3. Select Critical Thinking Scoring Criteria & Create Your Scoring Rubric

In the previous step you selected the critical thinking skills that you value. Now you will create a rubric that will allow you to determine how well your students perform each skill.

Note: If you already have a rubric or other scoring method, you might be able to use that if it goes after the same thinking skills shown in our rubric examples. If you prefer to build your own rubric rows rather than selecting from our examples, we welcome that as well.

Why Use Our Method for Measuring Critical Thinking?
Recall from previous materials that CT is a cyclical and iterative process made up of multiple and overlapping activities. CT can be simply defined as:

Critical thinking is the conscious and deliberate use of thinking skills and strategies used for guiding what to think, believe, or do.

Critical thinking (CT) is a holistic, complex, and integrated thinking skill. While thinking happens in phases, everything is connected. But scoring student signature assignments holistically (one score for all of their thinking) is difficult and can be unreliable. On the other hand, if we atomize the elements of thinking down too far in our rubrics, we do just as much damage to the validity of the scores. So we need to strike a balance between these two extremes. We do this by building at least six rows in our scoring rubrics based around the six-part process view of critical thinking.

The following steps are a quick and easy approach to building rubrics that can score critical thinking elements in student work.

Before you begin, recall the steps you completed when selecting/building your signature assignment:

- Decide whether you are going to score a product, performance, person, and/or process.
- Decide whether you will score in sections or as a whole.
- Select at least one specific bulleted criterion from each of the parts of the critical thinking framework to use in your critical thinking rubric.

A. Select one row from each of the six categories in the critical thinking framework.

Like a Chinese lunch menu, pick one from Column A, one from Column B… All of these six sets of examples are in Appendix F.

1. Interpretation
2. Analysis
3. Evaluation
4. Inference
5. Explanation (Communication)
6. Self-regulation (Metacognition)

B. Adapt the wording of the descriptors (the words in each scoring cell) to fit your signature assignment. *(Optional but Highly Recommended Step)*

Rubrics are handed out to students along with the signature assignment. Research has shown that giving students the rubric improves learning (and scores). We recommend adapting (also called localizing) the rubric rows when you are using the scoring rubric for just one assignment. Doing so will help your students see what “good” thinking looks like in the context of that assignment.

Note how the critical thinking involved here is **how well** the student thought about the sorts of questions that should be asked to guide their research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Example Clarifying Questions</th>
<th>Does not ask questions.</th>
<th>Identifies some questions.</th>
<th>Asks good questions.</th>
<th>Analyzes insightful questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapted Version</strong> Clarifying Questions</td>
<td><strong>Does not</strong> ask questions about the budget problem.</td>
<td><strong>Identifies</strong> some basic common or obvious questions about the budget problem.</td>
<td><strong>Asks</strong> relevant questions that guide further research into the budget problem.</td>
<td><strong>Analyzes</strong> insightful questions showing a deep understanding of how the questions can guide the research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Copy and paste each row into the [Critical Thinking Rubric Template](#).

D. Send your rubric to me for posting online. tom.zane@slcc.edu