Item Name: General Education Quality Review Series

- Action Item
- Committee Recommendation to Full Board
- First Read of Proposed Policy Change
- Information or Discussion Item

**Issue:** The board office asks that the committee engage in a strategic discussion with University Administrators in the second of a five-part review series on General Education Quality Assurance at the three Arizona state universities. Following the discussion, the board office asks that the committee determine next steps/course of action.

**Enterprise or University Strategic Plan**

- Empower Student Success and Learning
- Advance Educational Attainment within Arizona
- Create New Knowledge
- Impact Arizona
- Compliance
- Real property purchase/sale/lease
- Other:

**Background/History of Previous Board Action**
The board and university administrators have engaged in past discussions about general education quality at the three public Arizona state universities with the resulting review series beginning September of 2017.

**Discussion**
The board will discuss Part 2 of the General Education Quality Review series, which will highlight the general education programs' relationship to the universities' purpose and brand. Additionally, there will be some discussion about how universities communicate the value of general education to students and the employer and faculty perceptions of general education. Finally, universities will describe their assessment practices as it concerns general education.

**Requested Action**
The board office asks that the committee engage in a strategic discussion with University Administrators in the first of a five-part review series on General Education Quality Assurance at the three Arizona state universities. Following the discussion, the board office asks that the committee determine next steps/course of action.

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GENERAL EDUCATION QUALITY REVIEW SERIES
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
Unit Two: Assessment

In Unit One, background information was provided outlining the criteria and outcomes of general education courses at each of Arizona’s public universities. Additionally, the processes by which a course is approved for general education was described. In this, the second of the five-part series, assessment of the general education courses and programs will be described.

To provide background information as a tool to promote discussion between the board and university administrators, the following question is answered:

**QUESTION: HOW IS STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSED IN GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES AND PROGRAMS, AND WHAT DO UNIVERSITIES DO WITH THE RESULTS?**

All three public Arizona universities believe firmly that learning cannot be attributed independently to general education or a major, as the competencies/skills overlap. Furthermore, courses often serve multiple purposes as they can satisfy general education and degree program requirements. Thus, the assessment of general education learning outcomes cannot be separated from degree program-level assessment.

Academic programs use a variety of assessment approaches to measure student learning outcomes. University faculty determine what they want students to know and be able to do when they graduate. They develop the curriculum, design courses for the curriculum, map the learning outcomes onto program courses, teach the courses, and assess student learning in each course. These approaches will be described along with examples from each university.

**Pre- and Post-Tests**

**Arizona State University: Pre- and Post-Tests in General Education**

At ASU, pre-and post-test assessments are underway at both course and degree program levels. At the course level, pre- and post-tests are used in general education biology and chemistry. The initial analysis concerned learning improvement in two formats, the traditional lecture class and, by comparison, a hybrid classroom involving adaptive learning blended with interactive pedagogical practices. The learning growth was substantially better in the latter format in both classes. In biology, for instance, learning improved from ~75% to 90% in core concepts. Another example of course level use of pre-and post-tests is in college algebra, where the assessments
are accomplished completely within the courseware. When the class starts, all students do an assessment exercise that places them at their initial level. There are roughly 390 Learning Objectives in the course, and in the initial assessment, students range from no mastery of any Learning Objectives to considerable knowledge of core concepts. Once the student starts the exercises, the courseware constantly assesses proficiency in each Learning Objective. Students might show proficiency such that they jump ahead Learning Objectives but if a student demonstrates low proficiency, the system detects areas of need and begins with appropriate instructional materials. And with this courseware, a student can be redirected to a prior topic because the system re-tests constantly. When completed, students are expected to have achieved 90% proficiency in all 390 Learning Objectives in college algebra. The assessment of their learning growth is straightforward in this type of system, as the initial starting point is associated with a particular Learning Objective. This use of pre- and post-testing has proven successful in the general education math courses, with pass rates increasing from ~65% to 85% in some math courses and continued improvement in another.

At the enterprise level, ASU is designing the digital portfolio as a way of showcasing and assessing the attributes of the ASU experience. The university started using digital portfolios in 2015, and to date, 76,000 portfolios have been created by 58,000 unique users. Over 3,000 classes are incorporating digital portfolios in the instructional materials, and the portfolios are being used by 48 schools and programs as part of the assessment practice.

The digital portfolios provide an opportunity to conduct pre-, interval-, and post-test assessments in longitudinal studies designed for continuous improvement. In this design, one pre-test occurs in the entry English composition course. Students are directed through the writing program learning outcomes – critical thinking, reading and composing, rhetorical knowledge, processes, and knowledge of conventions – and the students create a first rough draft, revision plan, second draft, and final paper. Throughout the process, students develop Habits of Mind:

- Curiosity – the desire to know more about the world.
- Openness – the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world.
- Engagement – a sense of investment and involvement in learning.
- Creativity – the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas.
- Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.
- Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one’s actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others.
- Flexibility – the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.
- Metacognition – the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.
The first draft is the basis of the pre-test. The first paper allows the university to assess the student’s proficiency baseline, both collectively and individually, whether in the two-semester composition sequence, one-semester advanced course, or three-course stretch program. The design of the assessment process will include interval testing, which can then be used in predictive analytics. For example, an assessment of the portfolio at the end of the freshman year may offer predictive information on persistence to the second year. The next likely interval for an assessment of the student’s digital portfolio is in the first course that introduces the student to research in the academic major. In these gateway courses, the relationship between general education and disciplinary knowledge is critical. Depth of understanding in math, science, creative processes, and critical reading and writing vary based on the area of study. Finally, the post-test assessment is ideally situated at the end of a capstone experience, whether a seminar, internship, or applied learning experience, and integrates general education, disciplinary knowledge, and career readiness. Assessment will be conducted by comparing individual student progress within their portfolio from beginning to end, longitudinally, so that the students being assessed as seniors are the same ones assessed as freshmen as the benchmark. For inclusion in the final assessment, the academic deans are working with the university provost on an ASU portfolio that allows each student at the university a tool to demonstrate what it means to be a master learner and change agent who transforms knowledge into solutions, acts with integrity, collaborates with diverse groups, and, like the university itself, focuses on issues of social significance.

**Embedded Assignments**

**University of Arizona**

Another approach that is used is to embed specific assignments within core courses to assess learning outcomes. For this approach, it is important for the faculty to have mapped essential concepts and competencies onto the core courses of the curriculum. In this case, a random sample of the selected assignments is collected and an evaluation team uses a rubric to assess the level of learning. The same concepts and competencies can be assessed in later courses that are part of the program. In order to improve learning outcomes from the program it is critical to know where those concepts and competencies are taught in the curriculum. Then, the faculty can make improvements in the courses where those concepts and competencies are taught.

The University of Arizona has used rubrics to assess student learning outcomes in courses, in programs, and for institution-wide assessments. Recently, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) developed and tested through the Multiple State Collaborative a set of VALUE rubrics. These are used to assess specific competencies, such as writing, critical thinking, etc., across a program or university.

Institution-wide assessments were completed at UA to assess critical thinking and writing. In both cases, written assignments were collected from a freshman class (freshmen composition or general education) and from seniors in a large general education class. The critical thinking assignment was identical for both the freshmen and the seniors; the writing assessment made
use of assignments in general education courses, but the freshmen and seniors had different written assignments.

The findings from the critical thinking assessment on 280 samples indicated that 80% of the seniors scored satisfactory or better, while only 57% of the freshmen scored satisfactory or better. The interrater reliability was ~90%.

In a closing discussion with the 10 readers, many offered general statements about the freshmen papers as distinguished from the senior papers.

**Freshmen papers tended to:**
- Summarize more
- Rely on simple paragraph structures (point, illustrate, explain)
- Not grasp globalization aspect of the article
- Focus on personal lives to make a point
- Avoid the “big picture”
- Argue in polemics
- Indulge in broad stereotypes
- Not appreciate nuance
- Rely more on the authority of the author to make their own points

**Senior papers, tended to:**
- Rely on background knowledge (content) to pull into their responses
- Individualize voices and see nuanced ways to make a point
- Understood the point of the article and the assignment
- Had problem-solving capabilities
- Saw consequences, cause-effect in reasoning
- Saw grey areas, not just black and white, digital thinking about topics
- Recognized flaws in the article whereas in freshmen made inferences from observations that were not substantiated
- Demonstrated meta-cognitive skills (able to know how and why they know what they know)

In an assessment of writing skills, a modification of the VALUE rubric for written assessments was employed and compared written samples from freshmen and senior assignments in general education courses. The areas scored were: context of and purpose of writing, content development, genre and disciplinary conventions, and sources and evidence.

In this assessment, the scores on the rubrics were similar for both freshmen and seniors. This finding led to changes in the requirements for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 general education courses. Workshops were offered to all general education professors. These workshops included discussion on how to design high quality written assignments and how to provide meaningful and useful feedback to students. The general education requirements were changed to require
that students must write the equivalent of 10 pages, receive feedback on the assignment, and submit a revision for a grade. Revision is an important element for improving student writing. These policy changes were accepted by the Faculty Senate and are now required. This spring we reviewed the syllabi of all general education courses for compliance with this new requirement. Courses not in compliance may be put on probation and could lose the general education designation.

Beginning this fall, we will carry out a follow-up study using the same VALUE rubric for written communication. We will collect written samples from a variety of general education courses and use analytics to compare scores along different student demographics and populations. This will enable us to assess whether the implemented changes are making a difference in student writing.

**Capstone Courses**  
**Northern Arizona University**

Additionally, student learning outcomes (content and concepts) can be assessed in one or more assignments in a capstone course. In undergraduate or graduate programs with final products, papers/theses/dissertations or presentations/defense, essential concepts and competencies are assessed with a rubric. The faculty need to agree on what to assess and how it will be assessed, and the range of performance desired on a given rubric.

NAU has launched an extensive embedded assessment initiative that targets performance in Capstone courses using high-impact assignments in which both students and instructors have a motivated stake. This initiative has been guided by the development of rubrics modeled on the AAC&U VALUE rubrics which are the result of extensive collaboration and consultation with experts in general education and assessment.

The assessment rubric pilot is just underway. Rubrics are initially being developed for three high-impact essential skills, ones recognized by the workforce has important: critical thinking, effective writing, and effective oral communication (see Appendix 2 for an example of the “effective writing” rubric).

Departments will participate in using these rubrics to assess student learning in their capstones each semester. Eventually, this assessment will be staged for other elements in the general education program, as well, including the Junior-Level Writing courses, and lower-division general education courses. Departments will compile this information as part of their annual assessment reports and will provide a report to be reviewed by the general education committee during the seven-year program review cycle or the department’s accreditation cycle. Part of this report will also include department efforts to maintain course alignment with the goals of the general education program.

By using this approach, NAU ensures:
• Results are a valid measure of the essential skills of the general education program, since the common rubric will be constructed by faculty on the general education committee to align with the general education program standards and approved definitions of the essential skills;
• Students are more likely to express their best effort because the assignments are embedded in culminating project requirements, graded, and directly related to their learning within the capstone course.

In order to achieve this goal, the general education committee developed a strategy to ensure that all existing capstone courses were brought in alignment with program and degree program goals, as the Capstone is a culminating experience in both the major and the general education program. All academic units were required to submit their capstone courses using the syllabus template approved by NAU’s Faculty Senate in January 2016; this syllabus template models intentional course design, ensuring that courses are aligned with program requirements (degree programs and the general education program, for example) and that learning outcomes and assessments are in similar alignment. This quality assurance measure lays the groundwork for embedded course assessment that will serve, in the aggregate (across courses and over time) as an assessment measure of the program.

For example, ENG 445C Seminar serves as a culminating experience both of the BA in English and of the general education program. Particular emphasis is placed on the necessary historical and cultural context required for a thorough understanding of literature under discussion. Students consider each text in its proper historical, political, and aesthetic context and explore themes of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, the politics of representation, and other issues. On the completion of this course, students are able to discuss and analyze the ideas, images, themes, motifs, techniques, and issues present in this body of literature. This capstone seminar relies on student’s active engagement, dedication, and the application of skills acquired throughout their education.

ENG 445C emphasizes material appropriate to the Cultural Understanding distribution category as defined by the general education program. In this respect, English 445C enhances students’ understanding of different cultures of the world through the study of literature and related artistic creations. By exposing students to culturally relevant analytic frameworks, the course facilitates awareness of how cultures vary and shape human experience. Furthermore, ENG 445C emphasizes the general education essential skills of creative or aesthetic thinking and effective writing. These skills as well as learning outcomes related to the general education Cultural Understanding distribution block will be assessed by the culminating course assignment, a researched essay.

For the final 12-13 page research essay, students will are expected to develop a sustained critical argument in which they take a particular stance on a problem, theme or critical question addressed in one or more of the texts discussed in class, or in the larger field of U.S. multi-ethnic literature. Students are expected to incorporate outside sources in support of their arguments and, in the case of the novels or autobiographies, provide ample evidence from the
Additional benefits will ensue as NAU expands the use of the rubrics from First Year Seminars through Capstone courses. Most importantly, using the same rubrics over time will guide students’ learning of these important skills. Notice that the rubric contains description of performance that can be used for feedback and teaching. Over time these rubrics help students build up a concept of what it means to perform a skill well (for example, effective problem solving requires clear reasoning that I can explain and support). According to Brookhart (2013), these rubrics can be used with many different assignments and focus students on the knowledge and skills they are learning rather than the particular task they are completing. Essay writing, problem solving, experimental design, and the analysis of political systems are each important skills in their respective disciplines. If the rubrics are the same each time a student does the same kind of work, the student will learn general qualities of good essay writing, problem solving, and so on. If the rubrics are different each time the student does the same kind of work, the student will not have an opportunity to see past the specific essay or problem. The general approach encourages students to think about building up general knowledge and skills rather than thinking about school learning in terms of getting individual assignments done.

The previously mentioned assessment approaches are called embedded assessments because they directly relate to the course learning outcomes and requirements, thus students are more likely to be motivated to invest effort. Many institutions, including the three AZ universities, have rejected non-embedded, standardized assessment tests such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Students are less motivated to do their best work on these non-embedded assessments because they are not directly related to specific learning outcomes. In addition, findings from these assessments do not produce information that faculty and programs can use for continual improvement efforts since they are disconnected from specific curricula, including general education.

Aligned with national trends, ASU, NAU, and the UA have independently developed and continue to refine assessment strategies that rely on authentic, direct, and embedded assessments to produce what the National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA, 2016) defines as “actionable evidence,” insights that are meaningful to faculty about students’ strengths and areas of needed improvement. The summary of examples of common assessment approaches is outlined below.
General Education Assessment Approaches

Pre-and Post-test offered in a sequence of core courses

- Typically administered at the beginning and end of one class
- Administered again at the beginning and end of subsequent course

Embedded Assignments

- Mapped concepts and competencies onto the course curriculum
- Random sample of selected assignments to evaluate the level of learning and then the same sample student is assessed again in later courses to see where improvements/advances have occurred
- Results help with continuous improvement

Capstone Courses

- Assessment of one or more assignments in a capstone course
- Final papers or theses
- Faculty designed rubric used

While there are differences across the institutions, each uses rubrics - a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment. For example, versions of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubric are being used to assess student learning on assignments that are embedded in general education courses. “VALUE rubrics provide needed tools to assess students’ own authentic work, produced across students’ diverse learning pathways, fields of study and institutions, to determine whether and how well students are meeting graduation level achievement in learning outcomes that both employers and faculty consider essential.” (AAC&U  https://www.aacu.org/value).
Nationally, VALUE rubrics are widely recognized as a valid assessment strategy. George Pernsteiner, former President of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, commends the use of the rubrics: “Systematic assessment of authentic student work to determine whether students meet the expectations of colleges, employers, and of the community in which they live provides a powerful answer to those questions [about delivering on the promise of education]. If ever college meant anything, it was the faculty who made it so. That means the rigorous and valid assessments of what students can demonstrate they know is based on faculty judgment of a student’s own work . . . The question of what students know is being answered with this new paradigm of assessment using multiple measures of student learning – indirect, direct, and embedded – without a single mandated test” (2016).

ASU, NAU, and the UA assess general education outcomes using direct, authentic assessment strategies that capitalize on the expertise of faculty contributing to general education. Assessment findings provide meaningful information to (1) students about their learning in general education, (2) faculty about student learning for continual improvement efforts, and (3) university administrators and ABOR about student learning.

**Conclusion**

In this unit, university leaders described how quality is assured through measures and assessments. Significant gains in the acquisition of new knowledge; increased diversity of faculty and students; and enterprise goals that seek to expand student access to college have all contributed to a growing general education curriculum where many new courses have been developed. Enterprise goals and university growth have led to inquiries about how quality is assured and improved in the 21st century public higher education space.

Ideally, college experiences should stretch students to develop intellectually and personally in ways that make them informed decision-makers and citizens, and this is not new in the public higher education environment. There is no question of the value of traditional general education courses in philosophy, history, and western canon, and yet modern intellectual developments, increasing diversity of faculty and students along with response to market demands has resulted in an expansion of topics covered in the general education curriculum. Traditional courses are readily available for students to choose in addition to cutting edge subject matter that compels students to challenge themselves in the contexts of new knowledge gained from the foundations of tradition and cutting edge research in an increasingly diverse faculty and student marketplace.

To that end, while course content may be more diverse, the outcomes remain very similar to those of decades past. Those outcomes also align well with employers’ expectations. The

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business processes outlining the establishment of general education courses and the assessment of those courses and programs highlight the degree to which a course moves through a comprehensive and painstaking approval process to ensure that these courses meet the traditional outcomes that still hold in higher education.

Moreover, the program outcomes align well with the expectations of employers in terms of the knowledge and skills they desire in college graduates. Employers desire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and graduates and employees who are innovative, can think critically, solve problems, write and speak well, apply knowledge in the “real world,” demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity, intercultural sensitivity and the capability of being a lifelong learner. The design and assessment of general education programs has demonstrated the outcomes employers seek, that also align with national trends and best practices in general education curriculum across the United States.

The program design also includes quality indicators that inform assessment practices including: student self-assessments; analysis of general education program outcomes; national and academic program rankings; and post-degree employment and graduate admissions. These indicators help to inform the assessment practices which generally include three approaches in the general education sphere:

1. Pre- and Post-Tests
2. Embedded assignments
3. Capstone Courses and/or ePortfolios

These assessments are thorough and time consuming, but assessment does not end there. Program evaluations also include curricular changes when assessment results indicate the need for improvement and essential “clean up” of the general education curriculum every few years when courses become irrelevant or no longer aligned with the evolving mission of the universities.

The design of general education and its alignment with employers’ expectations, the meticulous business processes for approving general education courses, and the painstaking assessment practices employed and largely driven by quality indicators, illustrate that Arizona public universities are committed to quality in the general education curriculum. Their commitment is further demonstrated via membership and participation in professional organizations that focus on educational assessment. Assessment and continuous improvement are long-standing practices at Arizona’s public universities, and it is part of the ABOR enterprise goal of transparency that this review series highlights the activities of the universities to achieve quality.

As the general education review series continues, work will address the innovative approaches to delivery of general education, the role of community colleges in general education, and the means by which universities help underprepared students succeed in general education.
programs. There are business processes in place for all of these activities that will further inform the regents on how quality is addressed within these contexts.

**QUESTIONS FROM REGENTS FOR UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS:**

1. How does your general education program reflect your brand or the essence of your institution?
   a. How would you describe those key identifying characteristics?
2. What are students’ perceptions about general education? How does your university communicate the value of general education?
   a. Faculty?
   b. Employers:
3. What is the relationship between general education and the type of student you want to graduate?
4. How do you measure general education outcomes?
5. What continuous improvement exercises are you engaged in with regard to general education?

Additionally, beyond the strategic questions proposed, some data questions will also be addressed by the universities:

1. What ratio of general education courses are taught by tenured faculty, adjunct, and/or graduate students?
2. What is the average class size for each required course?
3. How many students take all of their general education courses at your university?
4. What percentage take all at a community college?
5. What percentage take some or part of their general education courses at the community college?
6. How do these percentages distribute demographically?
7. Which general education courses are taken most frequently at the community college? (What level?) How does performance compare between students who take courses at the university and those who take courses at the community college?
**What’s Next in February?**

In February, quality assurance of transfer coursework, particularly courses that transfer in from Arizona community colleges, will be discussed. This will include an overview of the role of AZTransfer as the coordinating agency that brings the community college and university administrators and faculty together. They discuss agreements between the institutions that assure that community college general education courses are in fact equivalent to their university counterparts. Finally, quality assurance includes the seamless transfer of these courses ensuring that transfer students know exactly what courses they need to take at the community college to satisfy general education requirements at the universities.

There might also be continuous discussion about the data or any questions that were not answered during the November meeting.

**NOTES**
Appendices

Appendix 2

**NAU Effective Writing Rubric**

Definition: Effective writing conveys information or argues a point of view using organizational structures, supporting materials, and language appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addresses the purpose of the assignment</th>
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<th>Developing</th>
<th>Competent</th>
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<td>The purpose is not always clearly evident or the body of the assignment is frequently unrelated to the purpose. The reader is frequently unable to follow the purpose.</td>
<td>The purpose is not always clearly evident or the body of the assignment is frequently unrelated to the purpose. The reader is frequently unable to follow the purpose.</td>
<td>Although the purpose of the assignment is addressed, it is not fully supported throughout the assignment (only some aspects of the purpose are explored and developed). The reader may have difficulty linking aspects of the assignment to its purpose.</td>
<td>Establishes the purpose of the assignment, though its focus may occasionally drift. Most aspects of the assignment’s purpose receive some exploration, development or support.</td>
<td>Clearly addresses the assignment’s purpose in a well-constructed or well-planned manner and all elements of the assignment are directly related to its purpose. All aspects of the purpose are fully explored, developed or supported in the assignment.</td>
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<td>Uses organizational structures</td>
<td>Frequently does not follow the organizational expectations appropriate to the discipline or assignment. Assignment frequently does not have a continuous pattern of logical sequencing and is hard to follow.</td>
<td>Follows some, but not all, organizational expectations appropriate to the discipline or assignment. Assignment sometimes does not have a continuous pattern of logical sequencing.</td>
<td>Follows organizational structures appropriate to the discipline or assignment. Organization of the assignment is logical and generally clear.</td>
<td>Accurately follows organizational structures appropriate to the discipline or writing assignment. Organization of assignment as a whole is logical, quickly apparent, and easy to follow.</td>
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<td>Uses field- or discipline-specific ideas</td>
<td>Ideas demonstrate limited command of the subject matter and frequently convey an inaccurate or incomplete understanding of the field, area, or discipline.</td>
<td>Ideas demonstrate limited command of the subject matter and sometimes conveys an inaccurate or incomplete understanding of the field, area, or discipline.</td>
<td>Ideas demonstrate proficient command of the subject matter and convey an accurate understanding of the field, area, or discipline.</td>
<td>Ideas illustrate familiarity with and proficiency with the subject matter and convey an accurate, in-depth understanding of the overall field, area, or discipline.</td>
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<td><strong>Select (a), (b), or (c) below, based on the type of writing assignment</strong></td>
<td><strong>(a) Supports claims in an analysis.</strong> Claims are not fully accurate, and claims are frequently not distinguished from alternate or opposing claims. Claims are not always supported with clear reasons and evidence. The audience’s knowledge level or concerns are not anticipated.</td>
<td>Introduces accurate claims, but does not always distinguish the claims from alternate or opposing claims. Supports claims with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, but does not always address counterclaims. The audience’s knowledge level or concerns are only somewhat anticipated.</td>
<td>Introduces precise, knowledgeable claims, distinguishes the claims from alternate or opposing claims, and establishes the significance of the claims. Develops claims and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both. Anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.</td>
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<td><strong>(b) Examines and conveys information in an informative/explanatory text.</strong> Facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples are frequently not relevant to the topic or the assignment. Supporting information may not necessarily be appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</td>
<td>Develops the topic with mostly relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples. Supporting information may not necessarily be appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</td>
<td>Develops the topic with relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</td>
<td>Develops the topic thoroughly with the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</td>
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<td>(c) Develops narratives of real or imagined experiences.</td>
<td>The reader is not always engaged or fully oriented to the context, point or view or narrative perspective; event sequences are disjointed and character development is limited. Either doesn’t attempt to use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, events, and/or characters, or does so ineffectively.</td>
<td>Engages and orients the reader by establishing a context, point of view, or narrative perspective. Organizes an event sequence that unfolds logically, but is not always smooth in its progression. Characterization is better developed but still in need of further improvement. Attempts to use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, events, and/or characters, but does so ineffectively.</td>
<td>Engages and orients the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view and a distinct narrative perspective; creates a smooth progression of experiences or events. Characterization is complex and original. Uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters in an original, unique, and/or imaginative manner.</td>
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<td>Select at least one from (i), (ii), (iii) to evaluate the surface features of the writing assignment.</td>
<td>The assignment’s tone and style are not entirely appropriate for the assignment’s purpose, genre/discipline, or audience. Word choice is frequently poor, sentences are phrased in an awkward manner or vocabulary may be repeated frequently without forwarding the purpose of the assignment.</td>
<td>Tone and style are appropriate for the assignment’s purpose, genre/discipline, or audience. Writing style is uniform throughout. For the most part the assignment is precisely worded and unambiguous. Sometimes word choice is too simple or too complicated. Wording demonstrates a lack of awareness of the subtleties of inflection or definition.</td>
<td>Tone and style are appropriate for the assignment’s purpose, and are used to interest the audience. Writing style is uniform throughout. The assignment is precisely worded and unambiguous. Words follow naturally, demonstrate awareness of the subtleties of inflection or definition, and are well-suited to the purpose, audience and discipline/genre of the assignment.</td>
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<td>(i) Tone, style and word choice are appropriate to the purpose and the genre or discipline of the assignment.</td>
<td>Tone and style are not entirely appropriate for the assignment’s purpose, genre/discipline, or audience. Writing style is uniform throughout. For the most part the assignment is precisely worded and unambiguous. Sometimes word choice is too simple or too complicated. Wording demonstrates a lack of awareness of the subtleties of inflection or definition.</td>
<td>Tone and style are appropriate for the assignment’s purpose.</td>
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</table>
(ii) **Sentence structure, paragraphs and transitions are appropriate to the purpose and the genre or discipline of the assignment.**

| The assignment exhibits frequent sentence-level structural problems such as overly simplified sentences, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments. Paragraphs frequently lack clarity. Linkages or transitions among ideas or areas of the assignment are frequently incomplete. | Sometimes sentences have structural problems, such as overly simplified sentences, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments. Topic sentences are missing or unclear in a number of paragraphs. In a number of paragraphs, the parts do not connect logically. The reader may have some difficulty in seeing linkages among ideas or transitioning between ideas. | Sentence structure is solid but less complex and varied than that of an exceptional assignment. Sentences are well-constructed and generally clear/concise, but sometimes offer redundant information. Overall, the assignment contains well-developed paragraphs and appropriately applies disciplinary-specific language. In all but a few cases, the paragraph’s point is expressed clearly and the parts of each paragraph connect logically and effectively. Transitions and linkages between and among ideas are smooth. | Sentence structure is varied, sometimes complex, and always clear, lucid, and interesting. The parts of each paragraph connect logically and persuasively, and internal transitions are smooth. Uses polished, disciplinary-specific language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency. Connections and linkages between and among ideas are smooth. |
| (iii) Controls conventions of writing such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, and formatting. | Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling impede the reader’s understanding of the assignment. Formatting styles are inconsistent throughout the assignment. | Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling are present but do not impede the reader’s understanding of the assignment. Formatting styles are inconsistent with the discipline/genre or purpose of the assignment. | Few errors are present in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and formatting. Formatting is appropriate to the discipline/genre. | Is virtually free of grammar, punctuation, spelling and formatting errors. Formatting is appropriate to the discipline/genre. |