

General Education Strand Report: Critical Thinking

Strand Definition: Demonstrate skill in analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating.

Rationale: WCC has devoted a great deal of effort in trying to find an effective method for the assessment of critical thinking. This has proven difficult as no specific courses are grouped under the critical thinking strand. It is rather contended that all general education courses at the college fulfill this requirement. As such, the outcomes defined for this strand as well as the assessment method will need to be content neutral. After experimenting with externally and internally devised instruments, the college has decided to opt for the CAAP exam in critical thinking. The advantage of using this instrument is that it compliments our ongoing assessment process for English and Science which also use CAAP. In addition, this instrument provides a national mean for comparison unlike previous instruments.

Outcomes:

The outcomes are defined in terms of the ability of students to manage information in the activity of problem solving.

#1 Analysis: The student will be able to categorize information or separate information into component parts.

#2 Synthesis: The student will be able to recognize discrete elements of information as being related (for instance by subject or relevance to the task at hand).

#3 Evaluation: The student will be able to identify which information is relevant to the solution of a problem.

Standard of Success:

The assessment will be deemed successful if the WCC mean is equal to or exceeds one standard of deviation below the national mean.

Sampling Method:

CAAP Critical Thinking will be administered in classes or course sections throughout the college. Classes will be randomly selected from the General Education Curriculum. The goal is to have at least 100 students participate through this sampling method.

Timeline:

A pilot assessment will occur in the Winter 07 term, with assessment taking place every three years thereafter.