Critical Thinking USLO Assessment Pilot

“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.”

**Goals**
- Decide how the AACU rubric (measurement tool) should be adapted for Washburn University USLO Assessment.
- Decide how the student assignments (the learning artifacts) should be adapted.
- Decide how the assessment procedure should be adapted.

**Context**
- AACU rubric was selected by committee as the assessment tool for the Critical Thinking USLO.
- EN300 instructors were asked to volunteer to share samples of student writing that could be used to pilot this tool.
- Nine instructors teaching seventeen sections volunteered and asked their students to submit papers to a D2L dropbox.

Paper sample resulted from different assignments, but followed these criteria: thesis-driven, argumentative assignments; referenced outside sources.
- We received 66 student papers.

**Process**
- English faculty reviewed papers & selected models to be used as “anchor papers.”
- University faculty participated in orientation to the AACU Rubric.
- Faculty practiced assessing with anchor papers to gain inter-rater reliability.
- Assessed the sample student papers.
- Reflected and throughout process.
- Participants debriefed with closing table discussions, filled out on-line surveys.

**Feedback for Future Assessment**
- Adjust wording of rubric, especially under category “Influence of Context and Assumptions.”
- Clearly define terminology within rubric.
- Create more standardized paper assignments for assessment.
- Define a more standardized paper length for assessment.
- Continue to provide time for discussion among assessors during training and during the process.

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**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.

**Domain of Assessment**
- Critical Thinking
- Analytical Thinking
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

**Dimensions**
- Vocabulary
- Information
- Conclusion
- Learning artifact

**Scoring Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning artifact</td>
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**Descriptive Rubric**

- Vocabulary: The use of appropriate and precise vocabulary in the context of the assessment.
- Information: The ability to accurately and comprehensively capture information from a variety of sources.
- Conclusion: The ability to draw logical and coherent conclusions from the information presented.
- Learning artifact: The ability to apply critical thinking to the creation of a learning artifact that demonstrates understanding of the subject matter.

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**Example**

- Sentence: “The effects of climate change on biodiversity...”
- Vocabulary: Appropriate use of scientific terms such as “biodiversity,” “climate change,” and “ecosystem.”
- Information: Accurate representation of current research on the topic.
- Conclusion: Logical conclusion drawn from the information presented, such as “climate change has a significant impact on biodiversity.”
- Learning artifact: A scientific paper or presentation that effectively communicates the research and implications of climate change on biodiversity.