

Effective Use of Rubric to Assess Critical Thinking In Educational Leadership Students

College of Education

Step 1: Student Learning Outcome

Think critically, using analytical, qualitative, and quantitative reasoning, to apply previously learned concepts to new situations, complex challenges, and everyday problems.

Step 2: Methods and Measures

Student progress toward the learning outcome was assessed using a scoring rubric for related items on the qualifying exam (administered at the end of the first year of coursework). For this SLO, attention was paid to the following outcomes as scored on the rubric:

1. Breadth and depth of knowledge
2. Conceptual synthesis
3. Application of theory to practice
4. Use of evidence

Qualifying exams were scored using a three-point rubric (Pass with Commendation, Pass, No Pass) addressing 10 outcomes.

Exams were administered and scored by the qualifying exam committee, which consists of 4-6 program faculty. The committee uses a double-blind scoring process.

Step 3: Criteria for Success

Students were required to receive a “pass” on all 10 outcomes to consider this SLO met. Students who do not pass on a first attempt were allowed a second attempt.

Step 4: Results

9 of the 14 students who completed the exam passed on the first attempt. Of the 5 students who did not pass on the first attempt, two passed on the second attempt, two took leaves of absence to further prepare for the exam, and one failed on the second attempt. The two students who took a leave of absence to further prepare for a re-take were both African women. No patterns were found to exist in success rate by gender or ethnicity.

Step 5: Improvement Actions

Final scores were compiled and analyzed by the program director and then reported to the Department, the Steering Committee, and the Executive Board for feedback and recommendations. Scores were slightly lower than in past years, which may reflect changes in a textbook and instructor for one of the core classes. Supplemental feedback from students suggested that this text did not provide sufficient depth in organization theory. The textbooks for that class are being adjusted for the coming year to provide greater exposure to primary source material.

Also, the fact that two African women did not pass and took leaves to further prepare for the exam may reflect language-related concerns in the classroom, especially as related to mastery of breadth and depth of content, an area in which both struggled. A faculty member is meeting with these students to review core content in preparation for the exam.