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Aligning Core Competency Outcomes Assessment and Professional Development

California State University, Monterey Bay

California State University, East Bay

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Aligning Core Competency Outcomes Assessment and Professional Development

This handout demonstrates one example of aligning core competency assessment to professional development. Pages 1-2 show an assignment guide developed by and for faculty at CSU Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Pages 3-9 show an assignment guide developed by CSU East Bay – also by and for faculty- that built on the work of CSUMB. Both guides are examples of aligning institution-level core competency outcomes assessment with professional development.



Written Communication, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy Assignment Guide

This CSUMB assignment guide is a tool instructors can use to critically examine and improve their own assignment guidelines for the purpose of helping student produce better work. There is no expectation that assignments explicitly address all questions posed in the guide. Rather, each guide poses questions to help instructors make their own decisions about what kinds of prompts to include -- or not to include -- in an assignment.

As you review the assignment guidelines, respond to the questions below (generated from the written communication integrated rubric criteria). Revise assignment prompts if appropriate and helpful to students. Depending on course level and prerequisites, it may be reasonable for students to know how to respond without explicit prompting. Consider offering students a sample that makes concrete the requirements and criteria of an excellent performance (e.g. an excellent student paper as a model). Abbreviations: WC = written communication, CT = critical thinking, IL = information literacy.

Issue/problem (CT)

- Does the prompt define for students what is at issue, or should students define their own issue? If the latter, how explicitly does the prompt define for students the limitations on the appropriate range of issues?
- How explicitly does the prompt define the urgency/need for response?
- How explicitly and narrowly does the prompt ask students to define what is at issue in the task?
- What information does the prompt offer in terms of the audience's background knowledge?

Supporting materials (IL)

- What kind(s) of sources are called for explicitly in the prompt (e.g. peer-reviewed literature only; are newspapers, magazines, blogs, and other forms of popular media acceptable; etc.)?
- What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of quantity and diversity of sources?
- How does the prompt engage students in establishing or questioning the credibility of cited experts and other evidence?

Use of support (IL)

- What does the prompt explicitly ask students to do with that information (e.g. analyze, synthesize)?
 - What does the prompt explicitly define as the purpose of the information (e.g. provide background information, support multiple perspectives, etc.)?
-

Position (CT)

- What role does the prompt suggest students should take in composing their responses (are they to be experts, mediators, friends, students, parents)?
 - What does the prompt suggest in terms of the range of perspectives students should consider?
 - How does the assignment ask students to identify their own and others' assumptions? What different categories of assumptions are students asked to consider (e.g. empirical, value, normative)?
 - What information are students given about the context in which they are composing? How does the prompt engage students in examining the assumptions relevant to that context?
-

Genre and disciplinary conventions (WC)

- What information does the prompt offer in terms of the audience for whom students are writing?
 - What relationship does the prompt suggest writers establish with their audience (peer to peer, expert to novice, supportive, confrontational)?
 - What information does the prompt offer in terms of the purpose for which students are composing?
 - What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of level of formality and specialized vocabulary for the writing?
-

Conclusions and outcomes (CT)

- How are students prompted to consider potential implications or consequences (intended or unintended) of their conclusions?
 - What audiences are students prompted to consider in assessing the implications of their conclusions?
-

Academic integrity (IL)

- What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of ethical access and use of information? (e.g., personal data, clinical trials, animal trials)
 - What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of reference and citation style?
 - What guidance does the prompt offer regarding the balance of paraphrase, quotation, and summary?
-

Grammar and mechanics (WC)

- What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of expectations regarding grammatical correctness

This assignment guide is a resource designed by the [ILO Subcommittee](#) to help faculty fine-tune an assignment that aligns to the [Institutional Learning Outcome \(ILO\)](#) Written Communication rubric being assessed in the 2018-19 academic year following the [ILO Long-Term Assessment plan](#). This guide is also designed to be useful for any written communication assignment.

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Some elements of a well-designed assignment:

- Aligns with course outcomes and what has been taught in the course.
- Has clear and transparent expectations and instructions in writing so students understand specifically what tasks to do and how to do them. This includes helping students know, “Where do I start?”
- Engages students. One way to engage is stating the purpose of the assignment including the value of the assignment in the field of study and the student’s career goals.
- Has real-world application helping the work to take on personal and professional meaning. This includes being able to practice applying skills, content, and concepts learned.
- Reflects and demonstrates respect to different ways of knowing, different learning modalities, and different levels of preparation.
- Are often scaffolded or sequenced to help students progressively integrate and connect their learning by breaking assignments into manageable chunks.
- Linked to and aligned with previous and future assignments.
- Includes a model assignment for students to see what success looks like.
- Provides an avenue for useful student feedback (both formative and summative).
 Include a reflection in writing to capture what they learned to solidify learning and assign responsibility to the student to retain acquired knowledge and skills.

CSUEB ILO Written Communication Rubric Approved by Academic Senate, May, 2017

Description: 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.

	4	3	2	1
Statement of purpose, thesis or controlling idea(s)	Clearly states a central idea, appropriate to the assignment.	Adequately states a central idea, generally appropriate to the assignment.	Inconsistently or superficially states a central idea, minimally appropriate to the assignment.	Lacks statement of a central idea, or states central idea inappropriate to the assignment.
Audience awareness	Demonstrates clear understanding of audience, appropriate to the assignment.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of audience, generally appropriate to the assignment.	Demonstrates inconsistent or superficial understanding of audience, minimally appropriate to the assignment.	Lacks an understanding of audience.
Organization, cohesion, and clarity	Clearly structured around the central idea. Uses a range of transitions to connect ideas, and is easy to follow.	Adequately structured around the central idea. Uses some transitions to connect ideas, and is generally easy to follow.	Has minimal structure around the central idea. Uses few transitions to connect ideas, and is somewhat difficult to follow.	Lacks structure around the central idea. Lacks transitions that connect ideas, and is difficult to follow.
Presentation of supporting ideas	Presents evidence and ideas that clearly support and develop the central idea.	Presents evidence and ideas that generally support and develop the central idea.	Presents evidence and ideas that minimally support and develop the central idea.	Does not present evidence or ideas that support or develop the central idea.
Language usage, sentence structure	Uses sophisticated and varied sentence structures. Demonstrates appropriate language choices.	Uses some variation in sentence structure. Generally demonstrates appropriate language choices.	Uses little variation in sentence structure. Minimally demonstrates appropriate language choices.	Lacks variation in sentence structure. Does not demonstrate appropriate language choices.
Mechanics: grammar, punctuation, and spelling	Shows correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Shows mostly correct use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. May have occasional errors that do not interfere with meaning.	Contains grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors that are distracting or occasionally interfere with meaning.	Contains grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors that are highly distracting or often interfere with meaning.

Descriptions & Examples for Each Rubric Category

Category 1: Statement of purpose, thesis or controlling idea(s).

- *How explicitly does the prompt ask students to define what the central idea is?*
- *What information does the prompt offer in terms of the purpose for which students are writing/composing?*

Example 1: Take a position on the issue of globalization in response to the following questions: Would you agree that corporations such as Starbucks, Walmart, and McDonald's have had a generally positive or negative impact on global culture? In your opinion, when these corporations build their facilities overseas, do they generally respect the local cultures in which they operate or not?

Example 2: Describe your topic, and write up your paper thesis (In this paper I am ... and I will....). What particular dimension of medical anthropology are you studying? E.g. Norms, values, ideals, myths, popular misconceptions, social problems, etc. Tell me why you selected this paper topic and why it is important and relevant to the topic? What is the clear and specific question you plan to answer in this paper?

Category 2: Audience awareness

- *What information does the prompt offer in terms of the audience for whom students are writing?*
- *What relationship does the prompt suggest writers establish with their audience (e.g. peer to peer, expert to novice, supportive, confrontational)?*

Example 1: Assume your 'audience' is a student like yourself, but who has not taken this course, and write to them in words they should be able to understand.

Example 2: Write a memo to the manager explaining ...

Category 3: Organization, cohesion, and clarity

- *What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of structuring the writing?*

Example 1: Be sure to provide adequate reasons, explanations, and examples from the texts as well as your own personal observations and experiences to validate your claims.

Example 2: Your term paper should be logically organized and integrate the results of your research, the class text, and the results of background information you received in class.

Category 4: Presentation of supporting ideas

- *What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of supporting and developing the central idea?*

Example 1: You must integrate your idea about the reading and make a new connection between the material and your findings. Give specific examples and be concrete when you make the connection.

Example 2: Integrate the results of your research, the class text, and the results of background information you received in class.

Category 5: Language usage, sentence structure

- *What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of level of the style, formality and specialized vocabulary for the writing?*

Example 1: The term paper needs to be written in your own words and in language understandable to the general population, i.e. without using jargon that people outside this course would not understand.

Example 2: Summarize the big ideas for each TED Talk in your own words.

Category 6: Mechanics: grammar, punctuation, and spelling

- *What guidance does the prompt offer in terms of expectations regarding grammatical and mechanical correctness?*

Example 1: Revise and proofread for grammar, punctuation, and spelling before turning your work in. Plan to review the paper 3-4 times before submitting a college-level paper free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Annotated Sample Assignment Aligning ILO Written Communication to Instructions

Recreation 3000 Philosophy Paper

Part 1

The philosophy paper is being assigned to help you formulate a personal and professional philosophy of leisure that will serve as a guide throughout your career. Design your paper for a specific audience. Students who do not plan to work in a Hospitality, Recreation or Tourism (HRT) industry should write the paper for individuals who need to be informed about the value of leisure. HRT majors should write for a hiring director in an HRT field.

In this part of the assignment, students are given a **clear purpose** for writing and also directed to write for a **specific audience** that they can determine based on their career path.

Part 2

Select one HRT field you would like to focus on for the paper: recreation, recreation therapy, hospitality or tourism. Discuss your philosophy, values and principles. Write in first person, use "I" and "My" statements. I believe . . . My philosophy is...

Here students are invited to choose a **central focus**, are given ideas about how to **develop** that focus, and are guided in their **language use choices**.

Part 3

Build your philosophy on a strong foundation of information from academic references that are specific to your selected HRT field, and the concepts being studied in the course (leisure, theory, philosophy, values and principles). Use evidence to support your statements throughout the paper and cite your sources in APA format (in-text and at the end of the paper).

In part 3 of the assignment, students receive more information about **supporting and developing their central idea** for a **specific audience** that they can determine based on their career path.

Part 4

You are required to draw from two current academic references (articles from peer-reviewed journals, trade publications or conference proceedings; or books other than the course textbook), which were published in the past 10 years. Do NOT use the textbook, web pages, magazine articles, newspaper articles, abstracts, television shows, videos, dictionaries, encyclopedias, Wikipedia, press releases or book reviews as references for the paper.

Building on 3 above, this part of the assignment provides information on **presentation of supporting evidence**.

Part 5

Provide a clear statement of purpose. Address four or more of the following questions in your paper:

- a. What is leisure and how does it impact the lives of people?
- b. Why is the HRT industry you selected important in the world today, and how does that industry relate to leisure?
- c. What is the basic philosophy of professionals working in your one selected HRT industry? (Information about purpose, standard of care, mission, vision, standards, and code of conduct in the industry will help address this question).
- d. Describe the values and principles that will guide you throughout your career, include the value of leisure.
- e. As a future professional in hospitality, recreation, recreation therapy or tourism, how do you hope to impact people and the profession?
- f. What do you hope to accomplish through your work in an HRT profession?

Part 5 reminds students to provide a clear **statement of purpose** and also gives them specific questions to help them **develop** their paper.

Part 6

The minimum paper length is 1,000 words, including the introduction, body and conclusion. Title pages, running heads, table of contents and abstracts are not needed and will not be counted toward the required length. Use of headings to organize the paper and improve flow is advised. Write full sentences in paragraph form, with no lists.

Here students are given direction about **organization, cohesion, clarity, language usage, and mechanics.**

Part 7

The assignment should be typed, double-spaced, and utilize a 12 point readable font. Use 1" margins. Spell and grammar check your work. Include APA format citations in text as appropriate and in the reference section at the end of the paper. Double space throughout the paper, including the reference section. Do not place extra spaces before or after headings, paragraphs, or sections. Indent the first line in each paragraph and use paragraphs that are 3-7 sentences in length.

This part of the assignment focuses on formatting requirements and reminds students of the importance of editing for **language and mechanics.**

Part 8

The paper should be clear and well-organized. Correct spelling, grammar, capitalization and sentence structure is required. Visiting the Student Center for Academic Achievement and/or the Writing Center to get help with writing is highly recommended. The content should be in your own words, based on use of appropriately cited reference materials, do not use any direct quotes. Interpret information from your references, do not copy any work directly from another author.

This part of the assignment focuses on formatting requirements and reminds students of the importance of editing for **language and mechanics**. Students are reminded of campus resources that can help them with their writing.

Part 9

Points for the paper will be based on the quality of writing, critical thinking, content, format, references and citations. A scoring rubric is provided in class to show the breakdown of points and expectations for the paper.

This part of the assignment provides students with the basic information about how their work will be evaluated.

Part 10

Your work should be original, written by you for this class.

Here students are reminded of **language usage**.

Part 11

As part of the ongoing commitment to continually improve our instructional programs, CSUEB periodically conducts secondary reviews of randomly selected student work on key assignments. This is only to help faculty improve the curriculum and will not affect your grades. To preserve your privacy, you are invited (but not required) to submit your assignments without your name. Omitting your name ensures that, while your instructor will be able to identify the work in this course as yours through the Blackboard submission process, any additional faculty reviewers will see your work as an anonymous submission.

Including a statement like this in an assignment helps with ILO and GE assessment.