



Building Performance-Based Assignments Using the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Model ©



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Summary

For this project, 9 faculty and 2 staff members reviewed and revised Hallmark Assessment Tasks (HATs) and their evaluation rubrics in the core curriculum for all 8 of the unit's undergraduate programs to incorporate the language of the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework and to collect data on student learning related to critical thinking.

What is a HAT?

A Hallmark Assessment Task (HAT) is a significant performance assignment that is aligned with professional, state, and unit standards. The course's assigned HAT is included in each instructor's syllabus, each student taking the course must complete the HAT assignment, and the instructor assesses the student's work using the HAT rubric.

Goals of the Project

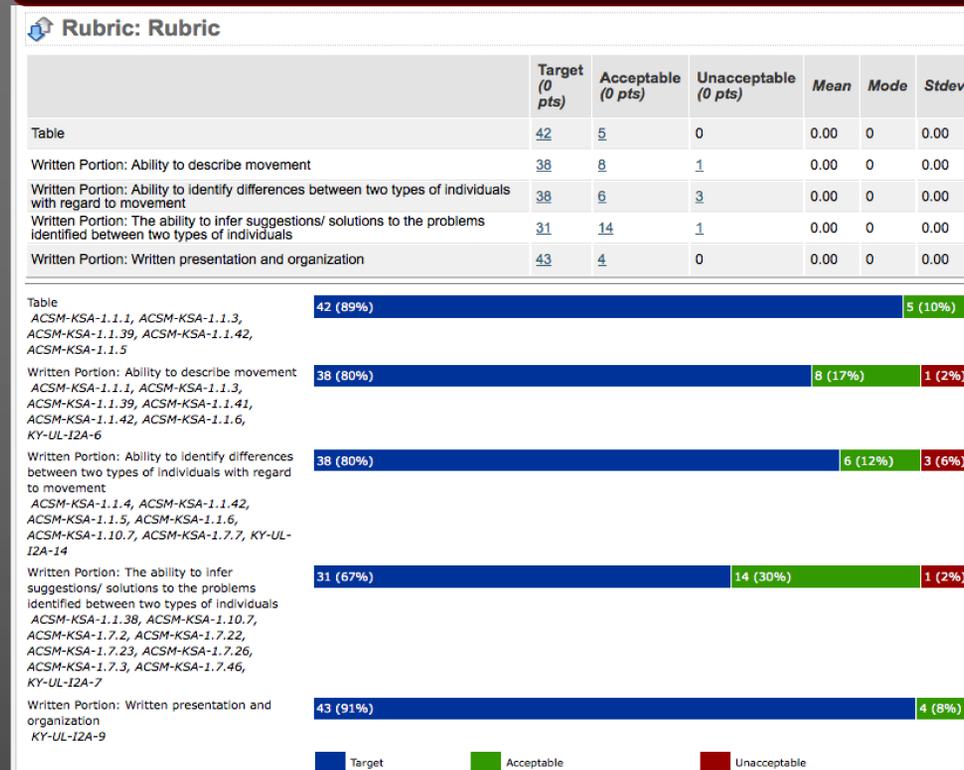
- To help students develop critical thinking skills.
- To collect program data on student learning related to critical thinking for program improvement.
- To establish a framework for further focus on critical thinking within the program.



Benefits of the Project

- Makes the focus on critical thinking more obvious to our students.
- Provides critical thinking language that students can use in all course work.
- Engages both students and instructors in active consideration of the meaning of the critical thinking terms.
- Provides a map of critical thinking across the core course work that programs can continue to build upon.
- Provides curriculum and assessment products that faculty engage with in department and program-level meetings.
- Provides data on student learning related to critical thinking for use in Student Learning Outcomes Reports and accreditation review.

Example of Critical Thinking Data



How to Identify and Assess Critical Thinking

To identify critical thinking in an assignment:

- Identify what the assignment is really asking the student to do (purpose and final product).
- List what the student should be learning in the process of completing the assignment.
- List the activities required by the student to accomplish the assignment.
- Think through the Paul-Elder Elements of Thought and Intellectual Standards as they relate to the required activities.
- Look at the assignment from the student's perspective (as though you were completing the assignment yourself).

To assess critical thinking:

- Identify three major skills you expect students to demonstrate in completing the assignment.
- Write a description for each of the expected skills using as many Paul-Elder terms as you can to describe a student's best effort in demonstrating the skill.

Examples of Assessment

- Student draws **logical conclusions** about his/her strengths and weaknesses and identifies **significant** and **logical** A, B, C goals based upon the **information** gathered for this assignment.
- Student **clearly** and **precisely** describes the developmental spelling stage and provides rationale to show his or her **inferences** that led to **conclusions**.
- Student includes **significant** supporting **facts** and incorporates **relevant** examples for each of the components.
- Student includes a **deep** and **precise** description of the spelling observation, including hypotheses and **assumptions**, the **information** that supports them, and next steps (**implications**).
- Student discusses **relevant** immediate and long-term **implications** of his/her specific nutrient imbalances.