Thinking Critically and Creatively
Appalachian State University, September 2024
Modified version of Critical Thinking* and Creative Thinking* VALUE Rubrics (AAC&U)

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. This rubric has been adapted by a committee with representation from the faculty, General Education Program, and Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning for assessing Appalachian's General Education learning goal of Thinking Critically and Creatively. For more information about the VALUE rubrics, see https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics.

Rationale

Critical and creative thinkers use an inquiry-based, systematic, logical, and generative process to promote greater understanding and further learning, considering intra- inter-, and trans-disciplinary sources. They are open-minded and willing to assess and consider multiple reliable and credible methods, sources, and conclusions, as part of an evidence-based and rational process. To be knowledgeable and informed in the twenty-first century requires that students cultivate the abilities to access, analyze, evaluate, create, communicate, and act, using information in all forms. The critical and creative thinker is able to apply knowledge in novel or unexpected ways towards useful and meaningful goals.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Assumptions: ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (https://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumption)

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

Credible Source: coming from one who is reliable given the context and purpose of the work

Position: perspective, thesis, hypothesis, or proposed problem solution

Source: a place from which information is obtained. Sources could include but are not limited to oral and written forms, print and audio-visual media, research findings, internet sources, historic documents and correspondence, data repositories, and established scientific principles. Communicators draw on this information as they work for a variety of purposes – to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

THINKING CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY						
Student Learning Outcome	**4** **Capstone**	**3** **Milestone (Higher)**	**2** **Milestone (Lower)**	**1** **Benchmark**	**0** **No Evidence**	**N/A** **Not Applicable**
Explanation. Students will clearly explain the issue/concept.	Issue/concept to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/concept to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/concept to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/ or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/concept to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	No evidence	N/A
Evidence. Students will intentionally use information to investigate a point of view or conclusion.	Information from credible source(s) is cited or acknowledged with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Information from credible source(s) is cited or acknowledged with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Information from credible source(s) is cited or acknowledged with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Information from source(s) is cited and/or acknowledged without any interpretation/evaluation.	No evidence	N/A
Context. Students will evaluate the consequence of context when presenting a position.	Thoroughly evaluates the relevance of contexts when influencing a position.	Partially evaluates relevant contexts influencing position.	Clearly identifies relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.	No evidence	N/A
Perspective. Students will express a position that takes into account the complexities of an issue and acknowledges other viewpoints and assumptions.	Specific position takes into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position are acknowledged. One's own and others' points of view and assumptions are synthesized within position.	Specific position takes into account the complexities of an issue. One's own and others' points of view and/or assumptions are acknowledged within position.	Specific position acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position is stated, but is simplistic and does not take into account different sides of an issue.	No evidence	N/A
Conclusions. Students will express a logical conclusion.	Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes are oversimplified.	No evidence	N/A
Transformational Thinking. Students will extend a novel or unique idea, question, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that pushes boundaries.	Creates a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product. Alternatively, generates knowledge that pushes boundaries or challenges assumptions.	Experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.	Analyzes and reflects upon a collection of available ideas.	Reformulates a collection of available ideas.	No evidence	N/A

*Adapted from "Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric" and "Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric" by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2009, https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics.