set up chosen assignment in the Assignments feature of Blackboard, including adopted rubric
- Provide students with assessment feedback of the critical thinking SLO in chosen assignment via the rubrics function

## CT Assessment Project Objectives continued

- ❑ Using the common critical thinking rubric, participate in sessions to norm and assess assignments
- ❑ Participate in course, program-level, and campus-wide discussions (project meetings, department meetings, symposium) to review results, draw conclusions, and develop recommendations for curriculum redesign and/or instructional improvements in program
- ❑ Be able to use this assessment process to inform the preparation of program's CAPR annual report (and/or five year report)
- ❑ Provide feedback on how project process worked and the usefulness of using a common rubric (process to be used in future years, when additional ILOs will be assessed)
- ❑ Make student work available, through Blackboard assignment and Outcomes functionality, for GE and/or Institutional-level assessment of critical thinking

# Review of Project Timeline and Deliverables

## During Summer 2013:

- ✓ Develop or identify an assignment that will be completed by students in a course you teach in Fall and/or Winter. This assignment must directly require students to demonstrate critical thinking competency.

Meet one day to:

- ✓ work collaboratively with other faculty to refine an institution-wide critical thinking rubric;
- ✓ participate in norming sessions, applying the critical thinking rubric to sample assignments.
- ✓ Commit to applying the rubric using the Blackboard assessment platform, which will be available in Fall. Assignment feature of Bb must be used for these assignments.

Deliverable: A plan for how you will assess critical thinking in one or more of your classes in Fall 2013 and/or Winter 2014.

**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.

## Levels Rubrics are Used

- To evaluate student work demonstrating a particular student learning outcome (SLO) = faculty member use in grading
- To assess *selected* student work demonstrating a particular program learning outcome (PLO)=program faculty use for curriculum improvement
- To assess *selected* student work demonstrating a particular institutional learning outcome (ILO)=university faculty committee use for institutional assessment

# Review of Project Timeline and Deliverables

## **During Fall 2013:**

- Participate in training on the Blackboard assessment platform;
- Assign identified assignment to course (upper-division GE or major capstone/senior course);
- Collect assignments and apply critical thinking rubric using the Blackboard electronic platform;
- Align course assignment to Critical Thinking ILO

Deliverable: Assignment and rubric developed, and if class taught in Fall quarter, rubric applied to assignment in Blackboard Outcomes.

# Review of Project Timeline and Deliverables

## During Winter 2014:

- Review results from Fall Quarter;
- Collect additional data from Winter quarter courses;
- Participate in program-level and campus-wide discussion of Fall quarter results, draw conclusions, and develop recommendations for closing the loop for your program;
- Provide feedback on how process and rubric can be improved for the following year when another Institutional Learning Outcome will be assessed.

Deliverable: Results from Fall quarter analyzed and documented, and recommendations identified for making course and/or program improvements.

**(Institutional level review to be done by ILO/GE subcommittees)**

# Review of Project Timeline and Deliverables

## **During Spring 2014:**

- Participate in CSU Northern California Spring Critical Thinking Symposium on Friday, April 18th and report on your experiences and outcomes.
- Prepare assessment results for your program's CAPR annual report (and to GE Director if the course assessed was a GE course).

Deliverable: Submit assessment results as described in second bullet point, above.

## CT Faculty Update Meeting Outcomes

- Understand how the University Blackboard Outcomes projects relate to and support each other
- Review progress on CT Assessment Project objectives and project deliverables for fall, winter, and spring 2014
- Overview of Bb Outcomes and identify how to align your course assignment to the CT ILO (Demo by Bernie)
- Share your key course assignment(s) and articulate how the CT Assessment support team can help you in winter quarter

## Faculty Discussion

- Share your key course assignment(s), and
- articulate how the CT Assessment support team can help you in winter quarter



# Critical Thinking Assessment Project

**Faculty Update Meeting**  
**November 8, 2013**





# Critical Thinking Assessment Project Faculty Update Meeting

February 28, 2014

# Objectives

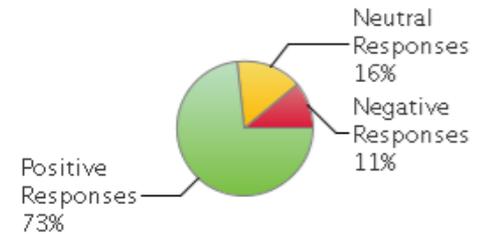
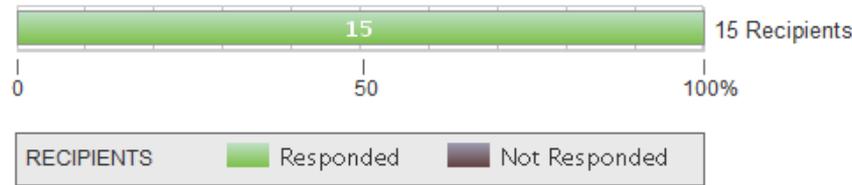
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- Evaluate faculty feedback from the Critical Thinking Assessment Project Faculty survey
- Review the fall 2013 upper division GE assignment assessment results and discuss implications
- Discuss ILO subcommittee plans for review of non-GE assessment
- Discuss how results can be used for closing the loop
- Review spring 2014 deliverables

# Overall Summary Faculty Survey Results

Total Survey Recipients: 15

Response Rate for CTAP Survey  
02/12/14- 02/23/14



# Difficulty of Bb Outcomes Process

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being Very difficult and 5 being Very easy, how would you describe the Blackboard Outcomes process of downloading the critical thinking rubric into your course?



VERY DIFFICULT    DIFFICULT    NEUTRAL    EASY    VERY EASY



On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being Very difficult and 5 being Very easy, how would you describe the Blackboard Outcomes process of creating the assignment and linking it to the critical thinking rubric?



VERY DIFFICULT    DIFFICULT    NEUTRAL    EASY    VERY EASY



On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very difficult and 5 being very easy, how would you describe the Blackboard Outcomes process of linking the assignment to the critical thinking ILO, the GE outcome (as appropriate) and your department's program learning outcomes? ?



VERY DIFFICULT    DIFFICULT    NEUTRAL    EASY    VERY EASY



# Comments: Difficulty of BB Process

As far as things go in Blackboard, it was perfectly easy to figure out.

I had a difficult time w/the browser & do not remember it being discussed in original meeting.

I needed a bit of help because I use a Mac. But when I sat down with Bernie, it was pretty obvious how to do it.

I think having a step by step instruction sheet definitely helps with all three processes. I refer to Julie Stein's instructions all the time and that makes all the difference. The last process just has a few more less familiar steps to me follow.

I think most faculty familiar with Bb should be able to do it with no problem.

It is amazingly simple!

It required reading the directions a couple of times but it was easy.

The CT rubrics don't align well with the nature of the assignment I intended to create. The fact that we couldn't change the rubric 'handcuffed' me to a type of assignment I didn't want to create.

The program learning outcomes in Blackboard are not the most current for our department, so I had to link to a writing outcome instead of the more current critical thinking outcome.

The step by step instructions were very helpful. The in person tutorial by Bernie helped as well

This was a helpful assignment and the faculty involved were truly supportive.

### Exhibit 9

Did you share and explain the critical thinking rubric with students?

YES NO



I am not exactly sure that students got the significance of the rubric for their assignment (I used a different one for grading), but I might share more about the nature of CT as an LO in the future.

I converted the rubric into a table word document, and shared it with the students, letting them know that I would use the rubric to evaluate their papers.

I explained it to them and they appreciated the feedback especially in understanding the level of detail I was asking for.

I explained the process in details in class.

I let the students know that this was a campus-wide pilot project. I let them know that student's input was welcomed.

I told students the goals of the project and that the rubric would only be used to assess this aspect of their assignments (I used an additional rubric for actually grading the assignment). I used the suggested language in the assignment.

I told students their work was being assessed to determine if Institutional Learning Outcomes were being met and asked them not to put their names on the work. The only questions I received were about not putting their names on the work.

I went over the questions for the assignment, which were tailored to each aspect of the rubric. I posted the rubric itself on Bb, but I cannot say for sure whether students read it closely. From their responses, I would say they got the gist of it.

It was part of the assignment instructions and I announced it in class as well. Students did not have additional questions

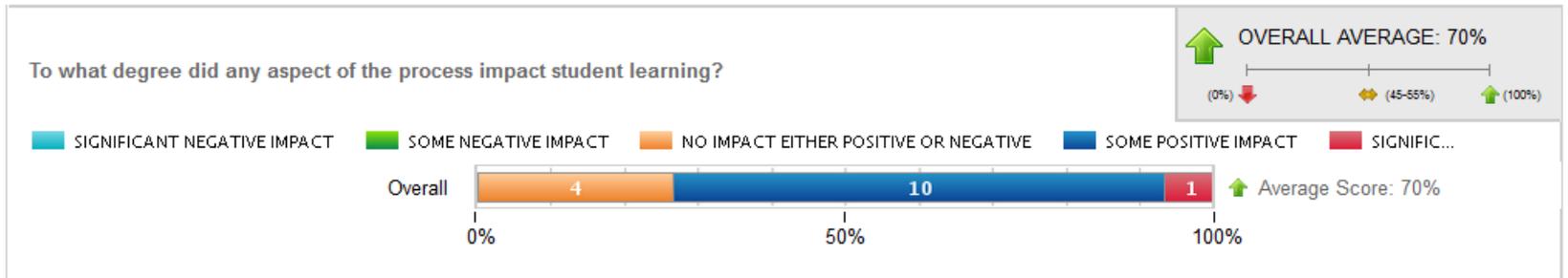
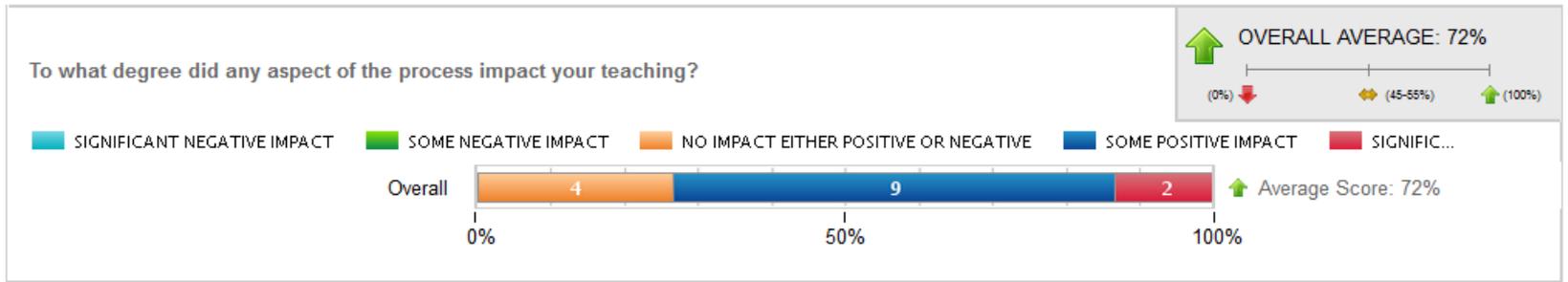
Students were told assignment was on previous submitted assignment. ie extra work on my part not theirs

They understood it.

Went over it in class

i'm chairing a search and the CLASS P & T committee and don't have time

# Impact on Teaching & Learning



# Impact on Teaching & Learning

I always teach so that student learn and all assignments are designed to check what they have learned

I had to tailor some of my assignments to meet the specific need of the CT Assessment project. It helped me to rethink the assignments and also helped students understand the need for CT in their assignments

I noticed students generally rose to the rubric standard and were able to see what was needed more clearly

I won't know until closer to the end of the quarter.

I'm not sure it changed much for the class, since I was new enough to the process, but it has caused me to rethink the assignments and how I present them, which will impact future classes

It is always good to spell out expectations in advance for student work. Although some aspects of the rubric didn't fit well with the assignment, students knew what was expected of their work.

It is hard to get feedback from students but I feel that they willingly participated in the project and critical thinking was a high priority for the class I taught.

Or maybe I should say that I couldn't detect the impact.

The guidelines for the assignment were more clear, and the standard more consistent.

The students are now in the midst of doing the CT project, so I can only guess at outcomes.

This pushed me to articulate more what the thinking process was about, and I think it enhanced students creative work. They literally brought it up in rehearsals!

slow start, slow implementation...thus, slow understanding any impact

# Suggestions to Improve Process

Allow faculty some more leeway in developing their rubrics; also, allow faculty the option of linking with Turnitin

Easy enough to do the mechanics, curious to see the results.

I enjoyed the process, but it is very difficult to come up with one rubric that fits well with a wide variety of assignments.

I'd like to adapt the rubric to be more discipline specific without compromising the ability for institutional assessment.

None

None - the process was well-planned and those involved were supportive.

Not sure yet, but may know more after my second go round.

Providing a rubric guide would be nice since it is such an important aspect of coursework

# What Else?

I enjoyed and found useful seeing how other faculty created their assignments

I enjoyed it.

I like the rubric & assignment & will be implementing in class Spring 2014. First go was difficult as I did not have a lot of extra time. Now, that I understand.... can't wait to use it all again.

I think that this is a reallt difficulty skill to do across the curriculum. I think writing would be easier,maybe numeracy would be, too.

I valued the feedback and support from everyone in the project, particularly the help and support from Julie Stein.

It has been a wonderful learning experience. The CT rubric has helped us to develop an dept specific rubric on CT.

Thank you for your patience in teaching us how to use Blackboard Outcomes!

Thanks for the opportunity.

The level of difficulty in creating and implementing this assignment on Bb was relatively high, making me wonder how successful you'll have in convincing other faculty to adopt this project and its aims.

Two things struck me. One is how I can convince my colleagues that this is a worthwhile endeavor. Second is how I would evaluate critical thinking in an advanced course in different topic.

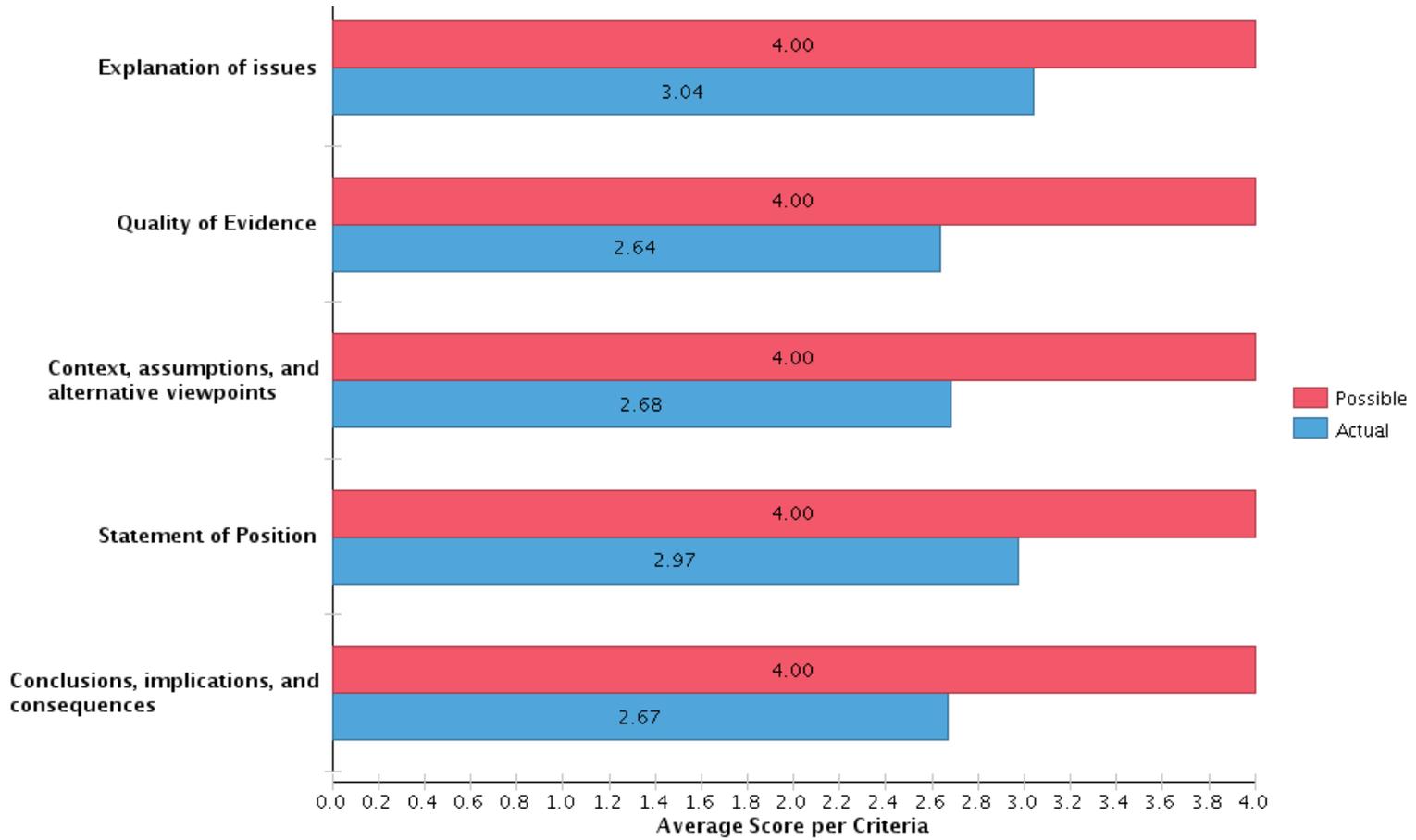
What a great group of colleagues, and terrific support from Julie and Bernie and everyone. I loved the cohort meeting in summer.

# Objectives

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- Evaluate faculty feedback from the Critical Thinking Assessment Project Faculty survey
- Review the fall 2013 upper division GE assignment assessment results and discuss implications
- Discuss ILO subcommittee plans for review of non-GE assessment
- Discuss how results can be used for closing the loop
- Review spring 2014 deliverables

# CT Rubric Evaluations for GE Assignments



# Frequency Distribution

Criteria		4	3	2	1	Number Evaluation	Average	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Explanation of issues	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		27%	53%	16%	4%	77	3.04	3.00	3.00	0.77
Quality of Evidence	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		18%	39%	31%	12%	77	2.64	3.00	3.00	0.92
Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		15%	44%	36%	5%	75	2.68	3.00	3.00	0.79
Statement of Position	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		25%	49%	23%	3%	75	2.97	3.00	3.00	0.77
Conclusions, implications, and consequences	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		8%	56%	31%	5%	75	2.67	3.00	3.00	0.70

## Student Comments: Fall 2013 CT Course

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“ I felt that my critical thinking was constantly challenged and made my mind open to other possibilities and views that I had not considered and did not know about.”

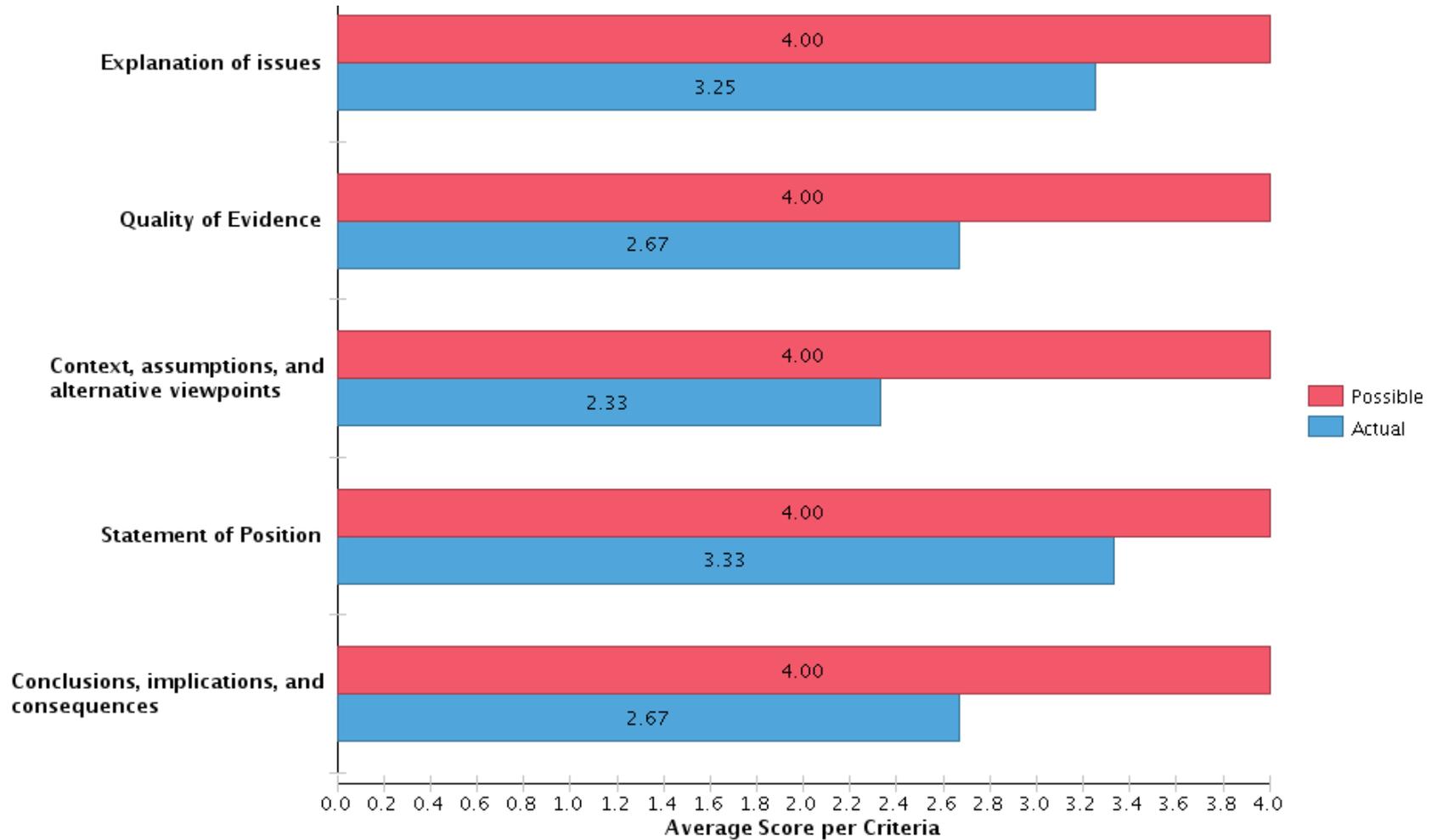
I felt I gained a lot in my writing, critical thinking, and presentation skills.”

*Provided with permission by a CTAP faculty member*

# Objectives

- Evaluate faculty feedback from the Critical Thinking Assessment Project Faculty survey
- Review the fall 2013 upper division GE assignment assessment results and discuss implications
- Discuss ILO subcommittee plans for review of non-GE assessment
- Discuss how results can be used for closing the loop
- Review spring 2014 deliverables

# 3% CT Rubric Evaluations for Non-GE Assignments



## CTAP Spring Deliverables

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- Participate in CSU Northern California Symposium on Assessment of Core Competencies Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 - noon and report on your experiences and outcomes
- Prepare assessment results for your program's CAPR annual report (and to GE Director if the course assessed was a GE course).
- On a volunteer basis, align spring courses

## 2014 CSUEB Faculty Learning Communities

### Title: Diversity and Social Justice Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) Assessment

#### Facilitator:

Diversity is one of CSUEB's greatest strengths and an institutional learning outcome for students (see ILO below), focusing on the applied knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities. Members of this FLC will collaborate in developing a rubric to assess student work for the presence of these competencies and apply the rubric in one of their courses to assess for the diversity learning outcome. Faculty who are teaching upper-division general education courses and/or upper-division courses in the major which contain a diversity learning outcome are particularly encouraged to apply.

#### Purpose:

- Clarify the institution's expectations for student competencies in the area of diversity, equity, social justice and global perspectives
- Identify strategies and pedagogies to develop diversity competencies across the curriculum
- Enhance faculty capacity to assess those competencies
- Promote and sustain creative and scholarly approaches to diversity and multicultural competence

#### Activities:

- Training on rubric development
- Developing rich and meaningful assignments for students to demonstrate the competency
- Participating in norming exercise to identify expectations for the levels of students' work
- Reviewing the Blackboard Outcomes process
- Developing an institution-wide rubric to assess students' attainment of diversity competency
- Field-testing the diversity rubric in a course you teach in Spring 2014 using Blackboard

#### Outcomes:

- Use the rubric to assess student work within a course
- Use the assessment process to inform preparation of your 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
- Use what has been learned from the process in scholarly writing about students' development of diversity, equity, social justice and global understandings within your discipline
- Report on FLC work at the Northern California Spring Symposium (at CSUEB) on Essential Learning Outcomes

**To apply, please provide:**

- a brief description of the program or course learning outcome that you would be assessing and the program to which the course applies (identify if it applies to GE, major, or both)

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**DIVERSITY Graduates of CSUEB will be able to apply knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities.**

Our students come from and return to an increasingly diverse society; therefore, students need the knowledge, skills and dispositions to successfully contribute to the creation and maintenance of inclusive and just communities. Our graduates must be able to recognize and understand the rich and complex ways that group and individual differences and interactions impact self and society. They will develop the capacity to interact openly and respectfully with individuals across the full range of human diversity including race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and ability.

Competencies that address diversity and multiculturalism include:

- considering all cultures and groups as worthy of respect while understanding how their own and others' perspectives are shaped by their cultures and experiences;
- working in diverse groups effectively, respectfully, and with sensitivity;
- recognizing their own biases and stereotypes and seeing issues and actions from different perspectives than their own;
- identifying injustice and developing strategies and tactics for addressing injustice and inequality;
- developing their sense of global citizenship through appreciation of diverse experience and values as sources of enrichment in their own lives, their communities and their culture(s);
- building coalitions with those who are different from themselves.

## **Title: Written Communication Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) Assessment**

### **Facilitator:**

Written Communication is one of CSUEB's institutional learning outcomes for students, focusing on the applied ability to communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively to use skills fundamental for active participation in a democratic society and for achievement in professional life after graduation. Members of this FLC will collaborate in developing a rubric to assess student work for the presence of these competencies and apply the rubric in one of their courses to assess for the written communication learning outcome. Faculty who are teaching upper-division general education courses and/or upper-division courses in the major which contain a written communication learning outcome are particularly encouraged to apply.

### **Purpose:**

- Clarify the institution's expectations for student competencies in the area of written communication
- Identify strategies and pedagogies to develop written communication competencies across the curriculum
- Enhance faculty capacity to assess those competencies
- Promote and sustain creative and scholarly approaches to written communication competency

### **Activities:**

- Receive training on rubric development
- Develop an institution-wide rubric to assess students' attainment of written communication competency
- Developing rich and meaningful assignments for students to demonstrate the competency
- Participating in norming exercise to identify expectations for the levels of students' work
- Reviewing the Blackboard Outcomes process
- Developing an institution-wide rubric to assess students' attainment of written communication competency
- Field-testing the written communication rubric in a course you teach in spring 2014 using Blackboard

### **Outcomes:**

- Use the rubric to assess student work within a course
- Use assessment process to inform preparation of your 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
- Use what has been learned from the process in scholarly writing about students' development of written communication within your discipline
- Report on FLC work at the Northern California Spring Symposium (at CSUEB) on Essential Learning Outcomes

**To apply, please provide:**

- a brief description of the program or course learning outcome that you would be assessing and the program to which the course applies (identify if it applies to GE, major, or both)

-----

**COMMUNICATION**

**Graduates of CSUEB will be able to communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others.**

Developing strong oral, written, and creative communication skills is an important learning outcome for our graduates because these skills are fundamental to active participation in a democratic society and to achievement in professional life after graduation. Communication implies an exchange between two or more people, so communication is about expressing one's own ideas, perspectives, and values as well as understanding the ideas, perspectives, and values of others.

Strong communication skills include:

- identifying the audience and purpose for a particular communication situation;
- representing knowledge orally, visually, and in writing;
- expressing ideas, perspectives and values clearly and coherently;
- supporting ideas, perspectives, and values with reasons and evidence;
- understanding other perspectives on a particular topic;
- locating, evaluating and using information appropriately;
- listening actively, empathetically, and respectfully;
- being open to new ideas and to changing perspectives when presented with new evidence;
- using various forms of communication and communication technologies.



# **Critical Thinking Upper Division GE Assessment using Blackboard Outcomes**

**GE Subcommittee  
Winter/Spring 2014**

**California State University, East Bay**

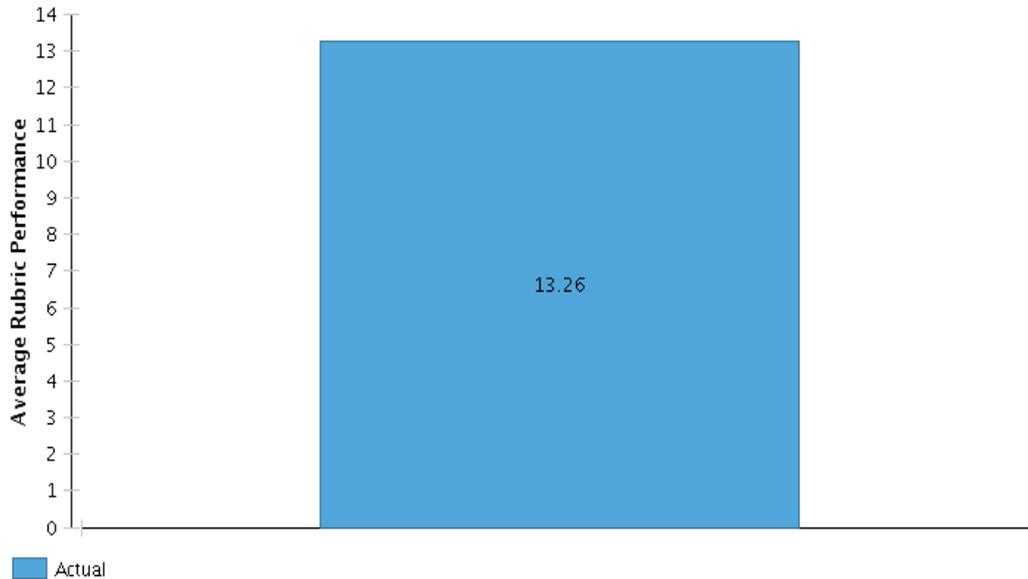
# Rubric Overall Performance

## Overview

Current Instrument Name CTAP Upper Div GE CT Fall 2013  
Rubric Name Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Description  
Total Evaluations 77  
Begin Date Jan 1, 1970  
End Date Apr 2, 2014

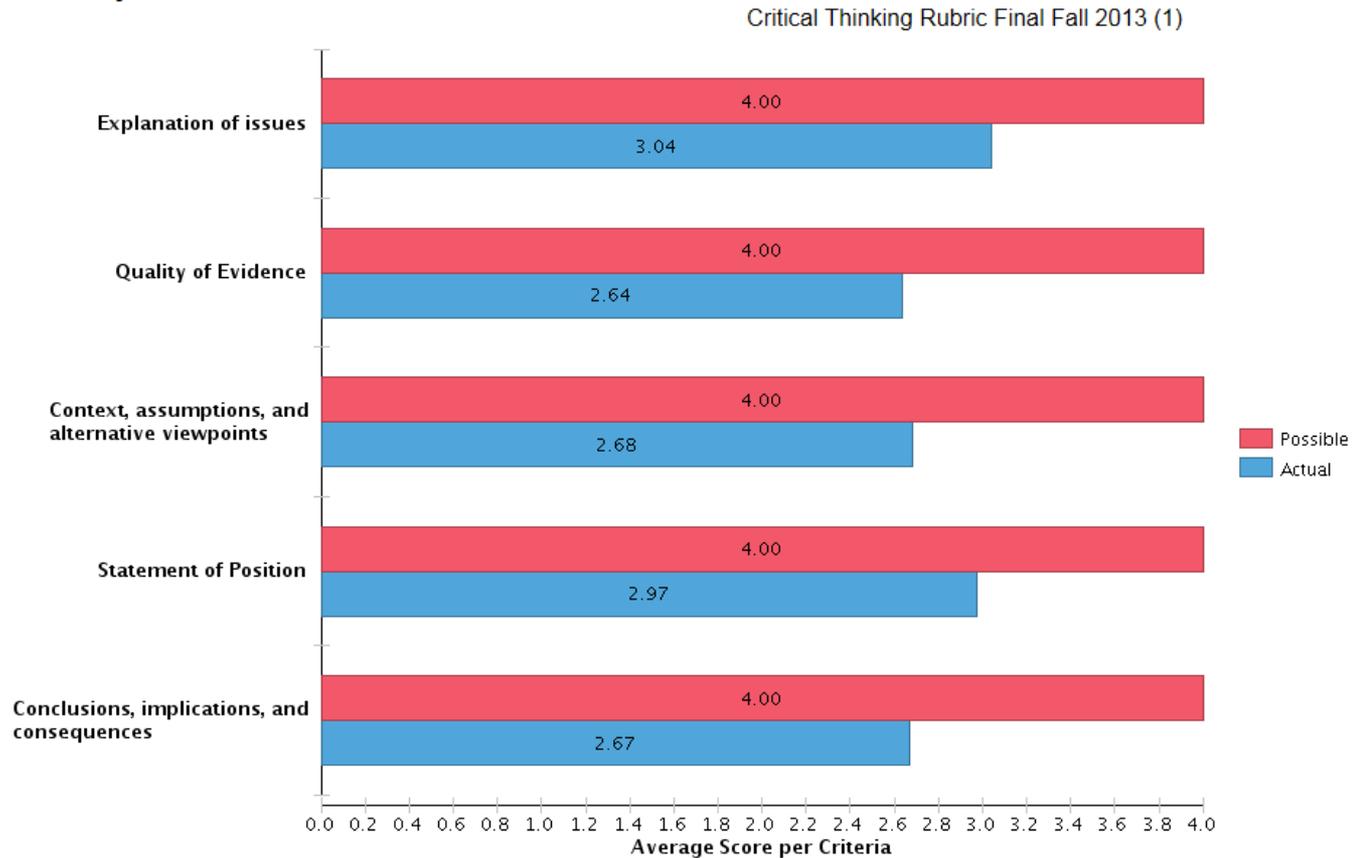
## Rubric Overall Performance

Points Possible: 20.00



# Rubric Analysis

## Rubric Analysis



# Frequency Distribution

## Frequency Distribution

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)

Criteria		4	3	2	1	Number Evaluation	Average	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Explanation of issues	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		27%	53%	16%	4%	77	3.04	3.00	3.00	0.77
Quality of Evidence	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		18%	39%	31%	12%	77	2.64	3.00	3.00	0.92
Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		15%	44%	36%	5%	75	2.68	3.00	3.00	0.79
Statement of Position	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		25%	49%	23%	3%	75	2.97	3.00	3.00	0.77
Conclusions, implications, and consequences	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		8%	56%	31%	5%	75	2.67	3.00	3.00	0.70



# **Critical Thinking Upper Division Non-GE Assessment using Blackboard Outcomes**

**ILO Subcommittee  
Spring 2014**

**California State University, East Bay**

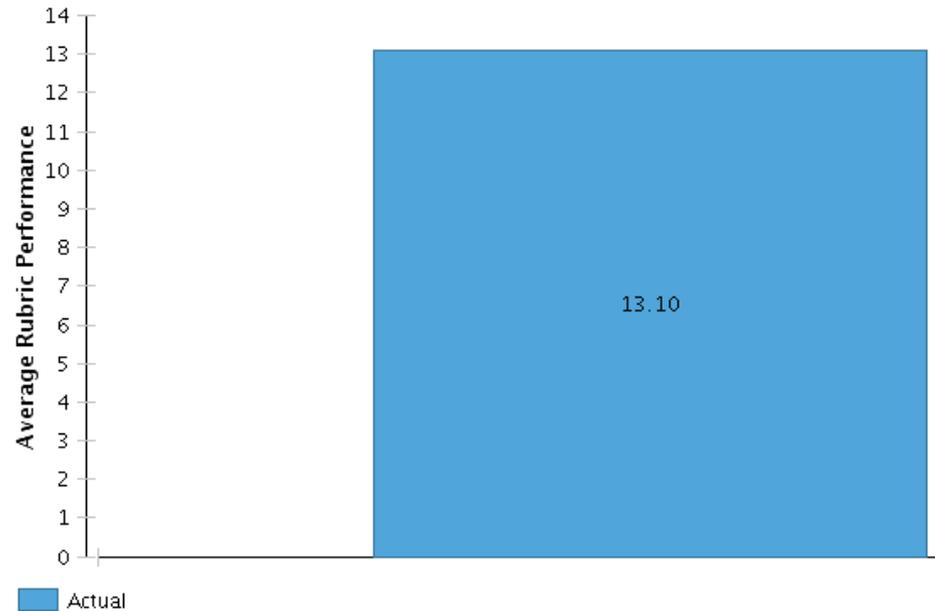
# Rubric Overall Performance

## Overview

Current Instrument Name CTAP Upper Div Critical Thinking Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Name Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Description  
Total Evaluations 101  
Begin Date Jan 1, 1970  
End Date May 5, 2014

## Rubric Overall Performance

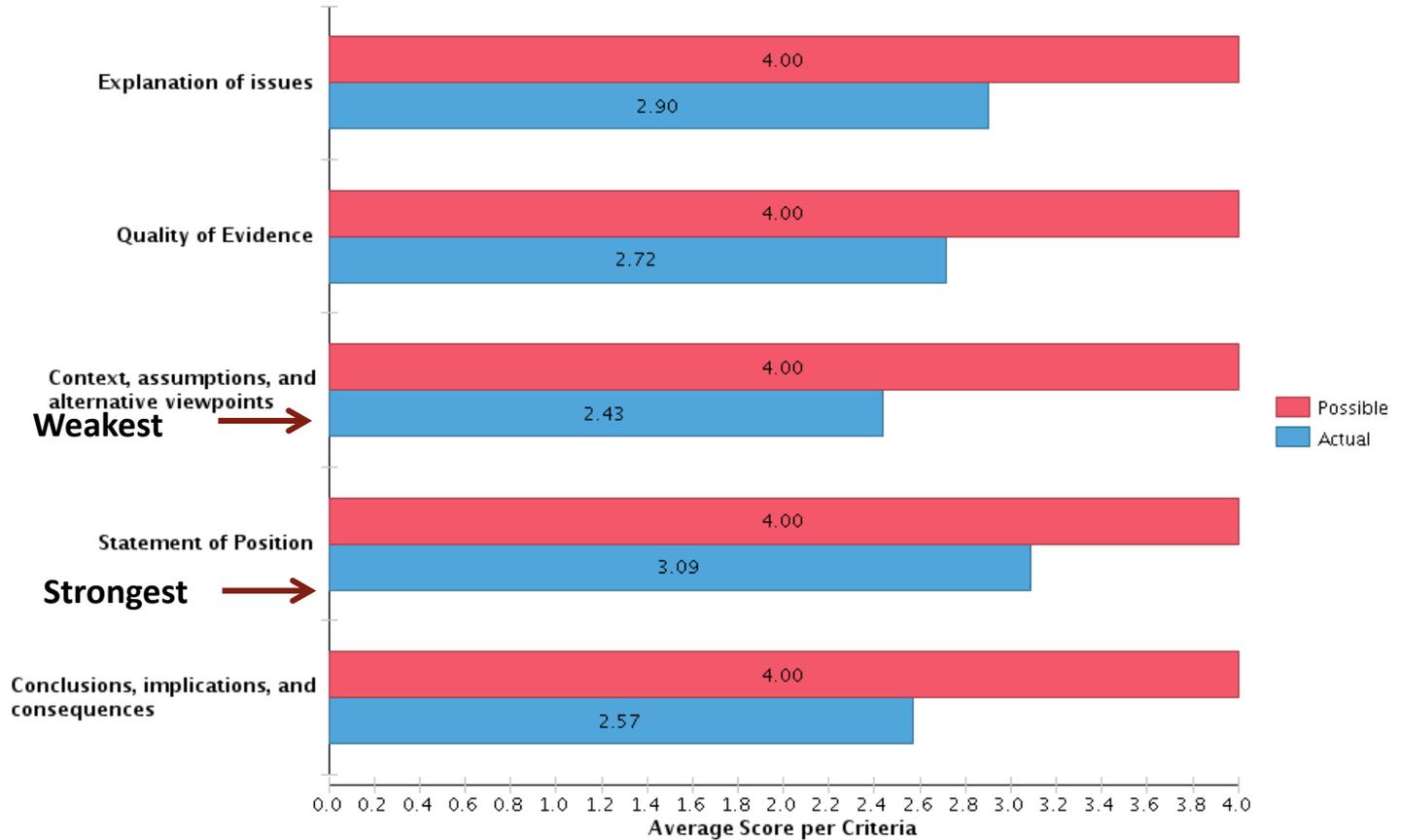
Points Possible: 20.00



# Rubric Analysis

## Rubric Analysis

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)



# Frequency Distribution

## Frequency Distribution

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)

Criteria		4	3	2	1	Number Evaluation	Average	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Explanation of issues	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		29%	38%	27%	6%	100	2.90	3.00	3.00	0.89
Quality of Evidence	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		21%	44%	19%	15%	99	2.72	3.00	3.00	0.97
Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		14%	34%	34%	18%	92	2.43	2.00	2.00	0.95
Statement of Position	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		37%	43%	12%	8%	100	3.09	3.00	3.00	0.90
Conclusions, implications, and consequences	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		18%	34%	35%	13%	100	2.57	3.00	2.00	0.93

# Rubric Overall Performance Comparison

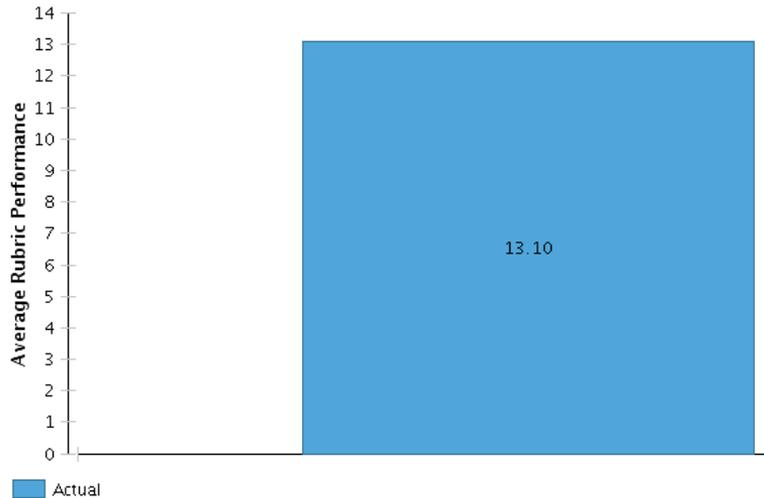
## Upper Division Non-GE

### Overview

Current Instrument Name CTAP Upper Div Critical Thinking Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Name Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Description  
Total Evaluations 101  
Begin Date Jan 1, 1970  
End Date May 5, 2014

### Rubric Overall Performance

Points Possible: 20.00



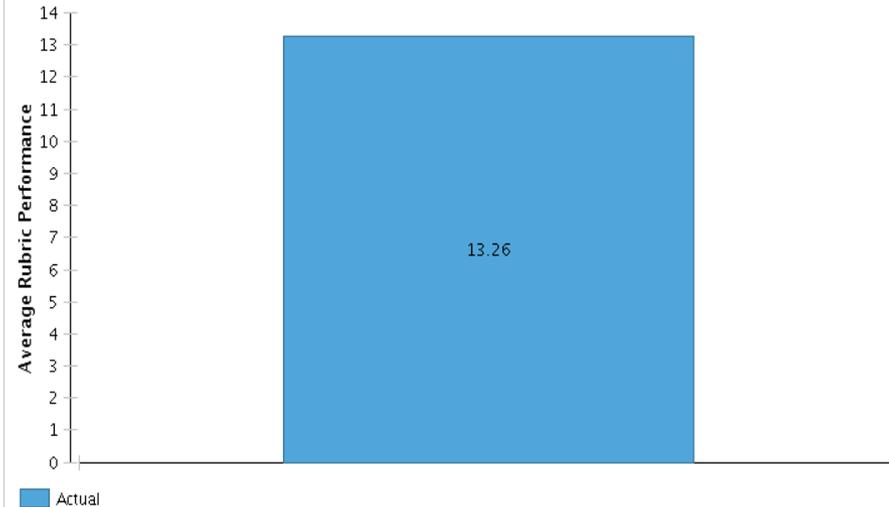
## Upper Division GE

### Overview

Current Instrument Name CTAP Upper Div GE CT Fall 2013  
Rubric Name Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)  
Rubric Description  
Total Evaluations 77  
Begin Date Jan 1, 1970  
End Date Apr 2, 2014

### Rubric Overall Performance

Points Possible: 20.00

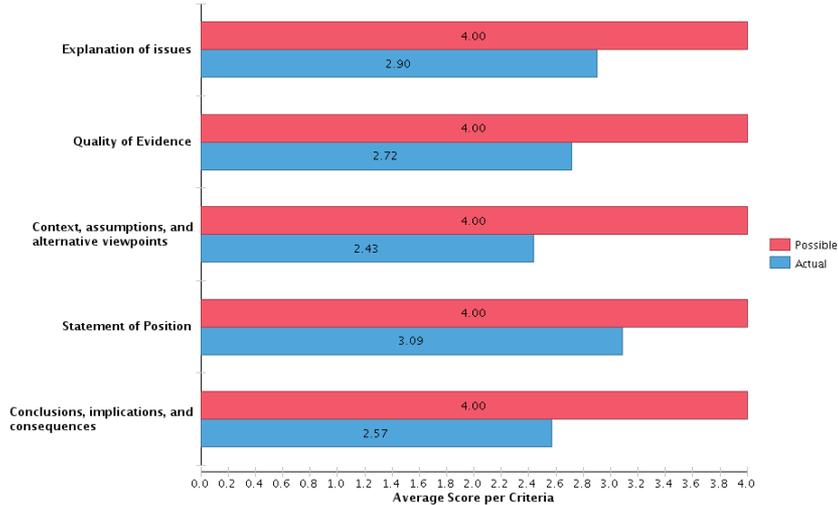


# Rubric Analysis Comparison

## Upper Division Non-GE

**Rubric Analysis**

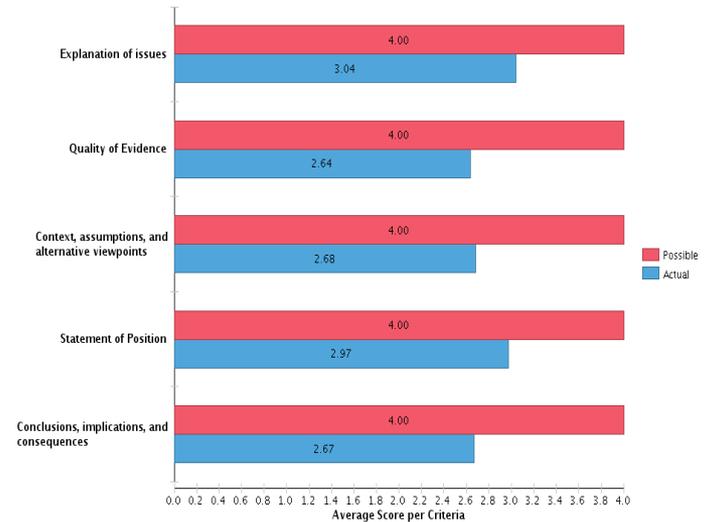
Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)



## Upper Division GE

**Rubric Analysis**

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)



# Frequency Distribution Comparison

## Frequency Distribution

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)

Criteria		4	3	2	1	Number Evaluation	Average	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Explanation of issues	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		29%	38%	27%	6%	100	2.90	3.00	3.00	0.89
Quality of Evidence	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		21%	44%	19%	15%	99	2.72	3.00	3.00	0.97
Context, assumptions, and alternative viewpoints	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		14%	34%	34%	18%	92	2.43	2.00	2.00	0.95
Statement of Position	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		37%	43%	12%	8%	100	3.09	3.00	3.00	0.90
Conclusions, implications, and consequences	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		18%	34%	35%	13%	100	2.57	3.00	2.00	0.93

## Frequency Distribution

Critical Thinking Rubric Final Fall 2013 (1)

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Explanation of issues	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
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Quality of Evidence	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
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Statement of Position	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		25%	49%	23%	3%	75	2.97	3.00	3.00	0.77
Conclusions, implications, and consequences	Points	4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00					
		8%	56%	31%	5%	75	2.67	3.00	3.00	0.70

**What was gained that will help you close the loop for your program's annual CAPR report?**

*Some faculty integrated project into their program report.*

- Department using the current or modified version of CT rubric and/or Blackboard Outcomes for assessment
- Have a better general understanding of assessing ILOs and SLOs
- Participation in CTAP project recognized as a contribution for CAPR report
- More knowledgeable about Blackboard Outcomes as a department assessment tool future
- Will be comparing ILO CT rubric to department CT rubric
- If asked as a lecturer to contribute to CAPR report, would be prepared to do so

**What was gained that will help the assessment of student learning as well as other educational processes?**

*A broad variety of curriculum design, pedagogical, and assessment approaches were gained.*

- Rubric provided a standard, consistency
- Helped to grade papers more consistently
- Continuing to use existing or modified rubric for course assignment(s).
- Revised assignments to be more detailed and intentionally aligned to outcomes and that matched rubric
- Have a broader understanding of CT and ways to assess critical thinking beyond essays
- Deepened understanding of how students develop CT skills and how students also benefit from more explicit modeling of thinking processes
- Encouraged faculty reflection on a multidisciplinary approach to assignments
- Now incorporating more elements of CT in course
- Created argument primer to help students structure arguments
- Going to pilot a research emphasis in next course
- Student feedback was that they had a clearer understanding of the assignment
- On assignment, students did better in group assignment than individual work

“Publishing a rubric for the students, suggests that there is a standard in the department. This can assist the students in feeling that grading is not arbitrary and they can expect consistent evaluations across the department.”

**Critical Thinking Assessment Project Summer 2013 – Spring 2014  
Summary End of Project Faculty Reflections**

“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.”

**What specific changes do you recommend to the critical thinking rubric?**

*Most faculty recommended changes to the original rubric.*

**Rubric changes**

- Add writing criteria
- Tie-in creative or innovative thinking and analytical thinking
- Creative projects are closer to CT as they are making an original case for a claim
- Emphasis on research and information not really measuring CT; would remove information literacy (evidence gathering)
- CT is more than gathering facts or critiquing or criticizing; it’s about showing our assumptions and defending why we think what we are thinking
- Still grappling with the general difficulty of rubrics; scale seems inflexible; suggest break down the task/skill even further for more accuracy – but adds more rows

**All-campus versus discipline/assignment specific**

- Consider discipline specific rubric
- Okay as a broad rubric; difficult to apply across departments – no perfect rubric for all
- Re-frame for a specific assignment
- Give faculty more flexibility for grading purposes
- Mostly fits my assignments but believe a challenge in arts, music, dance
- Too broad in its current form – would tailor for specific assignments

**General Comments**

- Use this feedback from faculty to close the loop
- Should continue using; worked in fall
- Perhaps we could use a template to be modified without losing the essential criteria
- Provide a “how to” to tailor rubric to be able to sync to assignments

“I am still interested in exploring what creative thinking is, not only because it appears in the ILO, but also because I believe it has everything to do with an agile, innovative and solutions-driven mindset.”

**Critical Thinking Assessment Project Summer 2013 – Spring 2014  
Summary End of Project Faculty Reflections**

The CT rubric as it is now is, in general, okay, but I still feel that it is too strongly biased toward the social sciences at the expense of the arts. Theater, art, and music can incorporate critical thinking into its productions as profoundly as any other field; it just commonly does so in different ways. I wish our approaches would have been better heard or more respected in the process of creating the CT rubric this year.”

**What else would you like to share?**

*Most faculty valued changes to the original rubric.*

- Had a positive experience;
- Enjoyed working with faculty and other departments and
- Appreciated understanding how faculty applied rubric and assignments to their courses
- Value rare conversations with peers about shared approaches
- Still a lot of work to do to understand what CT is
- Learning critical thinking requires a sounding board
- The rubric is important, but if overly complex, departments will not adopt
- It’s helpful to have a transdisciplinary rubric designed for many assignments
- There is a need for more assignments across the curriculum that encourage both creative (new, original, innovative) and critical (logical, well substantiated, insightful) thinking at the same time.

*“Rubrics take the mystery out of outcomes.”*

*“Students need more concrete tools to help them with abstract skills like critical thinking.”*



# **Closing the Loop on Assessment of Critical Thinking CSUEB ILO Assessment Team: Process & Findings**

**Sally Murphy**

**Senior Director, Undergraduate Studies & General Education  
California State University, East Bay**

# CSU East Bay Institutional Learning Outcomes



The California State University East Bay Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) express a shared, campus-wide articulation of expectations for all degree recipients. Graduates of CSUEB will be able to:

- **think critically and creatively and apply analytical and quantitative reasoning to address complex challenges and everyday problems;**
- communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others;
- apply knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities;
- work collaboratively and respectfully as members and leaders of diverse teams and communities;
- act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels;
- demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study.

## 2013-14 Critical Thinking Competency

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- 2013: Pilot of new rubric to assess first-year critical thinking outcomes
- 2013-14: One year pilot with 19 faculty teaching upper-division GE and/or upper-division courses in the major with a critical thinking learning outcome (using Blackboard Outcomes electronic learning assessment platform)
- 2014: Current pilots with College of Business and College of Education & Allied Studies assessing upper division work using CT rubric

# Iterative Collaborative Process

**CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC**  
for more information, please contact [rubric@csueastbay.edu](mailto:rubric@csueastbay.edu)



**Definition:**  
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.  
*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a score to any work sample or relation of work that does not meet benchmark (all one) and performance.*

Capstone 4		CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric suggested changes 9/16/13			CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and analyzed in context.	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.		
<b>Evidence</b> <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i>	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretative evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretative evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis of a topic.	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Milestone 3</b>	<b>Milestone 2</b>
<b>Influence of context and assumptions</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and several relevant contexts.	<b>Explanation of issues</b> Explains issues (background, knowledge) for full understanding of topic. Logically ties points together.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description <b>**leaves some terms underlined, ambiguous, unexplained, boundaries undetermined, and/or</b>
<b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is investigated, taking into account the complexity of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Other points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, and complexity of a relevant point of view is synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	<b>EVIDENCE</b> Provides evidence in support of a position. <b>EVALUATES QUALITY OF EVIDENCE</b> Influence of context and assumption Grapples with alternative viewpoints, uncertainty, and contradictions Identifies and analyzes assumptions and/or weaknesses in position Student's position (perspective, viewpoint, thesis/hypothesis)	<b>Milestone 1</b>	<b>Benchmark 1</b>
<b>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</b>	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.	Conclusions in light of information, and related outcomes (implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.	<b>CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric 10/5/13</b>		

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem(s) to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding.
<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 information from appropriate source(s) for an adequate analysis or synthesis.	Provides little 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.	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.
<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.



**Do we interpret this column as a slight improvement over Missing? Or does this column include that category? 1**

**1. Clearly, concisely, logically, and succinctly explains issues/problem(s) for full understanding of topic.**

**and briefly describes thesis and steps to prove it.**

**Logically ties points together by posing relevant and creative statements or questions about them.**

**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.

# Results

## Freshman

Critical Thinking Rubric: first-year competency*				
	1 Novice	2 Developing	3 Proficient	4 Advanced
Issue/problem is stated	Issue or problem lacks description or clarification	Issue or problem is stated but not clearly limited to scope of essay	Issue or problem is clearly stated with clear description and clarity	Issue of problem is clearly stated with a clear content that provides scope of the essay
Clear statement of writer's position on the issue/problem	Difficult for the reader to understand the writer's position	Writer's position is discernable but not clearly stated	Writer's position is very clearly stated	Writer's position is clearly stated and limits of that position are clearly articulated
Careful and effective use of argument strategies and evidence	Little or no evidence is used and/or no argument is advanced for the student's position.	Argument is missing or weak. Evidence is provided but is not focused on specific claims.	Argument is clear and evidence supports the claims of the argument.	Argument is clear and evidence provides strong support for the claims.
Quality of the sources of information	Since little or no evidence is used, there are few or no sources to judge.	Sources are cited but writer offers little evaluation of their credibility, or no justification for its use.	Sources are cited and evaluated. Evidence is relevant to claims and interpreted reasonably.	Sources are evaluated and reasons provided. Evidence is strongly relevant. Interpretation and use is provided and justified.
Awareness of writer's assumptions and/or assumptions of others	Little or no indication that the writer is aware of his/her assumptions or the assumptions of others.	Writer identifies some of her/his assumptions or some of the assumptions of others but does not use that information to strengthen the arguments advanced.	Writer clearly articulates some of his/her assumptions and the most obvious assumptions of others. Effectively uses the information to strengthen own argument or weaken the arguments of others.	Writer clearly articulates his/her relevant assumptions and the relevant assumptions of others. Uses the information strategically and ethically to strengthen own argument or weaken the arguments of others.
Writer is aware of and can describe conclusions, consequences, or implications that are the likely result of the problems/issues stated.	Writer does not describe the relationship between the problems/issue stated and any conclusions, consequences or implications. OR Writer inaccurately describes the relationship between causes and effects.	Writer provides a limited description of possible relationships between problems/issues stated and a few of the possible conclusions, consequences or implications.	Writer clearly describes the relationships between problems/ issues stated and the obvious and most likely conclusions, consequences, or implications.	Writer clearly describes the relationships between and among problems/ issues stated and clearly explains both obvious and less obvious conclusions, consequences, or implications.

\*This is a first draft of an effort to take the Values Rubric for Critical Thinking and expand the "benchmark" level to provide more useful feedback to and differentiation among freshman year papers from a critical thinking course. Using the unmodified Values Rubric scoring gave all students a score of 1.

## Upper Division

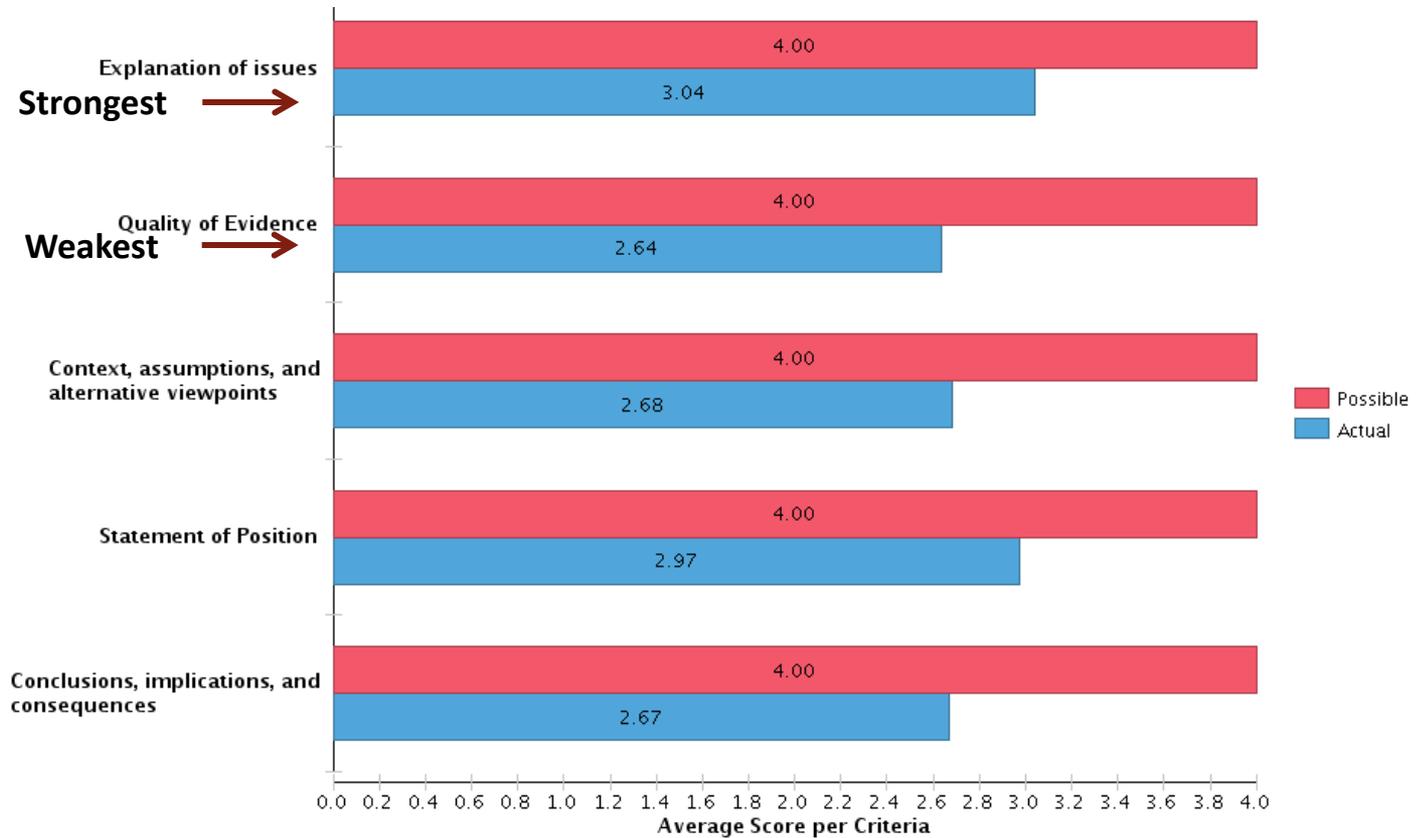
Critical Thinking Assessment Project  
Rubric Fall 2013

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
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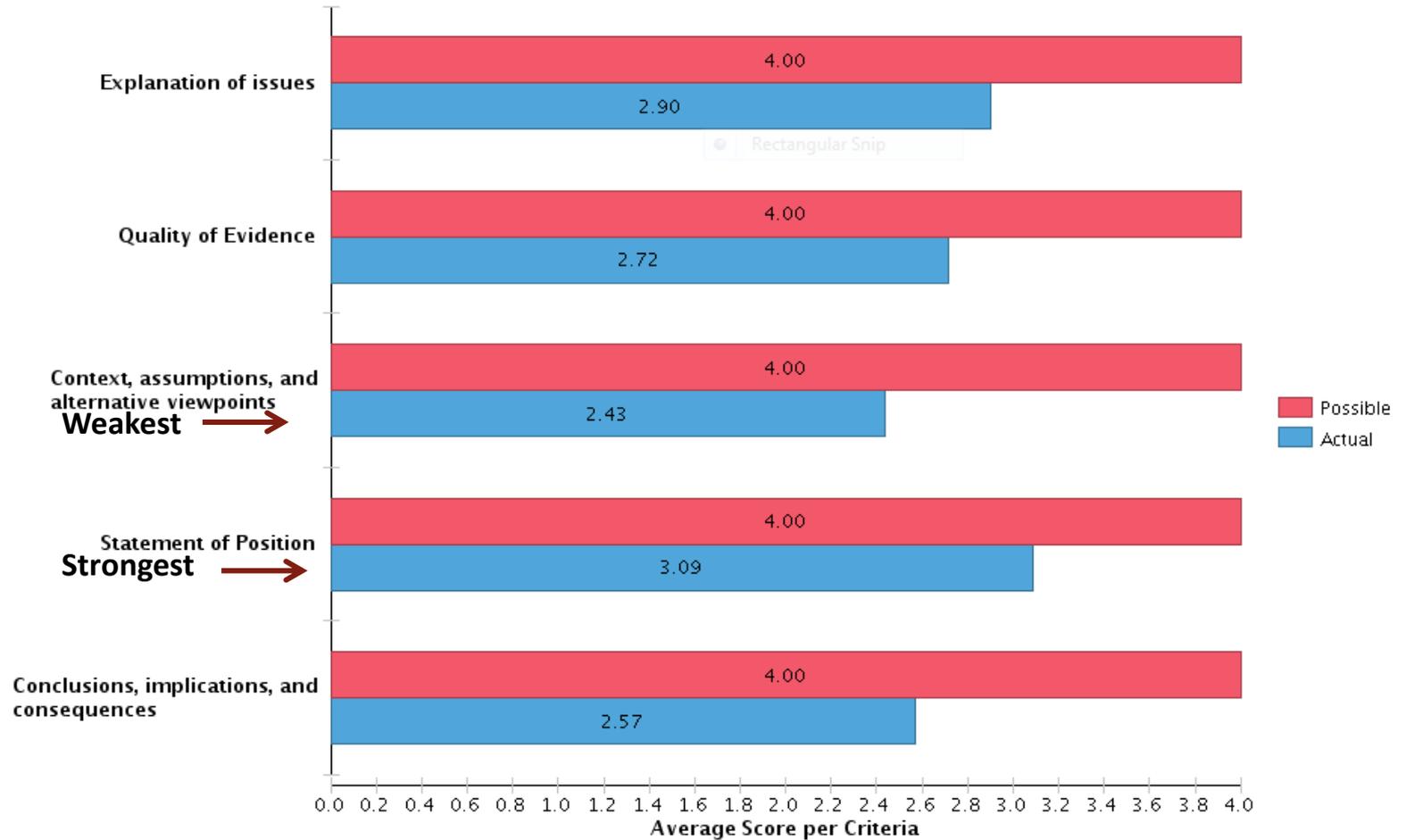
- 2.16
- Rubric revisions

- 2.65 GE, 2.74 Other
- Faculty recommendations

# CT Rubric Evaluation Results for GE Assignments



# CT Evaluations Results for Non-GE Assignments



# Findings

---

## **Importance of:**

- Curriculum mapping
- Involving faculty in all steps of the process
- Familiarizing faculty with the rubric before creating the assignment
- Designing well-crafted assignments
- Sharing rubric with students – impacts student learning and quality of assignments produced

## **About the Process:**

- Electronic learning assessment process+ ongoing support+ collaboration helped make assessment process engaging and relevant to faculty; faculty spread the word
- Enhanced teaching and learning
- Faculty collaboration experienced as faculty development; appreciated learning about critical thinking across disciplines
- Mixed results about applicability of one rubric across disciplines

# Closing the Loop on Findings

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## Next Steps:

- Report findings to all faculty
- Faculty meet to discuss curriculum
- Faculty development /reference tools for assignment design
- Further revision of rubric for specific disciplines



# **Closing the Loop on Assessment of Critical Thinking CSUEB ILO Assessment Team: Process & Findings**

**Sally Murphy**

**Senior Director, Undergraduate Studies & General Education  
California State University, East Bay**

May 30, 2014

David Baggins  
Professor, Political Science  
California State University, East Bay

Dear David,

Please accept our appreciation for your participation in the Critical Thinking Assessment Project through the 2013-2014 academic year.

Your contribution included participating in workshops, collaborating across campus in the development of a shared rubric for assessment of the Institutional Learning Outcome of critical thinking, developing a course assignment demonstrating the critical thinking competency, and using the University's new Blackboard Outcomes assessment platform to apply the critical thinking rubric to sample assignments.

You also participated in campus-wide discussions and a survey to analyze the results, developed recommendations for improvements, and participated in the CSU Northern California Spring Symposium on the Assessment of Core Competencies.

Your pioneering efforts significantly contributed to the University.

Best Regards,

Donna Wiley  
Senior Director, Graduate Studies & Academic Programs

Cc: James Houpis, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Kathleen Rountree, Dean, CLASS  
Kim Geron, Chair, Political Science



# **Engaging Faculty in Developing and Applying a Campus-Wide Rubric for Assessing Critical Thinking**

**Tamra Donnelly, Academic Programs & Accreditation Specialist**

**Sarah Nielsen, Department of English**

**Julie Stein, Instructional Design Specialist**

**California State University, East Bay**



# Our Bridge to Assessment

## Our Objective is to:

Provide you with some ideas to consider as you build your process for assessing Institutional Learning Outcomes and WSCUC core competencies using the strengths of your campus community

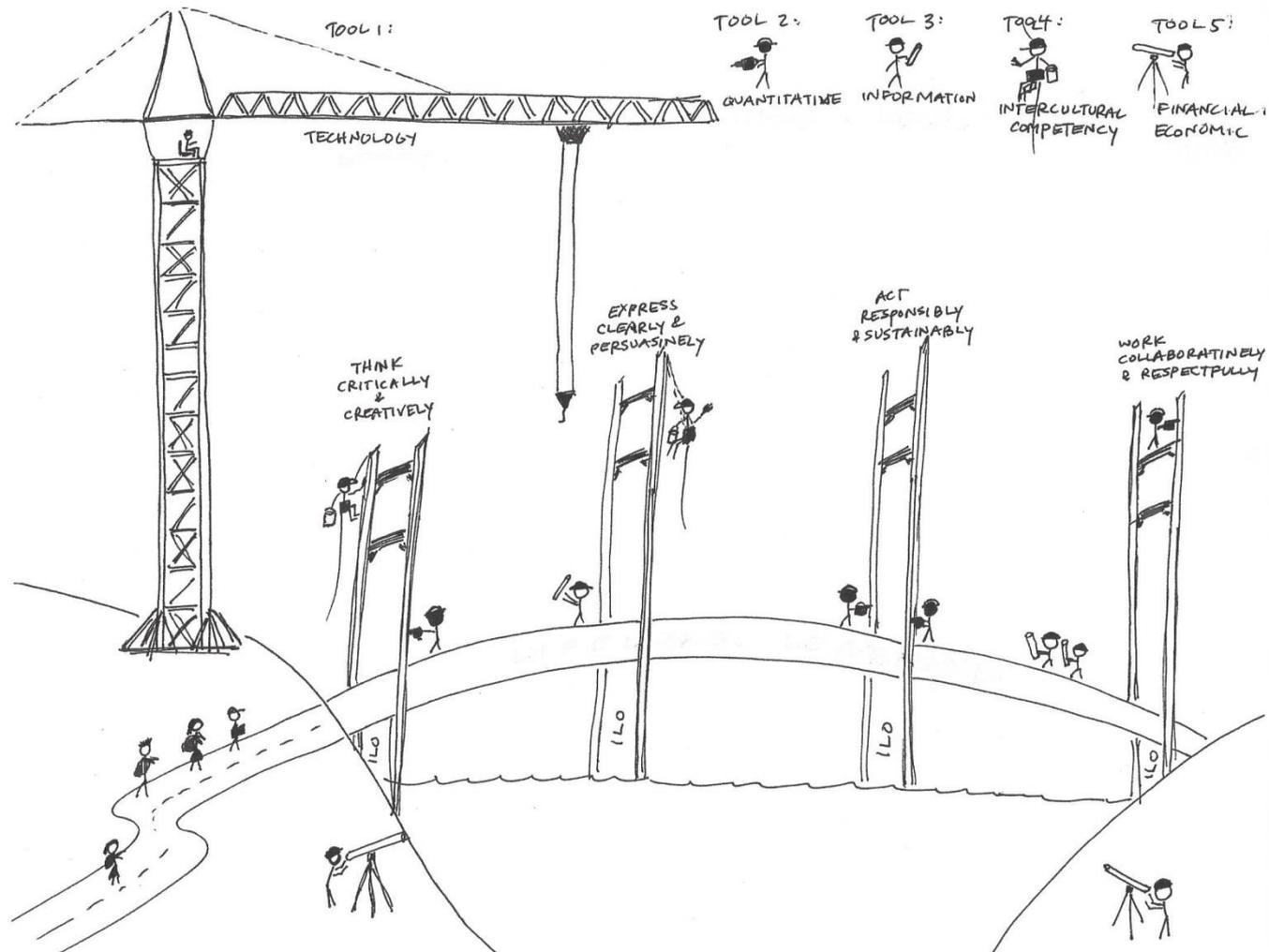
## Topics

- Context
- Process
- Point / Counter-Point
- Your questions



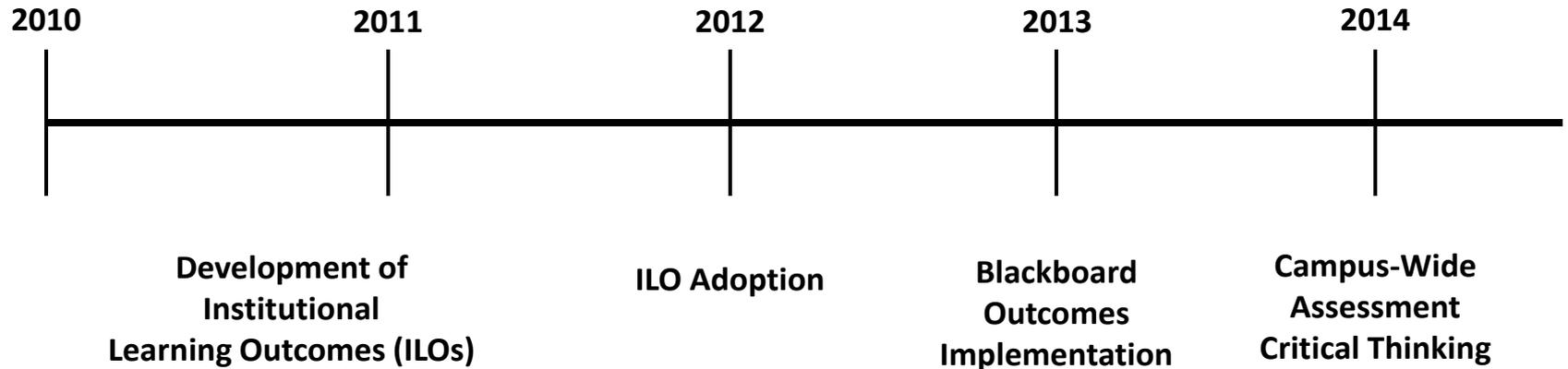
# CSU East Bay

## Building Institutional Learning Outcomes





# CSU East Bay Institutional Learning Outcomes Timeline



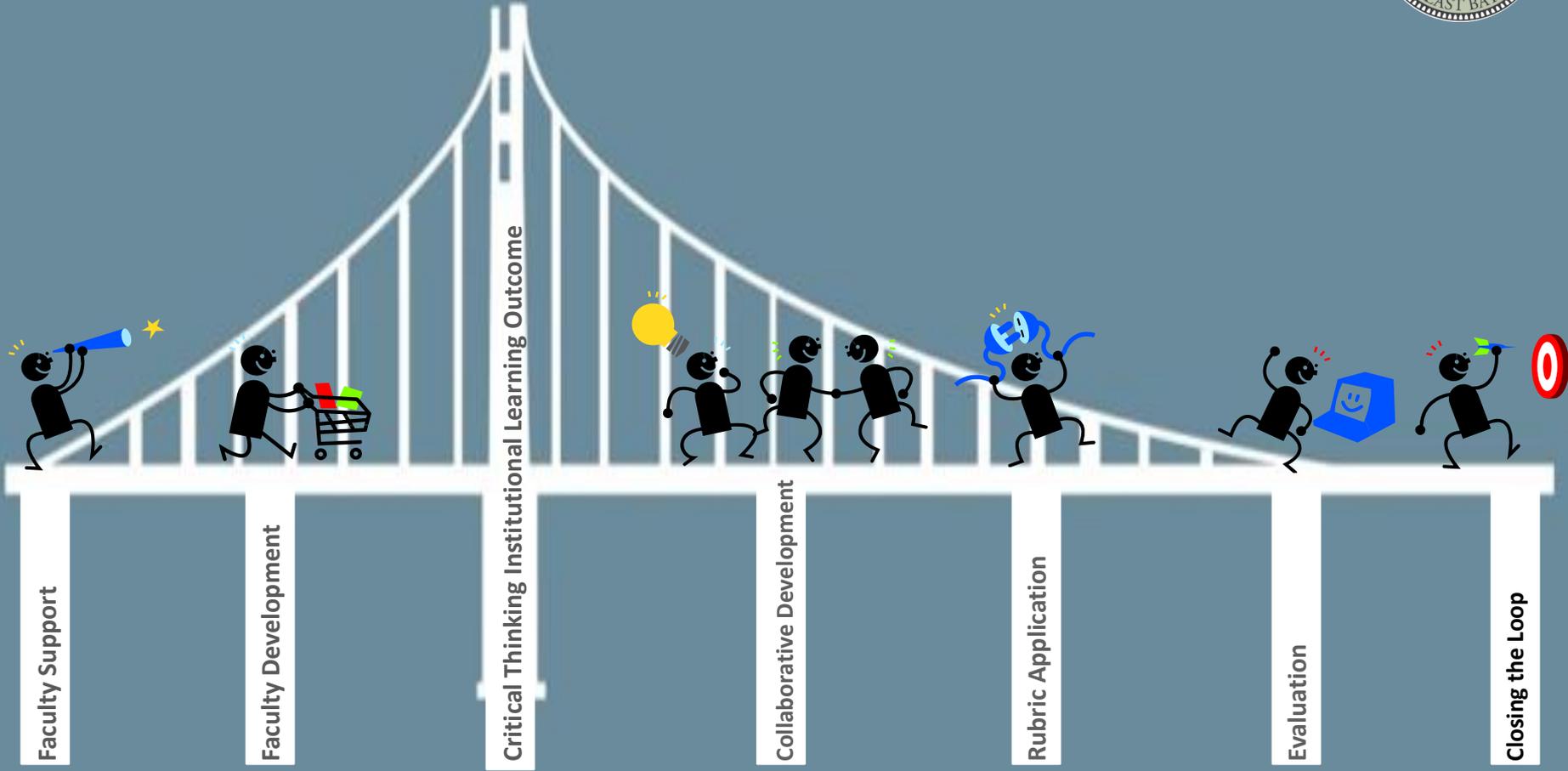


# CSU East Bay

## Institutional Learning Outcomes

The California State University East Bay Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) express a shared, campus-wide articulation of expectations for all degree recipients. Graduates of CSUEB will be able to:

- **think critically and creatively and apply analytical and quantitative reasoning to address complex challenges and everyday problems;**
- communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others;
- apply knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities;
- work collaboratively and respectfully as members and leaders of diverse teams and communities;
- act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels;
- demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study.



# Freshman Level Expanded Rubric

Critical Thinking Rubric: first-year competency*				
	4 Advanced	3 Proficient	2 Developing	1 Novice
<b>Issue/problem is stated</b>	Issue of problem is clearly stated with a clear context that provides scope of the essay	Issue or problem is clearly stated with clear description and clarity	Issue or problem is stated but not clearly limited to scope of essay	Issue or problem lacks description or clarification
<b>Clear statement of writer's position on the issue problem</b>	Writer's position is clearly stated and limits of that position are clearly articulated	Writer's position is very clearly stated	Writer's position is discernable but not clearly stated	Difficult for the reader to understand the writer's position
<b>Careful and effective use of argument strategies and evidence</b>	Argument is clear and evidence provides strong support for the claims.	Argument is clear and evidence supports the claims of the argument.	Argument is missing or weak. Evidence is provided but is not focused on specific claims.	Little or no evidence is used and/or no argument is advanced for the student's position.
<b>Quality of the sources of information</b>	Sources are evaluated and reasons provided. Evidence is strongly relevant Interpretation and use is provided and justified.	Sources are cited and evaluated. Evidence is relevant to claims and interpreted reasonably.	Sources are cited but writer offers little evaluation of their credibility, or no justification for its use.	Since little or no evidence is used, there are few or no sources to judge.
<b>Awareness of writer's assumptions and/or assumptions of others</b>	Writer clearly articulates his/her relevant assumptions and the relevant assumptions of others Uses the information strategically and ethically to strengthen own argument or weaken the arguments of others.	Writer clearly articulates some of his/her assumptions and the most obvious assumptions of others. Effectively uses the information to strengthen own argument or weaken the arguments of others.	Writer identifies some of her/his assumptions or some of the assumptions of others but does not use that information to strengthen the arguments advanced.	Little or no indication that the writer is aware of his/her assumptions or the assumptions of others.
<b>Writer is aware of and can describe conclusions, consequences, or implications that are the likely result of the problems/issues stated.</b>	Writer clearly describes the relationships between and among problems/ issues stated and clearly explains both obvious and less obvious conclusions, consequences, or implications.	Writer clearly describes the relationships between problems/ issues stated and the obvious and most likely conclusions, consequences, or implications.	Writer provides a limited description of possible relationships between problems/issues stated and a few of the possible conclusions, consequences or implications.	Writer does not describe the relationship between the problems/issue stated and any conclusions, consequences or implications. OR Writer inaccurately describes the relationship between causes and effects.

\*This is a first draft of an effort to take the Values Rubric for Critical Thinking and expand the "benchmark" level to provide more useful feedback to and differentiation among freshman year papers from a critical thinking course. Using the unmodified Values Rubric scoring gave all students a score of 1.

# Collaborative Process

**CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC**  
for more information, please contact value@csueastbay.edu



**Definition**  
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.  
*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a grade to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (all one) level performance.*

Capstone	Milestone	Benchmark
4	3	2
		1

CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric suggested changes 9/16/13				
Explanation of issues	Evidence	Influence of context and assumptions	Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)
Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, drawing all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretative/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoint is questioned thoroughly.	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.



CSU East Bay Critical Thinking Rubric 10/5/13				
Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described <b>REMOVED COMPREHENSIVELY &amp; REPLACE WITH ADEQUATELY</b> (not comprehensively), delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but <b>terms undefined</b> , ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
<b>Evidence</b>	Information is taken from <b>adequate</b> source(s) with enough interpretative/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoint is questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from <b>adequate</b> source(s) with enough interpretative/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoint is questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from <b>adequate</b> source(s) with enough interpretative/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoint is questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from <b>adequate</b> source(s) with enough interpretative/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoint is questioned thoroughly.
<b>Influence of context and assumptions</b>	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position.	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position.	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position.	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position.
<b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).
<b>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</b>	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.	Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order.

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 or alternative creative vision.



**Do we interpret this column as a slight improvement over Missing? Or does this column include that category? 1**

Criteria	4	3	2	1
<b>Explanation of issues</b>	Issue/problem(s) to be evaluated critically is stated clearly, logically, and described adequately, providing all relevant background information necessary for full understanding of topic. <b>Logically ties points together by posing relevant and creative statements or questions about them.</b>	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated, described, and adequate clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omission of relevant background information. <b>Questions or statements are clearly formed and relevant.</b>	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated, described, and adequate clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omission of relevant background information.	Issue/problem to be evaluated critically is stated, described, and adequate clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omission of relevant background information.

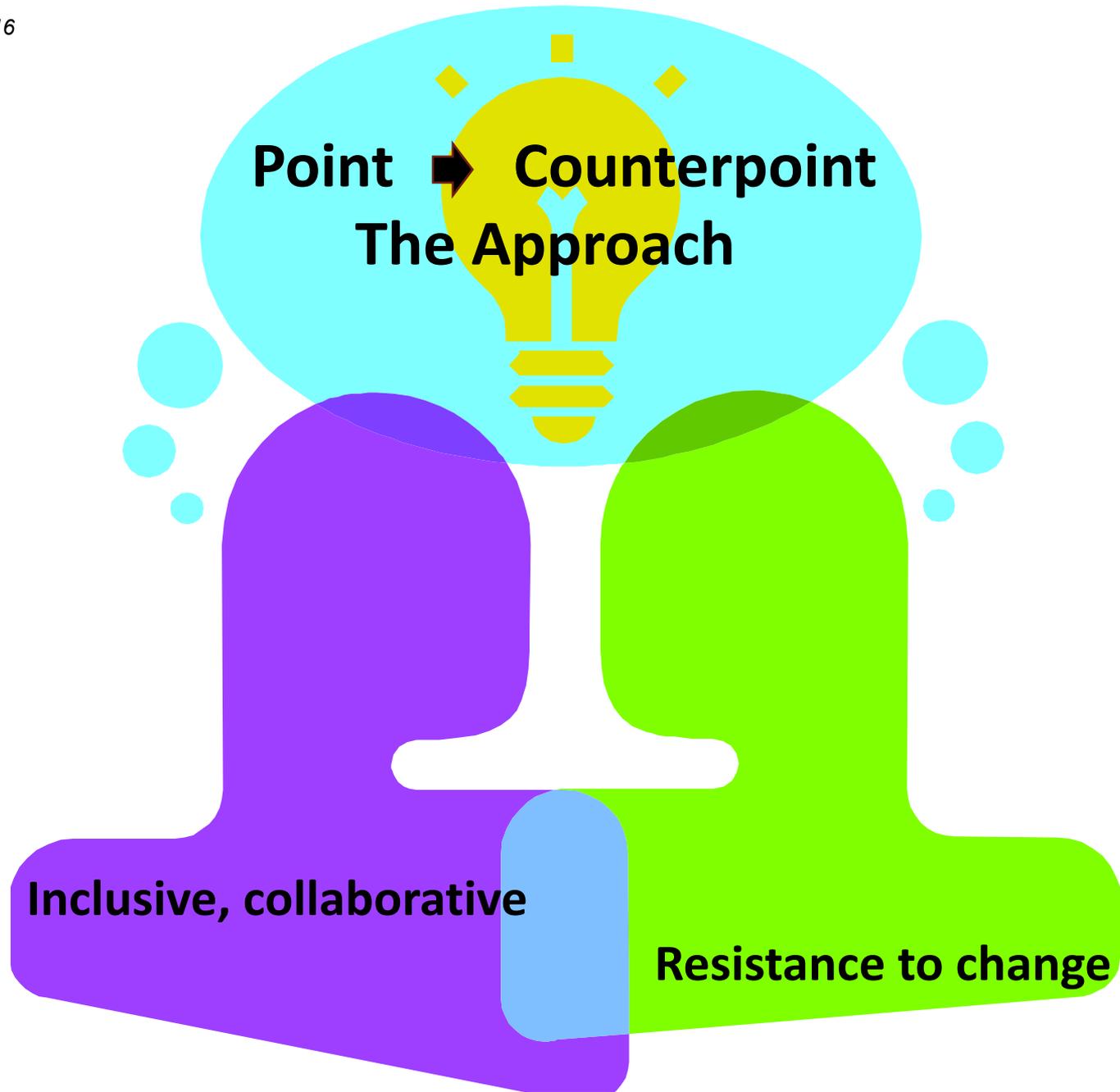
**1. Clearly, concisely, logically, and succinctly explains issues/problem(s) for full understanding of topic. and briefly describes thesis and steps to prove it.**

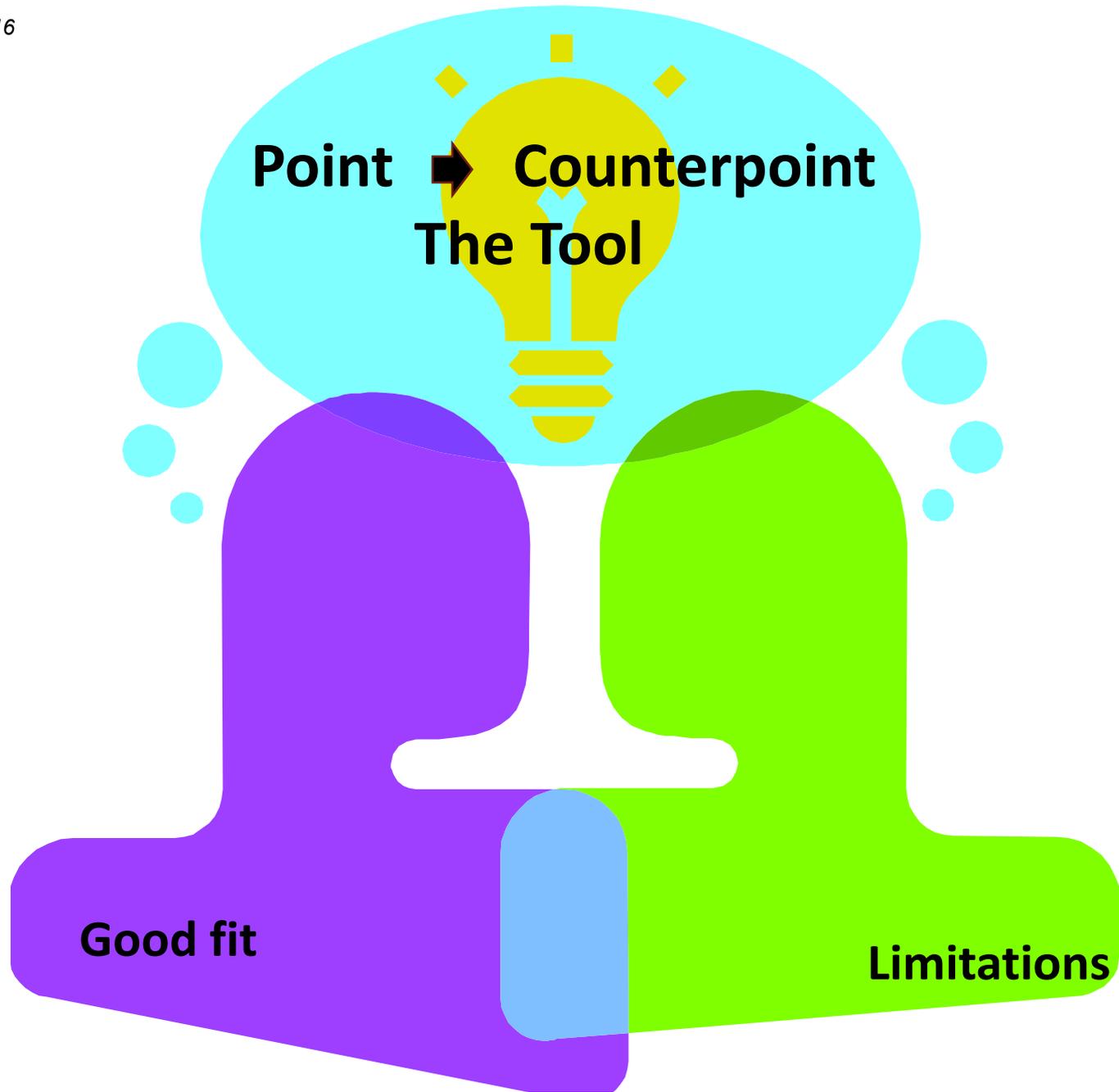
*Doris*

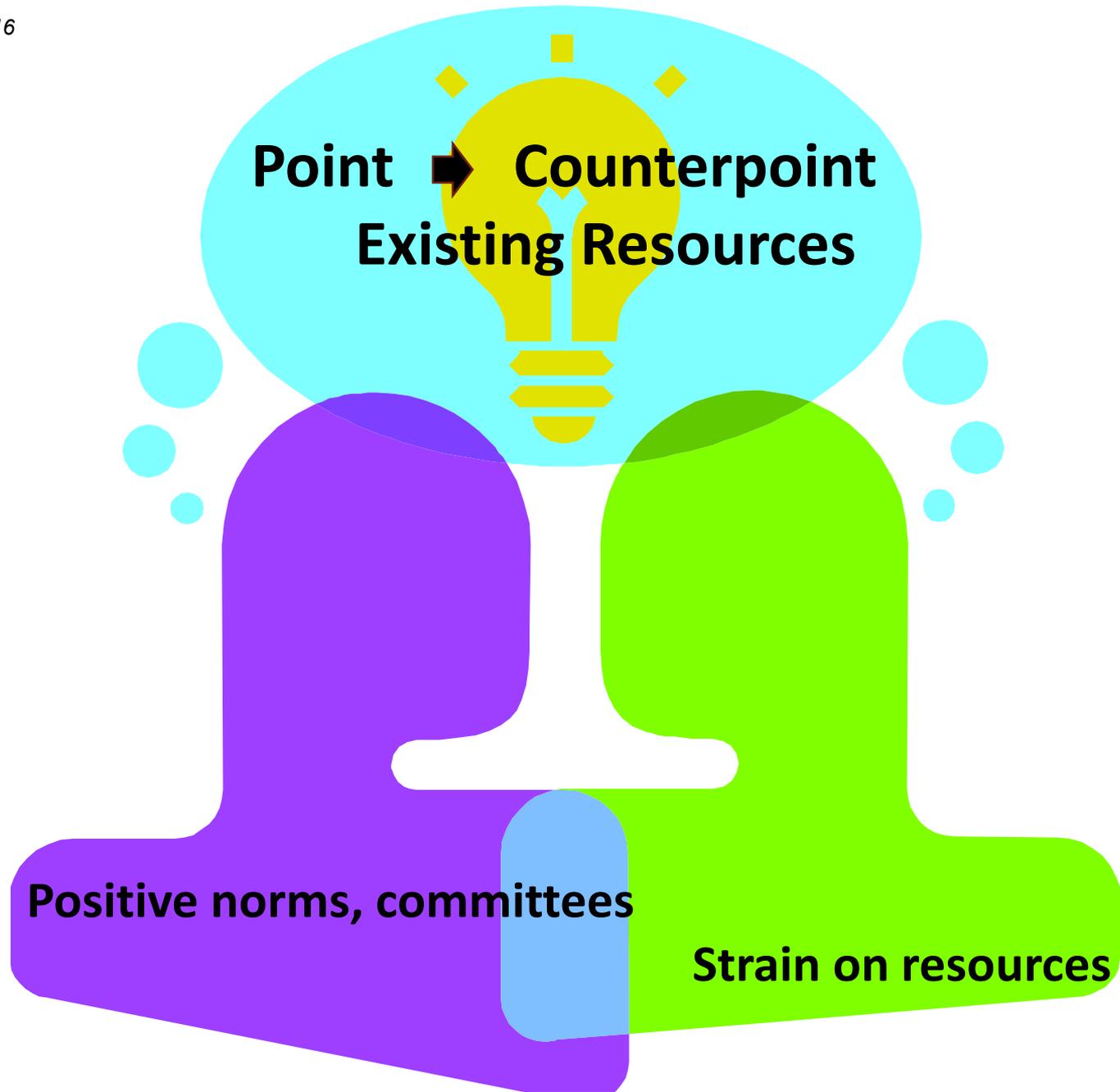
*Monique*

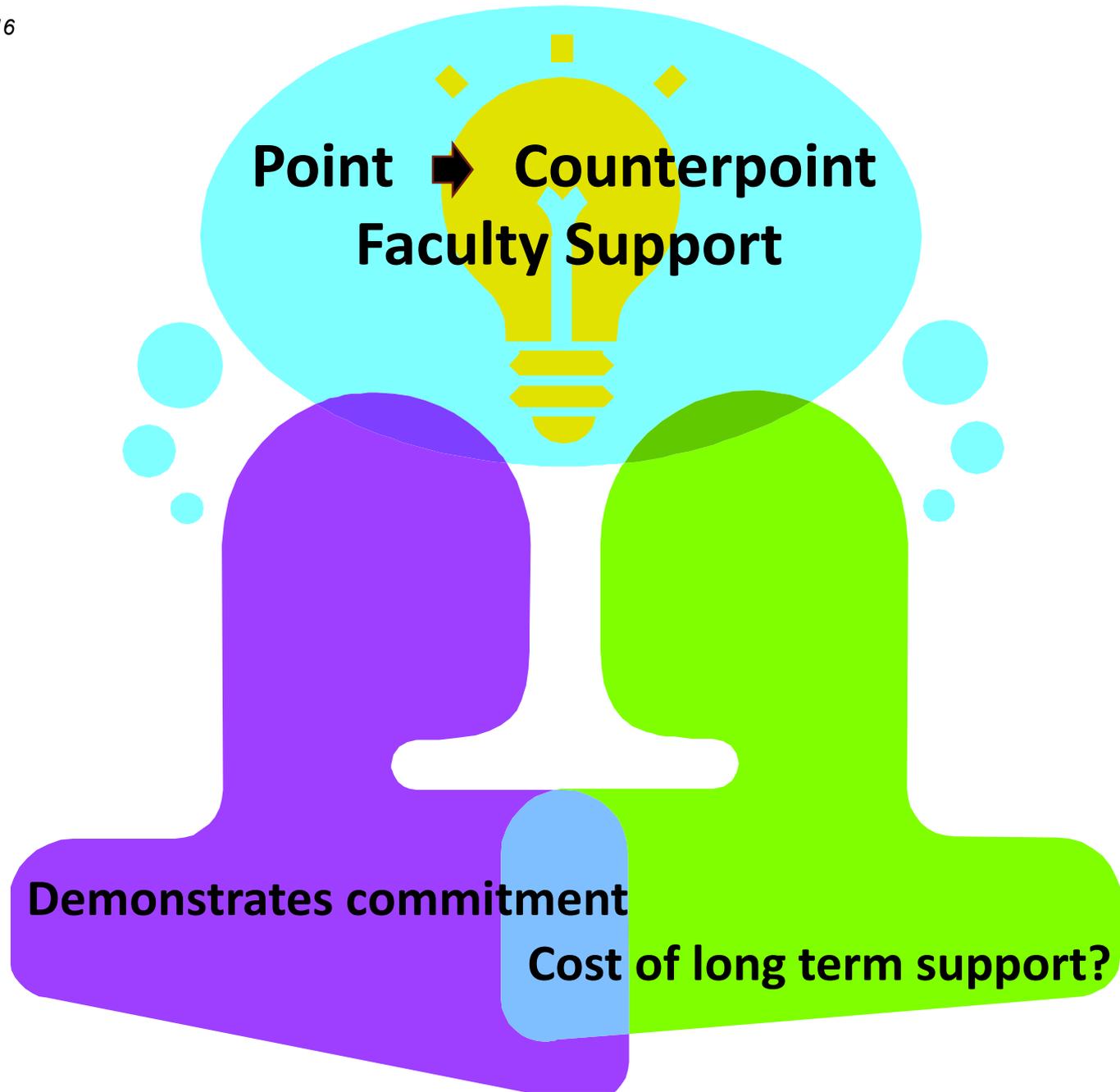
**Critical Thinking Assessment Project Rubric Fall 2013**

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	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.
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# Findings

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## **Importance of:**

- Curriculum mapping
- Involving faculty in all steps of the process
- Familiarizing faculty with the rubric before creating the assignment
- Designing well-crafted assignments
- Sharing rubric with students – impacts student learning and quality of assignments produced

## **About the Process:**

- Electronic learning assessment process+ ongoing support+ collaboration helped make assessment process engaging and relevant to faculty; faculty spread the word
- Enhanced teaching and learning
- Faculty collaboration experienced as faculty development; appreciated learning about critical thinking across disciplines
- Mixed results about applicability of one rubric across disciplines

# Closing the Loop on Findings

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## Next Steps:

- Report findings to all faculty
- Faculty meet to discuss curriculum and pedagogy
- Faculty development /reference tools for assignment design
- Further revision of rubric for specific disciplines

## Faculty Feedback

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“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.”





# **Engaging Faculty in Developing and Applying a Campus-Wide Rubric for Assessing Critical Thinking**

**Tamra Donnelly, Academic Programs & Accreditation Specialist**

**Sarah Nielsen, Department of English**

**Julie Stein, Instructional Design Specialist**

**California State University, East Bay**

## Engaging Faculty in Developing a Campus-Wide Rubric for Assessing Critical Thinking

WSCUC ARC 2014 Session C2: Campus-wide Approaches to Critical Thinking

<b>PROCESS COMPARISON CHART: LOWER-DIVISION AND UPPER-DIVISION ASSESSEMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING</b>		
<b>TYPE OF SUPPORT</b>	<b>LOWER-DIVISION PAPER-BASED</b>	<b>UPPER-DIVISION ELECTRONIC LEARNING ASSESSMENT</b>
<b>Faculty support</b>	Faculty support team formed to outline process and support systems. Team members included representatives from philosophy faculty, assessment, GE leadership, academic programs, instructional design, and technical support.	Faculty support team formed to outline process and support systems. Team members included faculty representatives from all colleges, assessment, GE leadership, academic programs, instructional design, and technical support.
<b>Faculty development</b>	See rubric application description below.	One-day workshop to review project, receive an overview of critical thinking from a faculty colleague in philosophy, norm critical thinking rubric, and draft rubric using ILO as a guide and AAC&U rubric as a template.
<b>Collaborative rubric development</b>	During regular GE Subcommittee meetings, the committee reviewed the AAC&U rubric and applied it to a small sample of papers from a lower-division critical thinking class. Based on the ensuing discussion, faculty revised the rubric to better fit our institutional situation and to better assess strengths and weaknesses of lower-division students.	Using the wiki feature in Blackboard, faculty further collaborated on the critical thinking rubric by expanding ideas, reflecting on the relationship of the criteria to their discipline, and providing feedback on each other's work. Work was reconciled by faculty support team for a more concise rubric and framing document.
<b>Rubric application</b>	One-day summer workshop with interdisciplinary faculty in which they reviewed the revised rubric and engaged in range-finding, note taking, evaluation and discussion of 44 of the 82 papers in the sample.	Faculty applied rubric in their course using the electronic learning assessment tool (Blackboard Outcomes; they received multiple methods of support including written instructions, videos, group and one-on-one training, and phone support.
<b>Evaluation of student work</b>	At the end of the one-day summer workshop, faculty discussed patterns in strengths and weaknesses seen in student papers. These patterns were communicated to the GE subcommittee as part of a longer assessment report on the lower-division critical thinking project.	General Education and Institutional Learning Outcome subcommittees evaluated critical thinking in student work from a variety of upper-division and major classes during committee meetings.
<b>Closing the loop</b>	Based on the one-day summer workshop, additional revisions to the lower-division critical thinking rubric were suggested. Example papers at 3 of the 4 levels of the rubric were identified. Plans for sharing results with the larger campus were proposed to the GE Subcommittee.	Current & planned activities include: faculty surveys; results shared in faculty meetings; process shared with other campus pilot teams; some faculty adopt rubric as-is or revised for department assessment; reference tools provided for assignment design; freshman assessment compared to upper-division assessment to identify and implement closing-the-loop activities.

**Engaging Faculty in Developing a Campus-Wide Rubric for Assessing Critical Thinking**

WSCUC ARC 2014 Session C2: Campus-wide Approaches to Critical Thinking

SELF-EVALUATION			
STATUS	YES	NO	IDEAS
<b>Our university has fully developed ILOs</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership support, faculty interest, community education</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on best practices and interviews with constituents</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty, student, focus groups to hone outcomes</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize draft of ILOs</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present draft to campus</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Senate and Presidential approval</li> </ul>			
<b>Our university has an assessment plan in place for ILOs</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic learning assessment platform selected</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ILOs mapped to curriculum</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term assessment infrastructure in ILO/GE Subcommittee</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and support provided</li> </ul>			
<b>Our university has developed a shared rubric to assess critical thinking</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with VALUE rubric for critical thinking and develop collaboratively</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply rubric to freshman level artifacts</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine rubric to expand achievement level 1</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply rubric to upper division work</li> </ul>			

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EAST BAY  
HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH PROTOCOL**

Use of this template (outline) is suggested when submitting a research protocol to the IRB. Your responses should be in terms which may be understood by a non-specialist.

Please complete **all** sections of this template. If any section is not applicable, list the heading and simply indicate "N/A".

**Instructions are bracketed and in italics. Please remove instructions prior to submission.**

**I. PROJECT TITLE:** USE OF BLACKBOARD OUTCOMES FOR PROGRAM AND INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING  
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT: PILOT AND IMPLEMENTATION

**II. DATE OF SUBMISSION:** MARCH 17, 2014

**III. STARTING AND ENDING DATES OF PROJECT START DATE:** APRIL 1, 2014 **/END DATE:** JUNE 30TH, 2015

**IV. INVESTIGATORS AND STAFFING**

**Primary Investigator:** Donna Wiley  
**Department:** Academic Programs and Graduate Studies  
**Phone number:** 510.885.3716  
**Email address:** donna.wiley@csueastbay.edu

**Please list all personnel (including P.I.) who will assist in conducting research in the table below:**

<b>NAME OF INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Donna Wiley, Sr. Dir. APGS	Sr Dir Grad Stud & Acad Prog	Project Director – Supervise personnel
Julie Stein	Instructional Design Specialist, APGS	Project Management – oversee project tasks
Tamra Donnelly	Acad Prgms & Accreditation Sp, APGS	Project Management – project support as needed
Jason Smith	Assistant Professor, Health Sciences	Lead PI for Health Sciences Implementation
Cynthia Andrzejczyk	Lecturer English, co-Faculty in Residence, Written Communication Faculty Learning Community (FLC)	Co-PI Written Communication FLC
Michael Rovasio	Lecturer English, co-Faculty in Residence, Written Communication (FLC)	Co-PI Written Communication FLC
Dennis Chester	Chair, English department	Co-PI Diversity and Social Justice FLC
Silvina Ituarte	Professor, Criminal Justice Administration	Co-PI Diversity and Social Justice FLC

**V. FUNDING SOURCES**

Academic Programs and Graduate Studies, California State University, East Bay

**VI. INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

Consultants and technology contacts from Blackboard who are representatives from the organization supporting the learning and assessment platform will be involved on occasion.

**VII. HYPOTHESIS**

**Problem & Background :** After a careful review of a number of electronic learning assessment platforms, CSU East Bay selected and installed Blackboard Outcomes in the Blackboard course management system in the summer of 2013. This was in direct 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).

Blackboard Outcomes allows groups of faculty to sample student work for program assessment as well as create reports for analysis and curriculum improvement. The system allows faculty to use an agreed-upon rubric to assess collected evidence and aggregate the results. These assessments can be done at both the program level (PLOs) and the institutional level (ILOs).

Written Communication and Diversity and Social Justice Faculty Learning Communities (FLC's) formed in the winter 2014 quarter to collaborate in developing and applying a rubric to assess student work for the presence of these competencies. Specifically, they formed to:

- Clarify the institution's expectations for student competencies in the area of diversity, equity, social justice and global perspectives
- Enhance faculty capacity to assess those competencies
- Identify strategies and pedagogies to develop diversity competencies across the curriculum
- Promote and sustain creative and scholarly approaches to diversity and multicultural competence
- Contribute to the ongoing enrichment of a Culture of Assessment

The faculty in the B.S. in Health Sciences program, in the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences, will be implementing Blackboard Outcomes for its assessment of its program learning outcomes.

**Goal #1:** During the spring 2014 quarter, the two FLC's will:

- 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 (at CSUEB ON April 18th) on Essential Learning Outcomes

**Goal #2:** Lead by Jason Smith, the Assistant Professor in Health Sciences and PI for this project, Health Sciences is assessing the Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) for knowledge integration and synthesis, the Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) for Thinking and Reasoning in these courses: HSC 2200, HSC 3300, HSC 3350, HSC 3550, and HSC 4550 using Blackboard Outcomes during the spring 2014 quarter.

**Importance of the Research:** While all universities are participating in some form of program level assessment to maintain accreditation, fewer are using a campus-wide shared electronic learning assessment platform such as Blackboard. Additionally, CSUEB is defining and assessing Institutional Learning Outcomes, also a process that few campuses are presently undertaking. This work will not only inform future CSU East Bay assessment and accreditation efforts but be of value to other CSUs and universities undertaking similar efforts. CSU East Bay, being early adopters of these two approaches, has participating faculty who are interesting in publishing about their contribution and work.

## VIII. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

This research is a case study of the assessment process that includes using learning and assessment technology, developing shared rubrics, developing assignments that align with the rubric criteria, assessing the assignments, and

closing the loop for improved student learning.

## **IX. HUMAN SUBJECTS INVOLVEMENT**

Students who are enrolled in courses instructed by faculty participating in the project during the research period.

### **A. DESCRIPTION**

Other than notification by participating faculty (see Risk Reduction section), students will complete their course work in the customary way.

### **B. SUBJECT POPULATION**

Students enrolled during the research period in courses that participating faculty have aligned to one or more learning outcomes.

### **C. RESEARCH MATERIAL**

Faculty will “align” a specific course assignment to one or more learning outcomes, and inform students that their work from that assignment may be sampled for assessment. They will also provide instructions to students to remove identifiers using the language identified below in the “Risk Reduction” section.

### **D. RECRUITMENT PLAN**

Subjects (students) are not specifically recruited. If they are in the course being assessed, their work may be sampled.

### **E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

N/A

### **F. POTENTIAL RISKS**

Student work that is sampled by Blackboard Outcomes for secondary assessment might include student names if students do not follow the instructions given by faculty. No students will be identified in any reports of any research results.

As part of evaluating the results of the student assessments, faculty will evaluate inter-rater reliability. During this process, they will be privy to other faculty names.

### **G. RISK REDUCTION**

Faculty using Bb Outcomes for secondary assessment are advising students that their assignment might be sampled for assessment. The following language will be provided in their syllabus to notify students:

*As part of the ongoing commitment to continually improving our instructional programs, CSUEB periodically conducts reviews of student work. This is only to help faculty improve the curriculum and will not affect your grades. To preserve your privacy, you are invited to submit your assignments without your name. Omitting your name assures that, while the instructor will be able to identify the work in this course as yours through the Blackboard submission process, additional reviewers will see the work as an anonymous submission.*

No faculty names will be used referencing inter-rater reliability if/when work is published. Additionally, faculty will be refreshed on the importance of professionalism and confidentiality when completing this analysis.

### **H. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Trained, authorized administrators will create assessment collections ensuring they are coded for student confidentiality.

No faculty names will be used referencing inter-rater reliability if/when work is published. Additionally, faculty will be refreshed on the importance of professionalism and confidentiality when completing this analysis.

## **I. RISK/BENEFIT**

This electronic process follows methods consistent with what faculty are already doing. Faculty are aware of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and already take measures to maintain student confidentiality using current assessment methods.

## **J. CONSENT ISSUES**

### **1. CONSENT PROCESS**

N/A

### **2. SPECIAL CONSENT PROVISIONS**

N/A

3. *[If request is being made to **WAIVE SOME OR ALL ELEMENTS OF INFORMED CONSENT FROM SUBJECTS OR PERMISSION FROM PARENTS**, explain why:*

N/A

4. *[If request is being made to **WAIVE DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT**, provide a justification for waiver based on one of the following two elements **AND** include a description of the information that will be provided to participants:*

N/A

5. *[If applicable, explain the **ASSENT PROCESS** for children or decisionally impaired subjects. Attach assent form.]*

N/A

6. *[If request is being made to **WAIVE THE REQUIREMENT TO OBTAIN ASSENT** from children age 6 or higher, or decisionally impaired subjects, explain why:*

N/A

## **X. OTHER**

*[If there are issues which the board should consider which do not fall into any category above, please describe them here.]*

N/A