



## Pointers on Assessment

### **Critical Thinking: A CORE LEARNING OUTCOME**

**Insight Assessment publishes the premier instrument set to measure critical thinking skills and habits of mind.**

### **Thoughts about learning outcomes assessment**

- ❖ Outcomes assessment offers the opportunity to measure the integration of skills, knowledge, and attitudinal growth that results from whole programs of education, not single lectures or courses.
- ❖ Everything you know about good research design is relevant and important to designing an assessment plan.
- ❖ Attention to student learning enriches the quality of teaching and adds to the enjoyment of teaching.
- ❖ Content focused outcomes are not enough. It is also important to measure abilities/skills and attitudes.
- ❖ The rarest assessment plan resource is time.
- ❖ Great teaching may result in great learning, but this relationship is not assured. This is why the focus is on measuring learning and not teaching.

### **Who must value selected learning outcomes?**

[The Students](#): If they do not understand and value the outcomes, they will not attempt to achieve them.

[Faculty and Student Life Professionals](#): They must clearly identify and describe observable evidence of the achievement of each learning outcome across the disciplines and across the student life experience.

This is why there are published consensus definitions of core learning outcomes that can assist your work.

To assist your assessment of critical thinking as a key learning outcome we suggest the "[Executive Summary of the APA Delphi Report Consensus Definition of Critical Thinking](#)." Download a copy from our website.



## Who must commit to the assessment of learning outcomes?

The Senior Administration: because their support, expressed in terms of resources and encouragement, demonstrates the centrality of this effort to systemic curricular improvement and academic excellence.

The Regents: because the assessment of learning outcomes should inform the understanding of programs, departments, schools, colleges, universities, and university systems.

Faculty and Student Life Professionals: because even with strong support staff to assist an assessment project, they must respond to what is learned about students' achievement of desired learning outcomes and make thoughtful changes in curriculum and student life programming.

## Getting started:

- ❖ **Select the assessment foci for Year 1:** Select a few key outcomes valued by students, faculty, future employers, and the citizens of your State.
- ❖ **Gather baseline data:** Capture available evidence of the quality of student learning being accomplished now.
- ❖ **Choose outcome measures:** Select tools that validly measure the outcomes, reliably over time, are cost efficient, student friendly, and provide immediate data for analysis.
- ❖ **Execute the Year 1 Plan:** This work is for team members with passion for educational research and real interest in the emerging results of the self study. People like this can be found in every key unit of the university.
- ❖ **Provide feedback to the campus:** Plan to examine the data from Year 1 soon after data collection, and plan to disseminate key findings objectively to all faculty and students. This fuels the on-going self study.

Please credit Insight Assessment if you use this material to facilitate a conversation about learning outcomes at your college or university. [www.insightassessment.com](http://www.insightassessment.com)