

Pro and Con Grid (Assesses Skill in Analysis & Critical Thinking)

WHEN USING TECHNOLOGY: Estimated level of time/energy required to prepare, to respond (students) and to analyze is **LOW**

Description: Students write quick lists of pros and cons to help them more clearly consider an issue.

Purpose: This assessment provides information students' objectivity and extent of analysis.

Procedure:

- 1) Identify a decision, judgment, dilemma, or issue that is relevant to the course.
- 2) Create a prompt to elicit pros and cons. You may specify a particular point of view for the students to adopt when considering the issue.
- 3) Identify how many pros and cons should be identified and the describe the response format you expect from the students.
 - 1) Prepare the questionnaire to be display-ready by writing it on the board, a transparency, or digitally projected. It could also be written on a half-sheet of paper and distributed to the students. It is important the prompts are presented in writing. Do not only read the question(s).
 - 2) Hand out index cards or half-sheets of paper. It is best if students do not write their names, unless there is a very good reason to know who wrote which comments.

Examples:

Course: Bioethics; Biology & Philosophy

You have read several recent articles on the current debate about patenting human genetic material. From your viewpoint as consumers, what are the principal pros and cons of allowing the patenting of genes? Identify at least 5 of each.

Course: U.S. Electoral Politics; Political Science

In the wake of the last federal census, the state legislature has just issued a draft plan for redistricting. Study this plan carefully, as though you were the governor's special assistant for legislative relations. Then write a short list of political costs and benefits that the governor should consider before decide whether to support this plan.

Adaptations/Extensions:

- 1) Students identify pros and cons from two viewpoints, such as customer and salesperson or defense attorney and prosecutor.
- 2) After completing the grid, students provide evidence for their positions.
- 3) After completing the grid, students present a debate or write an essay.

Suggestions: Responding to students' feedback may take longer than planning because questions lead to other questions. Set clear time limits. To temper expectations and disappointment, let students know you will not comment on everything.

References and Resources:

Angelo, T.A, and Cross, K.P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.