

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

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The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Assumptions: Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions)
- Context: The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

| | Benchmark | | Milestones | | Capstone | Score |
|--|---|---|--|--|-----------------|--------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| 1. Explanation of Issues | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | | |
| 2.1 Evidence <i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i> | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. | Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. | | |
| <i>2.2 Critically examining viewpoints of experts</i> | Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question. | Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. | Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning. | Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. | | |
| 3. Influence of context and assumptions | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. | Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or visa versa). | Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position. | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of context when presenting a position. | | |
| 4. Student's position <i>(position, perspective, thesis, or hypothesis)</i> | Specific position is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. | Specific position acknowledges different sides of an issue. | Specific position takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position. | Specific position is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position. | | |
| 5. Conclusions and related outcomes <i>(implications and consequences)</i> | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes are oversimplified. | Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes are identified clearly. | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes are identified clearly. | Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order. | | |

NOTES (CONTINUE ON OTHER SIDE):