

Liberal Arts Core Competency Criteria

Liberal Arts Council
University of Northern Colorado

From <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/Criteria/Competency/critthinking.pdf>

COMPETENCY: CRITICAL THINKING General Education

Guiding Principle: The goal of instruction in “critical thinking” is to help students become capable of critical and open-minded questioning and reasoning. An understanding of argument is central to critical thinking.

Definition: Critical Thinking competency
Ability to examine issues and ideas and to identify good and bad reasoning in a variety of fields with differing assumptions, contents and methods.

Criteria

1. Information Acquisition:

- Identify questions, problems, and arguments.
- Differentiate questions, problems, and arguments.

2. Application

- Evaluate the appropriateness of various methods of reasoning and verification.
- State position or hypothesis, give reasons to support it and state its limitations.

3. Analysis

- Identify stated and unstated assumptions.
- Assess stated and unstated assumptions.
- Critically compare different points of view.

4. Synthesis

- Formulate questions and problems.
- Construct and develop cogent arguments.
- Articulate reasoned judgments.

5. Communication

- Discuss alternative points of view.
- Defend or criticize a point of view in view of available evidence.

6. Evaluation

- Evaluate the quality of evidence and reasoning.
- Draw an appropriate conclusion.

11/30/2005

The above bullets represent the full spectrum of criteria that may define this competency. For the purposes of qualifying a state-guaranteed general education course that requires this competency, the institution must demonstrate that the course substantively addresses most, not necessarily all, of the stated criteria.

From <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/Criteria/Competency/mathcomp.pdf>

COMPETENCY: MATHEMATICS

General Education

(Defines criteria for mathematics competency across the curriculum. See mathematics content for course-specific criteria.)

Definition:

Ability to use mathematical methods, reasoning and strategies to investigate and solve problems.

Criteria

1. Information Acquisition:

- Select data that are relevant to solving a problem.

2. Application

- Use several methods, such as algebraic, geometric and statistical reasoning to solve problems.

3. Analysis

- Interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, and tables.

4. Synthesis

- Generalize from specific patterns and phenomena to more abstract principles and to proceed from abstract principles to specific applications.

5. Communication

- Represent mathematical information symbolically, graphically, numerically and verbally.

6. Evaluation

- Estimate and verify answers to mathematical problems to determine reasonableness, compare alternatives, and select optimal results.
- Recognize that mathematical and statistical methods have limitations.

11/30/2005

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From <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/Criteria/Competency/reading.pdf>

COMPETENCY: READING

Criteria apply to all general education courses that develop reading competency (criteria [are] not course specific).

Guiding Principle:

The ability to read critically is developed as students process visual information and apply the information to real problems across the curriculum.

Definition:

The ability to read critically and thoughtfully.

Criteria

1. Information Acquisition

- Recognize the different purposes and types of writing (e.g., descriptive, persuasive, narrative, imaginative, technical).

2. Application

- Read newspapers and journals to track current events and issues.
- Extract main points from texts and presentations.
- Research topics using the web and other technologies.
Demonstrate comprehension of material by applying it to a written report, oral presentation, or group discussion.

3. Analysis

- Summarize or interpret an author's point of view in written or oral format.

4. Synthesis

- Interpret material by connecting own experiences to what is read in written or oral format.

5. Communication

- Use logic, reasoning, content analysis, and interpretative skills when reading printed or published materials.
- Convey the essence of read material to others by paraphrasing or citing in written or oral format.

6. Evaluation

- Select texts that are credible and appropriate sources for written or oral case building.
- Identify common fallacies (e.g., fact, logic, and relationships) in presentations and written texts.
- Compare the value or relevance of information obtained from different sources.

11/30/2005

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From <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/Criteria/Competency/technology.pdf>

COMPETENCY: TECHNOLOGY
General Education

Guiding Principle:

The integration of appropriate technology competencies and skills support the mastery of content of general education. The use of technology should never suppress content or diminish the rigor of general education courses.

Definition of technology competency:

Ability to select and apply contemporary forms of technology to solve problems or compile information.

Criteria

1. Information Acquisition:

- * Conceptually understand available networking tools (e.g. web search engines, web sites), select, discriminate and evaluate sources for credibility and appropriateness.

2. Application:

- * Achieve a familiarity with contemporary technology that allows a student to identify which technologies are useful and/or appropriate.

3. Analysis:

- * Use appropriate technology to analyze information or data as required in a field of study.

4. Synthesis:

- * Integrate information or data from a variety of sources to form a position or present a point of view.

5. Communication:

- * Use current technology as a venue for information sharing (e.g. post a web page).

6. Evaluation:

- * Determine which technologies apply to the task, understand the limitations of those technologies and know how to combine technologies effectively.

11/30/2005

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From <http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/Criteria/Competency/writtencomm.pdf>

COMPETENCY: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Criteria apply to all general education courses that develop written competency (this competency is not course specific).

Guiding Principle:

Learning to write is a complex process that takes place over time with continued practice and informed guidance. While qualified writing professionals help students learn writing skills and knowledge of writing conventions, written communication competency is developed as students apply this knowledge across the curriculum. The statements below describe the level of competency in expository writing that students develop and refine in the general education curriculum.

Definition:

Student demonstrates the ability to write clearly and concisely.

Criteria

1. Information Acquisition
 - Find, select, and synthesize information from appropriate primary and secondary sources.
2. Application
 - * Apply knowledge of syntax, grammar, punctuation and spelling in writing assignments.
 - * Use appropriate vocabulary, formats, and documentation for different writing tasks.
3. Analysis
 - Critique own and others' work.
4. Synthesis
 - Integrate own ideas with those of others.
5. Communication
 - Convey a primary theme or message in a written text.
 - Use a variety of research tools, including current technological resources.
6. Evaluation
 - Clarify ideas and improve the quality of a written paper by using feedback.

See Communication Content Criteria for course-specific criteria.

11/30/2005

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