

Are Our Students Thinking Critically? What We Learned by Assessing Our General Education Program

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Background

- First time we assessed our General Education program.
- We wanted to assess students across the college.
- The LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes are part of our General Education program goals.

Our Project

- The Gen Ed Committee decided to look at the ability of our students to think critically.
- Faculty were invited to submit all their student artifacts from one assignment.
- A Gen Ed Assessment Committee evaluated the work of students who had a minimum of 45 credits using the LEAP Value rubric.

Outcomes

Number of Artifacts Examined: 39

Critical Thinking Rubric (20 points)

	Mean (Average)	Median
Explanation of Issues	2.5	3.0
Evidence	2.2	2.0
Influence of Context and Assumptions	2.2	2.0
Student's Position	2.1	2.0
Conclusions and Related Outcomes	2.1	2.0
Total Score	10.7 or 54%	10.0 or 50%

Student work is in the “Developing” range.

Observations

- Assignments were not well thought-out
 - Did not ask students to think critically
 - Students answered what was asked
 - Some assignments simply asked students to restate information

What Does This Mean?

- What do we expect of our students?
 - Is *Developing* acceptable for community college students?
 - Is it appropriate to use the same rubric for two & four year institutes?
- Are students capable of critical thinking in introductory courses?

Next Steps

- Show students rubrics in advance.
- Offer faculty workshops:
 - Curriculum
 - Assignments
 - Bloom's Taxonomy
- The Gen Ed committee is reviewing all Gen Ed course syllabi to see if the learning objectives include critical thinking.

Thank You!