

Using the Critical Thinking Rubric

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the thorough analysis of issues, ideas, artifacts, information or events to construct an argument or a solution.

At the associate's degree level, critical thinking identifies and frames a problem or question in selected areas of study and distinguishes among elements of ideas, concepts, theories or practical approaches to the problem or question.

Waubonsee's Outcome: Analyze information in order to construct an argument or solution.

The 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.

To measure critical thinking, create assignments with required comparisons, analysis, synthesis, planning, prediction and trouble-shooting. Require problem solving, research, or decision making that goes beyond what is in the text book.

You are welcome to modify the CLO rubric: The AAC&U VALUE rubrics were designed to be modified to increase faculty and student understanding of the criteria so that the resulting assessments will accurately reflect the learning and assessment activity. A Critical Thinking Discipline and Program Modified Rubric is available for use on the College Learning Outcomes web page in the Critical Thinking section. Criteria on the modified rubric were created by faculty at Salt Lake City Community College and are an option for you to use. We would like to build more modified rubrics for our other CLOs. If you would like to customize one of the CLO rubrics and need some assistance, reach out to kgorski@waubonsee.edu.

To assess a College Learning Outcome in your course, select two applicable criteria to assess critical thinking in your course. You can modify the rubrics to be discipline/program specific.

Explanation of Issues is the ability to describe an issue or problem to be considered in a clear and understanding manner. Can be measured through stating results, justifying procedures, explaining meaning, presenting arguments.
Evidence is the ability of selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion.
Influence of Context and Assumptions is the ability to identify own and others assumptions while presenting a position or identifying a solution. Assumptions are ideas, conditions or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof."
Student's Position /Solution is the ability to determine a specific position or solution while acknowledging other viewpoints.
Conclusions and Related Outcomes is the ability to draw a conclusion that is logically tied to a range of information including opposing views. Consequences and implications are identified.

Assess Critical Thinking Explicitly:

Students learn and do what is assessed, so try one of the following approaches:

- A. Provide criteria and standards for good thinking in your discipline. Rubrics are an easy and extremely powerful way to define and communicate these.
- B. Assign students to get directly involved with assessment via peer review. Taking the role of evaluator forces students to think about their (and others') thinking (metacognition). Hold students accountable for their peer assessments.
- C. Where appropriate, use ill-structured, real-world, authentic problems that may have several good solutions.
- D. Provide feedback to students on their CT ability (using our CLO rubrics).
- E. Model good reflection and then ask your students for reflection on the content you are teaching, how well they are learning, their assumptions, changes in their thinking, etc. (Zane, 2014).

Resources:

[Critical Thinking Using Signature Assignments](#)
[Implementing Critical Thinking](#)

References

- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Critical thinking VALUE rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/critical-thinking>
- The Lumina Foundation (n.d) *The degree qualifying profile*. Retrieved from: <http://degreeprofile.org/read-the-dqp/dqp-cover/>
- Zane, T. (2014) *Critical thinking using signature assignments*. Retrieved from: http://www.slcc.edu/assessment/docs/CT_Appendices/Implementing%20Critical%20Thinking%20Assignments%20Guidebook%201-6.pdf
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