

Critical and Creative Thinking Rubric

The Critical and Creative Thinking rubric articulates what Syracuse University students should know and be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate through six learning outcomes and specific indicators. The Critical and Creative Thinking rubric was created by a community of practice with faculty, staff, and students from across the University. This rubric is intended for institutional-level use in assessing and reflecting on undergraduate student learning. Faculty teaching courses with a Critical and Creative Thinking course tag may refer to the learning outcomes when developing course learning objectives, signature assignments, and other learning experiences for students. This rubric will continue to evolve as Syracuse University collects feedback from faculty who utilize it to reflect on student learning.

Critical and Creative Thinking Framing Language

Critical and Creative Thinking Framing Language: Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform and evaluate arguments, develop new insights, and produce creative work. Reflection on, and application of divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to research, knowledge, and artistic creation.

Preamble and Guidance

This rubric is meant to provide faculty and students with specific learning outcomes for Critical and Creative Thinking. It addresses concepts of Critical and Creative Thinking that are applicable across multiple disciplines and professional areas using language that respects different fields of knowledge and practice. This rubric was designed according to the belief that Critical and Creative Thinking are evident in all disciplines and can be implemented in various ways.

This rubric is also intended as a guide that faculty can consult when designing courses, assignments, and assessment instruments. It can be adopted in whole or in part, at introductory through advanced levels. Learning outcomes 1 through 3 focus specifically on issues related to critical thinking, whereas learning outcome 4 constitutes a bridge that links critical thinking to the implementation of creative work, which forms the focus of learning outcomes 5 and 6.

Critical thinking requires students to move beyond their comfort zones, build confidence, and develop intellectual humility. Students should be encouraged not only to seek, but also to question expert opinions, including that of the instructor and others. Faculty should be aware of the impact that authority and expertise can have on student expression and creativity, especially in their engagement with learning outcomes 2 and 4.

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
1. Describe a potential focus (idea, artifact, issue, event) for analysis.	1.1 Selects the focus of study by distinguishing it from other possibilities.	Selects a focus based on thorough examinations of different possibilities and provides an in-depth rationale for making an informed choice.	Selects focus but provides some rationale for making an informed choice.	Selects possible focus and makes a choice with little or no rationale.	Does not select the focus of study by distinguishing it from other possibilities.
	1.2 Justifies that the focus of study has potential for analysis.	Provides comprehensive and in-depth rationale for why this focus was chosen as having potential for study.	States the relevance of the choice of focus beyond personal rationale.	Provides a personal rationale for choosing the focus of analysis without identifying the choice's broader relevance.	Does not justify that the focus of study has potential for analysis.
2. Question the origin in which the idea, artifact, issue, or event was produced and the context in which it has since existed.	2.1 Identifies the historical and geographical origins.	Identifies the specific place and time of origin using a variety of evidence.	Identifies a general place and time of origin with limited evidence.	Attempts to identify a place or time of origin.	Does not identify the historical and geographical origins.
	2.2 Describes pertinent features of the context, including its survival and evolution.	Describes all pertinent features of the context (e.g., economic, social, cultural, and political conditions) and explains why the idea, artifact, issue, or event survived.	Describes some of the pertinent features of the context (e.g., economic, social, cultural, and political conditions) but does not explain why the idea, artifact, issue, or event survived.	Describes one pertinent feature of the context (e.g., economic, social, cultural, and political conditions) but does not explain why the idea, artifact, issue, or event survived.	Does not describe pertinent features of the context, including its survival and evolution.
	2.3 Explores what may be absent from the idea, artifact, issue, or event due to unintentional, systemic, or deliberate omission.	Uses multiple pieces of evidence to validate limits, constraints, or silences that were not represented.	Uses some evidence to explain potential limits, constraints, or silences that were not represented.	Identifies limits, constraints, and silences without evidence.	Does not explore what may be absent from the idea, artifact, issue, or event due to unintentional, systemic, or deliberate omission.

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
<p>3. Analyze, interpret, synthesize the idea, artifact, issue, or event's component parts and/or attributes.</p>	<p>3.1 Identifies and makes observations about the individual component and/or attributes of the idea, artifact, issue, or event.</p>	<p>Labels and lists all components fully using appropriate terminology. Uses appropriate analytic framework and evidence to articulate observations.</p>	<p>Labels and lists the majority of components using some appropriate terminology and framework but uses limited evidence.</p>	<p>Identifies one component using terminology and simplistic application of an analytic framework but uses limited evidence.</p>	<p>Does not identify and make observations about the individual component and/or attributes of the idea, artifact, issue, or event.</p>
	<p>3.2 Interprets the significance and contribution of these components and/or attributes to the idea, artifact, issue, or event.</p>	<p>Interprets the significance and contribution of all identified components/attributes with appropriate evidence.</p>	<p>Explains the significance and contribution of identified components, but only partially.</p>	<p>Describes the significance and contribution of identified components/attributes but with significant omissions.</p>	<p>Does not interpret the significance and contribution of these components and/or attributes to the idea, artifact, issue, or event.</p>
	<p>3.3 Synthesizes and reinterprets the idea, artifact, issue, or event in reference to an analytic framework (e.g., model, theory, protocols, standards, heuristics), based on its component parts and/or attributes.</p>	<p>Synthesizes and reinterprets categorization and justification of the idea, artifact, issue, or event in reference to an analytic framework. Uses appropriate framework and evidence.</p>	<p>Reinterprets categorization and justification of the idea, artifact, issue, or event, with limited synthesis in reference to an analytic framework.</p>	<p>Reinterprets the categorization with limitations and does not justify or use an analytic framework.</p>	<p>Does not synthesize and reinterpret the idea, artifact, issue, or event in reference to an analytic framework (e.g., model, theory, protocols, standards, heuristics), based on its component parts and/or attributes.</p>

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
<p>4. Reflect on the ways in which the relevance of the idea, artifact, issue, or event can contribute to the critical thinking and creative processes.</p>	<p>4.1 Explores how the idea, artifact, issue, or event and its history are of personal relevance.</p>	<p>Describes and explains the relationship and value of the idea, artifact, issue, or event to personal experience in different contexts and articulates the rationale of the connection between them.</p>	<p>Associates the relationship and value of the idea, artifact, issue, or event to personal experience in different contexts.</p>	<p>States the general relation to personal experience with limited context.</p>	<p>Does not explore how the idea, artifact, issue, or event and its history are of personal relevance.</p>
	<p>4.2 Explores how the idea, artifact, issue, or event and its history are of contemporary relevance.</p>	<p>Describes, explains, and justifies the relationship and value of the idea, artifact, issue, or event and its history to a contemporary context.</p>	<p>Associates the relationship and value of the idea, artifact, issue, or event to a contemporary context.</p>	<p>States the contemporary relevance with limited context.</p>	<p>Does not explore how the idea, artifact, issue, or event and its history are of contemporary relevance.</p>
	<p>4.3 Reflects on how the analysis of the idea, artifact, issue, or event, with regard to personal and contemporary relevance, contributes to the critical and creative processes.</p>	<p>Justifies how critical thinking strategies can affect the creative processes. Apply these strategies to the development of the idea, artifact, issue, or event.</p>	<p>Explains different strategies that exist within critical thinking and the creative process.</p>	<p>Identifies different strategies that can be used for critical and creative thinking.</p>	<p>Does not reflect on how the analysis of the idea, artifact, issue, or event, with regard to personal and contemporary relevance, contributes to the critical and creative processes.</p>

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
5. Develop a creative work (idea, artifact, issue, or event) through a process of iteration.	5.1 Plans how the creative work will be developed, tested, and revised.	Determines and justifies how potential collaborators, resources, and constraints will influence the scope of the creative work, how an audience will be engaged, and how revisions will be made.	Communicates a plan of how the work will be developed, provides some details on how it will be tested, revised, and speculate on how to take audiences into account.	Creates a plan of how the work will be developed, but lacks details on how it will be tested, revised, and how audiences will be taken into account.	Does not plan how the creative work will be developed, tested, and revised.
	5.2. Produces a draft of the creative work and gather feedback.	Produces a first draft/iteration of the creative work that is based on the plan and solicits comprehensive formative feedback gathered through systematic critique.	Produces a first/draft iteration of the creative work that is based on the plan and gathers limited/anecdotal feedback.	Develops an incomplete draft of the creative work that is partially based on the plan and no feedback collected.	Does not produce a draft of the creative work and gather feedback.
	5.3 Revises and finalizes the creative work in response to formative feedback.	Analyzes and critiques how or if feedback improves this version and creative process. Synthesize formative feedback into a final revision of the creative work.	Analyzes how or if feedback improves this version but does not fully synthesize feedback into a final revision of the creative work.	Accepts feedback without question and makes partial revisions.	Does not revise and finalize the creative work in response to formative feedback.

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
6. Disseminate a revised version of the creative work for an audience, evaluate reactions to it, and reflect on the creative process.	6.1 Disseminates a revised version of the creative work (including explanation or rationale appropriate to the domain) with an audience and collect and reflect on summative feedback.	Disseminates the work in a way that meets the guidelines of the assignment to the intended audience using appropriate materials that support and contextualize the work; is well organized and prepared; develop a tool and uses it to gather feedback; explore what it means to be open to divergent responses and viewpoints.	Presents the work in a way that meets the guidelines of the assignment to the intended audience using materials that support and contextualize the work; shows good organization and preparation; develops and uses a tool to gather feedback; does not explore what it means to be open to divergent responses and viewpoints.	Shares the work but presentation lacks organization and preparation or otherwise does not meet the guidelines of the assignment; develops a rudimentary tool for gathering feedback.	Does not disseminate a revised version of the creative work (including explanation or rationale appropriate to the domain) with an audience and collect and reflect on summative feedback.
	6.2 Evaluates the differences between the starting vision for the creative work and the outcome; reflect on the differences and future possibilities.	Evaluates and reflects on the differences between initial goals and outcome after gathering, compiling, and synthesizing all project resources and feedback. Suggest and justify future actions.	Analyzes and reports differences between initial goals and outcome after gathering, compiling, and synthesizing project resources and feedback. Suggest future actions.	Identifies some of the differences between initial goals and outcome after gathering some project resources and feedback.	Does not evaluate the differences between the starting vision for the creative work and the outcome; reflect on the differences and future possibilities.