

Washington State University Critical Thinking Rubric – Modified by Jerry Stonewater & Susan Wolcott (Draft 10/18/05)

Critical Thinking Skill	Very Weak (Confused Fact-Finder) 0	Partially Developed (Biased Jumper) 1	Substantially Developed (Perpetual Analyzer) 2	Excellent (Pragmatic Performer and Strategic Revisioner) 3-4
Overall Approach to Critical Thinking	Proceeds as if goal is to find the single, “ correct ” answer; depends on outside authority for correct answers, information, etc.	Proceeds as if goal is to stack up evidence and information to support a particular conclusion	Proceeds as if goal is to establish a detached, balanced view of evidence and information from different points of view	Proceeds as if goal is to come to a well-founded conclusion based on objective comparison of viable alternatives; Or to construct knowledge, to move toward better conclusions or greater confidence in conclusions as the problem is addressed over time.
Other Major Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to recognize uncertainty or attributes it to “temporary” uncertainty that authority will fix. • Depends on authority to indicate “correct” answers • Uses contradictory or illogical arguments; lacks organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes uncertainty and multiple perspectives but does not integrate them well into overall reasoning and justification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situates coherent and balanced description of problem in larger context; addresses multiple perspectives, evaluates evidence • Has difficulty establishing priorities for judging across perspectives • Organizes information and concepts into viable framework for exploring realistic complexities of the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides well-founded support for choosing one solution while objectively considering other viable options • But may not adequately address long-term, limitations, or next steps
1) Identifies and summarizes the problem/question at issue (and/or the source's position).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not identify and summarize the problem; is confused or identifies a different or inappropriate problem • Problem stated in dichotomous terms such as yes/no, good/bad, or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the problem from a set of information in which the problem is clearly evident • Does not identify subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem • Problem stated unidirectionally, e.g. “We will prove that x is true” or “To me, x is true” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem, and addresses their relationships to each other • Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue • Problem stated in terms of a process of examining evidence from multiple points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem stated as in Level 2, but with emphasis also on prioritizing across viable alternative solutions • Identifies nuances and implicit aspects of the problem; also identifies the most important problem or most important aspects of the problem • Identifies problems arising from limitations of current solutions; anticipates future problems

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2) Identifies and presents the STUDENT'S OWN perspective and position as it is important to the analysis of the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not identify the established or own point of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience and information from assigned sources Addresses a single view of the argument; fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own; fails to establish other critical distinctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes own reasoning, including assumptions, experiences, and information not available from assigned sources Fails to adequately prioritize issues, interfering with ability to strongly support own position 	<p>In addition to Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies how values and priorities were used, together with objective support from experience and other information, to establish one's own position on the issue Argues convincingly using a complex, coherent discussion of own perspective, including its strengths and limitations
3) Identifies and considers OTHER salient perspectives and positions that are important to the analysis of the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge the existence of multiple perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges the existence of multiple perspectives/positions provided in assigned sources, but deals primarily with a single perspective; fails to objectively discuss other possible perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares and contrasts/ provides arguments for and against different perspectives or positions Addresses additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information 	<p>In addition to Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops new insights based on complex evaluations of other salient perspectives or positions
4) Identifies and assesses the key assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge assumptions unless explicitly asked (same as pattern 1) If explicitly asked to address assumptions: Responds inappropriately (e.g., provides definition or asserts a "correct" answer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge assumptions unless explicitly asked (same as pattern 0) If explicitly asked to address assumptions: Focuses on others' assumptions, OR identifies some assumptions but fails to analyze them, OR provides superficial analysis of assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies assumptions related to multiple perspectives Evaluates assumptions; questions their validity, including objective evaluation of own assumptions 	<p>In addition to Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the most important or critical assumptions Develops strategies for addressing limitations related to assumptions over time
5) Identifies and assesses the quality of supporting data/evidence and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth Does not interpret data/evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies data/evidence to support own conclusion Ignores data/evidence from other perspectives (which are missing) or that disagree with own solution Equates unsupported personal opinion with other forms of evidence Stacks up evidence quantitatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines the evidence and source of evidence from multiple perspectives Questions evidence accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness Draws on additional data/evidence from outside sources 	<p>In addition to Level 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranks data/evidence in terms of importance, relevance, reliability, or other qualitative factors Describes process for systematically generating new data/evidence or for reinterpreting the significance of data/evidence over time

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6) Identifies and considers the influence of the context* on the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address context beyond dichotomous characterizations such as good/bad or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges the existence of different contexts, but discusses the problem primarily in egocentric or sociocentric terms Context mainly discussed in terms of conclusions pre-assumed in problem statement Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and considers the influence of context when analyzing perspectives and data/evidence Identifies and considers pertinent contexts not explicitly provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of the audience of the analysis Identifies and addresses long-term considerations related to the scope, context, and audience
7) Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications and consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides facts, definitions, or other “authoritative” information that mask as conclusions instead of own conclusion Does not address implications or consequences beyond dichotomous characterizations such as yes/no, good/bad, or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly states conclusions and reasons, but limited to supporting one perspective Considers implications and consequences only superficially Fails to address key relationships among context, assumptions, data, evidence, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes alternative conclusions, implications, and consequences Conclusions incorporate previously discussed problem statement, as well as key relationships among context, assumptions, data, and evidence Reluctant to select and defend a single overall solution as most viable; may provide inadequate support for solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes criteria to apply across alternatives to reach a well-founded conclusion Conclusions incorporate previously discussed problem statement, as well as key relationships among context, assumptions, data, and evidence Articulates how problem solving approach and criteria can be refined, leading to better solutions or greater confidence over time

* Contexts for Consideration in 6):

- a. Cultural/Social: Group, national, ethnic behavior/attitude
- b. Scientific: Conceptual, basic science, scientific method
- c. Educational: Schooling, formal training
- d. Economic: Trade, business concerns costs
- e. Technological: Applied science, engineering
- f. Ethical: Values
- g. Political: Organizational or governmental
- h. Personal Experience: Personal observation, informal character