

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN
C4: Enhancing Critical Thinking
Executive Summary

For additional information on the development or implementation of *C⁴: Enhancing Critical Thinking*, contact Dr. William Fannin, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Fannin_w@utpb.edu.

C⁴: Enhancing Critical Thinking seeks to have an early and sustained impact on entering students' critical thinking skills. Block scheduled sections of the general education writing composition courses, English 1301 and 1302, will pilot the explicit teaching of critical thinking skills using the Paul and Elder paradigm. Critical thinking is defined as, "thinking that attempts to arrive at a decision or judgment only after honestly evaluating alternatives with respect to available evidence and arguments" (Donald Hatcher and L. Anne Spencer).

At the end of the two required composition courses in which critical thinking is explicitly taught, students will demonstrate the following critical thinking skills:

Student Learning Outcome 1: *Students will be able to clearly identify and clarify problems, questions, and issues.*

Measurement: Students will have an overall satisfactory score on the course-embedded assessment(s) of *Clarity* as measured by the finalized critical thinking rubric(s).

Student Learning Outcome 2: *Students will collect and/or effectively organize information.*

Measurement: Students will have an overall satisfactory score on the course-embedded assessment(s) for *Collection/Organization of Information* as measured by the finalized critical thinking rubric(s).

Student Learning Outcome 3: *Students will carefully consider, analyze, and evaluate information in terms of its support for conclusions.*

Measurement: Students will have an overall satisfactory score on the course-embedded assessment(s) for *Analysis and Evaluation* as measured by the finalized critical thinking rubric(s).

Student Learning Outcome 4: *Students will draw well-reasoned, logically supported conclusions from information.*

Measurement: Students will have an overall satisfactory score on the course-embedded assessment(s) for *Logical Conclusions* as measured by the finalized critical thinking rubric(s).

Student Learning Outcome 5: *Students who take the two-semester ENGL 1301 and 1302 sequence in which critical thinking skills have been explicitly taught will show greater improvement in critical thinking than comparable students in ENGL 1301 and 1302 classes in which critical thinking skills have not been emphasized.*

Measurement: Students in the *C⁴* sections of ENGL 1301 and 1302 will have higher critical thinking scores on the Criticalthinking Assessment Test (CAT) than comparable students in ENGL 1301 and 1302 who have not been exposed to the explicit teaching of critical thinking skills.

Student Learning Outcome 6: *At the end of the ENGL 1301 and 1302 two-course sequence, students in the *C⁴* classes will demonstrate improvement in their critical thinking scores over their performance at entry in ENGL 1301. Scores for students in the non-*C⁴* courses, will be unchanged.*

Measurement: The CAT will be administered to all participating students upon entry to ENGL 1301 and exit from ENGL 1302. Each student's entry and exit score will be compared to determine whether the score has changed.

Course-embedded and global assessments will be used in both the *C⁴* and non-*C⁴* sections. The course-embedded rubrics will be used within the two courses. The global assessment instrument (CAT) will be administered in the ENGL 1301 courses at the beginning of the fall semester and in the ENGL 1302 classes at the end of the subsequent spring semester.