

BridgeValley Community & Technical College
Institutional Learning Outcomes
Revised 9 October 2020

Note: To clarify meaning, the faculty of BridgeValley has prepared a glossary for selected terms (indicated by *italicized font*). The glossary and associated references follow the list of outcomes.

ILO-1 *Communicate effectively when speaking and writing, using appropriate technology.*

- a. Communicate logically-organized and well-developed ideas, positions, or arguments in a *stylistically-appropriate* manner.
- b. Create oral and written work that demonstrates a thorough understanding of *context, audience, and purpose*.
- c. Evaluate *sources* for *validity, bias, credibility, and assumptions* to determine their appropriateness for use as examples and evidence to support a position or idea.
- d. Participate *honestly* in *academic discourse*, while differentiating original ideas from those of others by citing sources.

ILO-2 *Employ qualitative and quantitative reasoning skills to interpret and analyze data, solve problems, synthesize hypotheses, and communicate findings.*

- a. Evaluate and solve real-world situations or problems by applying mathematical or scientific principles.
- b. Propose plausible answers to mathematical, scientific, or technical problems.
- c. Interpret, analyze, and validate data/information/observations using pertinent discipline-specific techniques.
- d. Generate tables, graphs, and reports to present findings, results and conclusions in appropriate formats.

ILO-3 *Demonstrate civil discourse appropriate for living and working in a diverse society through the use and understanding of social respect, social responsibility, and social ethics.*

- a. Evaluate personal and *cultural* perspectives, thereby acknowledging the viewpoints of others regarding issues of *social respect, social responsibility, and social ethics* across a variety of perspectives and *cultures*.
- b. Examine objectively the *diversity* of histories, politics, communication styles, economies, beliefs, and/or practices across a variety of *cultures*.
- c. Assess how one's own action/inaction influences the world and one's own *communities* in terms of *civil discourse, social justice, diversity, and inclusion*.
- d. Discuss conflicting ideas and perspectives respectfully; resolve conflicts constructively; and demonstrate empathy, responsibility, and ethics in an *inclusive* manner as a member of *diverse* cultures, *communities*, and teams.

ILO-4 Apply the *critical thinking* process to analyze problems and make informed decisions.

- a. Define or refine a pertinent question or problem by clearly stating and comprehensively describing it in a way that reflects the *complexities of the topic*.
- b. Analyze one's own and others' *assumptions* in the context of *alternative systems of thought*, evaluating *biases* and testing implications and conclusions against *relevant criteria and standards*.
- c. Evaluate *relevant information* from a variety of credible *primary and secondary sources* to develop an evidence-based point of view related to a defined problem or question.
- d. Create and communicate a well-reasoned and imaginative/innovative/*divergent*/risk-taking position or solution that *synthesizes relevant information* and *sound evidence* to reach a logical and informed conclusion.

Glossary for Institutional Learning Outcomes

Academic Discourse [ILO-1]: The “conversation” students participate in by reading and/or listening to peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, books, conference presentations, and lectures and then responding through writing their own papers, participating in class discussions, and giving presentations.

Alternative Systems of Thought [ILO-4]: Alternative systems of thought are paradigms, or patterns of ideas, that differ from our own. We all see the world differently in relation to our own cultural perspectives and personal experiences. Biased experience supports bias, distorted experience supports distortion, and self-deluded experience supports self-delusion. Therefore, experience should not be thought of as sacred in any way but, instead, as one important dimension of thought that must, like all others, be critically analyzed and assessed. The mind can take in information in three distinctive ways: (1) by internalizing inert information, (2) by forming activated ignorance, and (3) by achieving activated knowledge. [1]

Assumptions [ILO-4]: An assumption is a statement accepted or supposed as truth without proof or demonstration; an unstated premise or belief. All human thought and experience is based on assumptions. We are typically unaware of what we assume and therefore rarely question our assumptions. Much of what is wrong with human thought can be found in the uncritical or unexamined assumptions that underlie it. Often one experiences the world in such a way as to assume that we are observing things just as they are, as though we were seeing the world without the filter of a point of view. One of the key dispositions of critical thinking is the on-going sense that as humans we always think within a perspective, that we virtually never experience things totally and absolutely. There is a connection, therefore, between thinking so as to be aware of our assumptions and being intellectually humble. [1]

Audience [ILO-1]: The people who will read or listen to the written or oral communication. The author adjusts the written or oral communication based on the knowledge and/or skill level of the audience.

Bias(es) [ILO-1 and ILO-4]: Bias is a mental leaning, inclination, or prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another. Any discussion must clearly distinguish two different senses of the word “bias.” One is neutral, the other negative. The neutral sense refers simply to the fact that, because of one's point of view, one notices some things rather than others, emphasizes some points rather than others, and thinks in one direction rather than others. This is not in itself a criticism, because thinking within a point of view is unavoidable. The negative sense implies blindness or irrational resistance to weaknesses within one's own point of view or to the strength or insight within a point of view one opposes. Fair-minded critical thinkers try to be aware of their bias (in sense one) and try hard to avoid bias (in sense two). Many people confuse these two senses. Many confuse bias with emotion or with evaluation, perceiving any expression of emotion or any use of evaluative words to be biased (sense two). Evaluative words that can be justified by reason and evidence are not biased in the negative sense. [1]

Civil Discourse [ILO-3]: Civility is being respectful, thoughtful, open-minded, and willing to listen to others. When exchanging views, the focus is on the issues rather than the individual(s) sharing them. When defending interpretations, verified information is used. If there is a need to compromise, it is done respectfully. Being willing to compromise; treating ideas and others with respect; and avoiding physical, emotional, and verbal violence are all part of civil discourse.

Communicate Effectively [ILO-1]: To communicate effectively, the writer/speaker must:

- create a logically organized piece of written or oral work;
- provide a variety of sources to support claims while citing appropriately;
- use prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing techniques;
- follow the rules of grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling; and
- target the work to serve an overall purpose based on the assigned task. [See **Purpose.**]

Communities/Community [ILO-3]: Referring to various and diverse groups of people. Examples include BridgeValley students, Charleston residents, rural communities, Appalachians, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), gender-identity-related communities, and LGBTQ communities.

Complexities of the Topic [ILO-4]: Analyzing the topic by breaking down and examining the various aspects that work in coordination to create the topic.

Context [ILO-1]: The information that provides meaning and clarity to the intended message of a written or literary work. Context provides the reader or listener with physical, cultural, situational, or historical information that assists in developing a main idea.

Credible [ILO-1]: A source is credible when it is high quality and trustworthy. To determine if a source is credible, evaluate the source for **Currency, Relevancy, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose** (the “CRAAP Test”).

- *Currency* speaks to the source’s publication date and if it is recent enough, or from a time period that best fits the topic.
- *Relevancy* judges whether the information has the right importance/depth for one’s needs.
- *Authority* is an examination of the author’s and publisher’s credentials related to the topic.
- *Accuracy* speaks to the quality of the source. Is the information supported by sources and cited? Is it peer-reviewed? Is it biased? Can the information be verified?
- *Purpose* is evaluated to understand the source’s point of view and reason for being created. Is it informative in nature or persuasive? [2]

Critical Thinking [ILO-4]: Critical thinking is the comprehensive exploration of ideas using credible and relevant information to identify, formulate decisions about, and solve problems. It is self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. [1]

Culture(s)/Cultural [ILO-3]: The way in which culture is agreed upon to make meaning of shared culture. Culture is considered a central concept in social sciences, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Cultural

universals are found in all human societies. These include expressive forms like art, music, dance, ritual, religion; and technologies like tool usage, cooking, shelter, and clothing. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture, and art, whereas the immaterial aspects of culture such as principles of social organization (including practices of political organization and social institutions), mythology, philosophy, literature (both written and oral), and science comprise the intangible cultural heritage of a society. [3]

Divergent Thinking [ILO-4]: Divergent thinking involves making unexpected combinations, changing information into unanticipated forms, identifying connections among remote associates, and the like. When an individual creates a divergent position, a single question returns multiple answers, and the individual considers and evaluates all answers equally. Divergent thinking has been equated with creativity. [4]

Diverse [ILO-3]: See **Diversity**.

Diversity [ILO-3]: Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values systems, national origins, and political beliefs. [5]

Honesty/Honestly [ILO-1]: Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: (1) plagiarism of an item submitted for a grade such as an answer on an exam, a quiz, a laboratory report, a submitted paper, experimental data, a computer program, or homework; (2) falsifying experimental data; (3) using work accomplished by another person; (4) assisting another person to cheat; (5) falsifying records; and (6) improperly accessing computer-stored information. [6]

Inclusion/Inclusive [ILO-3]: Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. The college promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. Inclusion in the college campus fosters a collaborative, supportive, and respectful environment that increases the participation and contribution of all students, faculty, and staff. True inclusion removes all barriers, discrimination, and intolerance. When applied properly, it is natural for everyone to feel valued and supported.

Primary and Secondary Sources [ILO-1 and ILO-4]: A *primary source* is a firsthand account by an eyewitness or a participant, or an original reference work. Examples include diaries, letters, news articles written by eyewitnesses to an event, interviews, original research reports, and official data such as census or labor statistics. A *secondary source* is an analysis or interpretation of information contained in a primary source. Secondary sources include articles and books analyzing primary sources. Both primary and secondary sources should be carefully examined for authorship and bias. [7]

Purpose [ILO-1]: The main intent of the work to either inform, persuade, or entertain the audience.

Relevant Criteria and Standards [ILO-4]: Relevant criteria and standards are the modes of thought that are pertinent in terms of applicable benchmarks or standards. There are many ways

to begin to grasp the profound truth that all content is nothing more nor less than a mode of thinking (about something), a way of figuring something out, a way of understanding something through thought. [1]

Relevant Information [ILO-4]: Information should be relevant to the research question, meaning the information is useful for the purpose of the project. To check relevancy, it is important to decide if the information at hand is appropriate for the topic, or if other information would be better suited for the assignment. Questions to ask when considering relevant information are: (1) Does the information answer the research question? (2) Does the information help create an understanding of the specific topic? (3) Is the source written at a level appropriate for its intended use? [7]

Social [ILO-3]: In sociology, social constructionism theory and communication theory examine the development of jointly-constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality. Social constructs can be different based on the society and the events surrounding the time in which they exist. [8]

Social Ethics [ILO-3]: How a society at any given time in history determines and defines moral laws, right, and wrong. These can and do change over time, by and within each society.

Social Justice [ILO-3]: The view that everyone deserves equal/equitable economic, legal, political, and social rights and opportunities. Access/equity/diversity/participation and the understanding of human rights and how they apply to a global society.

Social Respect [ILO-3]: Social respect means being respectful, thoughtful, open-minded, and willing to listen to others and respond to others in the same manner of respect, open-mindedness, and willingness to listen. [See **Civil Discourse.**]

Social Responsibility [ILO-3]: Referring to good citizenship as defined through being respectful of other ideas/opinions and being responsible to personal ideas/opinions. Looking at the greater good in a societal setting (looking out for each other).

Sound Evidence [ILO-4]: Sound Evidence uses credible sources—high quality and trustworthy sources that pass the “CRAAP Test.” [See **Credible.**]

Sources: See **Primary and Secondary Sources.**

Stylistically-Appropriate [ILO-1]: Style consists of the choices in language and phrasing that a writer or speaker makes. To be stylistically appropriate, writers must consider the type of writing they are presenting; they must consider what they need to accomplish with the writing to determine the type of style that is appropriate. For instance, the style of a scholarly journal article will be different from that of a blog/diary entry.

Synthesis/Synthesizes [ILO-2 and ILO-4]: Synthesizing relevant information is taking ideas and theories from two or more different sources and blending them together to create a new

combined idea. Synthesizing is not summarizing; it involves bringing many different ideas together to form a larger overarching theme. [9]

Validity [ILO-1]: The quality of being well-grounded, sound, or correct.

References for Institutional Learning Outcomes

- [1] *The Foundation for Critical Thinking*, 2019, <https://www.criticalthinking.org>.
- [2] “Evaluate your Sources Using the CRAAP Test.” *MJC Library and Learning Center*, 12 Feb. 2020, <https://libguides.mjc.edu/CRAAP/overview>.
- [3] Macionis, John J. and Linda Marie Gerber. *Sociology*. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011, p. 53.
- [4] “Idea Generation: Divergent Vs. Convergent Thinking.” *Cleverism*, 2020, <https://www.cleverism.com/idea-generation-divergent-vs-convergent-thinking>.
- [5] “Diversity and Inclusion Definitions.” *Ferris State University*, <https://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/diversityoffice/definitions.htm>.
- [6] “Adopted Policies.” *BridgeValley Community & Technical College*, <https://www.bridgevalley.edu/adopted-policies>.
- [7] Kennedy, X. J., Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Marcia F. Muth. 12th ed. *The Bedford Guide for College Writers with Reader, Research Manual, and Handbook*. Bedford-St Martin’s, 2020.
- [8] Lock, Andy and Tom Strong. *Social Constructionism: Sources and Stirrings in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 12–29.
- [9] “How to Synthesize Written Information.” *Study.com*, 2020. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/how-to-synthesize-written-information.html>.