

**Student Learning Committee (SLC)**  
Minutes from Meeting on November 4, 2014

**Committee members present:** Kendrick Brown (chair), Nancy Bostrom, Keith Edwards, Polly Fassinger, Terri Fishel, Diane Michelfelder, Paul Overvoorde, Jaine Strauss

**Absent:** Jim Hoppe, Kimerly Miller, Student representatives yet to be named by MCSG.

**I. The committee reviewed all Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) data available for “Think Critically and Analyze Effectively” (TCAE).**

It’s important to note the CLA data included in our analysis are not longitudinal because those data are not available. The comparisons presented include members of the 2010 cohort as first year students and members of the 2009 cohort as seniors.

- CLA: The consensus is to keep all CLA data because it connects to our learning outcomes for Critical Thinking and it is one of the few “direct” assessment measures we have for institutional data.
- There’s a concern about using the same measures across multiple learning outcomes within critical thinking.
  - When we look at all of the evidence gathered for TCAE, we will have to decide how best to use the data.

**II. The committee reviewed data related to TCAE Outcome #4: “Students will be able to synthesize and critique relevant information to formulate defensible conclusions, build upon existing knowledge, or create novel ideas.”**

General comments about #4:

- Should “synthesis” and “critique” go together in one outcome, or should they be separate?
- How wide of a scope is “formulating a defensible conclusion”? Does solving a word problem count?
- If we do separate “synthesis” from “critique” we may want to consider “synthesis” as part of “gathering” information.

SLC considered each available survey item in turn:

- **CIRP and CSS:** how often in the past year did you support your opinions with a logical argument? (one question, slides 12 and 13)
  - Yes—keep this question.

- **CIRP and CSS:** how often in the past year did you integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences? (one question, slides 14 and 15)
  - The consensus was to keep this question, although it doesn't address the "critique" aspect of the outcome.
- **CSEQ:** In conversations outside the classroom...how often have you persuaded others...(one question, slide 16)
  - We will not use this information for TCAE, but it may be a good fit for "Communicate Effectively."
- **HEDS Senior Survey:** How often have you pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of a particular argument...(one question, slide 17)
  - Yes—keep this question.
- **HEDS Senior Survey:** How often have you argued for or against a particular point of view...(one question, slide 18)
  - We will not keep this question.
- **HEDS Senior Survey:** How often have you connected what you learned in multiple classes...(one question, slide 19)
  - Yes—keep this question. It helps us understand "synthesis", but not "critique." This could also possibly be used for part of Demonstrate Intellectual Depth and Breadth (DIDB).
- **HEDS Senior Survey:** To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development with respect to critical thinking...(one question, slide 20)
  - Yes—keep this question.
- **NSSE:** how much has your coursework emphasized synthesizing and organizing ideas...into new, more complex interpretations or relationships? (one question, slides 22, 23 and 24)
  - The consensus was to keep this information, although note that it is about inputs rather than outcomes. Inputs can provide context for the results and may help us with recommendations.
  - Differences between first years and seniors—could it be that seniors are more cognizant of what would "count" toward this question?
- **NSSE:** how much has your coursework emphasized analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience...? (one question, slides 25, 26 and 27)
  - The consensus was to keep this information, although note that it is about inputs rather than outcomes.
- **NSSE:** how much has your course work emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations? (one question, slides 28, 29 and 30)
  - We will not keep this information for TCAE #4.

- **RPS:** how challenging is determining whether a source is appropriate for an academic project? (one question, slide 31)
  - We will not keep this information for TCAE #4. It's at the lower end of "gathering." And it may become more challenging later in their time in college, as the problems become more complex—it's not necessarily a linear progression.
- **RPS:** how challenging is deciding what information from your sources to integrate into your project? (one question, slide 32)
  - Keep—this question helps us to understand "synthesis."

***Action Item: The Assessment Office should review previous outcomes to confirm how we've been noting inputs v. outcomes.***

### **III. SLC began its review of General Education Requirements (GER) assessment data and whether and how these data connect to learning outcome #1 for "Think Critically and Analyze Effectively" (TCAE): "Students should question both stated and unstated assumptions and explore issues from multiple perspectives."**

- Writing, slide 6: Integrate own ideas with those of others.
  - No, this is too much of a stretch for this outcome, but it may be a better fit with TCAE #4 and with the outcomes under Communicate Effectively.
- Quantitative Thinking (QT), slide 11: Association and causation—broccoli.
  - Yes—the open-ended responses at q. 17 help us to understand "stated and unstated" assumptions. However, it does not include "multiple perspectives." Q. 16 does not pertain to the outcome, but keep it as context for q. 17.
- QT, slide 12: Association and causation—orange juice.
  - Yes—keep this question.
- QT, slide 13: Estimation, modeling and scale—disaster planning.
  - No—this is a good question but not necessarily TCAE #1. May be better for TCAE 2.

***Action Item: The Assessment Office will prepare data for review at the next meeting.***

### **IV. Next Steps**

- For the next meeting, SLC will turn attention to results from the General Education assessments that connect to TCAE 2 and 3.