

# **Critical Thinking 2003**

## **ACT Senior Exit Survey Results**

**Report Prepared: August, 2005**

### **Learning outcome**

Through the General Education Core 300: Values and Critical Thinking course, and other course work, students will learn to think critically and evaluate their own values and the value systems of other persons, groups, and nations.

### **Method**

The ACT Senior Exit Survey was administered to samples of Freshman Entry and Transfer Entry students in 2003 who were registered in Senior Seminar classes at the main campus and at off campus sites.

Items in the original ACT form dealing with critical thinking were identified and analyzed. These were the same items identified for assessment purposes in the 1998 administration of the ACT Senior Exit Survey.

### **Findings**

The attached Table 1 summarizes the responses of freshman entry and transfer entry students.

In all the items on critical thinking ULV samples scores higher than their peers in the national norms of private universities regarding how much progress they have made in developing critical thinking skills, and how important they consider these skills.

There is an overall tendency in both ULV samples for more respondents to report the importance of these skills compared to those who report much or very much progress in developing these skills at ULV.

Furthermore, freshman entry and transfer entry seniors are very comparable in their assessment of how much progress they have made and how important they consider these skills with one exception. More transfer students report making progress (81%) in thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes and values than freshman entry students (65%), even though 4 in 5 students in both samples consider this skill to be of great or very great importance.

It is noteworthy to report that only about one-half of student in both samples report making much or very much progress in developing understanding and applying math concepts and statistical reasoning. Moreover, in the freshman entry group, while 63% consider this skill to be

of great or very great importance, only 44% report making much or very much progress. This discrepancy is of serious concern, in addition to the generally low percentage of students reporting progress.

**Action Recommendation**

1. Consider putting more emphasis in applying math concepts in the GE math courses
2. Create a statistics course that meets the math GE requirement.

Table 1

Percentage of responses of ULV Seniors (02-03) on items related to **Think Critically** at ULV by **entry status**, compared to the ACT norms of national private universities

ACT Items	ULV Freshman Entry n=53	ULV Transfer Entry n=197	National Privates
<b>1. Drawing conclusions after weighing evidence, facts, and ideas</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A1)	94	90	76
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A1)	72	74	64
<b>2. Developing problem-solving skills</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A2)	92	86	82
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A2)	82	72	64
<b>3. Learning to think and reason</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A3)	94	91	86
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A3)	70	81	70
<b>5. Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A5)	85	81	79
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A5)	65	81	65
<b>13. Developing openness to new ideas and practices</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A13)	87	79	75
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A13)	67	73	62
<b>26. Understanding and applying math concepts and statistical reasoning</b>			
(Importance: Very Great/Great) (II-A26)	63	57	50
(Progress: Very Much/Much) (II-A26)	44	57	40
<b>2. Becoming more willing to consider opposing points of view</b>			

(Personal Growth: Very Much/Much) (II-D2)	77	80	66
(College Contribution: Very Great/Great) (II-D2)	69	74	50
27. Increasing my intellectual curiosity			
(Personal Growth: Very Much/Much) (II-D27)	76	86	69
(College Contribution: Very Great/Great) (II-D27)	62	75	58