Partnering with students for insights to institution-wide learning outcomes

- Why partner with students

- 2023 Student Partners in Assessment

    Developing critical thinking at Pacific

    Successes and challenges from partnering

- Take-away

    What's next, Q&A

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Respond in chat:

What concerns do you have about validity, reliability, equity, and fairness in assessment at your institution?

Why partner with students

- Students are our primary stakeholders.

- They are persuasive advocates for change.

- Partnering with students makes our understanding of student learning more accurate and nuanced.

- Students can tell us things we'd otherwise attempt to infer indirectly.

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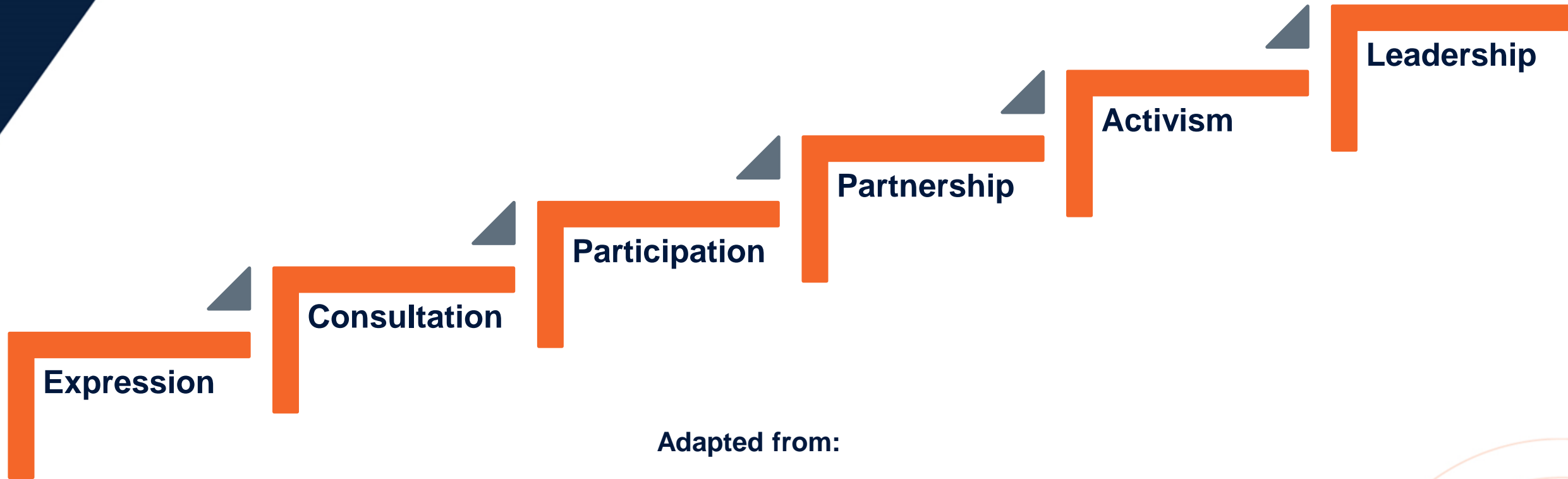PACIFIC

How partnering serves students

- Insights and response make college experience better for other students.

- Student perspectives check our assumptions and biases that might otherwise reinforce the status quo.

- Students in partner role gain professional skills and knowledge.

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Respond in chat:

What examples can you share of incorporating student voices into assessment?

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Spectrum of student involvement

Expression

Consultation

Participation

Partnership

Activism

Leadership

Adapted from:

- Jessica Lavariega Monforti & Melissa Michelson, "Nothing About Us Without Us: Empowering Student Voices"

- Barbara Bray & Kathleen McClaskey, "Continuum of Voice" (website)

- Students at the Center Hub (website)

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- 3 campuses in northern California

- 3300 undergrad & 3500 grad/professional

- Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving and Hispanic-Serving (AAPISI & HSI)

Context for assessment

- Institutional priority: increasing undergraduates' persistence to graduation

- Assessment responds to programs' needs and goals

- Assessment Office situated close to teaching and learning expertise
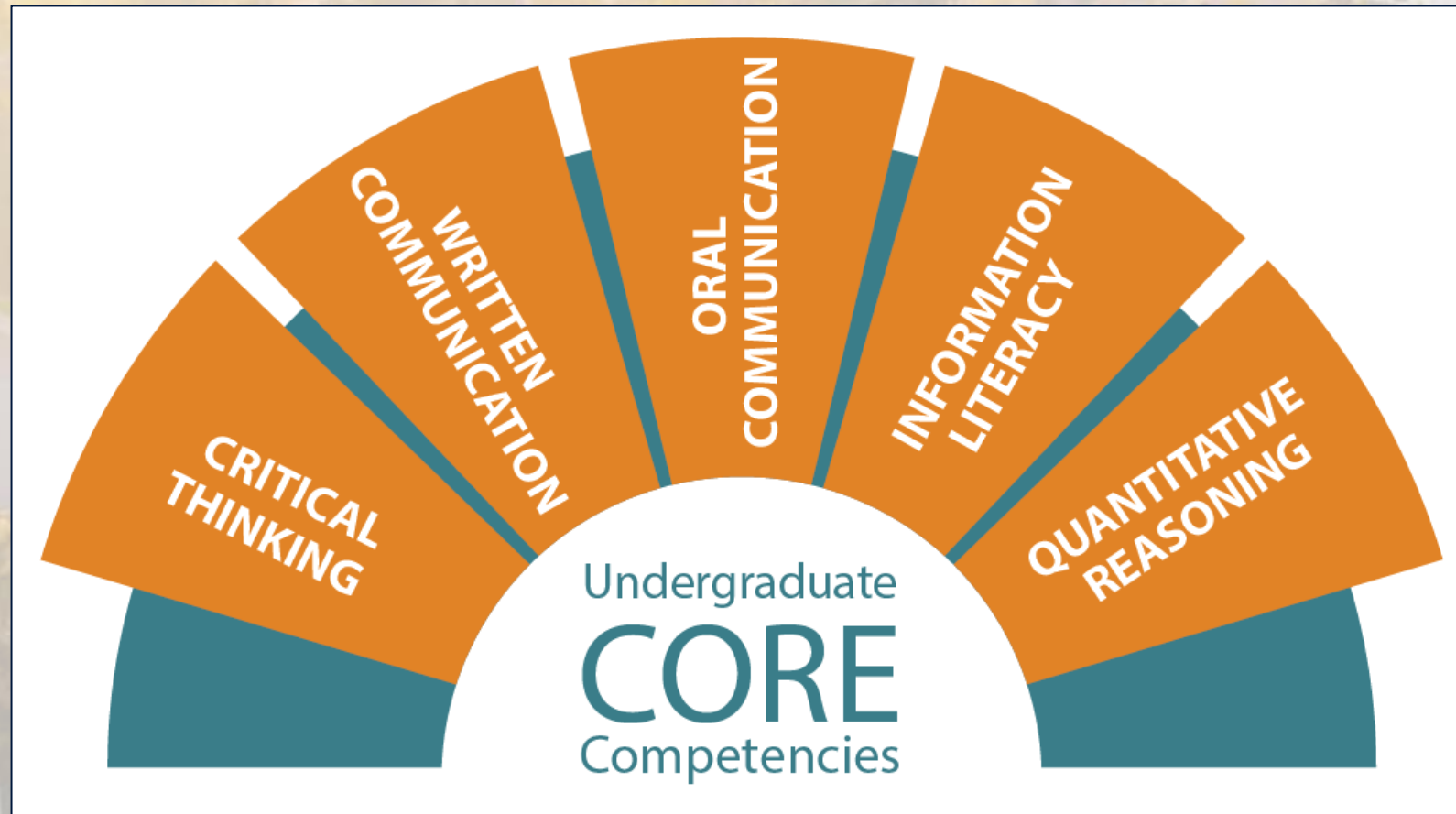
Student Partners in Assessment (SPAs)

- Initial cohort of 4 students selected Fall 2022; worked throughout Spring 2023

- Paid as student employees (4-6 hr/week)

- **Goal:** SPAs will **collect and interpret/analyze other students' perspectives** on Pacific's undergraduate core competencies

- First SPA cohorts are not directly involved in quantitative assessment of core competences

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Student Partners in Assessment (SPAs)

Initial training

- What are learning outcomes and assessment

- Pacific core competencies and how assessed

Research training

- Braun & Clarke, *Successful Qualitative Research*

- Method = thematic analysis

Project selection

- SPAs chose from several possible research projects and constructed a research question, **"What helps or hinders students in developing critical thinking?"**

Developing Critical Thinking Project

Purpose

- Understand student perceptions of critical thinking

- Understand student experiences developing critical thinking at Pacific (helps? hinders?)

- Materials with recommendations relevant for students and instructors

Method

- N = 20 undergraduate and graduate students

- Online qualitative survey: 7 open-ended questions & demographics

- Thematic analysis (*Braun & Clarke*)

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Results

Ashley Ippolito   Paty Santiago

Zhao Do   Zibby Madill

Developing
Critical thinking

Our Purpose

The 2023 Student Partners in Assessment developed a pilot study to learn more about critical thinking and improve teaching and learning at Pacific. 20 undergraduate and graduate students were asked to answer several open-ended questions on a confidential online survey. The questions asked about their experiences and opinions about critical thinking at the University of the Pacific.

The Student Partners in Assessment looked at specific questions regarding experiences with critical thinking when analyzing responses. The SPA team found three themes throughout students' responses, which can be found inside this brochure.

Brought to you by:

Student Partners in Assessment
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For questions or concerns please contact
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1 DIVERSE NEEDS MUST BE MET

SELF-CARE COMES FIRST

Self-care is the practice of taking deliberate actions to care for one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

1. Individual health and wellness is required before the development of critical thinking skills.
2. Students identified that they had difficulty focusing on classes or coursework due to a lack of mental wellness.
3. In some cases, a lack of mental wellness became a motivating factor to get support, and then students were able to refocus.

Love what you do

Stay positive

Healthy lifestyle

Exercise

Treat yourself

"
The challenge that I face in developing critical thinking skills is not getting enough sleep or taking care of my mental/physical health.
"

2 ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORTABILITY

Environmental comfortability refers to the state of feeling comfortable and satisfied in one's physical and emotional surroundings

In order to secure an environment which fosters critical thinking, respect and self-reflection is essential in group discussions. Environmental comfortability is a necessary basis for students to be able to surpass a challenge.

"
A part of it is that you have to get comfortable with being wrong or being disagreed with, but still have to know how well to argue for and communicate your ideas
"

3 STEPPING STONES

Stepping stone means a challenge that is meant to be surpassed. The challenges are necessary in order to push students out of their comfort zones but not something impossible to achieve. "The first" factor indicates the first time doing something is always an uneasy feeling and it requires students to critically think and try in order to find the right way to do it. Once they overcame this challenge, they found it became easier to achieve their goals and at the same time improved their critical thinking.

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I got a lot more involved in social justice issues and the work surrounding them, such as student government and undergraduate research. Since then, I've definitely felt the need to push my own learning, which I think has in turn improved my critical thinking and reasoning.
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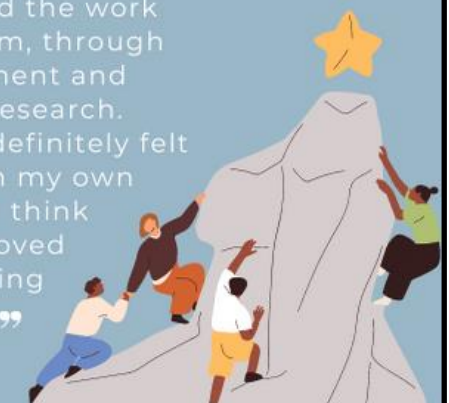
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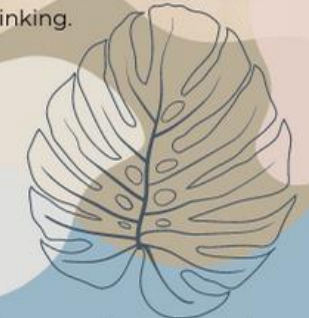
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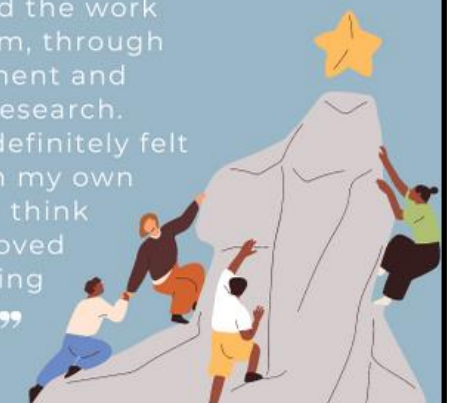
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Recommendations for Improving Critical Thinking

Selfcare is Not Selfish

Putting your well-being first can improve your critical thinking skills. On campus there are recourses such as CAPS or TAO (Therapy Assist Online). To learn more please contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (209) 946-2315

Form Community Connections

Engaging in on-campus communities along with off-campus communities is a great form of improving. Visit the Volunteer Center to learn about opportunities off campus and Student Leadership & Involvement Center (DUC 230) for opportunities on-campus. Research along with teaching assistances are other methods of getting involved.

Office Hours

Student responses showed that asking for help from professors has improved students' critical thinking. One way students have accomplished this is by going to office hours.

Professors can change "office hours" to more welcoming term such as "Hangout Hours" or "Student Hours." Providing more information about what office hours are can increase inflow.

Learn more about other resources:

Disseminating SPAs' themes and recommendations

- Team presentation to University Assessment Committee (May 2023)

- Research talk at university assessment conference (Nov. 2023)

- Tri-fold brochure distributed at "road shows" (Jan. 2024 – present)

- Presented at Core Competency Forum (March 2024)

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Lessons learned and considerations

- Indicators of success

- Balancing student background and autonomy with project goals

- Project scope, clarity, and expectations

- Attention to collaboration

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Final take away

- Our approach is just one model – there are many ways to be successful.

- Partnering with students may not go in the direction you expect, but it will be worthwhile.

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Thank you
Please ask questions in the chat

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