

Two Rubrics for Critical Thinking Assessment: A Mini-Training Session

The 2005 Assessment Institute at IUPUI

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Participant Outcomes:

- Identify Student Learning Outcomes for Critical Thinking
- Use a Rubric to Assess Student Papers
- Evaluate/Critique Assessment Rubric Design
- Recommend Improvements to Assessment Task Design

Identify Learning Outcomes for Critical Thinking

ACTIVITY

List Words/Phrases That Describe the Critical Thinking Outcomes You Would Like Students to Achieve:

Using a Rubric to Assess Critical Thinking

RUBRIC: Set of scoring guidelines for assessing student performance

Ideally, an Assessment Method Should:

- Link Assessment Results to Student Learning (Help “Close the Loop”)
- Provide Students With Useful Feedback by Pointing to Ways They Can Improve

Miami University Experience Using WSU Rubric

Available from Washington State University at <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ctr.htm>

The Critical Thinking Rubric

1) Identifies and summarizes the **problem/question** at issue (and/or the source's position).

Scant

Does not identify and summarize the problem, is confused or identifies a different and inappropriate problem.

Does not identify or is confused by the issue, or represents the issue inaccurately.

Substantially Developed

Identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem, and identifies them clearly, addressing their relationships to each other.

Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue.

2) Identifies and presents the **STUDENT'S OWN perspective and position** as it is important to the analysis of the issue.

Scant

Addresses a single source or view of the argument and fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own. Fails to establish other critical distinctions.

Substantially Developed

Identifies, appropriately, one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience, and information not available from assigned sources.

3) Identifies and considers **OTHER salient perspectives and positions** that are important to the analysis of the issue.

Scant

Deals only with a single perspective and fails to discuss other possible perspectives, especially those salient to the issue.

(continued)

Substantially Developed

Addresses perspectives noted previously, and additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information.

4) Identifies and assesses the key **assumptions**.

Scant

Does not surface the assumptions and ethical issues that underlie the issue, or does so superficially.

Substantially Developed

Identifies and questions the validity of the assumptions and addresses the ethical dimensions that underlie the issue.

5) Identifies and assesses the quality of **supporting data/evidence** and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue.

Scant

Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth, or denies evidence without adequate justification. Confuses associations and correlations with cause and effect.

Does not distinguish between fact, opinion, and value judgments.

Substantially Developed

Examines the evidence and source of evidence; questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness.

Observes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences.

Clearly distinguishes between fact, opinion, & acknowledges value judgments.

6) Identifies and considers the influence of the **context** * on the issue.

Scant

Discusses the problem only in egocentric or sociocentric terms.

Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts-cultural, political, etc.

Substantially Developed

Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of the audience of the analysis.

Considers other pertinent contexts.

7) Identifies and assesses **conclusions, implications and consequences**.

Scant

Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences of the issue or the key relationships between the other elements of the problem, such as context, implications, assumptions, or data and evidence.

Substantially Developed

Identifies and discusses conclusions, implications, and consequences considering context, assumptions, data, and evidence.

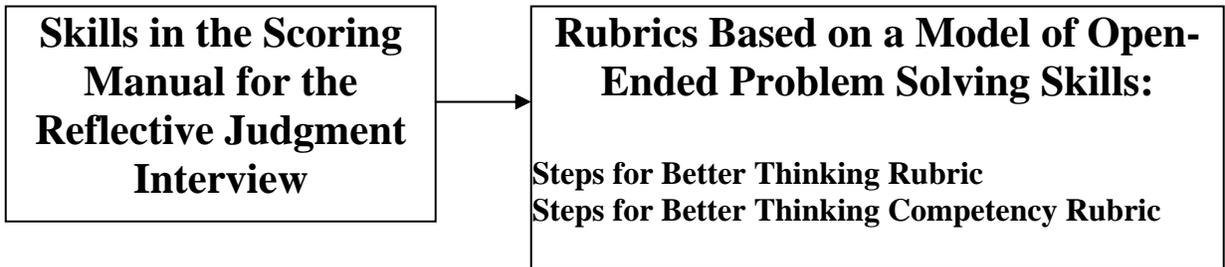
Objectively reflects upon the their own assertions.

(continued)

Contexts for Consideration

1. **Cultural/Social**
Group, national, ethnic behavior/attitude
2. **Scientific**
Conceptual, basic science, scientific method
3. **Educational**
Schooling, formal training
4. **Economic**
Trade, business concerns costs
5. **Technological**
Applied science, engineering
6. **Ethical**
Values
7. **Political**
Organizational or governmental
8. **Personal Experience**
Personal observation, informal character

A Cognitive Development Approach to Critical Thinking Rubric Design



Steps for Better Thinking performance patterns 0, 1, 2, 3, & 4 correspond to Reflective Judgment Stages 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7.

Benefits of a Rubric Based on Levels of Cognitive Development:

- Improve insights about students' critical thinking strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify the "next steps" in building student critical thinking skills.
- Provide students with more appropriate feedback for student learning.
- Improve interrater reliability.

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Steps for Better Thinking Rubric

Steps for Better Thinking ↓ SKILLS ↓	←Less Complex Performance Patterns			More Complex Performance Patterns→	
	"Confused Fact Finder" Performance Pattern 0—How performance might appear when Step 1, 2, 3, and 4 skills are weak	"Biased Jumper" Performance Pattern 1—How performance might appear when Step 1 skills are adequate, but Step 2, 3, and 4 skills are weak	"Perpetual Analyzer" Performance Pattern 2—How performance might appear when Step 1 and 2 skills are adequate, but Step 3 and 4 skills are weak	"Pragmatic Performer" Performance Pattern 3—How performance might appear when Step 1, 2, and 3 skills are adequate, but Step 4 skills are weak	"Strategic Re-Visioner" Performance Pattern 4—How performance might appear when one has strong Step 1, 2, 3, and 4 skills
Step 1: IDENTIFY A—Identify and use relevant information B—Articulate uncertainties	A0—Uses very limited information; primarily "facts," definitions, or expert opinions B0—Either denies uncertainty OR attributes uncertainty to temporary lack of information or to own lack of knowledge	A1—Uses limited information, primarily evidence and information supporting own conclusion* B1—Identifies at least one reason for significant and enduring uncertainty*	A2—Uses a range of carefully evaluated, relevant information B2—Articulates complexities related to uncertainties and the relationships among different sources of uncertainty	A3—Uses a range of carefully evaluated, relevant information, including alternative criteria for judging among solutions B3—Exhibits complex awareness of relative importance of different sources of uncertainties	A4—Same as A3 PLUS includes viable strategies for GENERATING new information to address limitations B4—Exhibits complex awareness of ways to minimize uncertainties in coherent, on-going process of inquiry
Step 2: EXPLORE C—Integrate multiple perspectives and clarify assumptions D—Qualitatively interpret information and create a meaningful organization	C0—Portrays perspectives and information dichotomously, e.g., right/wrong, good/bad, smart/stupid D0—Does not acknowledge interpretation of information; uses contradictory or illogical arguments; lacks organization	C1—Acknowledges more than one potential solution, approach, or viewpoint; does not acknowledge own assumptions or biases D1—Interprets information superficially as either supporting or not supporting a point of view; ignores relevant information that disagrees with own position; fails to sufficiently break down the problem	C2—Interprets information from multiple viewpoints; identifies and evaluates assumptions; attempts to control own biases* D2—Objectively analyzes quality of information; Organizes information and concepts into viable framework for exploring realistic complexities of the problem*	C3—Evaluates information using general principles that allow comparisons across viewpoints; adequately justifies assumptions D3—Focuses analyses on the most important information based on reasonable assumptions about relative importance; organizes information using criteria that apply across different viewpoints and allow for qualitative comparisons	C4—Same as C3 PLUS argues convincingly using a complex, coherent discussion of own perspective, including strengths and limitations D4—Same as D3 PLUS systematically reinterprets evidence as new information is generated over time OR describes process that could be used to systematically reinterpret evidence
Step 3: PRIORITIZE E—Use guidelines or principles to judge objectively across the various options F—Implement and communicate conclusions for the setting and audience	E0—Fails to reason logically from evidence to conclusions; relies primary on unexamined prior beliefs, clichés, or an expert opinion F0—Creates illogical implementation plan; uses poor or inconsistent communication; does not appear to recognize existence of an audience	E1—Provides little evaluation of alternatives; offers partially reasoned conclusions; uses superficially understood evidence and information in support of beliefs F1—Fails to adequately address alternative viewpoints in implementation plans and communications; provides insufficient information or motivation for audience to adequately understand alternatives and complexity	E2—Uses evidence to reason logically within a given perspective, but unable to establish criteria that apply across alternatives to reach a well-founded conclusion OR unable to reach a conclusion in light of reasonable alternatives and/or uncertainties F2—Establishes overly complicated implementation plans OR delays implementation process in search of additional information; provides audience with too much information (unable to adequately prioritize)	E3—Uses well-founded, overarching guidelines or principles to objectively compare and choose among alternative solutions; provides reasonable and substantive justification for assumptions and choices in light of other options* F3—Focuses on pragmatic issues in implementation plans; provides appropriate information and motivation, prioritized for the setting and audience*	E4—Articulates how a systematic process of critical inquiry was used to build solution; identifies how analysis and criteria can be refined, leading to better solutions or greater confidence over time F4—Implementation plans address current as well as long-term issues; provides appropriate information and motivation, prioritized for the setting and audience, to engage others over time
Step 4: ENVISION G—Acknowledge and monitor solution limitations through next steps H—Overall approach to the problem	G0—Does not acknowledge significant limitations beyond temporary uncertainty; next steps articulated as finding the "right" answer (often by experts) H0—Proceeds as if goal is to find the single, "correct" answer	G1—Acknowledges at least one limitation or reason for significant and enduring uncertainty; if prompted, next steps generally address gathering more information H1—Proceeds as if goal is to stack up evidence and information to support own conclusion	G2—Articulates connections among underlying contributors to limitations; articulates next steps as gathering more information and looking at problem more complexly and/or thoroughly H2—Proceeds as if goal is to establish an unbiased, balanced view of evidence and information from different points of view	G3—Adequately describes relative importance of solution limitations when compared to other viable options; next steps pragmatic with focus on efficiently GATHERING more information to address significant limitations over time H3—Proceeds as if goal is to come to a well-founded conclusion based on objective consideration of priorities across viable alternatives	G4—Identifies limitations as in G3; as next steps, suggests viable processes for strategically GENERATING new information to aid in addressing significant limitations over time* H4—Proceeds as if goal is to strategically construct knowledge, to move toward better conclusions or greater confidence in conclusions as the problem is addressed over time*

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* Shaded cells represent emergence of minimal skills in each step. Performance descriptions to the left of a shaded cell characterize skill weaknesses. Performance descriptions to the right of a shaded cell characterize skill strengths.

Steps for Better Thinking Competency Rubric

		Performance Pattern 0 “Confused Fact Finder”	Performance Pattern 1 “Biased Jumper”	Performance Pattern 2 “Perpetual Analyzer”	Performance Pattern 3 “Pragmatic Performer”	Performance Pattern 4 “Strategic Revisoner”
Step 1 Skills	Identify relevant information Circle ALL that apply	Identifies facts, definitions, and/or experts’ opinions.	Identifies information ¹ that is relevant to the problem	Explores a wide range of relevant information ¹	Focuses on the most important relevant information ¹	Develops viable strategies for generating important relevant information ¹ over time
	Recognize and address uncertainties ² Circle ALL that apply	Identifies at least one reason for temporary uncertainty ²	Identifies at least one reason for significant and permanent uncertainty ²	Addresses significant and permanent uncertainties ² when interpreting information	Identifies and discusses the significance of the most important uncertainties ²	Develops viable strategies for minimizing important uncertainties ² over time
Step 2 Skills	Integrate multiple perspectives ³ and clarify assumptions ⁴ Circle ALL that apply		Acknowledges more than one potential solution, approach, or viewpoint	Analyzes information from multiple perspectives, ³ including assumptions ⁴ and alternative objectives	Provides reasonable and substantive justification for assumptions ⁴ used in analysis	Argues convincingly using a complex, coherent discussion of own perspective; Articulates strengths and weaknesses of position
	Interpret and organize information Circle ALL that apply		Uses evidence logically to support a point of view; Correctly applies concepts/theories/techniques	Qualitatively interprets information and develops meaningful categories for analysis	Preserves problem complexity, but emphasizes the most important and/or most relevant and reliable information	Systematically re-interprets information as circumstances change or new information becomes available
Step 3 Skills	Use guidelines or principles to judge objectively across options Circle ALL that apply			Avoids reaching a biased conclusion	Maintains objectivity while establishing reasonable priorities for reaching a well-founded conclusion	Uses a systematic process of critical inquiry to build a solution; Articulates how problem solving approach and criteria can be refined, leading to better solutions or greater confidence over time
	Communicate and implement conclusions Circle ALL that apply				Appropriately tailors communication or implementation plans to the setting and audience	Provides appropriate information to motivate and engage others in long-term strategies
Step 4 Skills	Address solution limitations Circle ALL that apply				Focuses on most efficient ways to address limitations or to gather additional information	Articulates solution limitations as a natural part of addressing open-ended problems
	Engage in continuous improvement Circle ALL that apply					Identifies uncertainties and limitations as opportunities for continuous improvement; Engages in lifelong learning
Overall Approach to the Problem Circle ONLY ONE		Proceeds as if goal is to find the single, “correct” answer	Proceeds as if goal is to stack up evidence and information to support own conclusion	Proceeds as if goal is to establish an unbiased, balanced view of evidence and information from different points of view	Proceeds as if goal is to come to a well-founded conclusion based on objective consideration of priorities across viable alternatives	Proceeds as if goal is to strategically construct knowledge, to move toward better conclusions or greater confidence in conclusions as the problem is addressed over time

¹ Information can take many forms, including facts, descriptions, definitions, arguments, opinions, ideas, claims, theories, concepts, observations, research findings, values, perceptions, beliefs, influences, effects, and so on. Information can be obtained in many ways such as reading, seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, experiencing, interacting, thinking, etc.

² Uncertainties can relate to many aspects of the problem, including the problem definition, availability of solution alternatives, quality and interpretation of information, effects of alternatives, priorities and values of the decision maker and others, and so on. Temporary uncertainties relate to conditions that will become known in the future (e.g., experts will find the answer, information will become available, or effects will be knowable).

³ Perspectives can relate to any type of grouping that is meaningful to the problem, such as categories of people, cultures, societies, roles, races, genders, hierarchies, theories, concepts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, physical locations, time, disciplines, values, emotions, and so on.

⁴ Assumptions are hypotheses, suppositions, conjectures, assertions, presumptions, beliefs, or premises that are taken for granted or that lie behind an argument. Assumptions are made because of uncertainties; the “truth” cannot be known or proven. Some assumptions are better than others. Better assumptions are more reasonable, logical, comprehensive, plausible, likely, rational, impartial, objective, justified, credible, and/or believable.

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Washington State University Critical Thinking Rubric – Modified (Draft 1.5 10/18/05)

Critical Thinking Skill	Very Weak (Confused Fact-Finder) 0	Partially Developed (Biased Jumper) 1	Substantially Developed (Perpetual Analyzer) 2	Excellent (Pragmatic Performer and Strategic Revisoner) 3-4
Overall Approach to Critical Thinking	Proceeds as if goal is to find the single, “correct” answer; depends on outside authority for correct answers, information, etc.	Proceeds as if goal is to stack up evidence and information to support a particular conclusion	Proceeds as if goal is to establish a detached, balanced view of evidence and information from different points of view	Proceeds as if goal is to come to a well-founded conclusion based on objective comparison of viable alternatives; Or to construct knowledge, to move toward better conclusions or greater confidence in conclusions as the problem is addressed over time.
Other Major Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to recognize uncertainty or attributes it to “temporary” uncertainty that authority will fix. • Depends on authority to indicate “correct” answers • Uses contradictory or illogical arguments; lacks organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes uncertainty and multiple perspectives but does not integrate them well into overall reasoning and justification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situates coherent and balanced description of problem in larger context; addresses multiple perspectives, evaluates evidence • Has difficulty establishing priorities for judging across perspectives • Organizes information and concepts into viable framework for exploring realistic complexities of the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides well-founded support for choosing one solution while objectively considering other viable options • But may not adequately address long-term, limitations, or next steps
1) Identifies and summarizes the problem/question at issue (and/or the source's position).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not identify and summarize the problem; is confused or identifies a different or inappropriate problem • Problem stated in dichotomous terms such as yes/no, good/bad, or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the problem from a set of information in which the problem is clearly evident • Does not identify subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem • Problem stated unidirectionally, e.g. “We will prove that x is true” or “To me, x is true” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifies the main problem and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem, and addresses their relationships to each other • Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue • Problem stated in terms of a process of examining evidence from multiple points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem stated as in Level 2, but with emphasis also on prioritizing across viable alternative solutions • Identifies nuances and implicit aspects of the problem; also identifies the most important problem or most important aspects of the problem • Identifies problems arising from limitations of current solutions; anticipates future problems

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Critical Thinking Skill	Very Weak (Confused Fact-Finder) 0	Partially Developed (Biased Jumper) 1	Substantially Developed (Perpetual Analyzer) 2	Excellent (Pragmatic Performer and Strategic Revisoner) 3-4
2) Identifies and presents the STUDENT'S OWN perspective and position as it is important to the analysis of the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not identify the established or own point of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies one's own position on the issue, drawing support from experience and information from assigned sources Addresses a single view of the argument; fails to clarify the established or presented position relative to one's own; fails to establish other critical distinctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes own reasoning, including assumptions, experiences, and information not available from assigned sources Fails to adequately prioritize issues, interfering with ability to strongly support own position 	In addition to Level 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies how values and priorities were used, together with objective support from experience and other information, to establish one's own position on the issue Argues convincingly using a complex, coherent discussion of own perspective, including its strengths and limitations
3) Identifies and considers OTHER salient perspectives and positions that are important to the analysis of the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge the existence of multiple perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges the existence of multiple perspectives/positions provided in assigned sources, but deals primarily with a single perspective; fails to objectively discuss other possible perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compares and contrasts/ provides arguments for and against different perspectives or positions Addresses additional diverse perspectives drawn from outside information 	In addition to Level 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops new insights based on complex evaluations of other salient perspectives or positions
4) Identifies and assesses the key assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge assumptions unless explicitly asked (same as pattern 1) If explicitly asked to address assumptions: Responds inappropriately (e.g., provides definition or asserts a "correct" answer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not acknowledge assumptions unless explicitly asked (same as pattern 0) If explicitly asked to address assumptions: Focuses on others' assumptions, OR identifies some assumptions but fails to analyze them, OR provides superficial analysis of assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies assumptions related to multiple perspectives Evaluates assumptions; questions their validity, including objective evaluation of own assumptions 	In addition to Level 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the most important or critical assumptions Develops strategies for addressing limitations related to assumptions over time
5) Identifies and assesses the quality of supporting data/evidence and provides additional data/evidence related to the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth Does not interpret data/evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies data/evidence to support own conclusion Ignores data/evidence from other perspectives (which are missing) or that disagree with own solution Equates unsupported personal opinion with other forms of evidence Stacks up evidence quantitatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines the evidence and source of evidence from multiple perspectives Questions evidence accuracy, precision, relevance, completeness Draws on additional data/evidence from outside sources 	In addition to Level 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranks data/evidence in terms of importance, relevance, reliability, or other qualitative factors Describes process for systematically generating new data/evidence or for reinterpreting the significance of data/evidence over time

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Critical Thinking Skill	Very Weak (Confused Fact-Finder) 0	Partially Developed (Biased Jumper) 1	Substantially Developed (Perpetual Analyzer) 2	Excellent (Pragmatic Performer and Strategic Revisioner) 3-4
6) Identifies and considers the influence of the context* on the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address context beyond dichotomous characterizations such as good/bad or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledges the existence of different contexts, but discusses the problem primarily in egocentric or sociocentric terms Context mainly discussed in terms of conclusions pre-assumed in problem statement Does not present the problem as having connections to other contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and considers the influence of context when analyzing perspectives and data/evidence Identifies and considers pertinent contexts not explicitly provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of the audience of the analysis Identifies and addresses long-term considerations related to the scope, context, and audience
7) Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications and consequences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides facts, definitions, or other “authoritative” information that mask as conclusions instead of own conclusion Does not address implications or consequences beyond dichotomous characterizations such as yes/no, good/bad, or right/wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly states conclusions and reasons, but limited to supporting one perspective Considers implications and consequences only superficially Fails to address key relationships among context, assumptions, data, evidence, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzes alternative conclusions, implications, and consequences Conclusions incorporate previously discussed problem statement, as well as key relationships among context, assumptions, data, and evidence Reluctant to select and defend a single overall solution as most viable; may provide inadequate support for solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes criteria to apply across alternatives to reach a well-founded conclusion Conclusions incorporate previously discussed problem statement, as well as key relationships among context, assumptions, data, and evidence Articulates how problem solving approach and criteria can be refined, leading to better solutions or greater confidence over time

* Contexts for Consideration in 6):

- a. Cultural/Social: Group, national, ethnic behavior/attitude
- b. Scientific: Conceptual, basic science, scientific method
- c. Educational: Schooling, formal training
- d. Economic: Trade, business concerns costs
- e. Technological: Applied science, engineering
- f. Ethical: Values
- g. Political: Organizational or governmental
- h. Personal Experience: Personal observation, informal character

Practice Rating Student Papers

ACTIVITY:

- Read the assignment and 3 student responses on the following pages.
- Use the modified WSU rubric to rate each paper.
- Reach a consensus on your ratings with other participants.

This assignment was used in 1998 by S. Wolcott and S. Muller in a first course taken by students at The Women's College, University of Denver. Most students work full time and are of nontraditional age.

Essay Assignment

Restrictions on Gender in Educational Settings

In 1993, Shannon Faulkner challenged The Citadel, an all-male cadet corps, to accept her application to the program. Some people defend The Citadel's position in restricting the military school to male students, while other people argue that such a restriction constitutes discrimination.

Answer the following question (approximately one to two pages single-spaced):

As a student at an all-female college, what is your opinion on the above issue?

Below is a chronology of key events in the Shannon Faulkner versus Citadel case, adapted from *The Detroit News*, August 19, 1995. **Students were not given this information** because the assignment was used during 1998, when students were still familiar with the basic facts.

1993	
March 2	Ms. Faulkner sues, charging The Citadel's all-male cadet corps is unconstitutional. She had been accepted after gender references were deleted from her high school transcript, but the military college withdrew its acceptance when it discovered she was a woman.
August 12	U.S. District Judge C. Weston Houck rules Ms. Faulkner may attend day classes, but not join the corps of cadets or participate in military training.
August 24	4 th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals stays Houck's order two days before Ms. Faulkner is to register. She spends fall semester at University of South Carolina-Spartanburg.
November 17	4 th Circuit allows Ms. Faulkner into day classes.
1994	
January 12	Ms. Faulkner registers, but U.S. Chief Justice William Rehnquist grants the college a stay.
January 18	Ms. Faulkner becomes first woman to attend day classes at The Citadel after Rehnquist dissolves the stay.
July 22	Houck orders Ms. Faulkner into corps of cadets following a two-week trial of her discrimination suit. The Citadel appeals.
1995	
April 13	4 th Circuit rules Ms. Faulkner may join the corps unless South Carolina has a court-approved program by August to provide similar leadership education for women.
May 18	Converse College in Spartanburg agrees to create a \$10 million, state-funded South Carolina Women's Leadership Institute as an alternative.
July 24	Houck rules there is no time to hold a trial on the alternative program before Ms. Faulkner enrolls as a cadet. He sets a trial for November.
July 28	The Citadel asks 4 th Circuit to block Ms. Faulkner from becoming a cadet while it appeals to U.S. Supreme Court.
August 2	The Citadel Appeals Houck's ruling that Ms. Faulkner's physical condition can't be used to keep her out. A school spokesman says she is too heavy and has a bad knee.
August 8	4 th Circuit refuses to stay its April ruling, and the school asks U.S. Chief Justice William Rehnquist to intervene.
August 9	4 th Circuit refuses to stay its ruling on physical requirements
August 11	Rehnquist and Justice Antonin Scalia refuse to keep Ms. Faulkner out, clearing the way for her to become the first female cadet in the school's 152-year history.
August 12	Ms. Faulkner, accompanied by her parents and federal marshals, reports to campus to join other new cadets.
August 18	Ms. Faulkner leaves The Citadel corps of cadets after spending four days in the infirmary. She said the stress of the past 2-1/2 years "came crashing down" on her, making her unable to remain part of the corps.

Student Example #1

I believe it was improper for The Citadel to try to deny admission to Shannon Faulkner. Because The Citadel is a state-funded school, anyone who meets the academic requirements must be permitted to attend. This is a right granted by our Constitution. Anyone who thinks that Shannon Faulkner shouldn't have been admitted to The Citadel needs to think about our Constitutional rights. This country was founded on equal opportunity, and no one can deny Shannon Faulkner her Constitutional rights. This is why the courts finally forced The Citadel to admit Shannon Faulkner.

By looking at the facts in this case, it is obvious that there was only one right decision that could have been made by the courts. The right decision was to allow Shannon Faulkner, or any other qualified woman, to enter The Citadel. If the courts hadn't forced The Citadel to admit women, other state institutions would have decided it was all right to go on discriminating.

On the other hand, I don't understand why Shannon Faulkner wanted to gain admission to The Citadel to begin with. She lied on her application by not identifying her gender, and the school mistakenly assumed that "Shannon" was male. Then, once she entered The Citadel, Shannon Faulkner attempted to obtain special consideration, such as reduced workout requirements, because she was a woman. She was ultimately unable to handle the workload at The Citadel. She should have known this before she was admitted. I think that Shannon Faulkner wanted to gain publicity by trying to enter an all-male military academy. She obviously wasn't physically or mentally strong enough to be successful at The Citadel, and she shouldn't have tried to enter an academy where she would fail. She caused other, more qualified women, harm by pressing ahead where she didn't belong.

This point leads to the importance of a private school such as The Women's College. Because individuals fund private schools, those individuals can establish whatever policies they want for admission, whether based on gender, race, religion, or anything else. The Women's College provides an educational environment that meets the needs of women students, and it can legally do this because it is a private institution.

Shannon Faulkner should have applied to an educational institution where she was qualified and where she would have succeeded. However, it is important to keep in mind that The Citadel could not deny her admission based on her gender. Women should be allowed to attend any state institution they wish, even if they make the wrong choice.

Student Example #2

In 1993, Shannon Faulkner was accepted to The Citadel, an all-male, state-owned military school. The school's application form did not ask about gender, and The Citadel assumed that Shannon Faulkner was a male applicant. When it was later discovered that Shannon was female, The Citadel rescinded her admission acceptance. The State of South Carolina, which owned The Citadel, did not operate a female military school to which Shannon Faulkner could apply. After being denied admission to The Citadel, she sued the school for admission. The Supreme Court eventually ruled that Shannon Faulkner should be admitted to The Citadel because her rejection constituted discrimination. After entering the school, Shannon Faulkner dropped out; however, other female students have subsequently entered the school based on the Supreme Court's decision.

When I originally heard that The Citadel had denied her admission, I was angry that a state-owned school was restricted to only male students. It seemed obvious to me that a state school, supported by tax dollars, could not legally discriminate based on gender. However, upon investigating The Citadel and Shannon Faulkner issues more fully, I have come to believe that there are strong arguments on both sides.

During the court proceedings, The Citadel argued that there are many advantages to maintaining the tradition of an all-male military school. In particular, it argued that the purpose of the school was to "mold the minds, bodies and spirits of young men," and that admission of Shannon Faulkner would destroy the very essence of the school (New York Times, May 29, 1994). While these arguments at first appear to be purely discriminatory (similar arguments have been made in the past regarding race and religion), it is important to think about the goals and purpose of a military school. For example, I learned from The Citadel's home page (<http://www.citadel.edu/history/origins.html>) that academic studies at the school have historically been interrupted so that its male students could go to war. Given the U.S. military's differentiation between men's and women's responsibilities during war time, it can reasonably be argued that men benefit from gender-segregated training in preparing them for war. Thus, the fact that The Citadel is a military school might make it different than other public institutions with respect to gender issues.

In addition, the Supreme Court's decision seemed to hinge on the fact that The Citadel is a public school, supported by tax dollars. It is possible to question whether public ownership should matter with respect to a college institution. At The Women's College, which is a private school, we generally consider it acceptable that the school has a women-only tradition. However, given the indirect tax support of the school through financial aid, it is possible to argue that the name "The Women's College" is itself discriminatory because it discourages male applicants. If we have colleges designed to meet the distinctive needs of women students, why is it considered discriminatory to also have colleges designed to meet the distinctive needs of male students?

Although there appear to be strong arguments on The Citadel's side, I have concluded that, overall, I agree with the Supreme Court's ruling. There are several major reasons for my conclusion. First, the Supreme Court has clearly stated that denial of admission based on gender is illegal because The Citadel is a public school funded by tax dollars. Second, although it can (continued)

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be argued that male students should be allowed access to all-male military institutions, it is not justifiable in our society, which places high emphasis on personal freedom, to exclude female students from military education. Third, although men currently dominate the military, women might become a more integral part of the military if they are allowed to participate more fully in co-educational military education. In the absence of opportunities to receive high quality training, women will be unable to take on leadership roles. Fourth, the state had failed to provide an equivalent institution for female students. Even if we agree that men and women should be segregated in military education, I believe it is inappropriate for a state to fund a specific type of education for men but not for women. Fifth, although there are currently no male students at The Women's College, there are no rules precluding their admission. Thus, even though it is a private school, The Women's College does not practice overt discrimination.

It will be interesting to see how women at The Citadel fare after the institution gains more experience with female students. There are many social issues involved with this problem, and there is much disagreement about women's role in the military. It is unclear whether public opinion will ever fully support women in combat roles; however, the role of women cannot advance unless they are given access to the same military education available to men. Thus, admission of women to The Citadel is socially, ethically, and legally desirable.

Student Example #3

Opinion: (1) a view, judgement, or appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter, (2) belief stronger than impression and less strong than positive knowledge, a generally held view.

The topic of Shannon Faulkner is one that causes me much frustration. I have a lack of trust towards Ms. Faulkner. I believe that she used her gender as a selfish and manipulative way of obtaining access into the all-male environment of the Citadel. Many colleges and universities have traditions. Citadel tradition is that their enrollment be limited to males. The Women's College tradition is that enrollment be limited to females. If the Citadel was named "The Men's College," I don't believe Shannon Faulkner would have attempted to enter, but the prestigious name and the fact that her entry would be controversial were enough incentive for her to attempt to gain access into an environment where she did not belong. As a student in an all-female college, I find myself part of a very special, unique group of women. When a group of women come together with common ideas, hopes, and dreams, it creates an environment unlike any other; a community of strong minds, and stronger wills. If a man were to be accepted into The Women's College, I would feel he was trying to take my school and my community away from me and I, like many members of the citadel would voice my opinion.

Men and women are different. What works for one gender does not necessarily work for the other. I cannot explain the camaraderie between an all-male educational environment, but I can say that to be a part of an exclusive college for women is a wonderful fulfilling experience like no other. To be a part of such a group is an honor and a privilege, to be respected by all persons, male or female.

Evaluate/Critique Assessment Rubric Design

Questions for Discussion:

- Did you and your colleagues reach consensus on the ratings?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this rubric?
- Does this rubric address your student learning outcomes for critical thinking?

Recommend Improvements to Assessment Task Design

How Might the Student Assignment Be
Modified to Improve:

- Student critical thinking performance
- Assessment reliability