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Critical Thinking as Information Literacy: A Model for the Core Curriculum?

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Outline

- Core Curriculum/Revisions
- Description of Critical Thinking Skills
- Comparison of Georgia Southern University’s Critical Thinking & ALA’s Information Literacy Definitions
- Critical Thinking in the Core:
  - Georgia Southern University
  - Two other USG Universities:
    - North Georgia College & State University
    - Georgia College & State University
- Questions/Comments
- Lingering Questions
USG Core Curriculum

The following are specific Core areas:

- Area A1: Communication Skills
- Area A2: Quantitative Skills
- Area B: Institutional Options
- Area C: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics
- Area D: Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology
- Area E: Social Sciences
- Area F: Lower-Division Major Requirements
Background: Core Curriculum Revision 2010-2011

- All 4 -year institutions must make the following revisions:
  1. Develop learning outcomes and assessments plans for each area of the core. (Areas A-E)
  2. Incorporate the 3 new overlay requirements - US Perspectives (US), Global Perspectives (GL), and Critical Thinking (CT) - into the Core.
Description of Critical Thinking Skills:

- active, independent, and self-directed thinkers and learners who apply their thinking skills and innovation to solve problems.
- confront ambiguous situations and go beyond traditional approaches to devise more useful and favorable solutions.
- effectively identify, analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions.
- have the ability to consider and accommodate opposing points of view.
- have the ability to interpret inferences and develop subtleties of symbolic and indirect discourse.
- have the ability to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.
- have the ability to identify the audience, intent, value, and disciplinary perspective of potential sources of information.

Critical Thinking Assessment at Georgia Southern University

Critical Thinking SLO:

Students will interpret, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas using a logical and ethical framework.

Assessment of Critical Thinking SLO:

Proposal from the CCR Task Force stated critical thinking would be assessed in the Econ 2105 course, *Economics in a Global Society*

1. Faculty-designed multiple-choice test built around 5 case studies
2. Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal®
3. Still evolving
Comparison of Information Literacy & Critical Thinking

ALA’s Definition of Information Literacy:
“The ability to know when information is needed and to access, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically.”


Critical Thinking at Georgia Southern University:
“Students will interpret, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas using a logical and ethical framework.”

Critical Thinking in the Core: Seven USG Schools

Please refer to the chart on the handout
Questions/Comments:

- Should Information Literacy be emphasized in the core curriculum and its assessment?
- Can a one-course assessment plan adequately capture students’ knowledge of critical thinking/information literacy?
- Can a multiple-choice test adequately capture information literacy and/or critical thinking?
- Should there be multiple sites for assessing critical thinking and/or information literacy?
Lingering Questions:

- Should statements about information literacy be available at various university sites, such as academic and administrative units, for those universities that have information literacy as a key component of general education?
- Why is this information so difficult to find?