General Education Committee
February 13, 2014, Minutes

Began: 12:30 p.m.
Adjourned: 1:20 p.m.

Present: Dr. Courtney Vahlberg, Mary Turner, Anita Williams, Catherine Kinyon, Dr. Max Simmons, Dr. Glenne' Whisenhunt, Ernest Gobert, Brent Noel, Jay Ramanjulu, Doug Gregory, Pam Stout, and Dr. Kathy Wheat

Absent: Greg Gardner, Dr. Janet Perry, and Julie Rice-Rollins

The first item of business was reading the minutes from the October 2013 meeting. There was no quorum at the November 2013 meeting, so no minutes were taken then. Max made a motion to accept the October minutes. Ernest seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Courtney began with a description of the Gen Ed Artifact session that was held during Prep and Planning week in January. It was only one of many sessions scheduled for that Monday (the opening of the Performing Arts Center took away the usual late-week session times), and so was well-attended…by people already active in the artifact assessment process. Virtually no faculty who did not already contribute artifacts attended.

The Committee then discussed ways to recruit more faculty into providing Gen Ed artifacts. Ernest suggested that a brief General Education presentation be offered during one of the mandatory meetings that faculty attend during that week. That idea was quickly countered by the argument that submitting artifacts is a voluntary act and that the committee wants to keep it that way. There was a brief discussion of the numbers of people (committee members, evaluators, and faculty) who participate in the assessment process. Max requested statistics on the numbers of adjuncts, full-time faculty, divisions, and so forth, currently participating in the submission of artifacts. Writing and critical thinking have the most contributions. This is one reason why there is the move to combine Social Institutions with Human Heritage, Culture, Values, and Beliefs. Public speaking also has numerous artifacts.

Courtney requested that people mention the need for artifacts in the March division meetings. She indicated that she can send the names of students who qualify to faculty so that they only have to gather artifacts from those individuals. She also wanted to remind faculty that artifacts from the fall of 2013 can still be submitted.

Max suggested that it might be helpful for someone from the committee to attend the evening adjunct meetings during Prep and Planning week. It was also suggested that having a General Education Artifact Booth during that week could also help generate contributions. Additionally, Glenne' suggested that some kind of reminder could be put into the boxes given out by the CLT. The committee continued to brainstorm ideas for encouraging faculty to submit artifacts since the planning for the fall Prep and Planning week would begin in March. Among the ideas were creating slides to play in the general dining area, having an information table at the Infofest for

new adjunct faculty, and attending the new faculty meeting. The committee will revisit this topic at the March meeting.

Next, the committee discussed combining outcomes for Social Institutions and Human Heritage, Culture, Values, and Beliefs. Courtney suggested that the new outcome be Human Heritage, Culture, Values, Institutions and Beliefs. The outcome would state: Demonstrate an understanding of the ideas, values, and beliefs that have shaped global communities and the function of major social institutions in them (Attachment 1). She further proposed that the General Education Committee leave the rubrics as they are and allow the assessors of these two outcomes offer commentary on how to combine them. It was suggested that the proposed rubric be sent to the current evaluators for their comments. The Committee will consider this issue again in the March meeting.

There was brief discussion of the Critical Thinking rubric. The AACU Values rubric used last summer was difficult to use (Attachment 2), and Darby Johnsen suggested using a different rubric, one by Facione and Facione (Attachment 3). Courtney made a motion that the new rubric would be used for this year's assessment. Pam seconded the motion. Glenne' asked what definition of critical thinking the committee was using and said that it should match the rubric. It was decided that the committee would wait to vote on the motion until the March meeting.

Courtney made a motion to adjourn. Max seconded the motion. Approval was unanimous.

Attachment 1

Proposed General Education Learning Outcome –

Human Heritage, Culture, Values, Institutions, and Beliefs

Outcome

Demonstrate an understanding of the ideas, values, and beliefs that have shaped global communities and the function of major social institutions in them.

Subcomponents

- Demonstrate basic understanding of world geography.
- Demonstrate familiarity with major cultural issues of selected global communities..
- Demonstrate knowledge of significant historical events and figures of selected global communities.
- Demonstrate understanding of ethical concerns of selected global communities.
- Analyze how political systems impact society.
- Analyze how economic systems impact society.
- Analyze how religion serves to shape the norms of a society.
- Analyze how education interacts with cultural values and norms.
- Analyze how shifts in social institutions impact the family.

Attachment 2

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

Association of American Colleges and Universities

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

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

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.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence *Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion*	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) 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 (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

Attachment 3

Holistic
Critical Thinking
Scoring Rubric

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University of California, San Francisco

Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric

Facione and Facione

4 Consistently does all or almost all of the following:

> Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
> Identifies the salient arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
> Thoughtfully analyzes and evaluates major alternative points of view.
> Draws warranted, judicious, non-fallacious conclusions.
> Justifies key results and procedures, explains assumptions and reasons.
> Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.

3 Does most or many of the following:

> Accurately interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
> Identifies relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con.
> Offers analyses and evaluations of obvious alternative points of view.
> Draws warranted, non-fallacious conclusions.
> Justifies some results or procedures, explains reasons.
> Fair-mindedly follows where evidence and reasons lead.

2 Does most or many of the following:

> Misinterprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, etc.
> Fails to identify strong, relevant counter-arguments.
> Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view.
> Draws unwarranted or fallacious conclusions.
> Justifies few results or procedures, seldom explains reasons.
> Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views
> based on self-interest or preconceptions.

1 Consistently does all or almost all of the following:

> Offers biased interpretations of evidence, statements, graphics,
> questions, information, or the points of view of others.
> Fails to identify or hastily dismisses strong, relevant counter-arguments.
> Ignores or superficially evaluates obvious alternative points of view.
> Argues using fallacious or irrelevant reasons, and unwarranted claims.
> Does not justify results or procedures, nor explain reasons.
> Regardless of the evidence or reasons, maintains or defends views
> based on self-interest or preconceptions.
> Exhibits close-mindedness or hostility to reason.

Holistic Critical Thinking Rating Form

Rater's Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Project/Assignment/Activity Evaluated: _____

ID or Name	Score	ID or Name	Score

Instructions for Using the
Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric

1. Understand the construct.

This four level rubric treats critical thinking as a set of cognitive skills supported by certain personal dispositions. To reach a judicious, purposive judgment a good critical thinker engages in analysis, interpretation, evaluation, inference, explanation, and meta-cognitive self-regulation. The disposition to pursue fair-mindedly and open-mindedly the reasons and evidence wherever they lead is crucial to reaching sound, objective decisions and resolutions to complex, ill-structured problems. So are the other critical thinking dispositions, such as systematicity, reasoning self-confidence, cognitive maturity, analyticity, and inquisitiveness. [For details on the articulation of this concept refer to <u>Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction.</u> ERIC Document Number: ED 315 423.]

2. Differentiate and Focus

Holistic scoring requires focus. In any essay, presentation, or clinical practice setting many elements must come together for overall success: critical thinking, content knowledge, and technical skill (craftsmanship). Deficits or strengths in any of these can draw the attention of the rater. However, in scoring for any one of the three, one must attempt to focus the evaluation on that element to the exclusion of the other two.

3. Practice, Coordinate and Reconcile.

Ideally, in a training session with other raters one will examine sample essays (videotaped presentations, etc.) which are paradigmatic of each of the four levels. Without prior knowledge of their level, raters will be asked to evaluate and assign ratings to these samples. After comparing these preliminary ratings, collaborative analysis with the other raters and the trainer is used to achieve consistency of expectations among those who will be involved in rating the actual cases. Training, practice, and inter-rater reliability are the keys to a high quality assessment.

Usually, two raters will evaluate each essay/assignment/project/performance. If they disagree there are three possible ways that resolution can be achieved: (a) by mutual conversation between the two raters, (b) by using an independent third rater, or (c) by taking the average of the two initial ratings. <u>The averaging strategy is strongly discouraged.</u> Discrepancies between raters of more than one level suggest that detailed conversations about the CT construct and about project expectations are in order. This rubric is a **<u>four</u>** level scale, half point scoring is inconsistent with its intent and conceptual structure. Further, at this point in its history, the art and science of holistic critical thinking evaluation cannot justify asserting half-level differentiations.

If working alone, or without paradigm samples, one can achieve a greater level of internal consistency by not assigning final ratings until a number of essays/projects/performances/assignments have been viewed and given preliminary ratings. Frequently natural clusters or groupings of similar quality soon come to be discernible. At that point one can be more confident in assigning a firmer critical thinking score using this four level rubric. After assigning preliminary ratings, a review of the entire set assures greater internal consistency and fairness in the final ratings.