

CRITICAL THINKING ST. EDWARD'S RUBRIC

Definition

Critical Thinking is a process by which one evaluates a variety of evidence, information, and ideas that challenges one to question their and others' assumptions and support a 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, art, cultural artifacts 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](http://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

	Capstone 4	Milestone		Benchmark 1
		3	2	
Explanation of issues <i>Student identifies and summarizes the problems or questions at issue.</i>	Clearly identifies the main problems and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of those problems. Identifies not only the basics of the issues, but also demonstrates recognition of the nuances of those issues.	Problems or issues to be considered critically are stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, or backgrounds unknown.	Problems or issues to be considered critically are clearly stated but without necessary clarification or description.	Problems or questions are stated, but statement is confused, inappropriate, or inaccurate.
Position Student <i>Identifies and presents their own research-based perspective and position as it is important to the analysis of the issue (perspective, thesis, hypothesis)</i>	Appropriately identifies own specific position (perspective, thesis, or hypothesis) on the issue, drawing support from student's own contributed research, which the student has assessed in terms of limitations and strengths.	Own specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) acknowledges different sides and complexity of an issue.	Own specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic or obvious.	Addresses a single source or view of the argument and fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to student's own. Fails to establish other critical distinctions.
Position Others' <i>Identifies and considers others' perspectives and positions that are important to the analysis of the issue.</i>	Addresses perspectives noted previously, and additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation or evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are mostly left unexamined.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation or evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are unexamined or treated as proof texts.	Deals only with a single perspective and fails to discuss other possible perspectives, especially those salient to the issue.
Influence of context and assumptions <i>Analyzes own and others' assumptions*</i>	Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context. Considers other pertinent contexts.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Shows an awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	Discusses the problem only in egocentric or sociocentric terms. Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts.

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<p>Evidence <i>Evaluates evidence: Identifies and assesses the range and quality of supporting data.</i></p>	<p>Examines the evidence and source of evidence; questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness. Observes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences. Clearly distinguishes between fact, opinion, & acknowledges value judgements.</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/ evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are mostly left unexamined.</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation or evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are unexamined or treated as proof texts.</p>	<p>Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth, or denies evidence without adequate justification. Confuses associations and correlations with cause and effect. Does not distinguish between fact, opinion, and value judgements.</p>
<p>Conclusions <i>Conclusions (implications, consequences, significance, "so what?") are soundly/ reasonably supported</i></p>	<p>Identifies and discusses conclusions, considering contexts, assumptions, data, and evidence. Objectively reflects upon student's own assertions.</p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified or missing.</p>

*Contexts for Consideration:

1. Cultural/Social – Group, national, ethnic behavior/attitude
2. Scientific – Conceptual, basic science, scientific method
3. Educational – Schooling, formal training
4. Economic – Trade, business concerns costs
5. Technological – Applied science, engineering
6. Ethical – Values
7. Political – Organizational or governmental
8. Personal Experience – Personal observation, informal character
9. Artistic – Art and Cultural Artifacts