Introduction

This file describes how "Critical thinking" as a generic competence can be deconstructed into distinct learning outcomes in a university education setting.

It is one of 16 descriptions in LOUIS (Learning Outcomes in University for Impact on Society); LOUIS is part of the Aurora Competence Framework.

The descriptions are based on the VALUE Rubrics developed by the American Association of Colleges & Universities AAC&U.

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.

critical thinking components:

- Explanation of issues
- Evidence
- Influence of context and assumptions
- Student's position (perspective, thesis ←→ hypothesis)
- Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)

Critical thinking: Explanation of issues

Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated <u>without</u> clarification or description.

Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves <u>some</u> terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/ or backgrounds unknown.

Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is <u>not seriously impeded</u> by omissions.

Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated <u>clearly</u> and described <u>comprehensively</u>, delivering all <u>relevant</u> information necessary for full understanding.

Critical thinking: Evidence

Information is taken from source(s) <u>without</u> any interpretation/ evaluation.

Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, <u>without</u> question.

Information is taken from source(s) with <u>some</u> interpretation/ evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.

Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with <u>little</u> questioning.

Information is taken from source(s) with <u>enough</u> interpretation/ evaluation to develop a <u>coherent</u> analysis or synthesis.

<u>Viewpoints</u> of experts are subject to questioning.

Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a <u>comprehensive</u> analysis or synthesis.

Viewpoints of experts are questioned <u>thoroughly</u>.

Critical thinking:
Influence of context and assumptions

Shows an **emerging** awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions).

Begins to identify some 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).

Identifies **own and others'** assumptions and several **relevant** contexts when presenting a position.

Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and **carefully evaluates** the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.
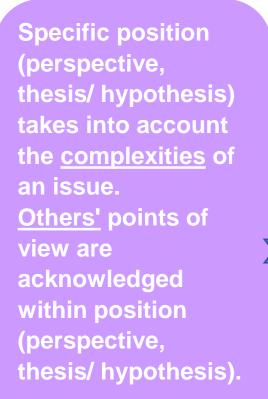
Critical thinking: Student's position (perspective, thesis ←→ hypothesis)

Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) is stated, but is **simplistic** and obvious.

➡

Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) acknowledges **different sides** of an issue.

➡

Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) takes into account the **complexities** of an issue.
Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis).
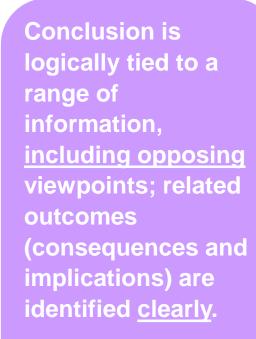
➡

Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) 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).

Critical thinking: Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)

Conclusion is **inconsistently** tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are **oversimplified**.

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 logically tied to a range of information, **including opposing** viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified **clearly**.

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.