

Tracking Cougar Curriculum



August 2017

THE BIG CS – COMMUNICATION & CRITICAL THINKING

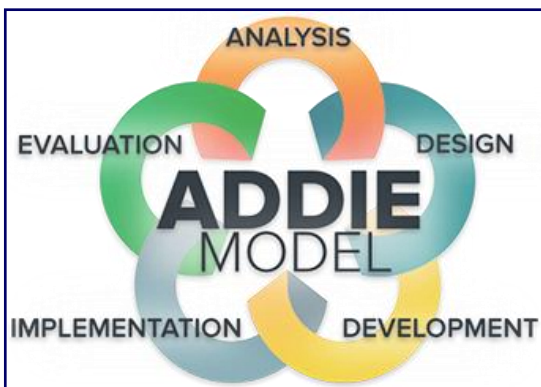
Provost Jon Hardesty addressed the Discipline Lead meeting on August 16th. He brought results of the last two years' core assessment results and challenged us all to raise student awareness of Critical Thinking and Communication. Regardless of whether our students are pursuing transfer or workforce readiness, their performance on these two key core objectives hovers around 50% of achieving the targets set by COAT. These findings were generated by more than 40 faculty from across disciplines who dedicate several days each spring to participate in Assessment Days. Faculty rated embedded student artifacts according to rubrics developed by COAT for assessing Communication and Critical Thinking.

Research has shown that it takes more than one assignment, more than one course, even more than one semester to improve student mastery of target behaviors; therefore, it cannot be the responsibility of a single discipline. Since awareness is the beginning of improved performance, we asked several faculty to contribute ideas for increasing student awareness of target behaviors in Communication and Critical Thinking. Some of them are listed below.

1. Share the rubrics with students at the beginning of the term.
2. Tell students that their assignments or instructional activities are designed, in part, to increase their Critical Thinking, and/or Communications Skills.
3. Tell students how the course outcomes relate to Critical Thinking and Communication Skills.
4. Let students know that both Critical Thinking and Communication skills are highly sought after, employable skills.
5. Show students how to use the rubric as a self-check tool before an assignment is submitted.
6. Include some element from the rubric as a part of the grading criteria and let students know that will be the case.
7. Use rubric elements when providing assignment feedback.

If you have other ideas, please send them to iholt@collin.edu so we can feature them this year in upcoming newsletters.

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Communication • Empirical and Quantitative Skills • Teamwork • Personal Responsibility • Social Responsibility
FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENT AREAS (with credit hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American History (6) • Communication (6) • Creative Arts (3) • Government/Political Science (6) • Language, Philosophy and Culture (3) • Life & Physical Sciences (6) • Mathematics (3) • Social & Behavioral Sciences (3) • Component Area Option [distributed across the components] (6)



Instructional Design and the Student Learning Outcome . . . Instructional design, what is it?

Instructional Design is a systematic process, employed to develop educational programs and produce consistent, reliable outcomes. It is the process of analyzing learning needs and goals to develop a delivery system that meets those needs. (paraphrased from Reiser, Dempsey, 2007).

Over the coming year, Tracking Cougar Curriculum will feature elements of instructional design that help focus instructional activities on desired student outcomes.