

# Using Assessment to Foster Student Achievement of Essential Learning Outcomes

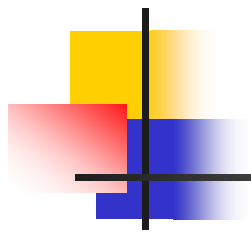


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King's College



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“There is a lot more teaching going on around here than learning and you ought to do something about that.”

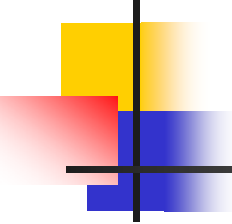
Graduating Senior  
King's College  
1968



# Some background information about King's College

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- Primarily undergraduate (2000 students)
  - 40% are first-generation college students
- 132 full-time faculty; 80 part-time faculty
- 35 major programs
- Several accrediting bodies-Middle States, NCATE & AACSB
- Been working on assessment for 25 years



# Goals of Curriculum Development and Assessment of Essential Student Outcomes

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- Faculty Development to Improve Teaching and Learning Strategies
- Integrated and Cumulative Curriculum
- Question our assumptions about teaching and achieving student learning outcomes



## *Some Assumptions We Questioned to Lead to More Effective Assessments*

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- ❖ Are my students learning what I think I'm teaching?
- ❖ Do I tell students what I want them to know and to be able to do?
- ❖ What constitutes acceptable (more than acceptable) work?



# *Some Questions/Assumptions We Asked to Improve Student Learning/Teaching Strategies*

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- ❖ How do I help students to identify competence and quality, and to adopt my standards of excellence?
- ❖ How can the quantity and quality of student learning be improved?
  - ❖ Reading
  - ❖ Information Literacy
  - ❖ Love of Learning vs. Student Entitlement
- ❖ What part do my courses play in a plan for students' cumulative learning?



# Intentional Learner

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Universities need to educate students to become "intentional learners." "Becoming such an intentional learner means developing self-awareness about the reason for study, the learning process itself, and how education is used. Intentional learners are integrative thinkers who can see connections in seemingly disparate information and draw on a wide range of knowledge to make decisions. They adapt the skills learned in one situation to problems encountered in another: in a classroom, the workplace, their communities, or their personal lives. As a result, intentional learners succeed even when instability is the only constant." (pages 21-22) AAC&U Greater Expectations Report



# Cumulative/Integrative Learning

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Do we want our students to integrate their learning into a holistic framework, to see the elements of their studies as interconnected and relevant?...If we want our students to approach the world as a set of atomistic fragments, disconnected and irrelevant, then we should proceed to offer and support a curriculum that does precisely that, and to do our work in the isolated cells of our classroom and the cellblock of our departments. If we want them to see the world whole, must we not at least see our colleges whole?

From Tagg, J. The Learning Paradigm College (2003) P. 350

# *What Constitutes Good Assessment?*



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- Defining goals/objectives for learning that students can understand
- Designing assignments that provide students with multiple opportunities to achieve these goals
- Defining criteria to judge student performance that can be shared with students so they can meet faculty expectations
- Using the results of the assessment to improve teaching, learning, and curriculum

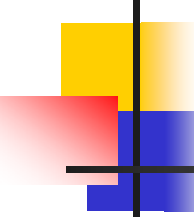


# ***COMMON FEATURES OF ASSESSMENT DESIGN AT KING'S COLLEGE***

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*Most of the assessments we do are:*

- Faculty designed
- Course-embedded
- Follow the plan of:
  - Goals/Objectives
  - Strategies
  - Criteria
- Subject to on-going revision based on the faculty's experience of student performance



# Reaching Consensus: Some Goals of the Core Curriculum at King's

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- Develop in students the fundamental thinking and communication skills required of every educated person
- Convey to students knowledge of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences
- Give students an understanding of how the various disciplines differ, how they are related and how these distinct perspectives enrich our lives



# Goals for the Core Curriculum at King's College

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- Cultivate students' capacity and desire for independent and continuing learning
- Lead students to recognize their personal worth and develop a sense of purpose
- Encourage students to examine their own religious and moral convictions so that they may discover appropriate ways of attaining personal fulfillment and of improving the quality of life in society at large



# Structure of the Core Curriculum

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First Year Experience [1 credit]  
Liberal Arts Seminar  
Composition  
Math  
Oral Communication  
Foreign Language and Cultures  
Literature  
The Arts  
Civilizations: Historical Perspectives  
Social Science  
American Studies  
Contemporary Global Studies  
Natural Science I  
Natural Science II course with a more narrow focus  
Introduction to Philosophy I course  
Philosophy II course with a more narrow focus  
Moral Theology  
Systematic Theology



# Assessment in the Core – Effective Writing Objectives

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- develop essay topics based on their own interests;
- narrow a general subject to a specific one;
- translate a topic into a thesis statement;
- develop and support that thesis by using specific evidence and concrete detail;
- use techniques of drafting and editing in the writing process, such as peer revision, global revision, and proofreading;
- organize an essay effectively;
- use outside information sources in the preparation of a paper.
- describe objects or events accurately
- use conventions of standard English in spelling, grammar and usage

# Assignment: Describing a Process



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1. The first step is to come up with a topic from the list below. You will most likely need to do a little research here. I have broken down the topics into sub-fields. If you don't see anything on the list that interests you--try to come up with your own topic.

If you take this route, you must have the topic approved first.

- Politics:
  - How a political party selects its nominee
  - How a presidential cabinet is formed and approved
  - How a bill becomes a law
- Medicine:
  - The process of a disease or disability
  - How a certain diet works on the body

# Describing a Process: Further steps



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2. The next step is to get to work on the research. Many of the topics will offer "one-stop shopping" in the research department. In other words, you will be able to find everything you need in one place. The topic development worksheet will help you do this.

3. Next, think about what your audience already knows about this topic. Make a list of terms you will need to define and common misconceptions that will need to be clarified.

4. Begin outlining. Break the process down into steps or stages. Make notes where you can use examples and comparisons to illustrate your points.

5. Consider using visual aids.

6. Begin writing.

# Matching up assignment and objectives



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- develop essay topics based on their own interests;
- develop and support that thesis by using specific evidence and concrete detail;
- use outside information sources in the preparation of a paper.
- organize an essay effectively;
- use techniques of drafting and editing in the writing process, such as peer revision, global revision, and proofreading;

# Assessment of the course



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Use conventions of standard English in spelling, grammar and usage

- 25% of students demonstrating severe problems in this area
- Not pedagogically sound or practical to teach grammar in the course
- Solution: Addition of a 1-credit grammar lab for students testing below 60% on Grammar Proficiency Exam

# American Studies Objectives



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- To identify the political, social, economic, and cultural forces that have produced a common U. S. heritage.
- To identify major events, persons, ideas, and circumstances that contributed to the development of American attitudes and institutions.
- To analyze concepts that give meaning and order to the primary sources and raw data of the past and present of the United States.
- To identify and analyze significant problems and situations pertaining to the continuing issues of contemporary life.
- To effectively navigate the various scholarly resources of American Studies.
- To apply interdisciplinary strategies for defining and critiquing notions of U. S. identity and culture.

# American Literature Class



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- Write an essay of approximately 10 pages following these specifications:

Define and discuss the characteristics of the archetype of the American Individual, using the sources from the beginning of the semester, as well as any other outside research you find relevant. As well as discussing the characteristics of the archetype, you should **briefly** discuss the origins of this figure, as well as its pervasiveness in contemporary culture.



# Immigration in American Assignment

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- Students choose an ethnic group and trace its path of immigration in American history.
- Students will interlace their studies of the 6 social sciences (culture, sociology, psychology, economics, government, and history) into the presentation. The presentation will demonstrate understanding of the social science as applied to the issue of immigration. It will enable the team and others in class to understand more fully the background and other related aspects of an immigrant group current or past as they struggled to arrive and live in the U.S.



# Core Area Responsibility Teams (CARTS)

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- Assessment every five years
  - 2008-2009 Oral Communication; Theology; Natural Science
  - 2009-2010 Thinking and Writing; Composition; FYE; Honors Program
  - 2010-2011 Liberal Arts Seminar; Foreign Languages and Cultures; Literature
  - 2011-2012 Math; Philosophy; The Arts; Civilizations: Historical Perspectives
  - 2012-2013 American Studies; Contemporary Global Studies; Social Science



# CART Reports

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- A copy of the minutes from the CART meeting in which the report was approved by the CART members
- A list of current CART members
- Current master syllabi, goals and objectives
- Descriptions of all courses in the CART category
- Statistics showing the number of sections of each course offered over the past five years
- Percentage of sections taught by full and part-time instructors and related staffing issues
- A summary of assessment policies and practices within the Core area
- A description of the successes, areas of concerns, and suggestions for improvement
- A description of any relevant changes in the Core discipline(s)
- A description of any interdisciplinary connections to other parts of the Core



# Two Assessment Programs at King's College

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- Comprehensive Assessment Program
  - Assessment of the Core (CART)
  - Goals for the Major
  - Competency Growth Plans
  - Sophomore-Junior Diagnostic Project
  - Senior-Level Integrated Assessment
- Learning Assurance Program (School of Business)
  - Goals for Business Majors
  - Capstone Course for Business Majors



# Developing Goals for the Major

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- Best Features

- An inspirational introduction and invitation to the discipline
- Idealistic but also practical definitions of goals students are expected to attain rather than goals of the program or faculty
- An integration of the major goals with the goals of liberal learning
- An expectation that students will participate in activities to enable them to contribute to the betterment of professions they enter and the society and global environment in which they will play an important role



# *MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM A TEACHER-CENTERED TO A LEARNER-CENTERED ORIENTATION*

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## GOALS:

**Make Available**

**FOSTER**

DEVELOP IN STUDENTS

Provide

HELP

**ENCOURAGE**

Give

**Teach**

*Cover*

**EVALUATE**

VS.

T S W B A T



# Developing Goals for the Major

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- What should graduating students in your discipline know and be able to do?
- Are the goals related to the mission of the college?
- Are the goals linked to general education requirements?
- Are the department's goals conveyed to students?



# Sample of Goals for the Major

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- History: Practice “Historical Mindedness:” Know essential historical facts; know fundamental themes of historical development in American and other societies; understand how and why history affects the contemporary world; comprehend how historical circumstances change; recognize the existence of multiple causation, and demonstrate caution about single fact explanations.
- <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/LiberallEarning.htm>



# Goals for the Neuroscience Major

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- The student can integrate the many sub-disciplines of the neurosciences. The student can assess and interpret behavior drawing on the biological, chemical, and neural underpinnings that support the behavior.
- The student can design and conduct original research in a specific area of the neurosciences: molecular, systems and functions, behavioral or cognitive neuroscience.

# Professional Writing Major



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- This degree focuses on the study of rhetorical theory (including visual and digital rhetoric), the practicalities of day-to-day workplace writing, and an introduction to some of the software technologies that professional writers (and their employers) depend on. Students emphasizing creative writing will receive the same theoretical background, but will have the opportunity to workshop their pieces and will graduate with a robust portfolio.

# Goals for the major

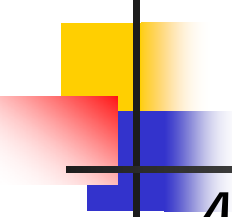


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• *Utilize language in a way that is consistently clear, effective, and concise for a variety of audiences, purposes and subjects.*

- Using edited and standard English as well as appropriate rhetorical strategies and research techniques in brief and extended forms of prose for purposes of exposition, persuasion, problem-solving.
- Strategies include the use of visual elements and forms of digital media.

# Goals for the major

- 
- *Analyze literary and professional writing in their imaginative, critical, and rhetorical dimensions.*
    - understanding approaches to rhetorical theory and literary criticism and using these to interpret and evaluate works; analyzing relationships between language and social behaviors (e.g., dialects and sociocultural backgrounds).

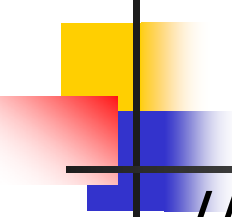
# Goals for the major



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- *To demonstrate mastery of the varied demands of workplace writing.*
  - This includes such elements as the ability to work in many different genres, including, but not limited to expository writing, writing for new media, technical writing, scholarly writing, and journalistic writing.
  - Students should be able to edit their own work and the work of others;
  - They should be able to respond to editorial criticism effectively;
  - They should be able to work collaboratively and to produce effective documents even under the pressure of deadlines and production schedules.

# Responding to the new goals

- 
- *Utilize language in a way that is consistently clear, effective and concise for a variety of audiences, purposes and subjects.*

- Using edited and standard English as well as appropriate rhetorical strategies and research techniques in brief and extended forms of prose for purposes of exposition, persuasion, problem-solving.
- Strategies include the use of visual elements and forms of digital media.

- **Introduction to Professional Writing**
- **Document Design**
- **Senior Seminar**

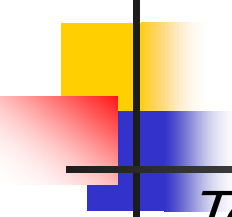
# Responding to the new goals

- 
- 
- *Analyze literary and professional writing in their imaginative, critical, and rhetorical dimensions.*

- understanding approaches to rhetorical theory and literary criticism and using these to interpret and evaluate works; analyzing relationships between language and social behaviors (e.g., dialects and sociocultural backgrounds).

- **Intro to Rhetorical Theory**
- **Senior Seminar**

# Responding to the new goals



---

- *To demonstrate mastery of the varied demands of workplace writing.*

- This includes such elements as the ability to work in many different genres, including, but not limited to expository writing, writing for new media, technical writing, scholarly writing, and journalistic writing.
- Students should be able to edit their own work and the work of others;
- They should be able to respond to editorial criticism effectively;
- They should be able to work collaboratively and to produce effective documents even under the pressure of deadlines and production schedules.

- **Editing**
- **Internship**



# Connecting the Core Curriculum to the Major

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- The Sophomore-Junior Diagnostic Project
  - Builds on the transferable skills of liberal learning
  - Demonstrates knowledge/methodology of major field of study
  - Identifies skills/knowledge deficiencies and remedies



# Examples of Sophomore-Junior Diagnostic Projects

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- Biology-Complete literature review showing writing, information literacy, critical thinking, oral communication abilities
- Political Science-Survey professions in government and select a government professional to interview with results presented orally and in writing
- English-Portfolio of three papers with extensive revision opportunities and a reflective essay



# Pulling it all together: The Senior-Level Integrated Assessment

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- Command of knowledge base of the major field of study
- Mastery of the methodology of the major field of study
- Competence in the transferable skills of liberal learning as related to goals of the major



# Examples of Senior-Level Integrated Assessments

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- Marketing-Synthesizing material learned in marketing courses develop a marketing plan for a new product
- History-Three tracks: Education; Professional Historian; Law/Public Service
- Chemistry-Conduct and present research to audience of three local colleges



# Developing Abilities throughout the Curriculum: Competency Growth Plans

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- An outline that describes how and where in the curriculum that students will develop the transferable skills of liberal learning
  - Ability- What should the student know and be able to do
  - Strategy- In what course(s) will the student be able to develop the ability; what kinds of assignments will enable the student to achieve it? How do we encourage cumulative learning and avoid needless repetition?
  - Criteria- How will the instructor and student know that the ability has been achieved? How will the students' performance be judged?



# ***TRANSFERABLE SKILLS OF LIBERAL LEARNING***

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- Critical Thinking
- Effective Writing
- Technology Ability
- Effective Oral Communication
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Library and Information Literacy
- Moral Reasoning

# *COMPETENCY GROWTH PLANS*



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- ***Strategy:*** In what course or courses will the student be able to develop the ability; what kinds of assignments will enable the student to achieve it? How do we encourage cumulative learning and avoid needless repetition?

# *COMPETENCY GROWTH PLANS*



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- ***Criteria:*** How will the instructor and student know that the ability has been achieved; How will the student's performance be judged?



# Developing and Revising Criteria

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- Faculty, in writing, convey expectations when giving assignment
- Comparing student performance with faculty expectations and revising criteria
- Have students use the same criteria as faculty to evaluate their own work
- Use revised Bloom's taxonomy to help specify criteria

# A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy

(From Anderson & Krathwohl, 2000)



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## *CREATE*

Generate, Plan,  
Synthesize,  
Produce the New

## *EVALUATE*

Critique or Judge based on  
Explicit Standards/Criteria

## *ANALYZE*

Break Down, Relate Parts &  
Whole, Organize

## *APPLY*

Follow Procedures to Solve Problems  
or Carry Out Tasks

## *UNDERSTAND*

Connect New Learning to Prior Knowledge by  
Interpreting, Classifying, Comparing, Summarizing, etc.

## *REMEMBER*

Elaborate, Encode, and  
Retrieve Information from  
Long-term Memory



# School of Business: Assurance of Learning Program

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- Four Primary Goals:
  - A student graduating from the William G. McGowan School of Business should be a(n):
    - Effective communicator
    - Ethically and socially responsible
    - Professionally knowledgeable
    - A critical thinker



# Specified Objectives for Each Goal

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- Effective Communication-Assessed in required senior-level course for all business majors
  - Prepare and properly deliver a complete, concise business presentation
  - Prepare and properly format a complete, concise business document
  - (See oral and written communication rubrics in handout)



## Goal 2: Ethically and Socially Responsible

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- Identify and apply various ethical decision making tools in solving complex ethical dilemmas in business
- Develop the capacity to implement ethical decisions
- Students will demonstrate growth in moral maturity and moral courage through an assessment examination instrument applied to students (in progress)



## Goal 3: Professionally knowledgeable

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- Acquire functional knowledge of current business topics, practices and theory and apply basic business concepts to contemporary business issues
- Understand the strategic value of information and the process of managing business information to add value to the business
- Assessed by using the Major Field Test in Business developed by the Educational Testing Service



## Goal 4: Critical Thinker

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- Identify and analyze alternatives and recommend a course of action in unstructured business problems
- Assessment is conducted in a required Business Law course in a course-embedded assessment of an appellate court argument
- (See critical thinking rubric in handout)



# Business Faculty Involvement

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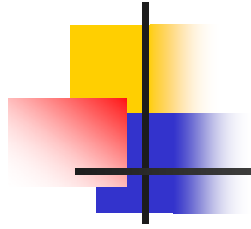
- 3 faculty are responsible for developing and monitoring of each primary goal
- 14/17 involved in the project teams



# Assessments in the Business School have yielded changes in curriculum

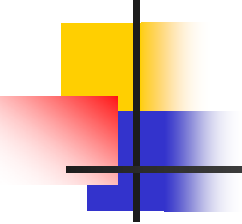
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- Revamp quantitative reasoning requirement from Calculus to new course designed by Math faculty better suited to the content of the Quantitative Business Analysis component of the ETS exam
- Hired internal experts to evaluate critical thinking, oral communication, and writing



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I evaluated the essays using the rubric you supplied. Each essay was evaluated on six standards: thesis/purpose, organization, development, language, sentence structure, and documentation. Each standard was marked as falling below expectations, meeting expectations, or exceeding expectations. The table below includes the final scores.



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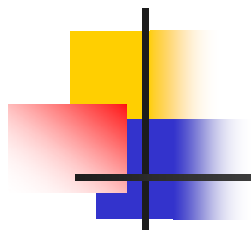
Standard	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Thesis/Purpose	13	21	6
Organization	7	25	8
Development	10	17	13
Language	7	28	5
Sentences	9	25	6
Documentation	3	3	0 (Only six writers included research.)



## Rubric

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The grading rubric included with the first set of essays contains several items that should be clarified. Numbers 1 (“The student used grammatically correct writing”) and 7 (“The paper contains no typographical or grammatical errors”) appear to overlap. Numbers 2 (“The student correctly used technical terminology”) and 5 (“The student used technical vocabulary accurately”) may seem redundant without an explanation of the perceived difference between the two objectives. Instructors might also wish to redesign the rubric to include some additional standards such as awareness of audience, documentation, and format.



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Thank You!

Questions?