

Transformative assessment is an “appropriate, meaningful, sustainable, flexible, and ongoing process that will inform decision making and use data for improvement, with the potential for substantive change.”

- Catherine Wehlburg, *Promoting Integrated and Transformative Assessment*



2011- 2012

SKYLINE

SLOAC:

**PRACTICING
TRANSFORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT**

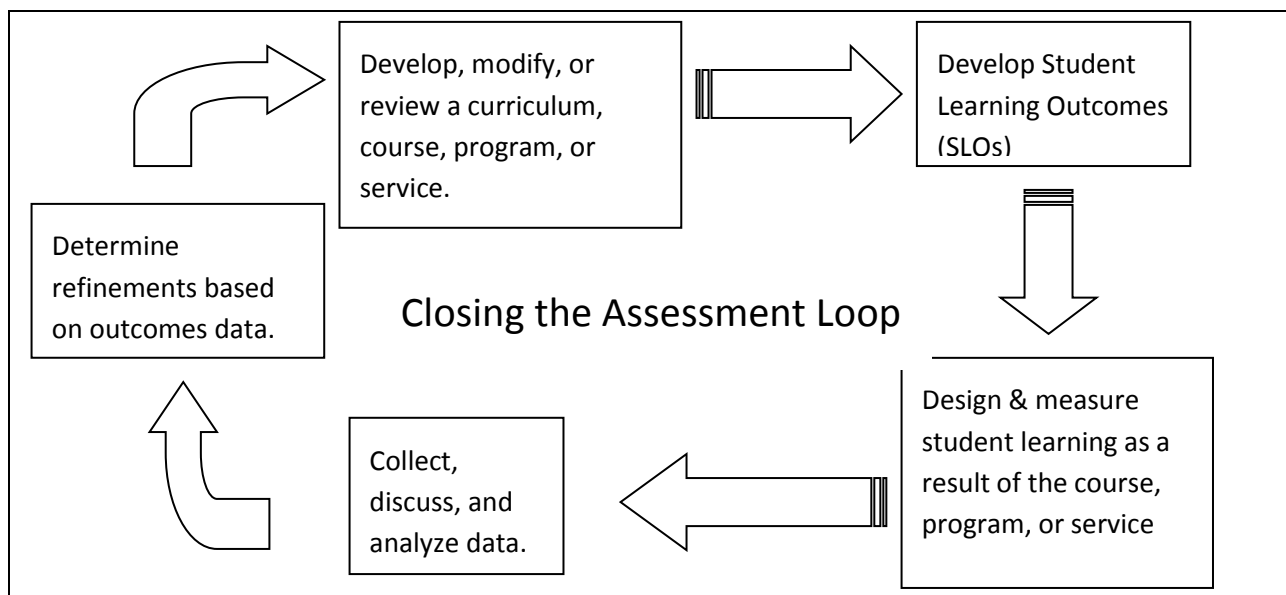
Ever heard of “Team in Training”? Perhaps you participated on a team that rode bikes around Lake Tahoe, or you ran a marathon to raise money for cancer research? Or perhaps you sponsored a friend or family member who was participating? In addition to raising significant funds for said research, what’s remarkable about this organization is that they help to train thousands of non-athletes to push their limits. Participants work with coaches and train with team members to support each other in building up their endurance.

While we aren’t raising money for cancer research, we are on “teams” to achieve a goal: to gather meaningful and appropriate assessment information that will help to guide the decisions that our College makes about student learning. Most of us have a couple of miles under our belt at this point, but how do we build up our endurance? How

do we sustain an assessment process for the long haul, for the marathon that takes us from one side of a city to the other? For the past six years, the SLOAC Steering Committee deliberated over this question, and we've created a meaningful and sustainable process to the best of our ability. This packet is intended to pull together everything that we've been releasing piecemeal, and to provide methods to make the process feasible.

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ASSESSING ON THE COURSE LEVEL

Catherine Wehlburg, who wrote *Promoting Integrated and Transformative Assessment*, rightly argues that, “The data that come from the assessment process are not meaningful unless they can be used to determine what a particular department or institution can do to increase the quality (and perhaps quantity) of student learning. ‘Doing assessment’ is very different from using the results of an assessment process... when the ongoing assessment planning provides information about what needs improvement, transformation that is based on student learning data can be accomplished” (17). In other words, drafting SLOs and even assessing are only the beginning; the substance in assessing lies primarily in analyzing the data and crafting an action plan, should students fall below the benchmark. For most of us, the results may spark dialogues about pedagogy and curriculum; in other instances, it may require resources that we request via our annual workplans and program reviews. The assessment cycle may take courage to confront some brutal truths, but keep in mind that the ultimate purpose is to improve student learning.

How much needs to be assessed? All departments are expected to assess every year, uploading assessments, findings, and implications to TracDat. How might that play out? You have many options: assess a core course per year, or assess one SLO from multiple courses per year, or substitute a course level assessment with a program level assessment. In addition, should you make any revisions to curriculum, instructional delivery, and the like, you are encouraged to assess that course again so as to determine if the revisions had any palpable impact.

Does every course need to be assessed? No. Meaningful and sustainable are the operative terms here. If you have yet to do so, it’s definitely worthwhile to discuss with your colleagues how much you’d like to assess each academic year, planning a six-year timeline. Focus your energies on core courses in your program whose assessment is likely to have the most widespread impact (ie., courses in a prerequisite sequence, heavily enrolled courses, GE courses, courses that are central to a given

ISLO, etc.), or courses that you're interested in troubleshooting. Satisfy your intellectual curiosity and your desire to better promote learning and student success.

What are some sustainable ways to assess? (1) While multiple measures are good practice, sometimes they're not feasible, given our competing responsibilities. Thus, if only one measure is used, best is to evaluate a major assignment/ task that measures multiple SLOs. (2) Use the parts of the ISLO rubrics that apply. You may be recruited to assess a given ISLO, such as effective communication, if your course is central to students fulfilling said ISLO. If that's the case, you'll be able to concurrently conduct a course level assessment and an ISLO assessment. (3) Rotate who will create and coordinate each course level assessment.

How do I document the assessment? Upload the information on TracDat, a database the District purchased to make it easier to manage the process. Training on TracDat is limited primarily to individuals designated by their deans, but if you're interested, you're encouraged to talk to your dean, who can forward the request to me. Also, from your dean you can find out if someone from your department has been trained on TracDat and can upload the information from your report.

How do I raise my students' awareness of SLOs and evaluation methods? A good start is listing the SLOs on your syllabus and to make available the rubrics that you're employing. Some instructors make direct connections with major assignments/ tasks and which SLOs they fulfill. Some have students reflect on how well they've mastered the SLOs. And some have their students apply the rubric to each other's drafts and give each other feedback. I'd love to hear from you about ways that you are making teaching and learning more transparent for your students.

ASSESSING ON THE PROGRAM LEVEL

Who needs to create PSLOs? Any department that is required to undergo program review must create PSLOs (students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that the

core courses have in common, by Spring 2011. As with the course level SLOs, limit the PSLOs to three, perhaps four, as you will be assessing them in some manner. Send an electronic copy to Maria Norris, cc'ing your Dean, and upload them on TracDat.

How do I draft these PSLOs? As with the course level SLOs, use Bloom's Taxonomy language, which can be accessed in the [SLOAC Framework's](#) appendix.

Draw from existing SLOs, such as our [ISLOs](#), since they encompass a variety of disciplines, and also help you to determine how your program supports students' fulfillment of these ISLOs. Identify which ISLOs pertain to your program, and/or adapt these ISLOs to explicitly connect with it.

Secondly, supplement these PSLOs if necessary by drawing from common course level SLOs, professional organizations with which your discipline is affiliated, transfer degrees in your discipline which have been created in response to the SB 1440 legislation, etc.

How much needs to be assessed? For programs with less than 20 degrees or certificates awarded each year, course level assessments "rolling up" to program level assessment will suffice for program level assessment (though you can do more if they want). For this "rolling up" to happen, you'll need to "map" course level SLOs to PSLOs on TracDat: in other words, determine which of the course level SLOs are central to students achieving the PSLOs. Once you enter that information on TracDat, you can use course level assessment results as a means to reflect on how well students are achieving the PSLOs. This mapping should be completed by the end of Fall 2011.

However, if your program awards more than 20 degrees or certificates each year, you must conduct a deeper assessment. For instance, CTE programs could cite students' performance on licensing exams; administer a survey or facilitate a focus group with graduates/ certificate recipients; evaluate culminating experiences such as a capstone project, portfolio, etc. This program level assessment, which may replace one of your annual course level assessments, should be identified and/or created by the end of Spring 2012.

ASSESSING ON THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

You're probably familiar with the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child"? The same certainly holds true at our College; faculty, classified staff, and administrators helps to develop the whole student in some capacity. Years ago, Skyline determined that any student completing an AA/AS degree and/or transfer preparation will develop competencies in the following Institutional SLOs (ISLOs): Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Citizenship, Information Literacy, Computer Technology Literacy, and Lifelong Wellness. All of us should be helping students to fulfill those ISLOs.

Why are ISLOs pertinent to my discipline/ department? It's important to keep our eyes on the big picture: how is our department/ discipline helping students to achieve said ISLOs? Mapping course level SLOs or student service PSLOs to ISLOs via TracDat will enable you to see how your department is helping students to fulfill the ISLOs. Conversely, if our College finds that few courses or services are mapping up to those ISLOs, it will raise questions about whether we need to provide more in that area, or if the ISLO is relevant to what we want Skyline graduates to have mastered.

How is Skyline assessing ISLOs? So far we've administered the CCSSE, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, in which students evaluate their own competencies. Our College will be administering it again this year so we can compare results with the last time's results.

To triangulate our data, we need direct measures, actual student demonstration of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Best is to attain these direct measures from authentic learning contexts, namely your classroom, with you as an experienced evaluator. The College's schedule is to assess an ISLO each semester, with data collection, analysis, and campus dialogues being spearheaded by the SLOAC Steering Committee. This upcoming Fall we will assess the Effective Communication ISLO, and in the Spring, Critical Thinking. If a course within your discipline is central to said ISLOs, you'll receive an invitation from me to participate in this assessment.

If I receive an invitation to participate, what should I expect? Can an ISLO assessment count toward my course level assessment? Absolutely, and in fact, I highly encourage you to either replace or supplement the scheduled course assessment if the two are different. The SLOAC Steering Committee recognizes that different disciplines may teach a given ISLO differently, and that even different faculty may have different curriculum and pedagogy. While there will be some basic parameters for all assessors to abide by, you'll be able to use your own major assignment if it fulfills the parameters. You'll also be provided a rubric to evaluate the student work, with the option of using the entire rubric or only the criteria that apply to your assignment. Your raw data will be used to evaluate student achievement of said ISLOs, aggregated with other course level data when available, and all efforts will be made to maintain your anonymity. While the SLOAC Steering Committee will only request the raw data from students with 36+ units (whom we'll identify for you) by late October, you're certainly welcome to apply the rubric to all student work in your class, which you can then aggregate with other sections of the class for course level assessment purposes. Thus in one fell swoop, you'll be able to fulfill a course level and ISLO assessment!

Our College has rubrics for the following ISLOs, which you are encouraged to use. Contact [Karen](#) at wongk@smccd.edu if you have any questions, or if you'd like a word file of the rubric(s).

- [Effective Communication Rubric](#) (Thanks to the SLOAC Steering Committee)
- [Critical Thinking Rubric](#) (Thanks to Rick Hough, Carlos Colombetti, & Michael Bishow)
- [Information Literacy Rubric](#) (Thanks to Tom Hewitt, Jeff Westfall, and Dennis Wolbers)
- Citizenship Rubrics (Thanks to Luciana Castro, Christine Roumbanis, & Kate Williams-Browne)
 - [Scientific Literacy](#)
 - [Social Skills](#)
 - [Active Citizenship](#)

- [Lifelong Wellness Rubric](#) (Thanks to Jan Fosberg, Melissa Komadina, and Rosie Bell)

USING TRACDAT TO DOCUMENT ASSESSMENT

In the past, word file templates were created to report results and action plans. However, they are being phased out and replaced by Tracdat, a user-friendly database. Thus it is extremely critical that every department have a TracDat coordinator. If your department doesn't have one and you're interested, contact your dean about becoming that person.

SUPPORTING ADJUNCT FACULTY SLOAC PARTICIPATION

The College recognizes that many departments are staffed by primarily adjunct, with only one FTER to juggle the assessments, or are taught by majority adjunct faculty. Clearly if assessment is going to have a large scale impact, the participation of adjunct faculty is important in any discussions about SLOs, evaluation of student work, and implications. Participation can be at many levels: participating in the assessment itself; creating assessments; analyzing results and its implications, including forging an action plan. For participating in the assessment itself and contributing to the subsequent discussion of results, typically compensation is in the form of flex credit. For adjunct faculty who take a lead in the SLOAC within their departments—creating the assessment and instruments, coordinating assessment efforts within the department, tabulating and analyzing data to determine if an action plan is needed and what it will be—funds are available. Please contact your Dean if you're interested.

GETTING HELP

To make the task easier for you, the SLOAC Steering Committee created a flowchart of assessment for both instruction and student services, a checklist of SLOAC

tasks, templates to generate SLOs and assessment plans, and numerous other resources which you can easily download from the [SLOAC website](http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/index.html), which is at <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/index.html>. I've also reconfigured one of the pages so that it's a one-stop shop: each step of assessment is highlighted, and you can access all pertinent information and documents under that step. That page is labeled the [Implementation Schedule](http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/slocalendar.html), which is at <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/slocalendar.html>.

If you would like help individually or during departmental meetings on writing SLOs, creating assessment plans, analyzing data and its implications, etc., please contact Karen at wongk@smccd.edu to make arrangements. Your colleagues on the [SLOAC Steering Committee](http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/members.html) are also valuable resources; please see <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/members.html> for the list of members.

PRACTICING TRANSFORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

As an open-access institution of higher learning where students come from such varied educational and cultural backgrounds, we are poised to revolutionize education. Assessment can serve as a tool for us to fulfill this mission: "...community colleges can be powerful laboratories for creating a fuller, richer set of assessment tools—aimed not simply at tracking progress (or its lack) but at understanding how to facilitate important forms of learning and personal development...Seen in this light, accountability is more than an external reporting requirement [for the purposes of accreditation]; it is an enactment of our professional responsibility as educators" (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, 2008). Assessment formalizes the reflection that is so necessary to being an effective teacher. As we make explicit among ourselves and our students what they should master and how they'll be evaluated, our students can become part of the process. We also are presented with the opportunity to discuss students' performance with our colleagues, focusing on what helps students learn, as

well as what we can do to help struggling students. It's the closest we can get to leveling the playing field, and welcoming everyone to compete.

If I don't see you at Opening Day, I wish you an excellent, fulfilling year. Please let me know if you'd like hard copies of the [Skyline College SLOAC Framework](#), if you have any questions or concerns, or if you'd like to share tasty cookie recipes (or even better, cookies).

Cheers,

Karen Wong

Professor of English and SLOAC Coordinator

SLOAC TRACDAT CHECKLIST

- ❑ **Determine the assessment schedule in collaboration with the appropriate faculty and/or staff, ideally over six years to complement the program review cycle.** Then enter the dates into TracDat (under “Means of Assessment”).

The point of assessment is to improve student learning and development, so focus your energies on core courses in your program whose assessment is likely to have the most widespread impact (ie., heavily enrolled courses, courses in a prerequisite sequence, GE courses, etc.), or courses that you're interested in troubleshooting. You are especially encouraged to assess the courses that are most heavily enrolled; the spreadsheet can be accessed from the [SLOAC Implementation Schedule website](#). Satisfy your intellectual curiosity and your desire to better promote learning and student success.

Why do we recommend a six-year cycle? Presently our Program Review is on a six-year cycle, so it makes sense to align the two processes. You have many options: assess a core course per year, or assess one SLO from multiple courses per year, or substitute a course level assessment with a program level assessment. In short, identify which core courses should be assessed, and divide by six to determine how much will be assessed from year to year.

If possible, should you make any revisions to curriculum, instructional delivery, and the like, you should assess that course again so as to determine if the revisions had any palpable impact.

- ❑ **Give “names” to all course level SLOs** in TracDat, replacing the current letters (ie., “a”) that are placeholders, by the end of Fall 2011.
- ❑ **Enter PSLOs** in TracDat under the SKY PROG-- _____ option from the pulldown menu by the end of Fall 2011.
- ❑ **Map course level SLOs to PSLOs** in TracDat by the end of Fall 2011.
- ❑ **Map course level SLOs to ISLOs** in TracDat by the end of Fall 2011.
- ❑ **Upload assessments, instruments, results, action plans, etc., in TracDat--ongoing.**



Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

Highlighted in the boxes, the following Institutional Student Learning Outcomes were generated with considerable input from the entire Skyline community. Upon completing an A.A./ A.S. degree and/or transfer preparation, students will show evidence of ability in the following core competency areas:

CRITICAL THINKING

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN PROBLEM SOLVING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES AND IN DAILY LIFE.

Critical thinking includes the ability to:

- raise vital questions, formulate responses (or solutions) to problems, evaluate the reasonableness of a solution and provide a justification.
- analyze and compose arguments; assess the validity or strength of an argument using appropriate deductive and inductive techniques.
- think creatively and open mindedly within alternative systems of thought; communicate, either artistically, graphically, symbolically, or verbally, a complete and clear solution to a given problem.
- make effective use of evidence in an argument; evaluate the truth or value of the premises using reliable sources of information.
- demonstrate understanding of diverse disciplinary perspectives and use appropriate inquiry, including the scientific method.
- analyze multiple representations of quantitative information, including graphical, formulaic, numerical, and verbal.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE AND COMPREHEND EFFECTIVELY.

Effective communication includes the ability to:

- comprehend, analyze, and respond appropriately to oral, written, and visual information.
- effectively express ideas through speaking and writing.

CITIZENSHIP

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO USE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED FROM COURSEWORK AND CAMPUS RESOURCES TO BE ETHICALLY RESPONSIBLE, CULTURALLY PROFICIENT CITIZENS, INFORMED AND INVOLVED IN CIVIC AFFAIRS LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND GLOBALLY.

Citizenship includes the ability to:

- demonstrate scientific literacy concerning a range of global issues;
- articulate similarities and contrasts among cultures, demonstrating knowledge of and sensitivity to various cultural values and issues.
- develop attitudes central to lifelong learning: openness, flexibility, intellectual curiosity, and a broad perspective that values diversity of thought.
- demonstrate appropriate social skills in group settings, listening and being receptive to others' ideas and feelings, effectively contributing ideas, and demonstrating leadership by motivating others.
- demonstrate commitment to active citizenship.

INFORMATION LITERACY

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE SKILLS CENTRAL TO INFORMATION LITERACY.

Information literacy includes the ability to:

- effectively locate and access information in numerous formats using a variety of appropriate search tools.
- evaluate the relevance, quality, and credibility of a wide variety of information sources using critical thinking and problem solving skills.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY LITERACY

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE SKILLS CENTRAL TO COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY LITERACY.

Computer technology literacy includes the ability to:

- use computer technology to organize, manage, integrate, synthesize, create, and communicate information and ideas in order to solve problems and function effectively in an information society.

LIFELONG WELLNESS

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF LIFELONG WELLNESS THROUGH PHYSICAL FITNESS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Lifelong wellness includes the ability to:

- demonstrate an understanding of physical fitness and its role in lifelong wellness.
- take personal responsibility for identifying psycho-social needs, determining resources, and accessing appropriate services for academic success.

PSLOs: THE COHESIVE CURRICULUM

(Variation from the *Skyline SLOAC Framework's* handout from Mary Allen's Assessment Workshop, p. 33)

- Coherence
 - Synthesizing Experiences
 - Ongoing Practice of Learned Skills
 - Systematically Created Opportunities to Develop Increasing Sophistication and Apply What Is Learned
-

Directions: If your department has a sequence of courses or prerequisites, it's worthwhile to evaluate whether your curriculum is cohesive. List core courses vertically in the left column, and PSLOs horizontally on the top row. If the set of courses below constituted your department's core courses, what insights can you gain about its relative cohesiveness?

Save your matrix and subsequent discussion on TracDat, as it is a useful means to assess your program's cohesiveness.

Course x Program Outcomes Alignment Matrix

Course	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5
100	I, P				I
101		I			P
102	P		P		P
103					P
200	P		P		
229					P
230			P, D		D
280					
290	D		P,D		D

I = Introduced, P = Practiced with Feedback, D = Demonstrated at the Mastery Level
Appropriate for Graduation

ISLO: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION (7/26/2010)

	Needs Work	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Assignment Fulfillment	Essay is off-topic and/or fails to fulfill the directives.	Essay is on-topic but fails to fulfill some of the directives.	Essay is on-topic and fulfills most of the directives.	Essay is on-topic and fulfills all directives.
Comprehension	Student does not relate the message to his or her own framework/ existing knowledge, summarizes inaccurately, or fails to mention the message.	Student integrates the message into his or her own frame of reference/ existing knowledge. Student's knowledge of the subject is generally accurate, though flawed or in the words of the original source.	Student develops a framework for organizing the message and relating it to his or her own frame of reference/ existing knowledge. Student's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout except with minor details, and is in his or her own words.	Student develops a framework for organizing the message and relating it to his or her own frame of reference/ existing knowledge or broader context/ larger world perspective. Student's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout, and is in his or her own words.
Analysis and audience	Student generally lacks an awareness of the reader, for the discussion lacks evidence, illustrations, other definitive details	Student makes some attempt to provide evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details to convince the audience, but some	Explanations and uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details generally convince the audience. Analysis reflects good	Explanations and sophisticated/ original uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details effectively convince the

	and/or reasonable follow-up explanations. Analysis shows undeveloped observational skills.	information is either extraneous or insufficient. Analysis shows reasonable observational skills.	observational skills.	audience. Analysis reflects highly developed observational skills.
Organization and audience	Opening comments are inappropriate, or are unlikely to engage the audience; provides little or no focus or order to the material; closes abruptly, either with no apparent concluding statement or with inappropriate remarks.	Opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points and engage the audience, but the approach seems somewhat artificial, weak, or unimaginative; provides some focus or order to the material, but the structure is somewhat unclear or awkward; concluding comments relate to the purpose and major points, but they either bring in extraneous information or are unnecessarily redundant.	Opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points and engage the audience; focuses and orders the materials to convey a generally unified point or effect, and provides movement within and between major points and from beginning to end; concluding comments are appropriate and relate to the purpose and major points, but they are not very strong or emphatic.	Opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points and engage the audience; focuses and orders the material to convey a unified point or effect, and provides clear and consistent movement within and between major points and from beginning to end; concluding comments are strong both in reemphasizing the purpose and major points and in leaving the audience with an appropriate closing statement.

ISLO: CRITICAL THINKING (7/26/2010)

Directions: Check the boxes that correspond to the frequency that a student has demonstrated the behavior in the work being assessed. Check “NA” if the particular type of critical thinking is not applicable to the work.

		Consistently	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	NA
Supports claims with evidence	Includes evidence that is appropriate and relevant.					
	Accurately interprets evidence such as quotes, graphics, statistics, etc.					
	Meets standards of evidence such as timeliness, accuracy, relevance and sufficiency.					
	Correctly uses and references multiple credible sources to ensure the accuracy of premises.					
	Other (please describe):					
Responsiveness to bias; Fair-mindedness	Provides unbiased selection, interpretation, and presentation of evidence.					
	Avoids unexamined use of emotionally loaded language or images.					
	Discriminates between facts versus values/opinions.					
	Justifies assumptions based on ideology (political, religious, or personal), peer pressure, or self interest.					
	Presents fair/charitable consideration of rival theories or opposing views.					

	Is open-minded regarding alternative conclusions; avoids dogmatism.					
	Other (please describe):					
Accurate and logical analysis	Does all or almost all of the following when appropriate	Consistently	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	NA
	Infers conclusions that are well-supported by the premises.					
	Develops arguments that are deductively valid or inductively strong; uses appropriate deductive and inductive criteria in composing or analyzing arguments.					
	Demonstrates an understanding of theory and application.					
	Considers multiple methods in solutions.					
	Makes logical connections between and among ideas.					
	Appropriately chooses and correctly uses formulas or formal techniques, (such as in algebra, logic, probability theory, chemistry, physics, statistics, etc.)					
	Examines both internal and external inconsistencies. Checks solutions for reasonableness.					
	Understands how to form and test hypotheses.					
	Other (please describe):					

