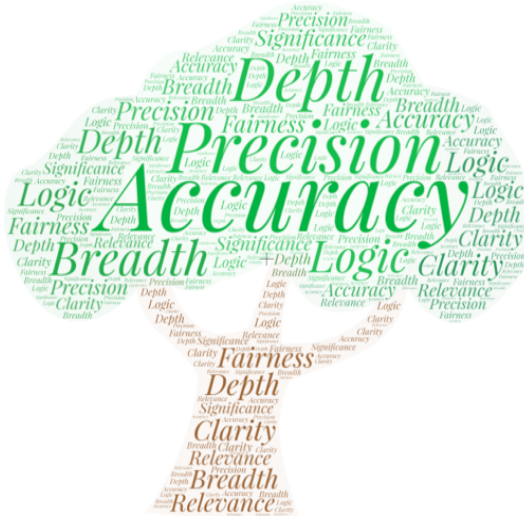


LEARNING TO ASSESS

Spring 2020

Critical Thinking

A Central and Unified Effort



Students bring unique experiences and understandings to PVCC. Here they encounter diverse learning opportunities that further challenge and deepen their thinking. Sometimes, for students, learning can seem disconnected across disciplines/departments and unrelated to daily life. In order to make learning relevant and integrative, students need a systematic way of thinking about the various subjects and problems they encounter. Facilitators need a clear and consistent language that reinforces sound reasoning and enhances understanding of the content. “We postulate that there are at least nine intellectual standards important to conducting affairs of everyday life”, which are clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness (Elder & Paul, 2008, *The Thinker’s Guide to Intellectual Standards: The Words That Name Them and the Criteria That Define Them*). Infusing these nine standards into the GEA rubrics makes critical thinking central to general education and fostering critical thinking becomes a unified effort.

Help students to ask better questions and reason as skilled thinkers. Here are some questions about questions from *The Thinker’s Guide to Analytic Thinking* by Elder & Paul.

Are the questions I am raising in this paper relevant? I am stating it precisely?

Am I phrasing the question in a loaded way? Am I taking for granted the correctness of my own position?

Am I in a position to answer this question? What information would I need before I could answer this question?



Assessment Labs:
Feb. 12, 3:00-4:00 pm
May 6, 2:00-3:00 pm
In the library

Psychology Department Collaborates to Improve Learning



Psychology faculty who teach PSY 101, Introduction to Psychology, collaborated on a common course assessment project during Fall 2019. Faculty measured students’ abilities on the learning objectives set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA). Pre-tests results showed that students scored lower in the areas of “working knowledge of psychological content domains” and “demonstration of psychological information literacy”. Faculty worked to bridge the gap between psychological concepts and life application in class discussions and highlighted classic Psychology experiments. Student scores dramatically improved and students reported higher levels of understanding and comprehension. Great work PSY 101 faculty!

Assessment *for* learning impacts everyone at the college and enriches learning for students, faculty, and staff while strengthening the organization. Assessment should be consequential and lead to improved student success. Learning facilitators at PVCC are expected to complete assessment projects annually and document the assessment using the forms in the GEA online tool.



Using the GEA Form to Follow the Assessment Process

PART 1: Describe the assessment plan including a clear purpose and a rationale.

5. Select your division
6. List the course you will assess. For example: ENG 101
7. Select the modality of the course (In person, Online, Hybrid)
8. Are you working with other instructors on this assessment project? If yes, explain. For example: You may be working on a common course assessment project that involves adjunct faculty who teach the same course will collaborate to improve learning across sections of a course.
9. Indicate if this is a General Education or Course Assessment project. A general education assessment uses one or more of the GEA rubrics and the 2,1,0 scoring system in the GEA online tool. A course assessment measures course competencies or other learning outcomes, the rubrics may or may not be applied, and scores are tracked using a separate tracking system such as an excel spreadsheet.
10. If this is a General Education assessment, select the rubric(s) you will be using.
11. What specific learning outcome will be measured?
12. Describe the purpose of the project and provide a rationale. For example: What problem are you trying to solve? How are you hoping to help students? What inspired you to focus on this particular area? Why is it necessary to improve learning in this area?
13. When do you plan to administer your assessment? For example: during week 8, Unit 3, informative and persuasive speeches, a pre at the end of lab 1 and a post at the end of lab 4, the cause/effect essay.

PART 2: Measure achievement of the learning outcome (pre), analyze results, and develop and implement strategies for improvement.

1. Summarize the results of the pre-assessment and described what you learned. For example, how was the average score of a particular dimension, what does the evidence suggest about students' level of understanding or ability to complete certain tasks?
2. Based on the results, what specific changes will you make to improve student learning? For example, how will you provide additional opportunities for students to practice, how could you redesign activities or modify learning conditions, what can be done to enhance students' understanding, or what additional resources at the college can be connected with to improve learning?

PART 3: Measure achievement of the learning outcome (post), analyze results, and reflect on instructional practices.

3. Summarize the results. Were the strategies effective for improving learning?
4. How will this assessment project inform your future practices? For example: Will you use this again? If so, how might you amend it? What your plans for continued growth? How will it inform program level improvements?