Creating a Rubric of Critical Thinking for Writing Intensive Courses

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Chinese Program Facts

Number of faculty: 8
Total number of writing intensive (WI) courses: 18
Average number of WI courses offered each AY: 7 – 8
Average number of students enrolled in WI each AY: 112

Introduction

Elevating critical thinking of students has been an active practice in colleges and universities across the U.S., also one of the important institutional learning objectives at UHM. The Chinese BA Curriculum Map recognizes the application of critical thinking and rhetorical skills to produce coherent work as one of the key students' learning outcomes for writing courses in English or Chinese. However, no rubric was identified in Chinese WI courses to assess the quality of students' work regarding critical thinking. Realizing the significance of a unified rubric for program assessment, this team has collaborated to create a holistic rubric, and implemented it to WI courses they teach.

Faculty Collaborative Rubric Development

Step 1 Research
- Examining the components of critical thinking assessment in all Chinese WI courses
- Studying the Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric by AACU
- Discussing via zoom meetings and emails

Step 2 Development
- Sharing previously developed rubrics in some WI course
- Creating and co-editing the rubric on Google Docs
- Revising the rubric based on feedback from faculty and assessment experts from the Assessment and Curriculum Support Center
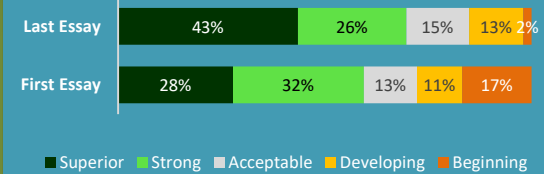
Step 3 Implementation
- Piloting this rubric in one content course (CHN470) and two literature courses (EALL363C and EALL473) in Fall 2020
- Collecting evidence: Scores and samples from student writings
- Comparing student's accomplishments in different courses

The Holistic Rubric

Score	Descriptors
Superior 4	• Issue/problem is clearly stated and described; viewpoints are thoroughly explored, and explained different major perspectives around the issue; • Evaluations of appropriately selected information are adequately presented with systematic analysis, coherent evidence and comprehensive interpretation; • Conclusions, consequences and implications) are logical and clearly identified, and limitations are appropriately acknowledged.
Strong 3	• Identified and explained major perspectives around the issue; • Information is synthesized to develop an adequate analysis or evaluation but may not be coherent; • Conclusions are logically tied to a range of information, and most consequences and implications are clearly identified.
Acceptable 2	• Issue/problem is generally stated but some perspectives are left unexplored; • Interpretation with information from sources is not adequate to develop a coherent analysis; • Conclusions are logically tied to some information, but not logically formed with synthesis; some consequences and implications are identified clearly.
Developing 1	• Issue/problem is mentioned but not coherently stated or clearly described; • Information taken from source(s) is minimally interpreted; • Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some information discussed, and consequences and implications are oversimplified or unsubstantiated
Beginning 0	• Issue/problem is unclear or very trivial. • Used no or little source to support one's viewpoints. • Conclusion is minimally connected to the information presented.

Pilot Results (N = 46)

More students achieved *Acceptable* or higher level on the last essay (84%) than on the first (73%).

	Superior	Strong	Acceptable	Developing	Beginning
Last Essay	43%	26%	15%	13%	2%
First Essay	28%	32%	13%	11%	17%

- CHN470: Language and Culture of China (n=18)
- EALL363C: 20th Century Chinese Literature and Culture (1949-pre) (n=13)
- EALL473: Topics in Chinese Culture Studies (n=15)

Tips for rubric implementation

- Setting up clear expectations for students by explaining the rubrics before they begin working on the assignments
- Sharing writing samples that are normed to each rubric descriptor
- Providing detailed feedback with the numerical rating for improvement
- Examining writings together with students, collaboratively co-construct feedback
- Promoting peer learning thorough students-students conferencing across the entire writing processes

Next Steps

- Reflecting on the experiences and discussing issues raised during the implementation of the rubric and assessment of students' writings
- Revising the rubric based on the discussions and reflections
- Promoting the implementation of the revised rubric to all other WI courses at Chinese sectional meetings and generating data for next assessment report due in 2023
- Sharing the rubric with other faculty at a curriculum meeting or workshop, and promoting its implementation in other WI Japanese or Korean courses for EALL program improvement