

# CREATIVE THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

*for more information, please contact [value@aacu.org](mailto:value@aacu.org)*



The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

## Definition

Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

## Framing Language

Creative thinking, as it is fostered within higher education, must be distinguished from less focused types of creativity such as, for example, the creativity exhibited by a small child's drawing, which stems not from an understanding of connections, but from an ignorance of boundaries. Creative thinking in higher education can only be expressed productively within a particular domain. The student must have a strong foundation in the strategies and skills of the domain in order to make connections and synthesize. While demonstrating solid knowledge of the domain's parameters, the creative thinker, at the highest levels of performance, pushes beyond those boundaries in new, unique, or atypical recombinations, uncovering or critically perceiving new syntheses and using or recognizing creative risk-taking to achieve a solution.

The Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric is intended to help faculty assess creative thinking in a broad range of transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary work samples or collections of work. The rubric is made up of a set of attributes that are common to creative thinking across disciplines. Examples of work samples or collections of work that could be assessed for creative thinking may include research papers, lab reports, musical compositions, a mathematical equation that solves a problem, a prototype design, a reflective piece about the final product of an assignment, or other academic works. The work samples or collections of work may be completed by an individual student or a group of students.

## Glossary

***The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.***

- Exemplar: A model or pattern to be copied or imitated (quoted from [www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/exemplar](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/exemplar)).
- Domain: Field of study or activity and a sphere of knowledge and influence.

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*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

|  | Capstone  | Milestones   |   | Benchmark  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
|  | 4   | 3  | 2   | 1  |
| <b>Acquiring Competencies</b><br><i>This step refers to acquiring strategies and skills within a particular domain.</i>  | Reflect: Evaluates creative process and product using domain-appropriate criteria.  | Create: Creates an entirely new object, solution or idea that is appropriate to the domain.        | Adapt: Successfully adapts an appropriate exemplar to his/her own specifications.                               | Model: Successfully reproduces an appropriate exemplar.  |
| <b>Taking Risks</b><br><i>May include personal risk (fear of embarrassment or rejection) or risk of failure in successfully completing assignment, i.e. going beyond original parameters of assignment, introducing new materials and forms, tackling controversial topics, advocating unpopular ideas or solutions.</i> | Actively seeks out and follows through on untested and potentially risky directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.               | Incorporates new directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.                  | Considers new directions or approaches without going beyond the guidelines of the assignment.                   | Stays strictly within the guidelines of the assignment.  |
| <b>Solving Problems</b>  | Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve problem, but recognizes consequences of solution and can articulate reason for choosing solution. | Having selected from among alternatives, develops a logical, consistent plan to solve the problem. | Considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solving problem.  | Only a single approach is considered and is used to solve the problem.                           |
| <b>Embracing Contradictions</b>  | Integrates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully.  | Incorporates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a exploratory way.    | Includes (recognizes the value of) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a small way. | Acknowledges (mentions in passing) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas. |
| <b>Innovative Thinking</b><br><i>Novelty or uniqueness (of idea, claim, question, form, etc.)</i>  | Extends a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.                              | Creates a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.                                      | Experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.                                 | Reformulates a collection of available ideas.  |
| <b>Connecting, Synthesizing, Transforming</b>  | Transforms ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.  | Synthesizes ideas or solutions into a coherent whole.  | Connects ideas or solutions in novel ways.  | Recognizes existing connections among ideas or solutions.  |