Suggestions and Best Practices for Assessing Student Learning in the Pathways Common Core
December 10, 2013

The CUNY central Office of Academic Affairs, after consultation with the CUE Council, the Assessment Council, the Academic Council (the Chief Academic Officers), the Centers for Teaching and Learning Council, and the Council of Presidents-Academic Affairs Committee, offers suggestions for assessing student learning in the Pathways Common Core. These suggestions are designed to support campus-based efforts, including efforts to meet Middle States requirements (particularly the student learning assessment requirements of Standard 14). However, assessment of student learning in the 30-credit Pathways Common Core should be but one piece of a college's evaluation of student learning, and but one piece of what a college does to inform discussions and decision making at the campus level to improve curriculum and enhance student learning. Further, assessment should be a faculty-driven process on each campus, linked to the campus curricula and the faculty's instructional work. Common Core assessment should, therefore, utilize to the greatest extent possible the existing assessment procedures currently in place at the campus. Finally, assessment should rely on authentic examples of student work wherever possible; assessment results should be made available to the campus community; and assessment results should be used to drive future curricular changes.

Suggestions for Assessing the Pathways Common Core

- In accordance with Middle States guidelines, assessment of general education should be "useful; cost-effective; reasonably-accurate and truthful; carefully planned; organized, systematized and sustained."[1]

- As required by Middle States, all colleges must have a current institutional assessment plan (IAP) that lays out the timeline, methods and procedures that will be used to conduct assessment activities. Included in the IAP should be clear indications as to how assessment will be conducted at all three levels: institution, program, and course, as well as the assessment of general education. The IAP should be developed with campus-wide consultation, consistent with college procedures.

- Direct evidence of student learning should be systematically gathered from a *selection* of courses in each area of the Common Core. It is recommended that each Common Core area be assessed on a regular basis consistent with the campus assessment plan.

- It is recommended that assessment of whether or not students met the Pathways learning outcomes be done using faculty-developed rubrics, such as the AAC&U LEAP value rubrics, or through other assessment techniques.

- The campus may assess whether the CUNY-wide Pathways student learning outcomes have been achieved, or may assess campus-specific student learning outcomes that have been mapped to the Pathways student learning outcomes.

[1] See Middle States Standard 14.

- It is recommended that rubrics or other assessment techniques be used for assessment of each of the three Required Common Core areas (English Composition, Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning, and Life and Physical Sciences) and for each of the five Flexible Core areas (World Cultures and Global Issues, US Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society, and Scientific World). See sample rubrics in Appendix at the end of this document.

- It is recommended that a faculty-dominated assessment body be created at each campus, or an existing group that engages in such efforts should be charged with conducting the Pathways Common Core assessments.

- Campus assessment plans and activities should "close the loop" in some demonstrable way, showing how the results of assessments are used to reform, inform, or revise programs or curricula.

- Assessment procedures and results should be analyzed and shared with all relevant constituents and should be used to improve teaching and learning.

- CUNY Office of Academic Affairs will serve as a clearing house for sharing best practices, models, and resources across campuses and will help to facilitate cross-campus collaborative cross-campus projects as requested.

Best Practices: Models from the Field

Since assessment of general education learning is an essential Middle States requirement, many campuses already have fully-developed plans and models in place for assessing their General Education programs. However, some campuses may be looking for a new model, or may be at a moment when they are just now developing their own approach to general education assessment. For those campuses we offer the suggestions above, and we also offer the following sample program models from three CUNY campuses whose assessment plans have been well-received by Middle States.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice

PHILOSOPHY

Criteria for assessment should be built into the general education program. Clusters of knowledge and abilities should be assessed regularly and systematically, considering multiple streams of evidence for student learning. Assessment should monitor not only capstone achievement, but formative progress that traces the value added of a John Jay undergraduate education.

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

The General Education Assessment Committee coordinates the assessment of the general education program. Faculty representing each area of knowledge in the common structure and college option will guide the development of assessment criteria, area-specific rubrics, signature assignment guidelines, and scoring of student performance across disciplines, courses, and academic level (freshman year to capstone experience). For the initial testing of rubrics, faculty in each course in the knowledge area will apply the relevant rubric to student work and provide the data to the general education assessment committee. They will also provide a random sample of assignments for the committee to score in order to establish the reliability of the scoring process. Institutional measures, such as surveys of student experience (e.g., NSSE, Graduating Student Survey, Evaluation of the Major Survey) and Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), will provide additional indicators of learning. A rotating schedule across the common structure and college option will guide the sampling of student work.

SCHEDULE

Learning outcomes studies will follow a 5-year assessment cycle in two phases. The schedule supports particular emphasis to the frequent assessment of learning outcomes in the Required Core (English, Mathematic Reasoning, Sciences) and the Flexible Core common competencies (Gather Information, Evaluate Evidence, Produce Well-reasoned Arguments). Phase I, the pilot phase, will focus on the development of rubrics, pilot studies, and report of outcomes on the common structure and college option. Phase II will implement a rotating schedule across areas of knowledge and competencies. Assessment reports will integrate the outcomes on direct and indirect measures according to the schedule.

III. Assessment Schedule Summary

Phase I (Pilot)

	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015
Direct Measures					
Required Core		Rubric (Eng ,Math, Sci)	Pilot (Eng, Math, Sci)	Report (Eng ,Math, Sci)	Pilot (Eng, Math, Sci)
Flexible Core	Rubrics Common Goals Rubric (World Cultrs, US Exp)	Pilot Common Goals Pilot (World Cultrs, US Exp)	Report Common Goals Report (World Cultrs, US Exp) Rubric (Creat Exp, Ind & Soc)	Pilot Common Goals Pilot (Creat Exp, Ind & Soc)	Report Common Goals Rubric (Scientific World) Report (Creat Exp, Ind & Soc)
College Option	Rubric Justice 100	Pilot Justice 100 Rubric Justice 300 Rubric Communications	Report Justice 100	Pilot Justice 300 Pilot Communications	Rubric Learn from Past Report Justice 300 Report Communications
Capstone Experience					Study
CLA	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors Report
Indirect Measures					
Course Grades			Fall 2013 Report		Fall 2014 Report
Noel-Levitz	Survey	Report			Survey
Eval of Major	Report				
Grad Stud Survey	Survey	Report	Survey	Report	Survey
Eval Assignments				Report	
NSSE					Survey

III. Assessment Schedule Summary (cont.)

	Phase I (Pilot)	Phase II (Rotation)			
	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017
Direct Measures Required Core	Report (Eng, Math, Sci)	Study (Math)	Report (Math)	Study (Sciences)	Report (Sciences)
Flexible Core	Pilot Common Goals Pilot (Scientific World)	Report Common Goals Report (Scientific World)	Study Common Goals Study (WC,US Exp, I&S)	Report Common Goals Report (WC,US Exp, I&S)	Study Common Goals Study (Creat Exp,Sci Wrld)
College Option	Pilot Learn from Past	Report Learn from Past Study Justice 100 Study Justice 300	Report Justice 100 Report Justice 300		
Capstone Experience	Report			Study	Report
CLA	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen	Seniors	Freshmen Report
Indirect Measures					
Course Grades		Fall 2015 Report		Fall 2016 Report	
Noel-Levitz	Report			Survey	Report
Eval of the Major	Survey	Report			
Grad Stud Survey	Report	Survey	Report	Survey	Report
Eval of Assignments	Report				Report
NSSE	Report				

PROGRAM REVIEW

A comprehensive general education program self-study will follow the 5-year assessment cycle.

LaGuardia Community College

LaGuardia uses outcomes assessment to advance student, faculty, and institutional learning. Designed to move beyond assessment for accountability, LaGuardia's process employs ePortfolios to collect early and later student work related to our General Education Core Competencies. Rating this work against faculty-generated rubrics helps faculty and staff college wide assess longitudinal student learning and implement evidence-based changes in curriculum and pedagogy.

LaGuardia employs an across-the-curriculum approach to General Education, based on a set of four Core Competencies woven into course work in all majors: Critical Literacy (which links reading, writing, and critical thinking), Quantitative Reasoning, Oral Communication, and Research and Information Literacy. These competencies, approved by governance in 2001, match up well with the primary SLOs required for all courses in the Pathways Common Core.
Each semester, students use their ePortfolios to complete course-based assignments (designed by faculty to meet Core Competencies) and deposit them into an online system. LaGuardia collects an average of 15,000 artifacts each year. Random samples are scored by interdisciplinary faculty teams, using carefully normed, rubric-based values. These General Education Benchmark Readings take place each year in January; the findings, shared with the campus as a whole, illuminate where we are achieving our goals and where we fall short.

Results from our assessment readings inform not only college-wide conversation and planning, but also our Periodic Program Reviews. As mandated by CUNY, programs engage in self- review every five years. LaGuardia's programs use the work of students from their programs, read against rubrics, to assess a combination of Gen Ed and programmatic competencies. With the help of LaGuardia's faculty-led Assessment Leadership Team, each program creates a curriculum map, showing how and where it will gather student work for each competency

2010-2011 Core Competency Grid
Occupational Therapy Assistant AS

	Baseline							
		SCO 101	SCO 110	SCO 175	SCO 204	SCO 205	SCO214	SCO 215

Critical Literacy (Writing Intensive)	ENG099/ ENG101/ ESL	Activity Analysis			Case Study			
Quantitative Reasoning	MAT096			Case Study			Activity Budget	
Oral Communication	CEP121 or Select a course	Cultural Presentation						Best Practical Scills
Research and Information Literacy	ENG101		Annotated Bibliogra			Research Paper		
Technological Literacy			ePortfolio					ePortfolio

Grounding assessment in classroom-generated artifacts of student learning engages LaGuardia faculty in a process of inquiry and reflection, helping them identify the concrete changes in pedagogy and curricula that can actually improve student learning. Building on PPR recommendations and action plans, programs can apply for Center for Teaching & Learning Mini-Grants to help them implement changes and assess the results. Supported by the College's Strategic Plan, this process helps faculty "Close the Loop" and makes a measureable difference for students. For example:

- In its 2010-11 PPR, the Physical Therapist Assistant program reviewed work from students' portfolios and found low scores on both the Critical Literacy Core Competency and a programmatic competency related to analyzing health care literature. The PTA faculty reviewed assignments from the sequence of courses in their major to discover where students could develop these skills and knowledge sets. They identified several key courses to redesign and developed a set of staged writing assignments that built both research and writing skills. Faculty integrated these articulated assignments into courses at several points in the program, culminating in an evidence-based research paper in the Capstone course. In a follow-up evaluation of student papers, 90% received the highest possible score on both critical literacy and literature-based research.

- When Business Administration and the Business Management programs assessed student work around the Oral Communication Core Competency in 2010, they found students did not perform well. Using a CTL Mini-Grant, they partnered with Communication Studies faculty to revise the *Introduction to Business* course to address oral communication. Students gave an initial oral presentation that was taped and deposited into the ePortfolio. Then, a faculty member from Communications Studies did a one-hour intervention about how to conduct more effective presentations. Students reviewed their presentations and redid them, taping them a second time for a pre/post comparison. 60% of students showed improvement on oral communication, and the mean score improved from 3.05 to 3.675. This intervention is mandated in all *Introduction to Business* courses, and the program plans to extend it to other courses as well, making it a more sustained and scaffolded effort.

LaGuardia's faculty-led outcomes assessment structure is now well-established. After a Spring 2012 site visit, a Middle States team commended LaGuardia's ePortfolio initiative, its

assessment strategy, and its creation of a wide-spread "culture of assessment." But there is still work to be done. The College is now considering ways to improve norming and sampling procedures; take fuller advantage of the capacities of ePortfolio; and assess Integrative Learning and other higher order thinking competencies. Aspiring to be a "learning college," LaGuardia continues to learn and rethink in order to deepen our practice. [See *Arcario et. al., "Closing the Loop: How We Better Serve Our Students through a Comprehensive Assessment Process,"* Journal of Metropolitan Studies, *Vol. 24 #2, Fall 2013.]*

City College

The City College Gen Ed Assessment Plan uses multiple measures at various points in time to assess student learning outcomes. Multiple measures include:

DIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

1. Embedded Assessment Approaches

Embedded approaches avoid disrupting the academic environment by collecting random samples of student work which are then independently assessed using rubrics. *Rubrics to assess proficiencies* have been locally developed (writing and information literacy rubrics) or adopted/annotated from the AACU VALUE rubrics (critical thinking and quantitative reasoning). Random samples of student work (research papers or other projects) from select, high enrollment General Education courses are collected every semester and scored by a team or readers comprised of faculty teaching those courses. The scores are reported as averages by individual rubric categories and include qualitative analysis of the skills assessed, along with specific recommendations for improvement.

2. Standardized Testing

The Collegiate learning Assessment (CLA) test has been adopted by CUNY and implemented in Fall 12. The CLA is administered to samples of 200 students at two levels: students who are just beginning their undergraduate studies (0 credits) and to students who are nearing the end of their undergraduate career (120 credits). The design of the CLA tasks requires students to demonstrate the higher-order critical thinking and analysis skills in the VALUE rubrics. The CLA also employs scoring rubrics that are similar in range and scaling to those of the VALUE rubrics.

3. Syllabi analysis

Syllabi of all Freshman Inquiry Writing Seminars (FIQWS), Freshman Quantitative Analysis (FQUAN) and other Gen Ed courses are collected and reviewed every semester to ensure their adherence to the program goals. They are evaluated with respect to the presence/quality of the following information: course goals, course learning outcomes, general education program learning outcomes, alignment of assignments with the learning outcomes, ways to demonstrate

learning/grade breakdown, types of writing assignments (for W courses), guidance included for the writing assignments, academic integrity statement, and practical course information.

4. Midterm progress reports

The goal of the midterm progress reports and intervention project is (a) to effectively identify first year students who are not meeting minimum academic requirements and provide appropriate assistance to them and (b) to analyze summative data to identify key areas of weakness and develop effective intervention strategies for them. For effective data collection and analysis, "Midterm software" was developed by the City College IT department. Select Freshmen classes participate in the project: FIQWS, FQUAN, and PSY 102. Each student is evaluated for the following: class participation, written assignments and homework submission, performance on exams/quizzes, time management & attendance, need for tutoring, need for ESL support, need to improve attendance, need to meet with an advisor (for students in danger of failing), need to attend a workshop on college skills, and grade to date. The following interventions are provided: tutoring (writing, math, and psychology), ESL support, college skills workshops, and advising.

The analysis of the midterm forms and interventions is used to improve services and information dissemination to the students, including modifications of the new student orientation, new student seminars, additional tutoring and workshops offerings.

INDIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

City College currently administers several instruments that are used in helping to assess the General Education program.

1. Faculty surveys

Faculty surveys are conducted in FIQWS to assess the effectiveness of the FIQWS program in student learning and transition to college life. In addition to being the initial course that introduces writing, critical thinking and information literacy skills, FIQWS also functions as a learning community, first-year experience, and college-readiness skills course. Faculty opinions about the course effectiveness in each of these areas are analyzed and used for further improvements of the program. In addition, FIQWS and writing intensive perspective courses utilize WAC surveys to inform the program of the effectiveness of writing pedagogy. Data from the surveys is used for improvements in course design, in particularly in relation to faculty resources, faculty development, co-teacher collaboration, and midterm reviews.

2. Surveys

End of semester Course and Teacher surveys are used to assess the effectiveness of individual sections and instructors. In addition to evaluating the instructor's performance, students reflect on their achievement of learning outcomes in the specific course. Additional surveys have been conducted in FIQWS to assess students' opinions about the effectiveness of the FIQWS program in relation to learning, community-building and development of college-readiness skills.

3. Student focus groups

Focus groups of about 20 students will be convened every other year to investigate student perceptions about the general education curriculum. The investigation will focus on course and curriculum quality, students' understanding of program's goals, and course availability.

APPENDIX: Sample AAC&U VALUE Rubrics for the three Common Core Learning Outcomes

The Association of College and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States. These faculty teams used a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. Below are three sample rubrics direct from the AAC&U that a number of the CUNY colleges are using to assess core student learning outcomes (SLO) in writing, critical thinking, and information literacy, the three SLOs that are required of each course in the 30-credit Common Core. In many cases, the campuses have tailored the rubric to meet the needs of their specific course or program. The rubrics below are presented in their original form (please see www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/).

SLO 1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

INFORMATION LITERACY VALUE RUBRIC

DEFINITION

The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. - *Adopted from the National Forum on Information Literacy*

FRAMING LANGUAGE

This rubric is recommended for use evaluating a collection of work, rather than a single work sample in order to fully gauge students' information skills. Ideally, a collection of work would contain a wide variety of different types of work and might include: research papers, editorials, speeches, grant proposals, marketing or business plans, PowerPoint presentations, posters, literature reviews, position papers, and argument critiques to name a few. In addition, a

description of the assignments with the instructions that initiated the student work would be vital in providing the complete context for the work. Although a student's final work must stand on its own, evidence of a student's research and information gathering processes, such as a research journal/ diary, could provide further demonstration of a student's information proficiency and for some criteria on this rubric would be required.

INFORMATION LITERACY VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Definition

The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. - The National Forum on Information Literacy

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	2	Benchmark 1
Determine the Extent of Information Needed	Effectively defines the scope of the research question or thesis. Effectively determines key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected directly relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis completely. Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected relate to concepts or answer research question.	Defines the scope of the research question or thesis incompletely (parts are missing, remains too broad or too narrow, etc.). Can determine key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected partially relate to concepts or answer research question.	Has difficulty defining the scope of the research question or thesis. Has difficulty determining key concepts. Types of information (sources) selected do not relate to concepts or answer research question.
Access the Needed Information	Accesses information using effective, well-designed search strategies and most appropriate information sources.	Accesses information using variety of search strategies and some relevant information sources. Demonstrates ability to refine search.	Accesses information using simple search strategies, retrieves information from limited and similar sources.	Accesses information randomly, retrieves information that lacks relevance and quality.
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved.	Communicates information from sources. The information is fragmented and/ or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.), so the intended purpose is not achieved.
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	Students use correctly all of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrate a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/ or proprietary information.	Students use correctly three of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/ or proprietary information.	Students use correctly two of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/ or proprietary information.	Students use correctly one of the following information use strategies (use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; using information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution) and demonstrates a full understanding of the ethical and legal restrictions on the use of published, confidential, and/ or proprietary information.

SLO 2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to be transdisciplinary, reflecting the recognition that success in all disciplines requires habits of inquiry and analysis that share common attributes. Further, research suggests that successful critical thinkers from all disciplines increasingly need to be able to apply those habits in various and changing situations encountered in all walks of life.

This rubric is designed for use with many different types of assignments and the suggestions here are not an exhaustive list of possibilities. Critical thinking can be demonstrated in assignments that require students to complete analyses of text, data, or issues. Assignments that cut across presentation mode might be especially useful in some fields. If insight into the process components of critical thinking (e.g., how information sources were evaluated regardless of whether they were included in the product) is important, assignments focused on student reflection might be especially illuminating.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Ambiguity: Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- Assumptions: Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are " taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from www.dictionary.reference.com/ browse/ assumptions)
- Context: The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.
- Literal meaning: Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, "she was green with envy" would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- Metaphor: Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, "she was green with envy" is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.

CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Evidence *Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion*	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts 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 experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.	Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) 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 (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

SLO 3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support c*onclusions*.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

DEFINITION

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

FRAMING LANGUAGE

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. The clearest finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is "How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?" In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers' fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer's growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing.

Evaluators using this rubric must have information about the assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers' work. Also recommended is including reflective work samples of collections of work that address such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as s/ he compiled the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing -- in the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and citational systems used in the writing? This will enable evaluators to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments and take it into consideration as they evaluate.

The first section of this rubric addresses the context and purpose for writing. A work sample or collections of work can convey the context and purpose for the writing tasks it showcases by including the writing assignments associated with work samples. But writers may also convey the context and purpose for their writing within the texts. It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for students about how they should represent their writing contexts and purposes.

GLOSSARY

- Content Development: The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- Context of and purpose for writing: The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience.

Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.

- Disciplinary conventions: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- Evidence: Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in text. Genre conventions: Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/ or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.

- Sources: Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Context of and Purpose for Writing *Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).*	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions *Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).*	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Resources

Additional AAC&U LEAP Rubrics

Sample Campus Rubrics for each Pathways SLO

Articles & Reports

Arcario et. al., "Closing the Loop: How We Better Serve Our Students through a Comprehensive Assessment Process," *Journal of Metropolitan Studies*, Vol. 24 #2, Fall 2013.

NOVA: Closing the Loop—Using Result to Improve Student Learning at Northern Virginia Community College *http://www.nvcc.edu/about-nova/directories--offices/administrative-offices/assessment/resources/sample.html*

Common Core Assessment Team (CCAT)

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Annita Alting, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, City College (Chair, Assessment Council)
Faculty--2 community college and 2 senior college (call for nominations/recommendations)