

*Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning
Template for Reporting Assessment Plans*

[Christopher Newport University]

Competency [Year(s) Assessed]	Definition	Standards	Description of Methodology
<p>Critical Thinking Cycle 1: Fall 2007/Spring 2010 Cycle 2: Fall 2011/Spring 2014</p>	<p>Critical thinking is using the basic skills of logical reasoning in natural languages, being able to analyze statements for consistency, implications, contradictions, and distinguishing fact from inference and argument from other discourse.</p>	<p>Students will take the ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) Critical Thinking Test, one of the most highly regarded critical thinking tests in the country. A resident critical thinking expert at CNU helped select the test because of its conceptual alignment with CNU's definition of the competency and because of its good psychometric properties. Additionally, the test offers national norms that will be used to determine a local standard.</p>	<p>A randomly selected sample of incoming freshmen take the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking Test the week before fall classes begin. ACT scores the tests. The scores of incoming freshmen are compared to national norms (although these norms are based upon sophomores from participating 4-year schools, not entering freshmen). The same students are asked to take the tests again as juniors in their spring term. It is expected that CNU upperclassmen will perform better on the measure than the national average and themselves as incoming freshmen.</p>
<p>Information Literacy Cycle 1: Fall 2007/Spring 2010 Cycle 2: Fall 2010/Spring 2013</p>	<p>According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL; 2000), information literacy "is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information (pg. 2)." CNU's Liberal Learning Council, the group that makes</p>	<p>CNU will use the data from multiple freshmen groups to help determine a standard for juniors. Experts in standard setting recommend using a combination of content expert judgment with impact data. Pertaining to CNU, faculty members of the Liberal Learning Council and librarians will review the items of the Information Literacy Test to set a</p>	<p><i>Instrument Selection:</i> The Information Literacy Test (ILT) is a computer-administered, norm-based test which allows for comparisons on information literacy mastery across universities. It consists of 60 multiple choice items: defining information (12 items); accessing information (19 items); evaluating information (19 items); and using information in an ethical and legal manner (10 items). Of the 60 items, 41 items assess knowledge; whereas 19 measure application. <i>Data Collection:</i> To assess changes in the information literacy of CNU students, a simple</p>

	<p>curricular decisions for this element of the curriculum, decided to adopt this definition of information literacy.</p>	<p>standard and then use the freshmen results (impact data) to fine tune the standard. This standard will be applied to the students' post-test scores.</p>	<p>pre-test / post-test design will be used. Freshmen will be randomly selected to take the ILT during freshmen orientation (pre-test). The testing sessions will require coordination between the Director of Assessment, IT services, faculty, and staff.</p> <p>During <i>University Assessment Day or Assessment Week</i>, all remaining students from the initial freshman cohort testing sessions will retake the ILT a second time (post-test). This assessment will occur during the junior year of the initial sample. Due to participant mortality (e.g., transfers, drop-outs, etc.), we expect a significant drop in size from our initial samples.</p>
<p>Oral Communication Cycle 1: Fall 2008/Spring 2011 Cycle 2: Fall 2012/Spring 2015</p>	<p>Effective oral communication is the ability to construct and present well-structured arguments that provide information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience using appropriate presentation skills such as eye contact, volume and articulation of voice, and nonverbal behaviors or gestures.</p>	<p>Classroom oral communication presentations will be evaluated in the areas of introduction of the oral presentation, the body of the presentation, the conclusion, and delivery of the presentation. Each of these traits is evaluated using a 4-pt scale: highly competent (4pts), competent (3pts), emerging (2pts), and unsatisfactory (1pt). In addition, an average across all traits will be used to determine overall performance. (This rubric can be provided.) Because students create and present their own speeches, the evaluation is considered a reflection of the students'</p>	<p><u>Pre-Assessment for incoming freshmen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select randomly approximately 150 freshmen to participate in this component of assessment (note, all students are required to participate in some area of liberal learning assessment) • Groups of 8 to 10 students will be grouped to a room, and each will present a 3-5 minute speech on the same prompt. • Approximately 12 Proctor-Raters will be trained on the rubric. Interrater reliability estimates will be calculated. <p><u>Post Assessment for juniors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing is done on a "junior assessment day" and involves the same students who took the pre-test as incoming freshmen. • Proctoring and logistics/procedures will be similar to that of the freshman testing. <p><u>Prompts for testing</u></p> <p><i>For incoming freshmen:</i> "The Common Reading focuses on service to community. What is your sense of your place in your community and your ability to make a difference?"</p>

		<p>proficiency in both constructing and delivering messages.</p>	<p><i>For juniors:</i>“How has your sense of your role in the community changed via your experiences in service learning at CNU (or via your service to your community/ or church)?”</p> <p><i>Instructions for both pre and post-tests will include:</i> "A well structured speech should include an introduction to gain your audience's attention and explain your topic, two or three main points with supporting evidence, and a conclusion to wrap it up."</p>
<p>Quantitative Reasoning Cycle 1: Fall 2008 /Spring 2011 Cycle 2: Fall 2011 /Spring 2014</p>	<p>At CNU quantitative reasoning (QR) is represented by an Area of Inquiry entitled “Mathematical Literacy” which consists of courses that introduce students to manipulative skills, elementary algorithms, and the modeling of real-world phenomenon.</p> <p>References to quantitative reasoning can be found at many levels of our guiding documents. The University anchors its curriculum in the principles of liberal learning. This general statement is elaborated in a document entitled <i>Principles of Liberal Learning</i>, which states “that students will solve problems using quantitative and qualitative tools.”</p>	<p>CNU will use the data from the freshmen to help determine a standard for juniors. Experts in standard setting recommend using a combination of content expert judgment along with impact data. Pertaining to CNU, science faculty members of the Liberal Learning Council will review the items of the Quantitative Reasoning Test to set a standard and then use the freshmen results (impact data) to fine tune the standard.</p>	<p>CNU will use the Quantitative Reasoning Test, an instrument originally developed at JMU, to assess QR. A group of science and math faculty members compared the objectives of CNU’s Mathematical Literacy area of inquiry to the specific items of several tests. The group concluded that the item-to-objective fit was best with JMU’s QR test. CNU uses the longitudinal value-added approach. A sample of incoming freshmen are tested using the QR and then, two-and-a half years later, are tested again on the same test.</p> <p>Approximately 10% (120) of the freshmen will be randomly assigned to take the QR test via the last two digits of their student IDs. Because the sample is derived by true random selection, it should be representative.</p> <p>At the time of post-testing, we anticipate between 70 and 90 of these students will still be enrolled at CNU. This drop off is due to attrition and transfer. These continuing students will be required to take the identical test as a part of a required Assessment Week during their junior year.</p> <p>Both pre-testing and post-testing are conducted via single settings.</p>

			<p>Students are required to take the post-test but are given a choice among testing times so they can select the testing option that best fits their schedule.</p>
<p>Scientific Reasoning Cycle 1: Fall 2008 /Spring 2011 Cycle 2: Fall 2011 /Spring 2014</p>	<p>At CNU scientific reasoning (SR) is represented by an Area of Inquiry entitled “Investigating the Natural World” which consists of courses that introduce students to natural sciences in the modern world. Both lecture and laboratory courses focus on how science is conducted and how scientific knowledge advances in individual fields. Students in these courses will understand the process by which scientists gain knowledge about objects, phenomena, the laws of nature, and the laws of the physical world. Natural sciences study the physical world and its phenomena.</p> <p>References to science reasoning can be found at many levels of guiding documents. The University anchors its curriculum in the principles of liberal learning. This general statement is elaborated in a</p>	<p>CNU will use the data from the fall 2008 freshmen to help determine a standard for juniors. Experts in standard setting recommend using a combination of content expert judgment along with impact data. Pertaining to CNU, science faculty members of the Liberal Learning Council will review the items of the Scientific Reasoning Test to set a standard and then use the freshmen results (impact data) to fine tune the standard.</p>	<p>CNU will use the Scientific Reasoning Test, an instrument originally developed at JMU, to assess SR. A group of science faculty members compared the objectives of CNU’s Investigating the Natural World area of inquiry to the specific items of several instruments. The group concluded that the item-to-objective fit was best with JMU’s SR test.</p> <p>CNU uses the longitudinal value-added approach. A sample of incoming freshmen are tested using the SR and then, two-and-a half years later, are tested again on the same test.</p> <p>Approximately 10% (120) of the freshmen will be randomly assigned to take the SR test in the fall of their first year.</p> <p>At the time of post-testing, we anticipate between 70 and 90 (58% to 75%) of these students will still be enrolled at CNU. This drop off is due to attrition and transfer. These continuing students will be required to take the identical test as a part of a required Assessment Week during their junior year.</p> <p>Both pre-testing and post-testing are conducted via single settings.</p> <p>Regarding post-testing, during <i>University Assessment Week</i> in the spring, all students who took the SR in original cohort will take the assessment again. Students are required to take</p>

	document entitled <i>Principles of Liberal Learning</i> , which states “that students should seek to model the natural, social, and technical worlds.”		the post-test but are given a choice among testing times so they can select the testing option that best fits their schedule. The conditions under which students take the test are standardized and involves trained proctors.
Written Communication Cycle 1: Fall 2007/Spring 2010 Cycle 2: Fall 2011/Spring 2014	<p>Competent writing should provide evidence of correct style; few errors in mechanics (spelling, presentation, capitalization, syntax); appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure and variety; well-structured, relevant content related by transitions and supported by a variety of sources; clarity of thought.</p> <p>References to writing can be found at many levels of guiding documents. The University anchors its curriculum in the principles of liberal learning. This general statement is elaborated in a document entitled <i>Principles of Liberal Learning</i>, which states that students should be able to “communicate orally, visually, [and] in writing.”</p>	<p>Overall competency is demonstrated by an average score of “2” across all writing components, connoting that the student is judged as an “adequate” writer or better by writing experts.</p> <p>Writing samples were evaluated using a rubric that guides raters in their evaluation of the following six components: thesis, evidence, evaluation and synthesis, structure, mechanical correctness and style. Each trait is rated on a five point scale (superior = 4, good = 3, adequate = 2, developing = 1, and poor = 0). A behavioral description is provided for each component at every point on the rubric’s scale. The rubric was developed and refined locally using the expertise of the English department, other writing experts, and the Director of Assessment, Evaluation,</p>	<p>CNU uses the longitudinal value-added approach. For this competency, constructed responses will be used. Entering freshmen write essays. As juniors, these same students will write essays again. The essays will be matched by student. The ratings of the essays will be compared. The difference scores will connote value-added. The junior year is selected because that is when most of the “general education” courses have been completed. Greater detail about the methodology is provided in subsequent subsections.</p> <p><u>Collection of “pre” writing samples, course-embedded:</u> Evaluations of students’ writing in ENGL 123 (required writing course for all freshmen except Honors students) will be considered the pre-assessment. This writing assessment occurs in students’ first or second semester at CNU. This exercise is standardized across sections. In other words, students are given the same amount of time and react to the same paper and respond to the same prompt . The English faculty who teach the ENGL 123 sections evaluate the papers generated in their respective classes. Additionally, an independent group of raters review a sample of papers. The first such collection occurred in fall 2007 and resulted in several revisions to the methodology.</p>

		and Accreditation. See attachment.	<p><u>Collection of “post” writing samples:</u> During the spring all juniors will be required to take assessments related to the Liberal Learning Curriculum and SCHEV’s Core Competencies. One such area is writing. They will be asked to write in conditions similar to the writing diagnostic in ENGL 123. The scores on their post-tests will be matched up to their pre-tests for comparison. The first collection for post writing samples was planned for spring 2010. Revisions to the methodology will be applied in the next cycle.</p> <p>Because CNU uses trait scoring (i.e., different aspects of writing are rated), we will be able to ascertain what areas of writing students improved on the most and which areas the least from individual trait change scores. The Liberal Learning Council will interpret those results and decide how to use them.</p>
--	--	------------------------------------	--

Oral Communication Rubric

Note: 4 pts = highly competent, 3 pts = competent, 2pts = emerging, and 1 pt = unsatisfactory

Part I: Introduction to Oral Presentation

- A.
- Began presentation while looking at audience naturally. (4pts)
 - Made some eye contact with audience but seemed somewhat awkward or unnatural. (2.5 pts)
 - Did not look at audience at start of presentation. (1pt)
- B.
- Used outstanding attention getter that piqued interest in the topic. (4pts)
 - Used adequate attention getter that gained some interest in topic. (3pts)
 - Used marginal attention getter that gained very little interest (2pts).
 - Used no attention getter (1pt).
- C.
- Provided a clear thesis and direction of speech (4pts).
 - Had some ambiguity in thesis or direction of speech (2.5pts).
 - Had unclear direction or focus of speech (1pt).

Part II: Body of Presentation

- A.
- Body was composed of distinct, logical sections or main points (4pts).
 - Some sections did not seem to flow in logical and/or effective sequence (2.5pts).
 - Sections were not logically presented, had rampant disorganization (1pt).
- B.
- Each section was explained exceptionally well, with rich detail (4pts).
 - Each section was explained well, with adequate detail (3pts).
 - Each section had some detail, but important points were absent (2pts).
 - Each section was not adequately explained (1pt).
- C.
- Made smooth transitions between each section using appropriate segues (4pts).
 - Occasionally made smooth transitions between sections (2.5 pts).
 - Made abrupt transitions or inappropriate segues between sections (1pt).

Part III: Conclusion of Presentation

- A.
- Clearly summarized speech, emphasizing main points (4pts).
 - Summarized speech's main points, but may have lacked emphasis or some clarity (3pts).
 - Gave ambiguous summary of speech's main points (2pts).
 - Gave no summary of speech's main points (1pt).
- B.
- Strongly reinforced the main idea of speech (4pts).
 - Moderately reinforced the main idea of speech (3pts).
 - Weakly reinforced the main idea of speech (2pts).
 - Main idea of speech was difficult to identify (1pt).
- C.
- Ended speech with excellent closure (4pts).
 - Ended speech adequately (3pts).
 - Ended speech with unusual or inappropriate closing (2pts).
 - Ended speech abruptly (1pt).

Part IV: Delivery of Presentation

- A.
- Made effective use of eye contact that engaged audience with little use of note cards (4pts).
 - Used consistent eye contact with some use of note cards (3pts).
 - Had inconsistent eye contact with dependence on use of note cards (2pts).
 - Had no eye contact with total dependence on use of note cards (1pt).
- B.
- Had outstanding volume and articulation of voice that enhance speech (4pts).
 - Voice was always heard and understood (3pts).
 - Voice was sometimes difficult to hear or understand (2pts).
 - Voice was frequently difficult to hear or understand (1pt).
- C.
- Nonverbal behaviors or gestures augmented the speech's message (4pts).
 - Nonverbal behaviors or gestures were consistent with message (3pts).
 - Nonverbal behaviors or gestures were sometimes distracting or inconsistent (2pts).
 - Nonverbal behaviors or gestures were absent or constantly distracting (1pt).