

# The Assessment Times



VOLUME 3

JANUARY 2006

## From the Chair

Jen Asimow

Dear All,

Thank you in advance to those of you have signed up to volunteer one or more of your classes to participate in the upcoming California Critical Thinking Skills Test. As many of you remember, the Assessment Committee administered this test in the fall of 2004. The test has 34 questions and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Many of us agree it is a challenging test that measures the critical thinking skills of our students in the in the following areas: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and explanation.

The results from the first administration of this test showed us that on average our students score just below the average college student in the U.S. We saw a slight increase in scores

from students who were nearer to the end of their HWC experience than in the middle.

From there, the HWC Assessment Committee hosted two Critical Thinking workshops designed to foster discourse about the following:

1. Our own understanding of critical thinking
2. Intentionality about critical thinking skills in our courses, and
3. Requiring students to use and hone their own critical thinking skills in our courses.

As with all assessment efforts here at HWC, the aim of gathering this type of data is expressly to improve student learning outcomes. The goal of

∞

?

professional development is to foster a deeper understanding of our own teaching and to apply new methodologies and practices in our classes.

Assessment Week is planned for February 20-25th, 2006. Look for buttons in your mailboxes to advertise this important week of the semester.

Thanks for all of your support. Until Next Month,

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Keenan Andrews	Asst. Dean
Jen Asimow	CD
Timothy Donahue	Eng
Todd Heldt	Lib
Jesus Miranda	Math
Helene Gabelnick	Chem
Lynell Kiely	SS
Anita Kelley	Bus
Cecilia Lopez	VP
Denise Maduli-Williams	ESL
John Metoyer	Assoc Dean
Willard Moody	Eng
Carrie Nepstad	CD
Dana Perry	Chem
Dave Richardson	Hum
Glenn Weller	CIS
Les White	SS
Armen Sarrafian	Art
Anthony Ealey	MH
Farrokh Asadi	Bio
Sammie Dortch	SW

## Committee Meeting Highlights

- The committee approved the Results brochure for CCFSSS
- The committee is preparing the results brochure for CCSSE
- John Metoyer and the web page sub committee has been designing the assessment web page. Check it Out!
- The committee continues to work on its conceptual framework, calendar and assessment plan
- The committee is planning for this semester's assessment of Critical Thinking. The committee approved the dates, the art, some advertising strategies and the informational brochure that will go out.

## Assessment Committee Chairs

Jennifer G. Asimow, Chair  
Glenn Weller, Co-Chair

Phone: 312-553-3087  
Fax: 312-553-5703  
Email: [jasimow@ccc.edu](mailto:jasimow@ccc.edu)

*Good Assessment  
Informs Good  
Teaching Practice*



Harold Washington College  
30 E. Lake St.  
Chicago, IL 60601

## Why Critical Thinking? (Excerpt from the Critical Thinking Community Web Page)

### The Problem:

Everyone thinks; it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.

### A Definition:

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.

### The Result:

A well cultivated critical thinker:

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

## Dates To Remember

February 15—Assessment Committee Meeting 3-4PM RM 1030

February 22—Assessment Committee Meeting 3-4PM RM 1030

March 1—Assessment Committee Meeting 3-4PM RM 1030

March 8—Assessment Committee Meeting 3-4PM RM 1030



### ASSESSMENT WEEK

**FEBRUARY 20-25**

### CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITE

- <http://www.criticalthinking.org/aboutCTdefiningCT.shtml>
- <http://faculty.ccc.edu/colleges/hwashington/assessment/>

**This is our new  
web site.  
CHECK IT  
OUT!!!!!!**

