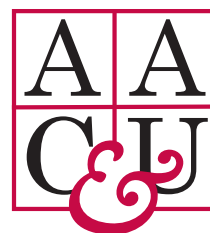




TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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Universities

CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

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. A person who is competent in critical thinking evaluates evidence carefully and applies reasoning to decide what to believe and how to act. A person with competency in this area demonstrates the ability to demonstrate among degrees of credibility, accuracy, and reliability of inferences drawn from

given data; recognizes parallels, assumptions, or presuppositions in any given source of information; evaluates the strengths and relevance of arguments on a particular question or issue; weighs evidence and decides if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted; determines whether certain conclusions or consequences are supported by the information provided; and uses problem solving skills.

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.

- **Ambiguity:** Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- **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.

- **Literal meaning:** Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, “she was green with envy” would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- **Metaphor:** Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, “she was green with envy” is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information contact value@aacu.org

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

| | Capstone 4 | Milestones 3 2 | | Benchmark 1 |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Explanation of issues | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | 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 but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. |
| Evidence Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question. |
| Influence of context and assumptions | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position. | Differentiates between self and others' assumptions and several relevant 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 vice versa). | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. |
| Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is creative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue. | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. |
| Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) | Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and well supported; reflect student's informed evaluation, demonstrating ability to weigh evidence and place perspectives discussed in priority order. | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly; evidence is generally well supported. | Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly; support of evidence is limited. | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified; little to no support of evidence. |
| Solving Problems | Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve a problem, but recognizes consequences of a solution and can articulate reasons for choosing a solution. | Having selected from among several approaches, develops a logical, consistent plan that considers how to solve a problem. | Considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solving a problem. | Only a single approach is considered and is used to solve a problem. |