



Association
of American
Colleges and
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Spring 2009 Draft for Public Release of Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric

This rubric is a step in a rubric development process that will produce a final draft by September 2009. All drafts are revised in response to the feedback received from VALUE Leadership and Partner campuses. The final feedback deadline for the VALUE Initiative is July 3, 2009. For more information or to give feedback, please email Wende Morgaine, VALUE Initiative Manager, at wendemm@gmail.com. Thank you!

The VALUE rubrics emerge from a process that examined many campus rubrics for each outcome and from the knowledge of faculty experts. They articulate fundamental criteria for each outcome demonstrated at progressively more sophisticated levels. The rubrics are intended primarily for institutional level use in evaluating and discussing student learning. The core expectations articulated in the VALUE rubrics can be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines or even courses. At the same time, the VALUE rubrics position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework that is shared nationally.

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.

Glossary

- 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." (<http://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 is 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.

Framing Language

The Value Critical Thinking 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 suggest that suggests successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations one encounters in all walks of life.

The Value Critical Thinking 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.



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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any performance that doesn't meet level one performance.

Core Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Problem/issue relevant to situation in context is clearly stated	Problem/issue relevant to situation is stated and partially described	Problem/issue relevant to situation is stated	Problem/issue relevant to a different situation identified
Evidence	An appropriate (for assignment) variety of reputable sources are selected and used.	An adequate (for assignment) variety of reputable sources are selected and used.	Limited reputable sources are selected and used.	Questionable sources are selected and used.
Influence of context and assumptions	Recognizes significant implications of context and assumptions in developing and presenting a well qualified position.	Responds to some implications of context and assumptions in developing and presenting a qualified position.	Shows emerging awareness of context and assumptions in presenting a position.	Presents position without consideration of assumptions or context.
Own perspective, hypothesis, or position	Student's perspective is multifaceted and exhibits complex and appropriate consideration of other perspectives.	Student's perspective is rational and considered in light of other perspectives.	Student's perspective is clear and an alternative is recognized.	Only student's perspective is apparent.
Conclusions, implications and consequences	A comprehensive conclusion synthesizes sources and has a nuanced consideration of implications and consequences.	Conclusions are integrated from sources with consideration of implications and consequences.	Conclusions acknowledge sources with limited consideration of implications and consequences.	Conclusion is emerging with scant attention to implications and consequences.

Created by a team of faculty from higher education institutions across the United States.



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Expanded Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Problem/issue relevant to situation in context is clearly stated. Ambiguities are fully explored. Questions are formulated that lead to full exploration of issues. Literal meaning is fully distinguished from metaphoric or symbolic meaning.	Problem/issue relevant to situation is stated and partially described. Ambiguities are adequately explored. Questions are formulated that lead to adequate exploration of issues. Literal meaning is adequately distinguished from metaphoric or symbolic meaning.	Problem/issue relevant to situation is stated. Ambiguities are partially explored. Questions are formulated that lead to partial exploration of issues. Literal meaning is partially distinguished from metaphoric or symbolic meaning.	Problem/issue relevant to a different situation is identified. Ambiguities are minimally explored. Questions are formulated that lead to minimal exploration of issues. Literal meaning is minimally distinguished from metaphoric or symbolic meaning.
Evidence	Evidence investigated and discussed thoroughly. Sources interpreted in context. Viewpoints represented in evidence are challenged. A balanced perspective of diverse viewpoints.	Evidence investigated adequately. Most sources interpreted in context. Some viewpoints represented in evidence are challenged. Adequately balanced although narrow in scope.	Evidence investigated partially. Limited contextual source interpretation. Viewpoints are justified on the basis of authority and are selectively challenged. Does not provide balanced views.	Evidence investigated minimally. Basic contextual source interpretation. Viewpoints are justified on the basis of authority. Represents a single viewpoint.
Influence of context and assumptions	Position qualified by considerations of experiences, circumstances, conditions and environment that influence perspectives and the implications of those perspectives.	Position presented with recognition of contextual sources of bias, assumptions and possible implications of bias.	Position presented tentatively, with emerging awareness of own and others' biases, ethical and political, historical sources and implications of bias.	Position presented in absolutes with little recognition of own personal and cultural bias and little recognition of ethical, political, historical or other considerations.
Own perspective, hypothesis, or position	A reasonable, clear, position or hypothesis, stated or implied, demonstrates some complexity of thought. It also acknowledges, refutes, synthesizes, or extends some other perspectives appropriately.	A reasonable, clear position or hypothesis is stated or implied. Important objections and/or alternate perspectives are considered with some thought.	Position or hypothesis is clear, whether stated or implied, with at least one other perspective acknowledged.	Work contains a discernible position or hypothesis that reflects only the student's perspective.
Conclusions, implications and consequences	Conclusions are based on a synthesis of evidence from various sources. Inferences about causal consequences are supported by evidence that has been evaluated from disparate viewpoints. Analysis of implications indicates some awareness of ambiguity.	Conclusions and evidence are relatively obvious, with synthesis drawn from selected (cherry picked) evidence. Assertions of cause are supported mostly by opinion and are also selective. Considerations of consequences are timid or obvious and easy.	Conclusions are weakly supported by evidence, with only emerging synthesis. Assertions of cause are doubtful. Considerations of consequences are narrow or exaggerated and dichotomous.	Conclusions are not supported by the evidence or repeat the evidence without synthesis or elaboration; tendency to confuse correlation and cause. Considerations of consequences are sketchy, drawn in absolutes, or absent.