

Assessment of Critical Thinking in MGT-245, Fall 2008

In accordance with our plan to move the majority of course-embedded assessment tools to upper-division courses, we conducted a Critical Thinking skills assessment using an argument mapping assignment and rubric on sophomores and juniors in MGT-245 in the Fall of 2008.

Compared to previous assessments of freshmen in BA-100, our assessment results were:

	BA-100 (Fall 2004)		MGT-245 (Fall 2008)		Net change
0 – Fails expectations	36	28%	10	27%	“+”1%
1 – Meets expectations	37	28%	14	38%	+10%
2 – Exceeds expectations	58	44%	13	35%	-9%
Total (Meets or Exceeds)	95	72%	27	73%	+1%

The total percentage of students who were able to at least meet our learning standards did not significantly change when applying the argument mapping assessment tool to higher division students. Unlike in Fall 2004, however, we now have data on each dimension.

	Fails standards		Meets standards		Exceeds standards	
Identifies the overall topic	13	35%	24	65%		
Identifies the author’s main argument (not the topic)	4	11%	33	89%		
Identifies the surrounding context of the argument	3	8%	15	41%	19	51%
Identifies supporting data, evidence, or arguments	10	27%	18	49%	9	24%
Identifies alternative arguments to author’s	12	32%*	2	6%*	23	62%
Identifies information that supports these alternatives	2	5%	13	35%	19	50%
Identifies other possible solutions to the problem	6	16%	11	30%	20	54%

* The assignment was apparently unclear to some students, as many left this section blank.

An alternative way of presenting the data, using mean compared to max score, is as follows:

	Topic	Argument	Context	Evidence	Alternative	Support	Solution
Mean/Max	65%	90%	72%	68%	65%	80%	78%

This representation of the data depicts an aggregate “grade” for the student body as a whole on each dimension. Regardless of which method we choose to display the data, it is clear that our students struggle with differentiating the overall topic from the specific claim of the author in a reading, as well as with identifying the evidence that directly relates to the author’s claim. They are easily able to identify the argument itself, however, as well as to respond to it with alternative supporting evidence and other solutions to the problem.