

Critical Analysis

Reading with an Analytical Eye (Micro-credential)

Are you a critical reader? Are you detailed-oriented? These invaluable skills are steps of good critical thinking and essential for many careers.

Critical thinking helps employees solve problems and strategize. The ability uses logic and knowledge to apply to specific situations. Employees who can engage in critical thinking are reflective, independent, and competent. Critical analysis means logically connecting ideas, scrutinizing and evaluating arguments, finding inconsistencies and errors in your work and others' work, solving complex problems, and engaging in reflection.

Often good critical thinking requires digital literacy.

Digital literacy is technical savvy navigation of the digital world for data you need. In this technology-driven life, you want to prove your digital skills. In the classroom, students properly use the internet and digital resources in their research. They learn which digital resources are appropriate for their situations and needs. In turn, this strengthens effective and safe internet usage. In the workplace, digital literacy enhances most positions. This skill not only improves employees' competence but also helps identify patterns in information and data, which helps identify trends and shifts in work.

Communicate your research and interpretation of ideas with a Critical Analysis project.

Requirements

Consult your faculty consultant as you consider your major and goals. Choose one project that uses your abilities to research, think critically and in-depth, and communicate your knowledge. Your project should indicate you are capable of interpreting and applying digital technologies. It must explore your research capabilities and application of knowledge, facts, and data. You can speak to your faculty member about the project's specifications—length, number of resources, deadlines, etc.

Example assignments (writing emphasis)

- Dissect and present a company's marketing message
- Explore an artist's creations and the mood or story it is creating
- Create an action plan for a global issue
- Explore a product or app and its reviews; propose a solution to its most impactful issue

Example assignments (digital emphasis)

- Plan a social media campaign
- Develop a wiki dispelling the myths about a culture, location, or activity
- Create a multi-media presentation exploring ...
- Create a digital guide that explains ...
- Collect and categorize convergent elements of divergent media
- Revise and repackage a given media so that it is optimized for another platform

Career-based Competencies

Earning this micro-credential will demonstrate your ability to articulate innovative thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms. Completing this project will demonstrate several competencies as defined by NaceWeb.org:

- *Critical Thinking*: Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information; gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem. proactively anticipate needs and prioritize action steps; accurately summarize and interpret data with an awareness of personal biases that may impact outcomes; effectively communicate actions and rationale, recognizing the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of stakeholders.

- *Technology*: Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals; identify appropriate technology for completing specific tasks; manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals.
- *Communication*: Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives; employ persuasion and influencing skills; communicate in a clear and organized manner so that others can effectively understand.
- *Leadership*: Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals; use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods; motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust.
- *Professionalism*: Prioritize and complete tasks to accomplish organizational goals; Consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations; have an attention-to-detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work.
- *Career & Self-Development*: Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.

Evaluation

When you complete this micro-credential, you will demonstrate your analysis, understanding, and communications with an audience. Your instructor will assess project for research, critical thinking, and communication. A successful project will demonstrate the competencies below (based on Meagan Kelly's *Breaking Down the Four C's* rubric). Students should earn ten or more Competent or Accomplished levels for each category.

Research			
	WHAT? What types of research are students using?	HOW? How are students demonstrating research skills?	WHY? Why are students researching?
Accomplished	Students use multiple primary and secondary sources—whether video, audio, articles, or other available information. The information from sources representing a single perspective related to the learning goals.	Students evaluate and refine information-gathering strategies. Students elaborate on connections within the information gathered. Students refine ideas based on gathered information. Students demonstrate control and fluency of applicable language, offer synthesized information and defends applying information.	Students defend the validity of information by evaluating the degree of objectivity and accuracy of sources. Students defend the inclusion/exclusion of information based on relevance.
Competent	Students use more than primary sources—whether video, audio, articles, or other available information. Students use information from sources representing a single perspective related to the learning goals.	Students formulate information-gathering strategies. Students connect gathered information. Students show a command of the language, assesses and organizes the resource's connections, and describes knowledge application.	Students analyze the validity of information by investigating the degree of objectivity and accuracy of sources. Students describe choices to include/exclude information based on relevance.

Developing	Students use information from sources representing a single perspective related to the project.	Students use an information-gathering strategy that allows them to add to their general body of knowledge. Students convey the relationships between the gathered information. Students make use of applicable terms, concepts, or ideas. Students describe connections within the information.	Students gather information while checking the credibility of sources. Students identify information connected to the project.
HOW SO? Annotated bibliography, multiple sources			

Critical Thinking

WHAT? What types of thinking are present?		HOW? How is thinking students demonstrating thinking?	WHY? Why are students thinking critically?
Accomplished	Students use research or information analysis. Students examine the gathered data, make judgments, and explore relationships between material. Based on data, the student creates something new or redesigns something existing.	Students act on their researched conclusions. Students use their gathered information to develop ideas using multiple methods, oral, written, nonverbal, visual, or digital tools.	Students convey real-world knowledge into their creations. They analyze and communicate real-world, unfamiliar situations or ideas.
Competent	Students use the information to apply, demonstrate, interpret, practice, or solve problems.	Students demonstrate critical thinking by using at least two of the following methods, such as oral, written, nonverbal, visual, and/or digital tools.	Students are analyzing unfamiliar situations and finding solutions to real-world problems that the teacher provided.
Developing	Students comprehend and grasp the meaning of content to explain, infer, compare, or contrast material.	Students demonstrate critical thinking by using oral or written methods.	Students are answering questions that have been given by the teacher with open-ended responses.
HOW SO? Content analysis; data collection and summary, annotated bibliography			

Communication

WHO? To whom are students communicating?		HOW? How are students demonstrating communication?	WHY? Why are students communicating?
Accomplished	Students are communicating their thoughts to a broad audience with diverse needs, wants, or motivations.	Students communicate their thoughts and ideas with multiple communication modes--written, verbal, nonverbal, visual, or digital. Technology is the primary tool to share their message.	Students communicate their understanding of the topic, reflect on their learning, and explore their interpretation and application of the knowledge in a user-friendly way.

Competent	Students are communicating their thoughts to a specific, identified audience. Students show an understanding of the chosen audience's needs, wants, or motivations.	Students communicate their thoughts and ideas using two modes of communication: written, verbal, visual, or digital. Technology is used to enhance their message.	Students communicate their thoughts for a purpose (to inform, instruct, motivate or persuade) that the student determines and communicates rather than an instructor-assigned purpose.
Developing	Students are communicating their thoughts in the classroom with the teacher/students and across campus.	Students communicate their thoughts and ideas using written, verbal, nonverbal, visual or digital communication.	Students communicate their thoughts for a specific, teacher-assigned purpose: to inform, instruct, motivate or persuade.
HOW SO? Designed documents, presentation, audio-visual			

Digital Literacy			
	WHAT? What does digital literacy create?	HOW? How are students demonstrating digital literacy?	WHY? Why do students use digital literacy?
Accomplished	Students create original works using two or more digital tools and technologies as a means of personal or group expression. Students engage multiple audiences with adept digital communication skills.	Students successfully apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information almost all the time. Students demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of technology functions.	Students communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats. Students generate work products employing a variety of digital environments and media.
Competent	Students create original works using one digital tool or technology as a means of personal or group expression. Students engage a specific audience with general digital communication skills.	Students demonstrate an operational understanding of technology. Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use the information most of the time. Students attempt to create original works as a means of expression.	Students communicate information and ideas effectively, for the most part, through media or formats. Students choose the most appropriate digital environments and media for selected projects.
Developing	Students create original works using one assigned software or digital tool as a means of personal or group expression. Students engage students, instructors, and the college with their digital skills.	Students attempt to use basic software or digital tools to gather and design information. Students modify original works of personal or group expression.	Students understand how to communicate information and ideas effectively for audiences, or they require significant support to do so. Students discern technological resources for specific digital environments and media.
HOW SO? Designed documents, presentations, and/or audio-visuals, explained digital usage and selection			