What is a VALUE Rubric and Why Develop Rubrics?

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Association of American Colleges and Universities
Florida State University
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A degree should...

...provide a broad, well-rounded education that enables discovery of interests and abilities to help students realize their full potential in life.

“I’m thinking that if I realize my full potential, and discover that here, and have a broad range of appreciating who people are and cultures outside my own, then I will be okay. [The] second will come from the first.”

*Student, California State University System*

...provide students with specific career knowledge and skills to help them realize their full potential in the workforce.

“I worry that if I go through this great diverse education, but I can’t go out and find a decent paying wage at the end of it, then, while I may be a better person for it, I’m still basically [out of luck].”

*Student, Oregon University System*
What is a Liberal Education?

• **Liberal Education = A** philosophy of learning that empowers & prepares individuals to deal with complexity, diversity, & change.

• Broad knowledge combined w/ in-depth study

• To help students develop a sense of social responsibility, strong & transferable intellectual and practical skills & a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge.

“Knowledge is nothing without imagination”
Changing Nature of the Degree

FROM

• Credits tied to seat time
• Major and GE
• Grades
• Knowledge Transmission
• Limited Access to Engaged Learning

TO

• Competency or proficiency
• Entire educational pathway
• Demonstrated through actual work over time
• Meaning-making, sense-making
• High Impact Practices for all, everywhere
Learning Outcomes that at Least Four in Five Employers Rate as Very Important

*Proportions of employers rating each skill/knowledge area as very important for recent college graduates to have*

- Oral communication: 85% (78% for students)
- Working effectively with others in teams: 83% (77% for students)
- Written communication: 82% (75% for students)
- Ethical judgment and decision-making: 81% (74% for students)
- Critical/analytical thinking: 81% (79% for students)
- Applying knowledge/skills to real world: 80% (79% for students)

*8, 9, 10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale, 10 = very important

Students: very important for success in workplace*
Top Priorities for Improvement

In which area do you think colleges and universities need to improve more?

- Ensure college graduates gain knowledge and skills that apply to a specific field or position
- Equal amount of improvement needed in both areas
- Ensure graduates gain range of knowledge and skills that apply to a range of fields or positions
- Neither area needs improvement

Employers

- 47%
- 34%
- 14%
- 5%

Students

- 31%
- 31%
- 21%
- 17%
What is a VALUE Rubric?

- Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education
- Articulation of expected, demonstrated learning at progressively more sophisticated and complex levels of achievement
- VALUE builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges multiple expert judgments and shared understanding of the quality of student work through the curriculum, co-curriculum, and beyond over reliance on standardized tests administered to samples of students disconnected from an intentional course of study.
From Creation to Capture: How to gauge impact

• **VALUE Project** ([www.aacu.org/value](http://www.aacu.org/value))
  - 16 national rubrics
  - **Created to:**
    - Develop shared understanding of common learning outcomes
    - Improve direct assessment of student learning (in text and non-text formats)
    - Encourage transparency and student self-evaluation of learning

• **Rubric Development & Use**
  - National Advisory Panel (12 people)
  - 16 Inter-disc/Inter-institutional teams of faculty/scholars (Over 100)
  - Reviewed existing rubrics to develop broad agreement on dimensions of outcomes ([openedpractices.org](http://openedpractices.org))
  - Tested in 2-4 waves on over 100 campuses
  - National reliability studies
  - To date accessed by over 5661 institutions/organizations, 32,729 individuals
  - Domestic & international, K-12, state university systems
  - 3 Consortia: RAILS, Connect2Learning, South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium
  - Approved for use in Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)
List of VALUE Rubrics

- Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural Worlds
  - Content Areas → No Rubrics

- Intellectual and Practical Skills
  - Inquiry & Analysis
  - Critical Thinking
  - Creative Thinking
  - Written Communication
  - Oral Communication
  - Reading
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Information Literacy
  - Teamwork
  - Problem-solving

- Personal & Social Responsibility
  - Civic Knowledge & Engagement
  - Intercultural Knowledge & Competence
  - Ethical Reasoning
  - Foundations & Skills for Lifelong Learning
  - Global learning

- Integrative & Applied Learning
  - Integrative & Applied Learning
VALUE Rubric

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aauw.org

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. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

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.

- 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)
- 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.
- Literal meaning: Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, "she was green with envy" would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- Metaphor: Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, "she was green with envy" is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.
# Critical Thinking Value Rubric

**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.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Performance Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation of issues</strong></td>
<td>Capstone 4</td>
<td>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Milestones 3</td>
<td>Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence of context and assumptions</strong></td>
<td>Capstone 4</td>
<td>Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Milestones 3</td>
<td>Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</strong></td>
<td>Capstone 4</td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is expressed clearly into account the complexity of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Milestones 3</td>
<td>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</strong></td>
<td>Capstone 4</td>
<td>Conclusion is consistently tied to some of the information discussed. Conclusions (implications and consequences) are identified clearly.</td>
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Number of People Who Have Viewed or Downloaded the VALUE Rubrics Since 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>6/1/2010</td>
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<td>12/31/2010</td>
<td>6,051</td>
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<td>1/28/2015</td>
<td>40,711</td>
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</table>
Types of Institutions Associated with Viewing or Downloading the VALUE Rubrics (as of June 2014)
The Power of Rubrics as Tools for Both Assessment and Learning

• Rubrics to help guide students and faculty
• Places individual faculty judgment within national shared experience; national benchmarks
• Encourages students’ best work, encourages self-assessment, and allows for mining of samples for assessment purposes
• Allows learning to be seen as portable, for cumulative learning and assessment, to complement other high-impact practices
• Can build up from course level to institutional reporting needs AND down from general to specific program/course context
Assessment Practices That Verify Achievement
Building the Evidentiary Base

- University of Kansas –

- “Analysis of the data from the AACU VALUE rubrics affirmed that a team approach to **course design** can yield larger improvement in some forms of student writing and thinking”
- “We also saw that the rubrics work best when there is close alignment between the nature of **the assignment** and the dimensions of intellectual skill described in the rubric”
- “Finally, at a practical level we are very encouraged that this process is **manageable and sustainable**”
Comparison of Student, Faculty, and Employer Scores Using the Integrative and Critical Thinking Rubric Fall 2007
Data helped us target discussions for specific areas of improvement.
Faculty Response: Impact on Student Learning

“….the quality of work submitted by the students was much higher than in quarters past….. the rubric helped me to grade the papers more consistently and helped me to hold the students to a higher standard, which helps them to reach higher levels of achievement in their future courses.”

**Hospitality, Recreation, & Tourism**

“I really see more engagement from my students.”

**Biology**

“Publishing a rubric for the students, suggests that there is a standard in the department. This can assist the students in feeling that grading is not arbitrary and they can expect consistent evaluations across the department.”

**Management**

“I plan to incorporate more elements of the critical thinking rubric in all of my production courses”

**Theatre**

The graph shows:

- **Overall Average:** 70%
- **Average Score:** 70%
- The majority of the responses (40-60%) fall in the category of "Some Positive Impact."
Major Outcomes of State Level Assessment

Immediate/Short Term Impact:

- Faculty Differentiation between Grading and Assessment
- Changes in Pedagogical Approach and Assignment Design
  - Cross-Disciplinary, Cross-Institution, Cross-State Conversations: Common Language & Common Framework
- Support Campus Level Assessment Initiatives
  - Engage Faculty
- Change Culture of Assessment Within and Across States
  - Improvements in Student Learning
  - Meet Calls for Public Accountability
Reliability Study

• 40 Faculty
• 4 Traditional Disciplinary Divisions – Humanities, Social Sciences, STEM, Professions
• Three VALUE rubrics – Critical Thinking, Civic Engagement, Integrative Learning
• Common set of student portfolio work
• Agreement = .66 without norming; .8 normed
MSC Participants:
CT, IN, KY, MA, MO, MN, OR, RI, and UT

Next MSC:
CO, TX, ME, NC

GLCA
IN, MI, OH, PA

85 campuses – 2–4-year, res., comp., lib arts (pub/priv)
Across All These Areas and Levels

Students’ Actual Work Becomes the Focus of Educational Attention
We are Being Asked to Shift...

from My Work
to OUR Work
Contact

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