

Student Pilot Test/Critical Thinking Session (1-31-06)

GE 101 Strategies for Academic Success (TR, 11:00, Sp 06, Mary Poole, Instructor)

11 students, one came in late

Counselors Mitch Poole & Cathy Vaughan also present

Schuermer set up the session much like the last one, putting the session in context:

- Described the accreditation process
- Described the role of the QEP
- Explained core Gen Ed competencies
- Gave the “garage door” example of CT, noting that some level of good thinking led to a wrong decision—noted that, if you’re learning, it’s OK to be wrong

This session differed from the preceding in that students answered 3 questions individually first (8, 9 and 10). Immediately following this, they were paired with a classmate and asked to answer the same question, working collaboratively. Afterwards, answers were discussed. The Nero question generated the most discussion.

Then Schuermer asked them this: what would you think if you were a new student and asked to take this test?

- It wouldn’t bother me. You aren’t being graded on it. It’s only your opinion.
- I would be intimidated. I’ve been in school for awhile, so I’d be OK with it, but it might intimidate a new student.
- I would feel I was being tricked. If I was a new student walking on campus thinking seriously about a career, and you put this test in front of me and tell me there are no right answers, I’d wonder why I was doing it. The COMPASS test we take tells me what I need to know in English and math, but if there are no right answers, why am I doing this?
[At this point, Schuermer asked what she meant by “tricked.” Mitch Poole noted that there were “right” answers, but that the QEP faculty didn’t have them because the company wouldn’t release them. Schuermer noted there are right answers and it was the goal of the faculty to improve CT skills in students, just like it was a goal to improve their writing and math skills.]
- If I took the test, I would want to see the results, otherwise, what is the point?
- I’d want to know exactly which ones I got wrong and be able to look at the questions and rethink the answers. I would be more interested in the answers than my score.
- I still think it would be tricky and I’d wonder what bearing it would have on my education.
- But it does have a bearing on your education. If I was coming in as a new student, it wouldn’t bother me.

[Schuermer revisited the “tricky” issue and made it clear that there were right answers and he understood why someone might feel that way if everything was simply a matter of opinion. He added that it would be important to make clear the purpose behind the test before students took it.]

- I think how you present it would make a difference. Don't present it as a test, as a placement test. Explain why you're doing it and students will understand. Personally, I like stimulating my mind. I like to think outside the box. When we discussed the answers it was good to see what my classmate was thinking and what I was thinking.
[Schuermer added that this collaborative activity got at an important principle about instruction: the more engaged in the learning activity, the more likely it is that learning takes place. Schuermer then asked those who had yet to speak up what they thought.]
- If you set up the test, I think it will work.
- I think it is a good idea for new students.
- It was cool man, if you set it up. I'm OK with it.
- I'd be more concerned about someone not taking it seriously than it scaring off someone.

	Group answers (4 groups of 2, 1 group of 3)	Individual answers
#8	A 2	2
	B 2	3
	C 1	2
	D 0	4
#9	A 1	3
	B 0	0
	C 0	0
	D 0	0
	E 4	8
#10	A 5	10
	B 0	0
	C 0	0
	D 0	1
	E 0	0