May 2023

ILO 5: Critical Thinking and Reading

Definition: Critical thinking is the habit of exploring a phenomenon (e.g., an event, artifact, story, or issue) and applying certain criteria to determine its value and legitimacy. It involves analyzing and synthesizing often contradictory pieces of information and logically connecting ideas to make sound, well-reasoned judgments. Critical thinkers tolerate ambiguity, recognize underlying assumptions, welcome counterarguments, and routinely revise their own beliefs in response to the world around them.

Critical reading occurs when readers actively engage with a written, visual, or auditory text, going beyond its surface-level characteristics to identify and evaluate its deeper structural elements, such as purpose, tone, organization, and meaning. Those who read critically assume an objective point of view, and interact with a text by making annotations, posing questions, and forming their own opinions about what they've read.

Outcome: Students will

- Use an array of critical thinking strategies to make meaningful connections between divergent ideas and to observe, recognize, and solve novel problems.
- Adopt an unbiased approach to the act of reading, probing a variety of different texts to identify and explain their key elements and to uncover both the strengths and weaknesses in their deep structure.

Guidelines for General Education Assessment

1. This rubric should be used for **assessment.** It is not meant to be used for grading.
2. You will be asked to report your assessment data in the **Level 1-4** format. Any other reporting format (0-100, for example) will create an inconsistency in scoring and render the data invalid.
3. When using this rubric, it is **not** always expected that all categories on the rubric are assessed in a single assignment. Only report on the categories actually assessed.
4. Set expectations **before** you give an assignment. The expectations for how many students achieve at each level will depend on the level of the course. For example, 100-level courses may rarely have students in the Level 4 category, while higher-level courses will likely have more students achieving Level 4.
5. Ideally, General Education courses that have more than one section should use the same signature assignments and rubrics to assess an ILO in all the sections.
6. Collect data from as many sections as possible. For courses that have multiple sections, it is ideal to have a departmental assessment coordinator. The coordinator can then collate all assessment data.
7. It is the responsibility of the chair of the department (who may delegate to the assessment coordinator) to ensure that all adjuncts who teach General Education courses use agreed- upon signature assignments and collect assessment data.
8. For courses that offer multiple sections, submit data from as many sections as possible. However, if data is missing from one or two sections, simply state this in the narrative and give information for only the sections for which data exists.
9. Remember to collect artifacts (completed student assignments) for each level represented in your course. Artifacts should NOT have any student identifying information (remove names).

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CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Explains Issue/ Understands Problem	Clearly defines the issue or problem and accurately identifies the core issues/key concepts. Appreciates depth and breadth of problem and identifies relevant, significant points of view. Demonstrates fair-mindedness toward the problem and all relevant points of view	Defines the issue and identifies the core issues/key concepts, but may not fully explore the depth and breadth. Identifies relevant points of view. Demonstrates fair-mindedness.	Defines the issue, but superficially or narrowly. May overlook some core issues/key concepts and focus on irrelevant or insignificant points of view. May identify other points of view but struggles with maintaining fair-mindedness.	Fails to clearly define the issue or problem. Does not recognize the core issues/key concepts. Ignores alternate points of view. Fails to maintain a fair-minded approach toward the issue or problem or other points of view.
Student's Position	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is creative, taking into account the complexities of the issue or problem. Limits of position are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Acquires Information and Evidence	Identifies sufficient, credible, relevant information/evidence. Considers information/evidence that opposes as well as supports the argued position. Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from it.	Identifies sufficient, credible, relevant information. Considers some information and opposing points of view. Distinguishes between information and inferences drawn from it	Identifies some credible information, but not enough; some information may be irrelevant. Ignores strong counter-arguments. Sometimes confuses information and the inferences drawn from it.	Relies on insufficient, irrelevant, or unreliable information. Fails to identify or dismisses relevant counter-arguments. Confuses information and the inferences drawn from it.
Utilizes Information and Evidence	Uses information and evidence to support claims and thoroughly analyze one's own assumptions and the assumptions of others. Makes assumptions that are consistent, reasonable, and valid.	Uses information and evidence to support claims and analyze assumptions, but may lack depth and precision. Makes valid assumptions.	Use information and evidence that is superficial and at times inaccurate. Only loosely analyzes assumptions. Assumptions are irrelevant or unclear.	Fails to use information or evidence. Does not analyze assumptions. Makes invalid assumptions.
Makes Valid Conclusions	Follows where evidence and reasoning lead to obtain defensible, thoughtful, logical conclusions or solutions. Makes inferences that are consistent with one another, and identifies the most significant implications and consequences of the reasoning (positive or negative). Distinguishes probable from improbable implications/solutions.	Follows where evidence and reasoning lead to obtain justifiable, logical conclusions or solutions. Makes valid inferences, but may lack depth; identifies significant implications and consequences, but may lack insight and precision. Distinguishes probable from improbable implications/solutions, but may lack insight and precision	Follows some evidence to conclusions or solutions. Makes inferences that are often unclear, illogical, inconsistent, and/or superficial. Has trouble identifying significant implications and consequences. Identifies improbable implications.	Uses superficial, simplistic, or irrelevant reasoning and unjustifiable claims. Makes illogical, inconsistent inferences. Maintains or defends views based on self-interest, regardless of the evidence. Ignores significant implications, consequences, or solutions.

Adapted from Foundation for Critical Thinking. (n.d.) Critical Thinking Grid. Retrieved from http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/critical-thinking-testing-and-assessment/594. Used by permission.

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