

FIVE CONTINUA FOR ASSESSING THINKING

CONTINUUM ONE

OBVIOUS

BEYOND THE GIVEN

1

2

3

4

States the obvious, just scratches the surface, doesn't stretch to go beyond the given information or surface story.

Probes beneath the surface, reaches beyond the obvious, stretches for new observations, questions, connections.

CONTINUUM TWO

SIMPLISTIC

ELABORATED

1

2

3

4

Under-described, no detail or nuance. Overly broad, overly simplified, overly generalized.

Rich in detail, evocative, imaginative, nuanced, descriptive

CONTINUUM THREE

ONE-DIMENSIONAL

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL

1

2

3

4

Only explores one layer or dimension. Doesn't see complexity, layers, or multiple viewpoints.

Explores several layers or dimensions Recognizes complexity, recognizes that there are different levels, layers, or perspectives.

CONTINUUM FOUR

RESTRICTED

GENERATIVE

1

2

3

4

Closure-oriented. Doesn't seem to want to explore big ideas or ask hard questions. Resists exploring possibility of bias, resists open-ended inquiry.

Expands or extends thinking in new directions. Broadens understanding, opens up new lines of inquiry. Often reflects curiosity and openness.

CONTINUUM FIVE

TANGENTIAL

ESSENCE -CAPTURING

1

2

3

4

Doesn't capture or recognize important themes, characteristics or elements. Strays from the topic. Hovers over unimportant details or ideas.

Insightful, captures the heart of things. Identifies key themes, characteristics or elements. Sees deep structure. Shows an appreciation for the relative importance of things.