



# CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

This rubric was adapted by an interdisciplinary team representing Columbia Gorge Community College through a process that examined and modified the AACU Critical Thinking Value Rubric to meet the needs of CGCC's Institutional Learning Outcomes assessment. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The CGCC team agrees with the utility of the AACU Value rubric, which "is to position learning at undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success".

## ***Institutional Learning Outcome #2***

*Through their respective disciplines, CGCC students who earn a degree can: Creatively solve problems by using relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning, and evaluation of information. (Critical thinking and Problem-Solving)*

### ***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.

### ***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.*

- **Issue:** an important topic or problem for debate or discussion.
- **Position:** a point of view adopted and held to.
- **Evidence:** the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.
- **Conclusion:** a judgment or decision reached by reasoning.
- **Outcomes:** something that follows as a result or consequence
- **Assumptions:** Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof."

| Criteria   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   | <b>Not Demonstrated<br/>0</b><br><i>(Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (level one) level performance.) Not demonstrated can be assigned to individual students</i> | <b>Not Applicable</b><br><i>(Evaluators are encouraged to assign "not applicable" if student work was not required to address a category. If assignment is used for assessment of all students, all students should be scored as N/A in this category and an explanation is required in space provide on web form.)</i> |
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| <b>Explanation of issues</b><br><br><i>The focus of this dimension is the student's presentation of the issue/problem.</i>   | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for a full understanding of multiple perspectives. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described; however, limited inclusions of relevant perspectives may impede some understanding. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. Presentation of the issue is one sided. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. | No explanation of issues is evident.  | Explanation of issues is not required for the assignment  |
| <b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b><br><br><i>The focus of this dimension is on the student's internal reflection of their position and their awareness of their own intrinsic assumptions.</i> | Position is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Acknowledges own perspective and biases, and demonstrates ability to reflect or act beyond of own biases         | Position takes into account the complexities of an issue. Acknowledges own perspective and biases.  | Position acknowledges different sides of an issue.  | Position is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.  | Position is not stated.   | Position is not required to be stated for assignment.   |

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| <p><b>Evidence</b><br/><i>Selecting, evaluating and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion.</i></p> <p><i>This dimension includes the evaluation and interpretation of biases and assumptions from sources. The focus is on extrinsic assumptions whereas the dimension “Student’s position” focuses on intrinsic assumptions.</i></p> | <p>Information is taken from credible, reliable, scholarly source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes others' assumptions</p> | <p>The majority of Information is taken from credible, reliable, scholarly source(s). Some general interest, non-scholarly sources are also used. Enough interpretation/evaluation is evident to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Identifies others' assumptions.</p> | <p>Information is taken primarily from general interest, non-scholarly sources, with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Questions some assumptions.</p> | <p>Information is taken from general interest, non-scholarly sources without any interpretation/evaluation. Shows an emerging awareness of sources' assumptions.</p> | <p>No information from sources or viewpoints of experts are evident. Shows no awareness of assumptions.</p>   | <p>Evidence (information from sources) is not required for the assignment.</p>  |
| <p><b>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</b></p>   | <p>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are prioritized and thoroughly evaluated.</p>  | <p>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, 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.</p>                  | <p>No conclusion is stated or implied</p>   | <p>Student is not required to provide a conclusion for the assignment.</p>  |