


Guide To Assessing Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking. It requires rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism. (Paul and Elder, 2006)

Assess the work using each of the five criteria below:

				
Formulates or reformulates a vital problem, question or issue.	Fails to identify or summarize the problem, question or issue.	Summarizes the problem, question or issue though some aspects are confused or incorrect and nuances and key details are missing or superficial and/or context is overlooked.	Clearly and precisely formulates or reformulates the vital aspects of the problem, question or issue as it relates to the context.	Vital aspects of the problem, question or issues are clearly and precisely formulated or reformulated identifying integral relationships essential to analyzing the problem, question or issue as it relates to the context.
Gathers, assesses and analyzes relevant information, data or evidence.	<p>Information, data or evidence are simplistic, inappropriate or unrelated to the problem, question or issue at hand.</p> <p>Information or data are repeated without question and evidence is dismissed without adequate justification.</p>	<p>Appropriate information, data or evidence are provided, although it is clear that the treatment of such is routine and superficial.</p> <p>Information or data are selective but largely unexamined in terms of accuracy, relevance and completeness.</p>	<p>Appropriate information, data or evidence are provided and are thorough, fully analyzed and reported.</p> <p>Information, data or evidence and its source are questioned in terms of accuracy, relevance and completeness.</p>	<p>Information, data or evidence are provided and are extensive, furthering insight into the problem, question or issue.</p> <p>Information, data or evidence and its sources are fully analyzed and evaluated as to accuracy, relevance, completeness and point of view.</p>
Arrives at well-reasoned conclusions, solutions and implications.	Provides a simplistic solution and/or absolute conclusion attributed to an external authority with no consideration of implications.	Demonstrates industrial habits of mind that present conclusions as relative to each other, with simplistic solutions, and a cursory examination of implications.	<p>Exemplifies strong habits of mind by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plausible solutions, • a consideration of assumptions, • reasoned judgment and conclusions based on evidence, and • consideration of implications that reach beyond the immediate situation. 	<p>Exemplifies strong habits of mind by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plausible, coherent working theories, • well reasoned judgment and conclusions based on evidence with an examination of different viewpoints, • an analysis of assumptions, • a discussion of how things might be otherwise, i.e. supposition, • a thorough examination of implications, and • a consideration of ambiguities.

Integrates other disciplinary perspectives.	No evidence of attending to differing disciplinary symbol systems, genre or perspectives (see note below). Ignores viewpoints from other disciplines and/or treats them superficially or misrepresents them.	Acknowledges different disciplinary symbol systems, genre and perspectives (see note below); however, does not incorporate them into analysis. Analyzes a viewpoint from another discipline thoughtfully and mostly accurately.	Provides interpretation, analysis and synthesis with limited integration of other disciplinary symbol systems, genre and perspectives (see note below). Calls upon viewpoints from more than one other discipline to understand the problem, question or issue more fully.	Provides powerful and illuminating interpretation and judgment requiring the use of a variety of disciplinary symbol systems, genre and perspectives (see note below). Calls upon viewpoints from a wide range of disciplines to fully understand the problem, question or issue in deeply textured ways.
Communicates effectively.	Works alone to answer questions related to the topic under consideration.	Shares ideas with others related to the topic under consideration to build collective understanding of the topic.	Interacts with others in figuring out complexities related to the ideas of the topic under consideration (the talk is about discipline subject matter and includes higher-order thinking such as making distinctions, applying ideas, forming generalizations, and raising questions).	Engages in considerable, rigorous interaction with others in figuring out complexities related to the ideas of the topic (the talk is about discipline subject matter and includes higher-order thinking such as making distinctions, applying ideas, forming generalizations, and raising questions) in which the communication builds coherently on ideas to promote improved collective understanding of a topic.

Note:

Symbol systems refers to the ways in which human beings garner meaning and disciplines make meaning through words, pictures, gestures, numbers, musical patterns, etc. The manifestation of these symbols are public; however the mental processes needed to manipulate such symbols must be inferred from the performances of individuals on various kinds of tasks. "Students develop a disciplined mind when they learn to communicate with the symbol systems and genres of a discipline. In science, students learn how to write (and recognize) a well-crafted scientific report in which clear and testable hypotheses, methodology, results, and discussion are made public for readers to weigh. In history, knowledge about the past is embodied in vivid and well-footnoted narratives as well as in museum exhibits, monuments, and documentary films." (Mansillia, V. & Gardner, H. (2008). Disciplining the mind. *Educational Leadership*, 65, (5), 14-19.

Reference:

Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2006). Critical thinking: Concepts and tools. The Foundation For Critical Thinking. Retrieved March 03, 2008 from <http://www.criticalthinking.org>