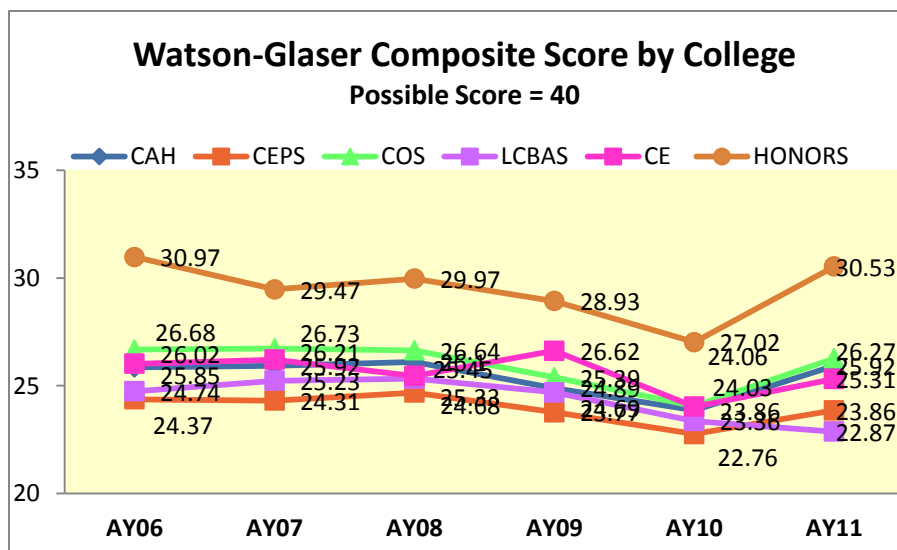
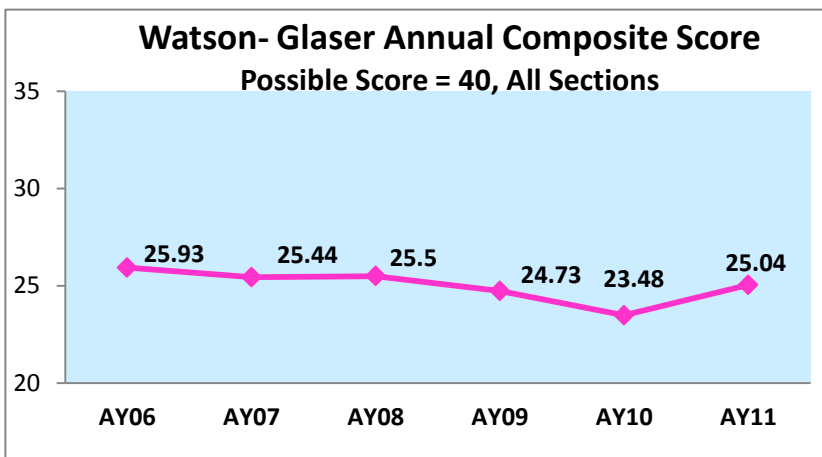


CASL's Critical Thinking Assessment AY11 Executive Summary

See <http://www.eiu.edu/assess/wgdata.php> for full report

The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal has been administered in senior seminars since 2002. The WGCTA is a standardized test designed to measure the following critical thinking skills: inference, recognition of assumption, deduction, interpretation, and evaluation of arguments. The highest possible score is a 40. The charts show a slight increase in critical thinking in the last academic year for the university as a whole, 3 out of 4 colleges, and for honor's students. The downward trend we were seeing in scores for several years stopped.



EWP –Critical Thinking

Data from the EWP readers indicate that critical thinking is a skill that still needs to be improved. Trained readers have suggested that making arguments, development of the thesis, and analyzing others' are weaknesses in many of the completed portfolios.

Results from the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) (Administered every 3 years)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is an indirect measure that was administered in SP10 to freshmen (330) and seniors (590). Positive NSSE Data: Eastern seniors were on par with seniors at other Illinois public institutions, our Carnegie class, and all other NSSE schools with 88% indicating Eastern has contributed quite a bit or very much to their thinking critically and analytically. Eastern is higher by 3-6% than the other institutions' seniors when asked how much their coursework has emphasized making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions. Negative NSSE Data: When asked how much in the current year they had been asked to memorize facts and then repeat them in the same form, 63% of EIU seniors answered "very much" or "quite a bit". While students at comparable universities answered similarly, these are high percentages for rote memorization at the senior level and indicate that critical thinking activities such as analysis and evaluation may be less prevalent than desirable.

The direct measure employed by the VSA in 2010, the Collegiate Learning Assessment, shows only 22% of Eastern seniors above or well above expected performance levels on tasks such as critiquing an argument, making an argument, and writing analytically, while 24% percent of our seniors are below the expected level and 38% are well below this level. One hundred freshmen and one hundred seniors completed the CLA.

Comments: Unlike writing and speaking, there are no general education courses that teach critical thinking skills in any consistent way that would reach all undergraduates.