

General Education Program Assessment Results 2024-25

Introduction

UTC's new General Education Program was implemented in Fall 2023. In alignment with the assessment timeline that was established as part of the new program the two outcomes selected for assessment were:

- Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims (Critique and Evaluate); and
- Create, innovate, and adapt to take charge of your own learning (Create, Innovate, and Adapt).

This report describes the assessment tools, artifact collection, assessment methodology, and results from the Spring 2025 assessment of artifacts collected in Fall 2024. During this annual process, faculty assessors were able to build upon prior lessons from earlier years of program assessment, as well as utilize the locally developed rubrics to determine the level of student learning over the past year.

General Education Outcomes

Each general education course is aligned with at least one of UTC's four general education student learning outcomes:

1. Communicate effectively according to purpose using written, oral, and/or audio-visual methods.
2. Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims.
3. Cultivate inclusion by recognizing, examining, and reflecting on the diversity of cultural and individual experiences.
4. Create, innovate, and adapt to take charge of your own learning.

Assessment Tool

During Summer 2021, the Reimagining General Education (RGE) Committee developed a rubric modeled after the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric along with the Millersville University Critical Thinking Rubrics as well as influence from rubrics created by the University of South Florida and East Tennessee State University. UTC's Critique and Evaluate Rubric (Appendix A) is comprised of four dimensions:

- *Explanation of issues or problems,*
- *Selecting and interpreting information to investigate a concept, theory, or claim,*
- *Analyzing and evaluating context, assumptions, or perspectives within the evidence, and*
- *Conclusions and related outcomes.*

Each dimension has four performance levels including Proficient, Developing (strong), Developing (weak), and Novice. Evaluators are encouraged to assign "not applicable" to a dimension of the work sample when it is not possible to assess.

In addition to the Critique and Evaluate Rubric, UTC developed a Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric (Appendix B). This rubric was adapted from AAC&U's Create, Innovate, and Adapt VALUE Rubric, as well



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as Rhode Island College’s Critical and Creative Thinking Rubric. UTC’s Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric is comprised of three dimensions:

- *Creativity,*
- *Demonstrate innovative thinking, and*
- *Adapt ideas.*

Each dimension has four performance levels including Proficient, Developing (strong), Developing (weak), and Novice. Evaluators are encouraged to assign “not applicable” to a dimension of the work sample when it is not possible to assess.

Artifact Collection

Artifact collection was accomplished via Canvas, UTC’s Learning Management System (LMS). All faculty members teaching a general education course aligned with the Critique and Evaluate and/or Create, Innovate, and Adapt student learning outcomes were asked if they had assignments/artifacts that could be submitted as part of the annual General Education Program assessment process. Faculty members identified a specific assignment in the course that gives students an opportunity to address the specific student learning outcome. The assignment could be any paper or project that could be submitted to Canvas as an attached file. When the assignment was due, students were prompted to submit their work to the designated General Education module in Canvas. Utilizing the Canvas module streamlined collection of the student work and linked the artifact to a specific course and student learning outcome.

At the end of the Fall 2024 term, faculty uploaded student work from Canvas to the General Education Assessment SharePoint site. Seventy-six courses (84 classes) submitted student work for assessment. From the submitted student work, 59.0% met the criteria for assessment using the Critique and Evaluate or Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric. Some student work could not be assessed due to the length of artifact, format of artifact, or format of submission. Altogether, 800 student artifacts (400 with the Critique and Evaluate Rubric and 400 with the Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric) were assessed in 22 different subjects, comprised of 43 individual classes. The full list of courses represented can be found in Tables 1 and 2. Those with a sample size of zero are included to show the variety of courses for which artifacts were submitted, even though none were usable for assessment purposes. Although the artifacts were from the Fall 2024 term, assessment took place during Spring 2025.

Table 1. Fall 2024 Course Representation – Critique and Evaluate

Create and Evaluate			
Course Subject	Course Number	Course Title	Sample Size
ANTH	1400	Archaeology	15
ANTH	1200	Cultural Anthropology	15
COMM	3250	Tv & Pop Culture	15
ENGL	2280	Children's Literature	15
ENGL	2510	Popular Fiction and Social Media	13
FREN	1010	Elementary French I	0



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GEOG	1030	World Geography	8
GEOL	1025	Geology of the National Parks	0
GEOL	1040	Earth's Resources and the Environment	7
GEOL	2250	Oceanography	15
HIST	2220	Europe and the World, c. 1500-1800	10
HIST	2210	Medieval Europe, Illumined! From 300-1500	13
MATH	1730	Combined Precalculus	0
SOC	1510	Introduction to Sociology	43
SOC	1511	Introduction to Sociology	11
SOC	1150	Sociology of Social Problems	13
SPAN	2110	Spanish Language and Culture	0
SPAN	1010	Elementary Spanish I	14
WGSS	2220	Women's Health	15
SOCW	2050	Introduction to Social Policy: A Social Justice Perspective	0
ETR	1010	Entrepreneurship: The Mindset and Skillset	54
ECON	1000	The Economics of Global Issues	15
ECON	1010	Principles of Economics: Macroeconomics	60
ECON	1020	Principles of Economics: Microeconomics	30
FIN	2010	Personal Finance	0
ECON	1020	Principles of Economics: Microeconomics	20

Table 2. Fall 2024 Course Representation – Create, Innovate, and Adapt

Create, Innovate, and Adapt			
Course Subject	Course Number	Course Title	Sample Size
ART	2150	The History of Art from 1400 CE to the Present	19
COMM	3250	TV & Pop Culture	15
CRMJ	1100	Introduction to the Criminal Justice System	20
ENGL	2700	Creative Writing	11
ENGL	2510	Popular fiction and Social Media	14
FREN	1010	Elementary French I	0
GER	1010	Elementary German I	0
HIST	1120	Making the Modern World: Globalization, Imperialism, and Revolution	6
IARC	1200	Survey of Architecture	31
LTAM	1750	Intro to Latin American Studies	31
MUS	1110	Introduction to Music	74
REL	1030	Introduction to the Study of Religion	40
REL	1050	Intro to Islam	18


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REL	1070	Buddhism: Teachings, Practices, and Socio-cultural History	18
SOC	1510	Introduction to Sociology	83
SOC	1150	Sociology of Social Problems	8
SPAN	1010	Intro to Spanish	17

Methodology

For each course, a random sample of student work was selected from the SharePoint site. Not all artifacts could be utilized due to fit with rubric, artifact length, or quality of reproduction. Faculty volunteers were solicited by email and 25 faculty volunteered. Three faculty scorers were lost based on timing of required norming session, leaving 22 volunteers. Seven of the scorers had experience with this specific assessment process or other closely related processes, ensuring a good mix of experienced and new assessors. Each faculty member was awarded a \$350 stipend for participating in a 4-hour training session and completing the assessment of assigned artifacts. Prior to the training session, each assessor received a scoring sheet and one of the rubrics, either the Critique and Evaluate or Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric.

To enhance interrater reliability, a representative of UTC's Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) provided a 4-hour training session on best practices for assessing student work with the rubrics. The bulk of this training session was centered on norming the results with all scorers. To better accommodate schedules, the training was held virtually in February 2025. Each artifact was scored by two faculty members.

Results

Assessment results for the *Critique and Evaluate* and *Create, Innovate, and Adapt* learning outcomes revealed a wide distribution of student performance across all levels of competency. Interrater reliability for both outcomes met or exceeded the acceptable threshold of 75%, ensuring consistent scoring among evaluators.

Critique and Evaluate

Results from the assessment of the Critique and Evaluate outcome were distributed across all levels of competency. Students, on average, were most likely able to demonstrate *Explanation* (67.7% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 12.6% at the Proficient (4) benchmark) and had the most difficulty in the *Conclusion* dimension (33.7% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 2.6% at the Proficient (4) benchmark). Also in the *Conclusion* dimension, more students performed at the Novice (1) benchmark than in any of the other three dimensions. Figure 1 provides the full range of student performance on all four dimensions and Figure 2 summarizes the percentage of students above the Novice (1) benchmark.

Figure 1. Results for Critique and Evaluate Outcome 2024-25

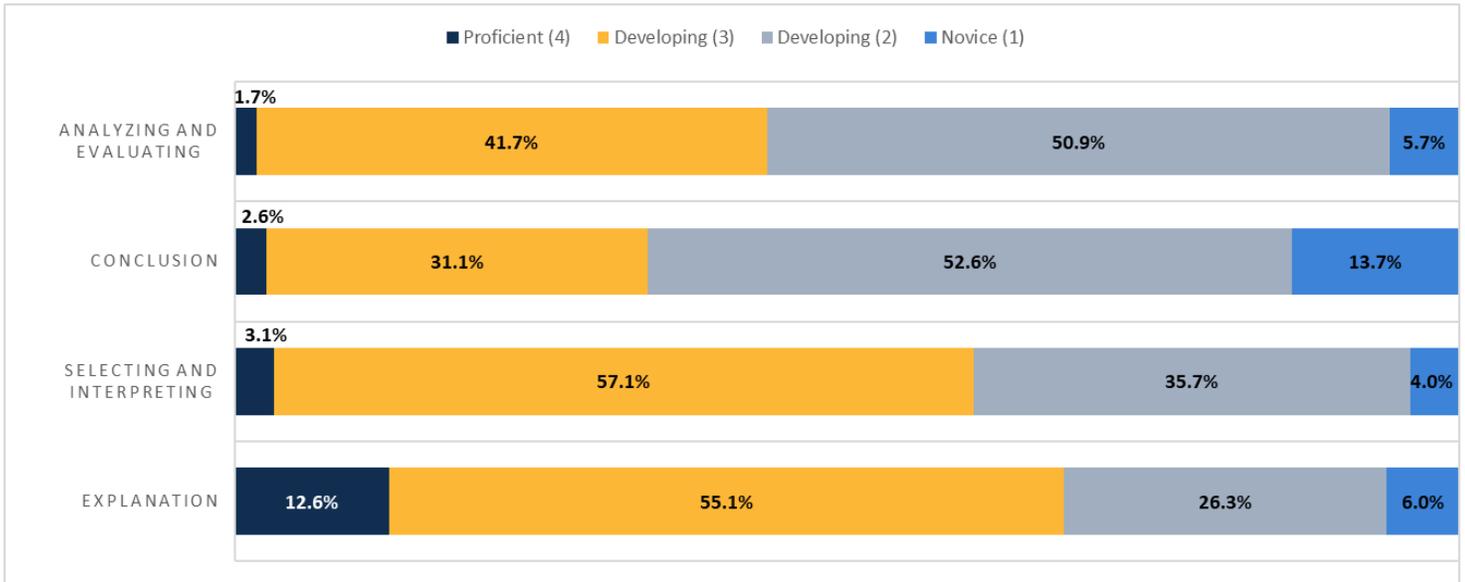
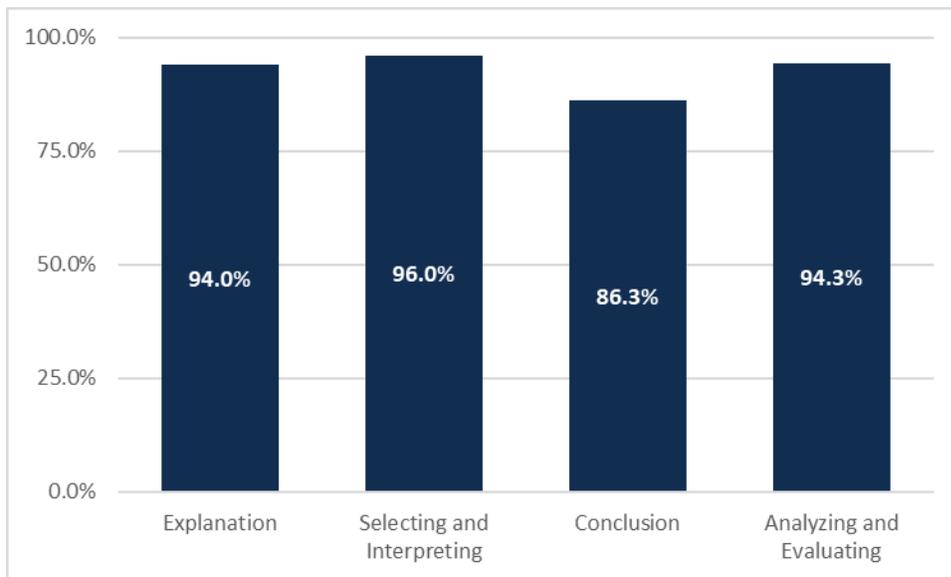


Figure 2. Percentage of Students above Novice (1) Benchmark – Critique and Evaluate Outcome 2024-25



Create, Innovate, and Adapt

Results from assessment of the Create, Innovate, and Adapt outcome are distributed across all levels of competency. Students, on average, were most likely able to demonstrate the ability to *Adapt Ideas* (25.5% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall; 2.3% at the level of Proficient (4)) and had the most difficulty in the *Demonstrate Innovative Thinking* dimension (16.5% above the Developing (2) benchmark overall and 1.3% at the level of Proficient (4)). Figure 3 provides the full range of student performance

on all four dimensions and Figure 4 summarizes the percentage of students above the Novice (1) benchmark.

Figure 3. Results for Create, Innovate, and Adapt Outcome 2024-25

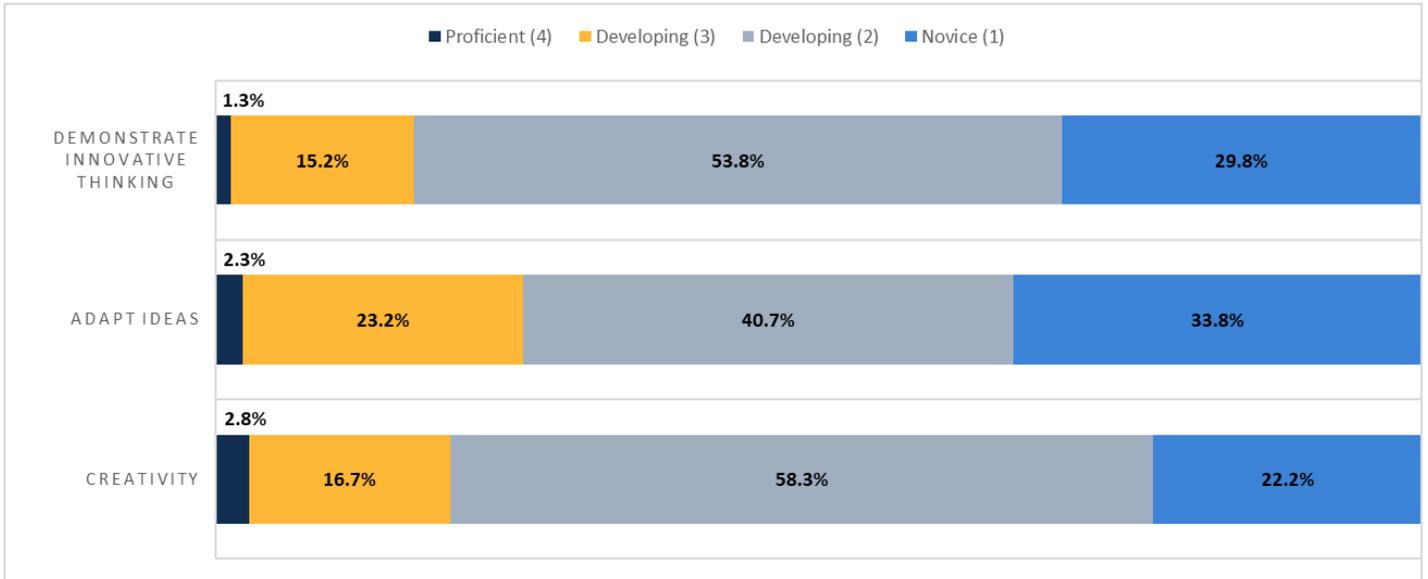
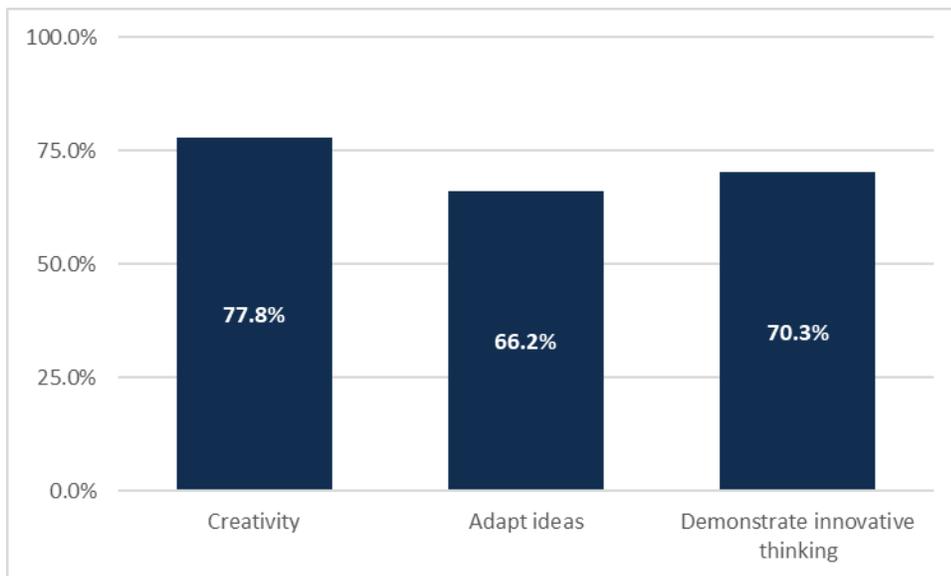


Figure 4. Percentage of Students above Novice (1) Benchmark – Create, Innovate, and Adapt 2024-25



Recommendations

UTC again gained insights and developed recommendations for enhancing programmatic General Education assessment. Interrater reliability was high for both the Critique and Evaluate Rubric scores and the Create, Innovate, and Adapt Rubric scores, although initially, there were some concerns about



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the language within the rubric and how it can be interpreted differently depending on the experiences of the person reading it. Artifacts with less than 75% interrater reliability were removed from the analysis. This included 20 Critique and Evaluate artifacts and 16 Create, Innovate, and Adapt artifacts.

The Director of Accreditation and Assessment in OAA received feedback from faculty assessors regarding their perceived strengths and concerns related to the rubrics. Feedback from faculty will continue to be taken into consideration as the General Education assessment process moves forward, and adjustments can be made to the rubrics to facilitate a more effective assessment process overall.

An additional piece of the process, receiving focus in Fall 2025, is artifact collection. While the current process has improved over time, it is still not ideal for faculty and students. Adjustments have been made to streamline the artifact collection, but efficiency can still be enhanced. Planning meetings with faculty committees, including the General Education Committee, will begin this summer with meetings taking place in the fall. UTC's process of continuous improvement involves obtaining feedback from faculty, staff, and students in order to be sure any concerns can be addressed. It is also necessary to ask for feedback related to strengths of the General Education assessment and the General Education program as a whole.

Additional strategies to support improvement now include raising campus awareness of the results of General Education assessment. Results will be sent to faculty, staff, and students, as well as being available online. Beginning in Fall 2025, workshops and discussions will be held related to assignment creation focusing on dimensions where students had lower scores. Lastly, continuation of developing local experts on the assessment process is vital to continued success. As the General Education program moves forward, OAA team members will remain involved, thereby continuing to build a team of experts who enhance the evolution of the process. The more UTC faculty and staff involved in the process, the more robust and successful the assessment of the General Education program will be. The process of continuous improvement is in place in the General Education program, as it is with all academic programs, to support student success.

General Education Outcome 2: Critique and evaluate information, concepts, theories, and claims.

Framing language: For the purpose of this rubric, principles of sound critical thinking can be understood by describing how to thoroughly analyze, interpret, and assess information, concepts, theories and claims. A complete critique and evaluation will rigorously describe a vital question or problem, assess and present relevant information related to that question or problem, consider underlying assumptions and provide the context of other perspectives, offer a clear conclusion about the question or problem, and examine the implications and consequences of that conclusion.

Glossary (these definitions are informed by definitions from Dictionary.com):

- Information: Information is factual knowledge obtained from ethical investigation, study, or instruction. This definition might be best understood by contrasting it with the terms “disinformation” or “misinformation,” content disseminated to intentionally deceive or misinform its consumers.
- Concepts: Concepts are abstract or general ideas that require no evidence to prove their value or veracity.
- Theories: A theory is an explanation of a particular subject that is supported by significant evidence that has been tested and proved by multiple independent investigators.
- Claims: A claim is an evidence-based assertion open to challenge.
- Opinion: An opinion is a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

	Proficient (4)	Developing (3)	Developing (2)	Novice (1)
Explanation of issues or problems	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, making sure information is relevant for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated by description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries underdetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Selecting and interpreting information to investigate a concept, theory, or claim	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of sources are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation of their expertise. Viewpoints of sources are taken as fact, without question.



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Analyzing and evaluating context, assumptions, or perspectives within the evidence (information, concept, theory, or claim)	Thoroughly analyzes and evaluates evidence, including underlying assumptions and context of material; discusses multiple perspectives (both supportive and competing), and acknowledges and addresses bias in sources.	Attempts analysis and evaluation of evidence, begins to address underlying assumptions and opinions within context of material, and discusses multiple perspectives, usually with some acknowledgement of bias.	Some evaluation of evidence by summarizing material, some discussion of underlying assumptions, opinions, and context of material; there may be discussion of a few perspectives, usually without acknowledging context or bias.	Minimal attempt to analyze or evaluate evidence, accepts opinions without acknowledging context or bias, dismisses other perspectives.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student’s informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints, related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes are oversimplified.

Inspiration drawn from:

- Millersville University Critical Thinking Rubric: <https://www.millersville.edu/gened/files/rubric-criticalthinking-fa15.pdf>
- East Tennessee State University Critical Thinking Rubric: https://oupub.etsu.edu/cbat/economics/documents/niu_critical_thinking-short.pdf
- A Model for the National Assessment of Higher Order Thinking Paper: <https://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/a-model-for-the-national-assessment-of-higher-order-thinking/591>
- AAC&U Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric: <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CriticalThinking.pdf>
- University of Southern Florida Critical Thinking Rubric: <https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/documents/academic-programs/critical-thinking-simple-and-detailed-rubric.pdf>

General Education Outcome 4: Create, Innovate, and Adapt

Framing language: For the purpose of this rubric, Creative Thinking reflects the capacity to combine 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 and management of the unexpected. By creating, innovating, and adapting, students make connections that enable them to make thoughtful choices about their own education.

	Proficient (4)	Developing (3)	Developing (2)	Novice (1)
Creativity	Invent: Seeks out and uses new or untested ideas and approaches results in a final project that expands the expectations of the original assignment.	Incorporate: Brings in new directions and/or approaches to the final product.	Include: Stays within the guidelines of the assignment, but potentially considers new directions and/ or approaches.	Represents: Stays strictly within the guidelines of the assignment; unable to move forward without explicit instructions.
Demonstrate Innovative Thinking	Expand: Extends a novel or unique idea, format, or product into a usable artifact.	Evolve: Creates a novel or unique idea, format, or product.	Experiment: Experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, format, or product.	Assemble: Reformulates a collection of available ideas.
Adapt Ideas	Integrate: Transforms alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas and solutions into an original result.	Synthesize: Explores alternate, divergent, or contradictory ideas and solutions into a coherent whole.	Connect: Recognizes the value of alternate, divergent or contradictory perspectives and connects ideas in novel ways.	Recognize: Acknowledge existing connections and alternate ideas in passing.

Inspiration drawn from:

- AAC&U Creative Thinking Value Rubric: <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CreativeThinking.pdf>
- Rhode Island College's Critical and Creative thinking rubric: <https://w3.ric.edu/faculty/organic/coge/General-Education-latest-Rubrics.pdf>