CSU Pueblo General Education Assessment 2025 Report

During the 2024-2025 academic year, CSU Pueblo assessed four different General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, and Technological Literacy. This was continuing the cycle of our General Education Assessment plan. Shortly after this process began, the General Education Board agreed to consolidate Technological Literacy and Information Literacy outcomes into one since it was determined that few courses directly addressed the skills outlined in the original Technological Literacy rubric. While two of these four outcomes were originally scheduled for assessment in 2023-24, insufficient artifacts were collected in that year which led to the increased load for 2024-25.

First, classes were identified which would provide appropriate artifacts for assessment of each SLO. This came from the list of Gen Ed sections offered each semester and whether the instructors had existing assignments that fit the SLOs. Using department chairs or their authorized designee as a contact person, instructors were asked to name the artifact (or artifacts) to collect for assessment. Chairs or designees then entered that information into a OneDrive form.

When the artifacts were to be collected through a Blackboard assignment, the form completed all required instructor actions for that class in that semester. Those artifacts were collected from Blackboard for the assessment session in early summer. Artifacts not collected through Blackboard required either paper copies or electronic transfer to a OneDrive folder in early-mid May so that they could be assessed. For the first time in our assessment cycle, we collected artifacts from some (but not all) Senior to Sophomore (STS) sections taught as dual enrollment in the high schools, in addition to on-campus and online sections. None of the STS sections run through Blackboard, so collection and preparation of artifacts for scoring was a bit more challenging. In the future, we will concentrate on collection from STS courses only in the Spring semester.

Faculty were recruited to participate in the two-day artifact scoring session in late May 2025. Each was assigned to one of the SLO groups based upon an appropriate match to their disciplinary expertise, with 3-4 faculty in each group. Denise Henry, Director of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Leadership (CTLL), gave the introduction to the process and rubrics. The rubrics used included two AAC&U VALUE and another designed in the same format for Information and Technical Literacy. These rubrics have integer scores of 0-4 depending on the level of outcome achieved. Gen ed level coursework (1st and 2nd year) might be expected to be at the intermediate levels, or milestones, but will vary. This would be between the baseline (1) and capstone (4) levels.

A few scorers used half points for the critical thinking outcome. Three rounds of preparatory group artifact scoring and discussion were held for each outcome to set expectations and increase interrater reliability. Scorers worked side by side after initial calibration and discussed observations and questions as they did independent scoring.

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Student essays were the type of artifact collected, overwhelmingly in digital form.

Critical Thinking had the least challenges during the scoring process of all three SLOs. One factor contributing to this was the decision to allow the scorers to give partial credit in the form of half-point values, since some of the scorers thought the rubric was a bit vague. Some scorers felt partial criteria were met in one score level, but not demonstrating full completion for the next level. Alternatively, keeping integer scores might be more consistent in the future.

Another fact was that one secondary school submitted very long papers that the students worked on over a period of weeks while most other instructors submitted shorter assignments that presumably weren't as great a percentage of the students' final course grades. In future rounds, we might consider page limits on artifact assignments to alleviate this disparity. We might also consider more alignment of assignment types across offerings of the same or similar courses during the collaborative part of the assessment preparation. However, the main goal is to assess at what level student outcomes were achieved across multiple courses, regardless of the artifact chosen.

Creative Thinking

Creative Thinking is the combination or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

Artifacts were collected from several disciplines for this. Artifacts from several disciplines were scored, and faculty noted being impressed by the creativity they saw in some. Some artifacts submitted from World Languages under this SLO were in languages understood by few or none of the members of the faculty grading party. Also, several of the artifacts were collected using technologies which generate files in a format which could not be stored on Blackboard or easily shared. Other artifacts submitted were not assessable, usually because they did not fit the rubric questions. For example, some artifacts had extra materials which weren't consistent. A few artifacts had no assessable material at all. Checking assignments for rubric fit earlier in the process would solve this in the future. In all cases, faculty need to be familiar with the rubric prior to choosing artifacts for any outcome.

Information/Technological Literacy

Information & Technical Literacy is identifying information needs, locating and critically evaluating diverse information sources, and effectively evaluating and applying technologies to accomplish identified tasks within ethical and societal contexts.

As mentioned above, these two SLOs were merged over the course of the collection period when it became apparent that there was significant overlap in these, and no instructors were teaching the courses intended for assessment of the Technological Literacy SLO were teaching technological literacy in their Gen Ed classes to an extent great enough to merit assessing it separately.

The bulk of artifacts submitted for this outcome were used in the process. Some of the papers collected did not match the rubric well for scoring. In these cases, it would be very important to attach the assignment directions to the work to be scored. However, that information was not available for many in this instance. Exactly what constituted the use of technology was very vague according to some faculty. Early agreement on definitions and expectations from the very beginning of the process would be needed in future to allow more meaningful assessment. This SLO needs to be revisited to consider its importance in our Gen Ed program and a viable method of assessment.

Data and Analysis

Critical Thinking Data

Table 1. Number of Critical Thinking artifacts collected and scored by course and modality

Critical Thinking courses with numbers of artifacts	RI	STS	XONL	Total collected	Total scored
Hist 110	19	11		*30*	*29*
Hist 111	13	12		*25*	*25*
Hist 201	6	19		*25*	*25*
Hist 202	17			*17*	*17*
Phil 107	16			*16*	*16*
Phil 102			19	*19*	*19*
Phil 201	15			*15*	*15*
Phil 204	12		15	*27*	*27*
	98	**42**	**34**	***174***	***173***

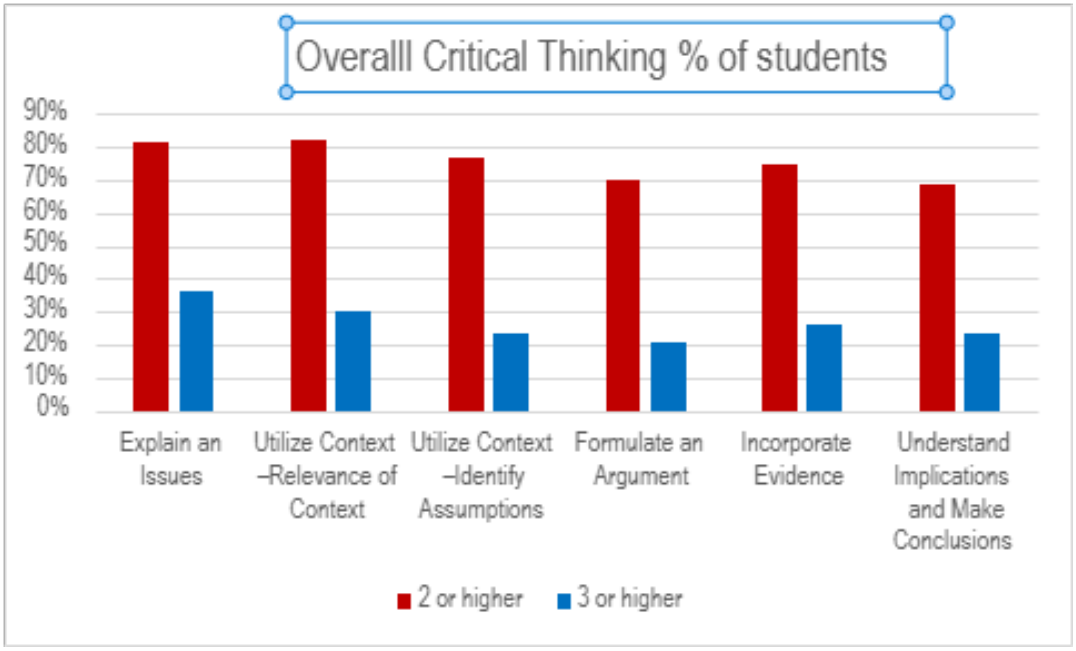
The first thing of note here, and to be considered for each SLO, is the sample size. In the case of Critical Thinking, sample size was comparatively large because all students take History courses. Overall scores indicate that students are getting to a developing/intermediate level for this outcome, as averages were at or near the 2.0 range for many items in most classes.

Table 2. Critical Thinking Average Scores for SLO components by course

Critical Thinking SLO components	***Explain an issue***	***Utilize Context-Relevance***	***Utilize Context-Assumptions***	***Formulate an argument***	***Incorporate Evidence***	***Understand Implications & Make Conclusions***
Hist 110	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.3
Hist 111	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.1	1.9
Hist 201	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.5
Hist 202	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1
Phil 107	2.0	2.1	2.2	1.5	2.0	1.7
Phil 102	2.7	2.2	2.1	2.3	1.9	1.8
Phil 201	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.2	3.8	2.3
Phil 204	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.1	2.2

One might speculate that courses with a very large percentage of STS artifacts would have lower averages. The data did show lower averages on most values for STS sections as compared to resident instruction (RI) sections for History. With critical thinking, it seems apt that formulating an argument and understanding implications/making conclusions got the lowest scores overall so the need for working on these skills might make good feedback for every instructor teaching all these courses, no matter the section type, site or modality.

Figure 1. Critical thinking comparison of percentage meeting over a score of 2 or 3



For critical thinking, 70-80% of artifacts scored at a level of 2 or higher in most critical thinking SLO components. This dropped to 20-35% when looking at a higher level of proficiency (scores of 3 or 4) with "formulate an argument" showing the lowest percentage. This data demonstrates that there is potential for improvement. Better alignment of artifacts to the chosen SLO rubric might assist with this.

Information and Technical Literacy Data

Table 3. Number of Info and Tech Literacy artifacts collected by course and modality

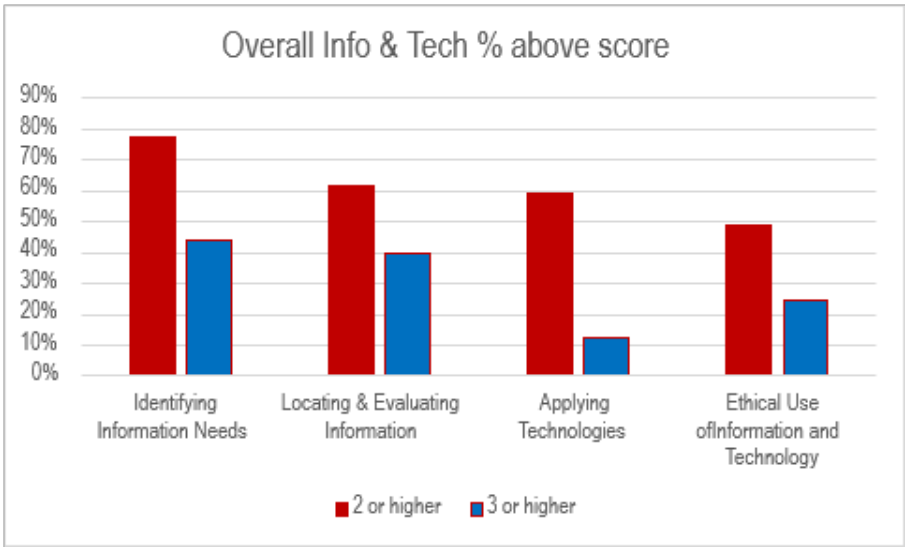
Info and Tech literacy courses with numbers of artifacts	RI	STS	XONL	*Total*	*Total Scored*
MAE 101	12		11	*23*	*23*
ANTH 100	7			*7*	*7*
ENG 101	33	8	8	*49*	*47*
ENG 102	32			*32*	*0*
ENG 115	5			*5*	*0*
HIST 110	21	6		*27*	*19*
HIST 111	10	21		*31*	*19*
HIST 201	6	19		*25*	*25*
HIST 202	17			*17*	*16*
WS 100	8			*8*	*8*
SOC 101	19			*19*	*19*
PHIL 102			10	*10*	*9*
PHIL 107	11			*11*	*11*
PHIL 201	11			*11*	*11*
PHIL 204	5		9	*14*	*14*
PSYC 100	31	4		*35*	*35*
PSYC 151	20			*20*	*20*
PSYC 231	10			*10*	*10*
PSYC 251	10			*10*	*10*
	268	**58**	**38**	***364***	***303***

The information and technological literacy average scores are lower overall, as compared to critical thinking. From observations in preparation and during the review, it is suspected that misalignment of what is taught in the courses and measured in assignments likely contributed to the low scores in assessment data. In consideration of the next five-year assessment plan, if this SLO is maintained, it will be imperative that the instructors fully consider the rubric before designing and/or choosing their assignments.

Table 4. Information and Technical Literacy average scores for SLO component by course

INFO and Tech Literacy SLO components	*Identify Info needs*	*Locate & Evaluate info*	*Apply technologies*	*Ethical use of Info & Tech*
MAE 101	2.3	2.0	2.5	1.9
ANTH 100	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0
ENG 101	2.5	2.6	1.7	2.3
HIST 110	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.8
HIST 111	1.6	1.0	0.7	0.6
HIST 201	3.0	3.0	2.2	2.5
HIST 202	1.6	0	1.0	0
WS 100	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.3
SOC 101	2.2	1.2	1.7	0.9
PHIL 102	1.6	1.0	1.6	1.4
PHIL 107	1.6	1.6	1.7	2.1
PHIL 201	1.7	2.4	2.2	2.2
PHIL 204	2.1	1.2	1.4	0.9
PSYC 100	2.2	1.5	1.7	1.4
PSYC 151	2.2	1.8	1.1	0.8
PSYC 231	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.8
PSYC 251	2.9	2.6	1.8	2.0

Figure 2. Info and Tech Literacy comparison of percentage meeting over a score of 2 or 3



For information and technical literacy, 50-78% of artifacts scored at a level of 2 or higher SLO components. This dropped to 12-43% when looking at a higher level of proficiency (scores of 3 or 4) with "applying technologies" showing the lowest percentage. That may indicate an issue

with rubric and artifact alignment. More attention to the artifacts chosen for this SLO rubric or reexamining the outcome focus might assist with this.

Creative Thinking Data

Table 4. Number of Creative Thinking artifacts collected by course and modality

Creative Thinking courses with numbers of artifacts	RI	STS	XONL	*Total*	*Total Scored*
ENG 114	9	7		*16*	*16*
ART 100	46	7		*53*	*40*
MUS 118	44			*44*	*20*
SPN 102	10			*10*	*3*
ARH 211	25			*25*	*25*
	134	**14**	**0**	***148***	***104***

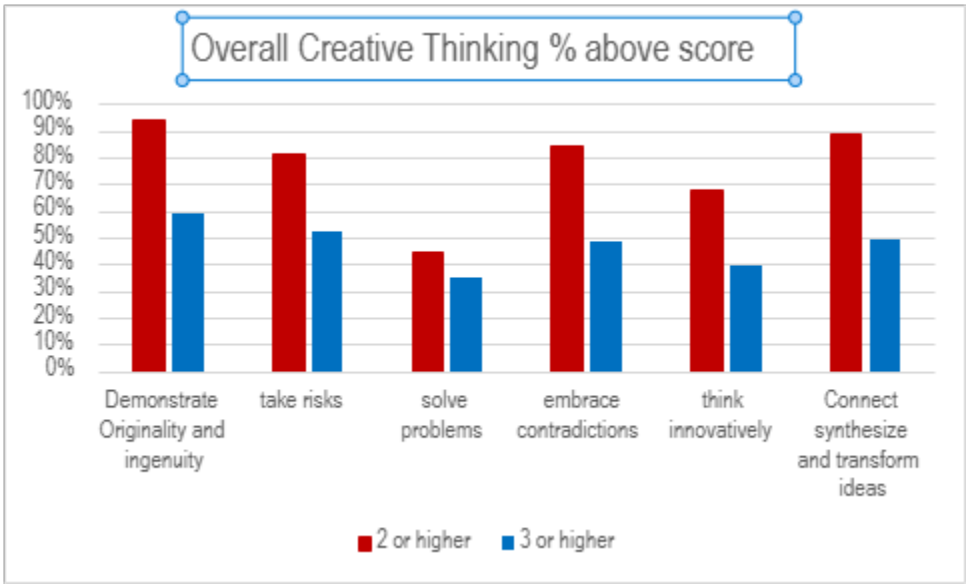
The limited data available from World Languages here did result in a lower number of artifacts for scoring than other SLOs. Those language classes include many students, so evaluation of whether the Gen Ed program overall is succeeding for this SLO is restricted without a sample from those classes.

Table 5. Average scores for Creative Thinking SLO by course

Creative Thinking SLO Components	Originality	Take risks	Solve problems	*Embrace contradictions*	*Think innovatively*	*Connect, synthesize and transform*
ENG 114 + SPN 102	2.6	2.3	1.3	2.3	2.0	2.4
ART 100	2.6	2.3	1.1	2.1	1.9	2.4
MUS 118	2.7	2.3	1.0	2.2	2.0	2.6
ARH 211	2.8	2.5	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.6

Creative Thinking average scores were mostly within the 2.0-2.6 range. With the classes that are here, we noticed that the scores for "solve problems" were much lower on average than the other components of this rubric. Since this SLO seems likely to remain in the next five-year assessment plan, asking instructors to focus a bit more on assignments including problem solving seems like a good idea. Alternatively, it might be considered whether all six subparts of the rubric apply to our campus expectations concerning Creative Thinking. That particular topic is also assessed within our gen ed within the problem solving SLO to be assessed in another set of courses next year.

Figure 3. Creative thinking comparison of percentage meeting over a score of 2 or 3



In achievement of SLO components, 69-90% of artifacts scored a 2 or higher for most components. Again, "solve problems" achievement was at a lower level than the others, with only 45% at 2 or better. Scores of 3 or better were seen in 35-60% of artifacts, depending on the component.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Overall, the assessment process ran fairly well. Faculty scored artifacts, and data was collected and presented as averages and percentage of students achieving a particular score level. This process has provided useful information on process, rubrics, SLO performance, and next steps. The information here will serve as a benchmark for future comparisons and to engage faculty in discussions of the assessment.

To enhance instructor participation in general education assessment, we will identify faculty teaching gen ed courses and offer training to improve their understanding of assessment as a core program-improvement process and their role in selecting suitable assignments. We will also encourage collaboration among departments across campus for engagement in the process and how the analysis works in tandem with all our efforts to contribute to improved learning for all students.

Faculty familiarity with how to choose or design an assignment useful to generate artifacts for rubric scoring is crucial to successful assessment. Campus resources to support the culture of assessment and more consistent understanding and utilization of rubrics are required, especially when campus changes are implemented. Along these lines, Denise Henry has created a Blackboard mini course to provide professional development in gen ed assessment for instructors who complete it. This is to help them design or pick artifacts better suited to the intended

assessment, including a focus on particular outcomes and the associated rubrics. The link to this Blackboard course description is here.

We are using the experience gained in this year's review along with the prior 3 years to help design the next five-year plan for General Education assessment, which will go into effect in the Fall of 2026. Most notably, we want to encourage enough faculty participation in how we assign SLOs to specific classes to ensure that each SLO is taught and measured in the classes to which it is assigned for assessment, and that there is consistency across course modalities and sites for similar assessment. The group of SLOs assessed across all courses in the gen ed program needs to represent the core outcomes important for an undergraduate degree at CSU Pueblo.

Conclusions

This year's assessment activities reinforced the need to formalize a consistent, sustainable process for evaluating student learning within the General Education Program, supported by clear communication and appropriate institutional resources. Assessing three student learning outcomes (SLOs) during this cycle has strengthened our capacity to implement a manageable, annual schedule focused on two SLOs per year, demonstrating progress toward establishing a systematic and ongoing assessment process consistent with HLC expectations for continuous improvement. Faculty are increasingly familiar with the role of SLO assessment in demonstrating and improving student learning, which supports broader institutional effectiveness efforts and enhances the reliability of evidence used for decision-making.

To further build institutional capacity, assessment leads will begin attending department meetings to ensure faculty understand assessment procedures, expectations, and the use of results for improvement. This initiative aligns with HLC's emphasis on shared responsibility for student learning and coherent participation across academic units. The timing is strategically aligned with development of the next five-year assessment plan, ensuring that future processes are collaborative, transparent, and integrated into academic planning. Department chairs will receive targeted support to facilitate evidence-based discussions of student learning within their programs, reinforcing the University's commitment to a culture of continuous improvement.

The assessment rubrics employ a four-point scale, where 1 indicates baseline performance, 2–3 represent milestone (developing) proficiency, and 4 reflects capstone-level mastery. A score of 0 indicates no evidence aligned with the outcome. Average rubric scores ranged from 1.3 to 2.6. Given that milestone-level performance (approximately 2–3) is appropriate for first- and second-year students, these results suggest that students meet expectations in many areas, with opportunities for growth in others. Some sub-dimensions scored above 2 and occasionally above 3. However, mismatches between certain assignments and the rubric limit the precision of

quantitative interpretation. Even so, variation among sub-scores provides useful insight for identifying areas for improvement.

Across the three SLOs assessed, approximately 50% or more of students scored at level 2 or higher, while fewer students—typically 30–40%—achieved at level 3. These patterns indicate developing proficiency consistent with students' academic level.

Strengthening collaboration with high school STS instructors would promote greater alignment between course expectations, assignment design, and rubric criteria. Such alignment would also help students enter college with a clearer understanding of foundational academic skills, such as citation practices. The inclusion of Extended Studies (Online and STS) courses in the General Education assessment process for the first time represents a notable advancement.

Norming sessions again proved essential, enabling faculty to calibrate scoring, deepen shared understanding of outcomes and rubric elements, and identify alignment issues between assignments and expected competencies. The disciplinary diversity of faculty reviewers enriched these discussions. Expanding participation in future cycles would further strengthen assessment reliability. Increasing the number of initial group-scored artifacts (e.g., four samples rather than three) may also enhance calibration before independent scoring begins.

Taken together, this year's results demonstrate meaningful progress in assessing student learning within the General Education Program and provide actionable evidence to guide next steps. The findings indicate developing proficiency appropriate to students' academic level, while also identifying specific areas where assignment design, rubric alignment, and instructional practices can be strengthened. Importantly, the assessment process itself generated clear improvement strategies—such as expanded norming, faculty calibration, and enhanced collaboration with STS and Extended Studies instructors—that will be implemented in the next cycle. These actions represent intentional efforts to "close the loop" by using evidence to inform instructional adjustments and structural improvements. The insights gained will directly shape the forthcoming five-year assessment plan, reinforcing a continuous improvement model that aligns with institutional priorities and HLC expectations for systematic, ongoing evaluation of student learning.

Scoring rubrics are found here:

https://www.csupueblo.edu/assessment-and-student-learning/_doc/general-education-assessment1/critical-thinking-rubric-2023.pdf

https://www.csupueblo.edu/assessment-and-student-learning/_doc/general-education-assessment1/info-tech-lit-rubric-2025r.pdf

https://www.csupueblo.edu/assessment-and-student-learning/_doc/general-education-assessment1/creative-thinking-rubric-2023.pdf