

Rhetoric and Resolution: Translating Institutional and Disciplinary Definitions of Critical Thinking in the Senior Capstone

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Scholarly discussions of the tension between general education and disciplinary specialization tend to focus on lower-level courses aimed at non-majors. However, faculty increasingly teach upper-division courses that incorporate liberal learning principles as well. These courses pose special challenges and opportunities for translating institutional critical thinking language into disciplinary practice. Based on my analysis of ethnographic data from a political science and public administration capstone course, I conclude that faculty in similar courses can help students recognize, compare, translate, and integrate institutional, disciplinary, rhetorical, and individual conceptions of critical thinking.

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