

Think Project Plan
Sponsored by the Learning Evidence Team
Fall 2004



LET Think Project Plan: Philip Bishop, Linda Anthon, Nick Bekas, Judi Delisle, Emily Hooker, Patrick Nellis, Melissa Pedone, Allison Sloan, and Roberta Vandermast. Others who contributed to the Think Project Vision: Andrew Alexander and Tim Grogan.

The “Think Project” Umbrella

The Think Project, as conceived by the Learning Evidence Team, is an umbrella covering four activities:

1. Creation of a “Valencia Thinks” Web site.

Under the direction of Judi Delisle and Karen Borglum, the Learning Evidence Team will establish a “Valencia Thinks” Web site that is an electronic bibliography of links to scholarly literature on critical and creative thinking—including links to successful models of assessment of critical and creative thinking—with a special focus on work completed or underway at the College.

2. Development and testing of rubrics for assessing critical and creative thinking.

Consultants on assessment that visited the College have urged the Learning Evidence Team to undertake a small, pilot project on assessment in order to learn how to conduct a larger, successful assessment project at the College. Therefore, in this Think Project, college wide groups of learning leaders will identify/develop rubrics that measure student competency at critical and creative thinking. They will test these rubrics by applying them to the work of currently enrolled students. These efforts will provide rubrics that can be adapted and used to assess student mastery of critical and creative

thinking. It will also improve understanding of the relationship between student assessment and student learning.

3. Formulation of a blueprint for the execution of a larger project to assess students' competency in critical and creative thinking that will begin in 2006.

This blueprint will be formulated by the Learning Evidence Team with input from stakeholders throughout the college. This blueprint will help the College move toward transformative assessment in which college wide assessment assists in answering the questions: How does this affect student learning? And, how do we know?

4. A "Thanksgiving Banquet" to celebrate what is learned from this project.

This will be a banquet to which all who participated in the Think Project will be invited. At the banquet, the Learning Evidence Team will publicly announce the results of the pilot project and roll-out the blueprint for the larger assessment project on Think scheduled for 2006. By making what we learned public and by publicizing work to come, we hope to spread momentum for the further development of learning outcomes based on our core competencies and for the value of linking learning and assessment.

The Think Project fulfills action items specified in the "Learning Evidence Plan for Transformative Assessment." The Learning Evidence Team (LET) will serve as the coordinating task force for the Think Project [with the LET co-chairs serving as the "primuses" (*prim*) of the project].

The Goals of the Think Project

- Define and refine our concept of critical and creative thinking through dialog among learning leaders that is grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- Promote a shared understanding of critical and creative thinking among learning leaders.
- Close the gap between institutional core competencies and curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.
- Identify/develop and test rubrics that can be adapted for the assessment of critical and creative thinking in a variety of disciplines or programs.
- Improve our understanding of how to execute a successful, college wide, interdisciplinary assessment project.
- Publicize and celebrate learning.

Desired Outcomes for the Think Project

- Increased understanding among faculty and professional staff of scholarly literature on assessment.

Currently, there is no central Web site where faculty and professional staff can conveniently access an electronic bibliography of scholarly literature and successful models that demonstrate the core competency, "Think." A Web site focused on "Think" will facilitate the scholarship of teaching and learning, as well as the relationship between teaching, learning and assessment.

- Increased communication about work completed or underway at the College that centers on "Think."

In addition, there is no central Web site where efforts at the College which involve "Think" are highlighted alongside scholarly literature. This would spread awareness of "home-grown" efforts, expertise and experience that would enrich college wide efforts to assess "Think."

- Greater shared understanding at the College of what is meant by critical and creative thinking.

Scholarly study and discussion of critical and creative thinking should produce a greater shared understanding of critical and creative thinking, as well as more effective ways of translating our institutional core competencies (TVCA) in curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes.

- Well-designed rubrics that can be adapted to assess critical and creative thinking in a variety of disciplines or programs.

Currently, there are no rubrics for measuring critical and creative thinking that have been tested and endorsed for use at the College.

- A well-designed plan for assessing student mastery of "Think" from a college wide sample of student work from a variety of disciplines.

As the Learning Evidence Team has discovered this year, it takes careful, systematic planning to mount a successful project. Since the College has never engaged in college wide assessment of core competencies, it is imperative that the first project undertaken be well-planned in order to produce reliable results.

The Think Project Timeline

(To be completed by Work Group on Dec. 13th)