

**APPENDIX A**  
University of Louisville  
Ideas to Action (i2a) Evaluation Plan  
Background

In April 2007 the university received approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools–Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) to implement their practical, university-wide [quality enhancement plan \(QEP\)](http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/what/sacs-qep) entitled “Ideas to Action: Using Critical Thinking to Foster Student Learning and Community Engagement.” (<http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction/what/sacs-qep>) Ideas to Action (i2a) sharpens our existing focus on building undergraduate students' [critical thinking skills](#), starting in the general education program and continuing through undergraduate major courses. Students will be required to demonstrate their critical-thinking skills in a [culminating experience](#), such as a thesis, service learning experience, internship or capstone experience. The two specific outcomes identified for i2a are that 1. Students will be able to think critically and 2. Students will develop the ability to address community issues. These outcomes will be assessed using both direct and indirect measures. <http://louisville.edu/ideastoaction>

Since January 2008 a subcommittee of the i2a Task Group has been working on detailing and operationalizing the i2a evaluation plan. The subcommittee members are Cathy Bays and Connie Shumake (co-chairs), Julia Dietrich, Ron Fell, Ann Larson, Kathleen Otto, Jeff Valentine, and Riaan VanZyl. **The i2a evaluation vision** is a systematic, ongoing process to evaluate the evidence of undergraduate students’ ability to think critically and connect student learning to the community for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the undergraduate educational experience and documenting accountability to accreditation agencies. **Specific i2a evaluation goals** include multiple measures of actual and perceived student performance, consistency with Paul-Elder critical thinking model, evaluation of outcomes and process, “valued-added” assessments, and faculty input & participation.

In May 2008 the i2a Task Group approved the following i2a student learning outcomes that have implications for general education courses and undergraduate units: Students completing [general education](#) courses will be able to communicate important ideas and to use critical thinking as a tool for learning by:

1. Applying the Elements of Thought\* in selected, course assignments.
2. Using the Universal Intellectual Standards\*\* as criteria for quality in reasoning.

Students completing courses within their identified [major](#) will be able to communicate important ideas and use critical thinking as a tool for learning by:

1. Applying the Elements of Thought\* in selected discipline-specific course assignments.
2. Using the Universal Intellectual Standards\*\* as criteria for assessing quality of discipline-specific reasoning.
3. Demonstrating discipline-specific critical thinking skills using real world problems.

Upon completion of the [culminating experience](#) students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Apply the Elements of Thought\* when engaging in an i2a culminating experience project.
2. Use the Universal Intellectual Standards\*\* as criteria for assessing quality during the i2a culminating experience project.
3. Demonstrate well-cultivated critical thinking skills when engaging in an i2a culminating experience project.

For i2a, Evaluation is defined as the systematic collection of information about i2a initiatives and processes and its impact on student learning and development. In this process baseline, process and outcome assessments are conducted and information is reviewed and subsequently used to enhance learning and achieve i2a goals. The i2a Evaluation Plan Schematic Representation was created to provide a visual representation of the “big picture” (See next page). The long-term goal is to have the plan be a dynamic document that would link to more detailed documents. For example, in the “Assessment” section clicking on “Critical Thinking Rubric General Education” would link to the critical thinking summary data for general education courses. A Detailed Unit Level i2a Evaluation Plan has been created for each component of the i2a plan (e.g., general education, majors, and culminating experience). The plan provides specific suggestions of tasks (inputs) for units to consider for incorporating i2a.

Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Model ([www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org)):

\*Elements of Thought: Information, Purpose, Interpretation & Inference, Key Question, Assumptions, Essential Concepts, Implications & Consequences, Point of View

\*\*Universal Intellectual Standards: Clarity, Accuracy, Precision, Relevance, Depth, Breadth, Logic, Significance, Fairness, Completeness