



## 2021 Summer Assessment Institute: Critical Thinking

### Overview

A faculty institute occurred in August 2021 to assess LCC's progress with transfer student learning outcomes in the area of Critical Thinking. The institute consisted of nine faculty participants. Following an open-call for applications, participants were selected by the Vice President of Instruction. Participants included **Brad Benjamin, Sue Bennett, Catie Graham, J Haynes-Hughes, Michaela Jackson, Abbie Leavens, Amber Lemiere, Allison McCrady, and Chris Tower.**

Faculty contributed 481 artifacts during the 2020-21 academic year from a variety of disciplines. Institute participants assessed a randomly selected sample set based on the Critical Thinking rubric developed by LCC faculty. A minimum of three faculty readers evaluated each artifact. Readers reviewed and scored artifacts using Portfolium, a Canvas plug-in purchased by LCC in spring 2021.

### Results

**Critical Thinking** - Apply objective, valid methods of inquiry and problem-solving to draw rational, ethical, and coherent conclusions.

Outcome	Average
A) Students will identify and define primary problems or issues.	3.6
B) Students will present relevant, accurate and objective information and will draw valid inferences from that information.	3.4
C) Students will use techniques or processes appropriate to the subject to analyze and make judgments.	3.4
D) Students will propose and evaluate solutions based on the criteria of logic, evidence, ethical principles, and coherence.	3.2
Overall	3.4

Notes: scores converted from a four to a five-point scale, in order to correspond with other LCC rubrics. When raters determined artifacts to be non-assessable, no score was recorded.

### Inter-Rater Reliability

Switching to Portfolium in a remote institute environment instigated a number of changes to the assessment process. As in years past, the institute began with an intensive norming (calibration) session to ensure that readers were interpreting the rubric in a similar fashion. Rather than monitoring the scoring in real time as in the past (not feasible in Portfolium), each artifact was assigned a minimum of

three readers. In the past, a third read only occurred when the scores of the first two readers differed by more than one point on the five-point scale. The norming session at the beginning did focus exclusively on calibrating scoring. It was suggested that for future institutes, if held remotely, a mid-point check-in session would be useful.

## Observations

- In comparison to past institutes, there seemed to be a good variety of disciplines represented. However, not all transfer programs/disciplines submitted artifacts (similar to years past).
- Readers had the most difficulty with assessing outcome D.
- Some readers commented that the quality of work was higher than expected.
- Readers could not score some of the artifacts submitted via Google, when permissions were not granted to view the information. In some cases, artifacts downloaded directly from Canvas appeared as links to Google docs.
- A small number of video artifacts were submitted, but could not be uploaded into Portfolium due to file size and other limitations.
- Student de-identification was not possible with artifacts uploaded directly from Canvas (unlike the past, when the de-identification would have occurred manually). The FERPA agreement for the institute that all participants must sign ensures confidentiality, but it is a deviation from past practice, when paper artifacts were manually de-identified.
- Portfolium can randomize sample sets, but no manual adjustments are possible. This created some issues in cases where several artifacts were inaccessible due to lack of Google document permissions.
- Portfolium does not have a mechanism to include prompts or criteria with each assignment. Although readers were provided with access to the Google sheet that contained the information, not everyone used it as a resource. For those who did use it, the consensus was that it was extremely useful to know which outcomes the submitting faculty member felt were relevant. Also, having the prompt related to the specific assignment was very helpful.
- In terms of providing evidence to substantiate arguments, some readers observed that many students seem to be doing the bare minimum. There is a clear difference between “I have evidence” and “I know how to use evidence in a meaningful way.” This is an area of growth for LCC.

## Recommendations

- Continue efforts to encourage faculty from all disciplines to submit artifacts. Although we are improving, there are still areas that don't participate regularly.
- Continue to encourage all faculty to use the Global Skills outcomes and rubrics in their classes. This not only helps build the pipeline for relevant artifacts, it also promotes student learning.
- Continue to request the prompt/assignment and relevant outcomes from all faculty who submit artifacts.
- Consider replacing the remaining locally developed outcomes and rubrics (Interpersonal Relations, Critical Thinking and Communication) with relevant American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics. The existing Quantitative Literacy rubric is based on the AAC&U's rubric of the same name.
- Create larger sample sets in Portfolium to account for technical glitches (such as the Google access issue).

- Develop a way to tag particular assignments in Canvas “in perpetuity” (by Global Skill/outcome) so they automatically get submitted for the summer institute.
- Explore adding the “student badging” module in Portfolium to encourage students to independently identify assignments that show evidence of meeting the different Global Skills.
- Revise message to faculty soliciting artifact submissions to more directly address the fears and hesitations faculty may have with submitting artifacts.

## **In-service Activity**

1. Brief report-out on findings of Critical Thinking institute (scores and observations about difficulty in assessing the outcomes as written). Lead: Wendy Hall.
2. All faculty: create an assignment relating to the focus of the coming year, Interpersonal Relations (“make an assignment that fits this objective”). Use LCC Interpersonal Relations rubric and compare to AAC&U VALUE rubric for teamwork. Session could also include creating an Interpersonal Relations assignment with backward intentions – to spark or insinuate conflict/tension and have them/us evaluate and reflect how they responded, grew, or used it to their benefit of overall growth/learning. Leads: Abbie Leavens and Brad Benjamin.
3. Breakout sessions ideas:
  - a. Amplifying Use of Discussion Boards (lead: Amber Lemiere)
  - b. Using Portfolium for Course and Program Assessment (leads: Michaela Jackson, Megan Moon, Sarah Griffith?)
  - c. Assessment 101 (lead: Wendy Hall)