

GE Standard II: Critical Thinking Standard

Courses seeking to meet the Critical Thinking Standard must:

- (i) Require students to engage in particular activities, and
- (ii) Use direct assessment to demonstrate improvement of student skills in particular areas

To meet the Standard, courses must address *each* of the five areas listed on the following pages. Direct assessment must be used in *each* area.

The specific requirements for addressing and assessing each Area follow, and are listed under the Area headings themselves. One page is devoted to each of the five Areas.

Area 1: Logical Consistency

Briefly describe contexts in which your course will require students to do one or more of the things listed in the following bullet points:

- Understand that concepts share a logical framework. That is, understand that one idea makes sense given another.
- Understand that, given a logical propositional system, no theorem of the system contradicts another.

Your course is asked to demonstrate improvement in one or more of the following student skills:

- The ability to offer or evaluate an argument by providing reasons that support the conclusion and employing logically sound argumentation
- The ability to offer or evaluate an argument without allowing a false inference to follow from true premises
- When offering or evaluating an argument, the ability to show that the argument can be proved or at least sufficiently supported by data
- When offering or evaluating an argument, the ability to show that the premises of the argument are true in the actual world
- When discussing an argument, the ability to identify whether the right question or questions are being asked.

Describe what direct assessments you will use in order to demonstrate improvement of such skills among your students.

Area 2: Clarity of Argumentation

Briefly describe contexts in which your course will require students to do one or more of the things listed in the following bullet point:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the process of developing or presenting an argument

Your course is asked to demonstrate improvement in one or more of the following student skills:

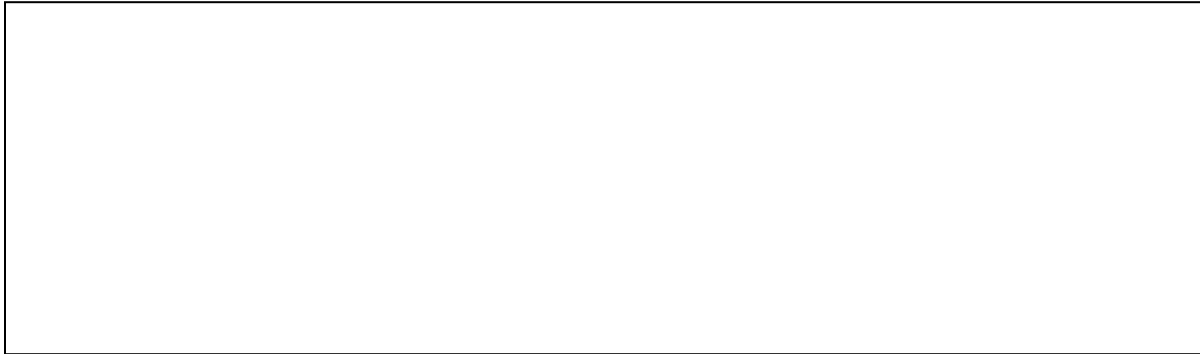
- The ability to clearly state one point at a time
- The ability to elaborate upon a statement if asked
- The ability to provide examples that connect the student's thoughts to life experiences
- The ability to use analogies and metaphors to help people connect the student's ideas to a variety of things that they already understand
- The ability to demonstrate the sequential steps in developing or presenting an argument.

Describe what direct assessments you will use in order to demonstrate improvement of such skills among your students.

Area 3: Ability to Assess Evidence

Briefly describe contexts in which your course will require students to do one or more of the things listed in the following bullet point:

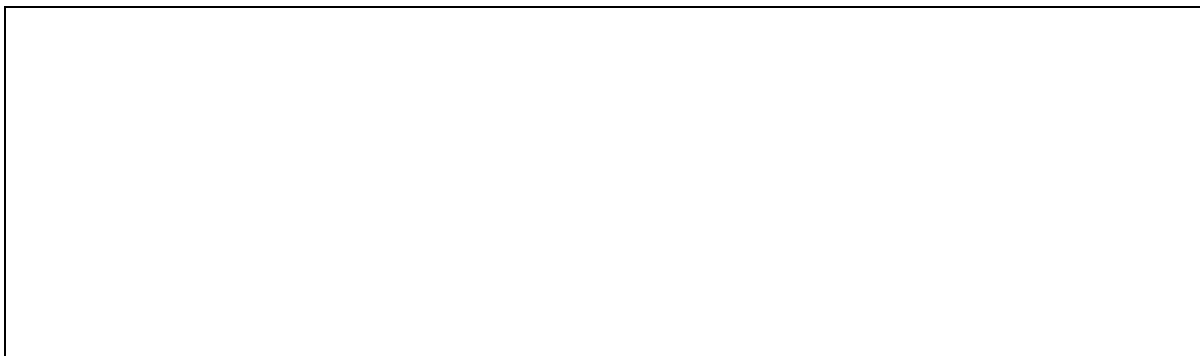
- Demonstrate the skills required to estimate the value of evidence:



Your course is asked to demonstrate improvement in one or more of the following student skills:

- The ability to evaluate whether claims are supported by the data provided
- The ability to compare and contrast information that opposes an author's position and that which supports it
- The ability to evaluate whether all information used is clear, accurate, and relevant to the question at issue
- The ability to evaluate whether an author has gathered sufficient information in making an argument
- The ability to assess the extent and weight of any evidence provided

Describe what direct assessments you will use in order to demonstrate improvement of such skills among your students.



Area 4: Ability to Apply Evidence

Briefly describe contexts in which your course will require students to do one or more of the things listed in the following bullet point:

- Demonstrate the skills required to apply evidence during argumentation.

Your course is asked to demonstrate improvement in one or more of the following student skills:

- The ability to restrict claims made to those supported by the available data
- The ability to search for and uncover information that opposes your position as well as that which supports it
- The ability to ensure that all information used is clear, accurate, and relevant to the question at issue
- The ability to ensure that sufficient information has been gathered when formulating an argument or position
- The ability to adequately explain the extent and weight of any available evidence

Describe what direct assessments you will use in order to demonstrate improvement of such skills among your students.

Area 5: Ability to Reflect upon Assumptions, Including one's Own

Briefly describe contexts in which your course will require students to do one or more of the things listed in the following bullet point:

- Examine assumptions critically, and suspend the conclusions that follow from a particular assumption in order to consider the viability of alternative assumptions and/or propositions.



Your course is asked to demonstrate improvement in one or more of the following student skills:

- The ability to recognize the relevance and/or merit of alternative assumptions and perspectives
- The understanding of the process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning assumptions

Describe what direct assessments you will use in order to demonstrate improvement of such skills among your students.

