

# 2015-2016 Annual Assessment Report Template

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Report:

## Question 1: Program Learning Outcomes

### Q1.1.

Which of the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Sac State Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs) **did you assess?** [Check all that apply]

- 1. Critical Thinking
- 2. Information Literacy
- 3. Written Communication
- 4. Oral Communication
- 5. Quantitative Literacy
- 6. Inquiry and Analysis
- 7. Creative Thinking
- 8. Reading
- 9. Team Work
- 10. Problem Solving
- 11. Civic Knowledge and Engagement
- 12. Intercultural Knowledge and Competency
- 13. Ethical Reasoning
- 14. Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- 15. Global Learning
- 16. Integrative and Applied Learning
- 17. Overall Competencies for GE Knowledge
- 18. Overall Competencies in the Major/Discipline
- 19. Other, specify any assessed PLOs not included above:

- a.
- b.
- c.

### Q1.2.

Please provide more detailed background information about **EACH PLO** you checked above and other information such as how your specific PLOs are **explicitly** linked to the Sac State BLGs:

See attached report

### Q1.2.1.

Do you have rubrics for your PLOs?

- 1. Yes, for all PLOs
- 2. Yes, but for some PLOs
- 3. No rubrics for PLOs
- 4. N/A

5. Other, specify:

**Q1.3.**

Are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission of the university?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

**Q1.4.**

Is your program externally accredited (other than through WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC))?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q1.5**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q1.5**)

**Q1.4.1.**

If the answer to Q1.4 is **yes**, are your PLOs closely aligned with the mission/goals/outcomes of the accreditation agency?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

**Q1.5.**

Did your program use the *Degree Qualification Profile* (DQP) to develop your PLO(s)?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No, but I know what the DQP is
- 3. No, I don't know what the DQP is
- 4. Don't know

**Q1.6.**

Did you use action verbs to make each PLO measurable?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

## Question 2: Standard of Performance for the Selected PLO

**Q2.1.**

Select **ONE(1)** PLO here as an example to illustrate how you conducted assessment (be sure you *checked the correct box* for this PLO in Q1.1):

Written Communication

**Q2.1.1.**

Please provide more background information about the **specific PLO** you've chosen in Q2.1.

See attached report

**Q2.2.**

Has the program developed or adopted **explicit** standards of performance for this PLO?


- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know


4. N/A

**Q2.3.**

Please **provide the rubric(s)** and **standards of performance** that you have developed for this PLO here or in the appendix.

See attached report

 No file attached

 No file attached

Q2.4. PLO	Q2.5. Stdrd	Q2.6. Rubric	Please indicate where you have published the <b>PLO</b> , the <b>standard</b> of performance, and the <b>rubric</b> that was used to measure the PLO:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. In <b>SOME</b> course syllabi/assignments in the program that address the PLO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. In <b>ALL</b> course syllabi/assignments in the program that address the PLO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. In the student handbook/advising handbook
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. In the university catalogue
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. On the academic unit website or in newsletters
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. In the assessment or program review reports, plans, resources, or activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. In new course proposal forms in the department/college/university
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. In the department/college/university's strategic plans and other planning documents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. In the department/college/university's budget plans and other resource allocation documents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Other, specify: <input type="text"/>

### Question 3: Data Collection Methods and Evaluation of Data Quality for the Selected PLO

**Q3.1.**

Was assessment data/evidence **collected** for the selected PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q6**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q6**)
- 4. N/A (skip to **Q6**)

**Q3.1.1.**

How many assessment tools/methods/measures **in total** did you use to assess this PLO?

**Q3.2.**

Was the data **scored/evaluated** for this PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q6**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q6**)
- 4. N/A (skip to **Q6**)

**Q3.2.1.**

Please describe how you collected the assessment data for the selected PLO. For example, in what course(s) or by what means were data collected:

See attached report

(Remember: Save your progress)

### Question 3A: Direct Measures (key assignments, projects, portfolios, etc.)

**Q3.3.**

Were direct measures (key assignments, projects, portfolios, course work, student tests, etc.) used to assess this PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q3.7**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q3.7**)

**Q3.3.1.**

Which of the following direct measures were used? [**Check all that apply**]

- 1. Capstone project (e.g. theses, senior theses), courses, or experiences
- 2. Key assignments from required classes in the program
- 3. Key assignments from elective classes
- 4. Classroom based performance assessment such as simulations, comprehensive exams, or critiques
- 5. External performance assessments such as internships or other community-based projects
- 6. E-Portfolios
- 7. Other Portfolios
- 8. Other, specify:

**Q3.3.2.**

Please **explain** and **attach** the direct measure you used to collect data:

See attached report

 No file attached

 No file attached

**Q3.4.**

What tool was used to evaluate the data?

- 1. No rubric is used to interpret the evidence (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- 2. Used rubric developed/modified by the faculty who teaches the class (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- 3. Used rubric developed/modified by a group of faculty (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- 4. Used rubric pilot-tested and refined by a group of faculty (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- 5. The VALUE rubric(s) (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- 6. Modified VALUE rubric(s) (skip to **Q3.4.2.**)
- 7. Used other means (Answer **Q3.4.1.**)

**Q3.4.1.**

If you used other means, which of the following measures was used? [**Check all that apply**]

- 1. National disciplinary exams or state/professional licensure exams (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- 2. General knowledge and skills measures (e.g. CLA, ETS PP, etc.) (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- 3. Other standardized knowledge and skill exams (e.g. ETC, GRE, etc.) (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)
- 4. Other, specify:  (skip to **Q3.4.4.**)

**Q3.4.2.**

Was the **rubric** aligned directly and explicitly **with the PLO**?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. N/A

**Q3.4.3.**

Was the **direct measure** (e.g. assignment, thesis, etc.) aligned directly and explicitly **with the rubric**?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. N/A

**Q3.4.4.**

Was the **direct measure** (e.g. assignment, thesis, etc.) aligned directly and explicitly **with the PLO**?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. N/A

**Q3.5.**

How many faculty members participated in planning the assessment data **collection** of the selected PLO?

**Q3.5.1.**

How many faculty members participated in the **evaluation** of the assessment data for the selected PLO?

**Q3.5.2.**

If the data was evaluated by multiple scorers, was there a norming process (a procedure to make sure everyone was scoring similarly)?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know
- 4. N/A

**Q3.6.**

How did you **select** the sample of student work (papers, projects, portfolios, etc.)?

See attached report

**Q3.6.1.**

How did you **decide** how many samples of student work to review?

See attached report

**Q3.6.2.**

How many students were in the class or program?

approximately 30

**Q3.6.3.**

How many samples of student work did you evaluate?

all available

**Q3.6.4.**

Was the sample size of student work for the direct measure adequate?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

## Question 3B: Indirect Measures (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.)

**Q3.7.**

Were indirect measures used to assess the PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q3.8**)
- 3. Don't Know (skip to **Q3.8**)

**Q3.7.1.**

Which of the following indirect measures were used? [**Check all that apply**]

- 1. National student surveys (e.g. NSSE)
- 2. University conducted student surveys (e.g. OIR)
- 3. College/department/program student surveys or focus groups
- 4. Alumni surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- 5. Employer surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- 6. Advisory board surveys, focus groups, or interviews

7. Other, specify:

**Q3.7.1.1.**

Please explain and attach the indirect measure you used to collect data:

 No file attached

 No file attached

**Q3.7.2.**

If surveys were used, how was the sample size **decided**?

**Q3.7.3.**

If surveys were used, how did you **select** your sample:

**Q3.7.4.**

If surveys were used, what was the response rate?

## Question 3C: Other Measures (external benchmarking, licensing exams, standardized tests, etc.)

**Q3.8.**

Were external benchmarking data, such as licensing exams or standardized tests, used to assess the PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q3.8.2**)
- 3. Don't Know (skip to **Q3.8.2**)

**Q3.8.1.**

Which of the following measures was used? [**Check all that apply**]

- 1. National disciplinary exams or state/professional licensure exams
- 2. General knowledge and skills measures (e.g. CLA, ETS PP, etc.)

3. Other standardized knowledge and skill exams (e.g. ETC, GRE, etc.)

4. Other, specify:


**Q3.8.2.**


Were other measures used to assess the PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q4.1**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q4.1**)

**Q3.8.3.**

If other measures were used, please specify:

 No file attached

 No file attached


(Remember: Save your progress)


## Question 4: Data, Findings, and Conclusions

**Q4.1.**

Please provide simple tables and/or graphs to summarize the assessment data, findings, and conclusions for the selected PLO for **Q2.1**:

See attached report

 No file attached

 No file attached

**Q4.2.**

Are students doing well and meeting the program standard? If not, how will the program work to improve student performance of the selected PLO?

To some extent (see assessment results)

 No file attached

 No file attached

**Q4.3.**

For the selected PLO, the student performance:

- 1. **Exceeded** expectation/standard
- 2. **Met** expectation/standard



- 3. **Partially** met expectation/standard
- 4. Did not meet expectation/standard
- 5. No expectation/standard has been specified
- 6. Don't know

## Question 4A: Alignment and Quality

### Q4.4.

Did the data, including the direct measures, from all the different assessment tools/measures/methods directly align with the PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

### Q4.5.

Were **all** the assessment tools/measures/methods that were used good measures of the PLO?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

## Question 5: Use of Assessment Data (Closing the Loop)

### Q5.1.

As a result of the assessment effort and based on prior feedback from OAPA, do you anticipate *making any changes* for your program (e.g. course structure, course content, or modification of PLOs)?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (skip to **Q5.2**)
- 3. Don't know (skip to **Q5.2**)

### Q5.1.1.

Please describe *what changes* you plan to make in your program as a result of your assessment of this PLO. Include a description of how you plan to assess the impact of these changes.

We will discuss necessary program changes during our strategic planning retreat to be held in August.

### Q5.1.2.

Do you have a plan to assess the *impact of the changes* that you anticipate making?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

### Q5.2.

How have the assessment data from the last annual assessment been used so far? [**Check all that apply**]

	1. Very Much	2. Quite a Bit	3. Some	4. Not at All	5. N/A
1. Improving specific courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Modifying curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Improving advising and mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Revising learning outcomes/goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Revising rubrics and/or expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Developing/updating assessment plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Annual assessment reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Program review	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Prospective student and family information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Alumni communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. WSCUC accreditation (regional accreditation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Program accreditation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. External accountability reporting requirement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Trustee/Governing Board deliberations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Strategic planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Institutional benchmarking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Academic policy development or modifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Institutional improvement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Resource allocation and budgeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. New faculty hiring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Professional development for faculty and staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Recruitment of new students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Other, specify:

**Q5.2.1.**

Please provide a detailed example of how you used the assessment data above:

NA

(Remember: Save your progress)

### Additional Assessment Activities

**Q6.**

Many academic units have collected assessment data on aspect of their program *that are not related to the PLOs* (i.e. impacts of an advising center, etc.). **If** your program/academic unit has collected data on program *elements*, please briefly report your results here:

NA

**Q7.**

What PLO(s) do you plan to assess next year? [Check all that apply]

- 1. Critical Thinking

- 2. Information Literacy
- 3. Written Communication
- 4. Oral Communication
- 5. Quantitative Literacy
- 6. Inquiry and Analysis
- 7. Creative Thinking
- 8. Reading
- 9. Team Work
- 10. Problem Solving
- 11. Civic Knowledge and Engagement
- 12. Intercultural Knowledge and Competency
- 13. Ethical Reasoning
- 14. Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- 15. Global Learning
- 16. Integrative and Applied Learning
- 17. Overall Competencies for GE Knowledge
- 18. Overall Competencies in the Major/Discipline
- 19. Other, specify any PLOs not included above:

- a.
- b.
- c.

**Q8.** Please attach any additional files here:

16.docx  
33.33 KB

No file attached

No file attached

No file attached

**Q8.1.**

Have you attached any files to this form? If yes, please list every attached file here:

Yes. PLO writing evaluation results for AY 15/16

## Program Information (Required)

**P1.**

Program/Concentration Name(s): [by degree]

BA Environmental Studies

**P1.1.**

Program/Concentration Name(s): [by department]

Environmental Studies BA

**P2.**

Report Author(s):

Jeffery Foran

**P2.1.**

Department Chair/Program Director:

Jeffery Foran

**P2.2.**

Assessment Coordinator:

Jeffery Foran/Cathy Ishikawa

**P3.**

Department/Division/Program of Academic Unit

Environ. Studies

**P4.**

College:

College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies

**P5.**

Total enrollment for Academic Unit during assessment semester (see Departmental Fact Book):

220

**P6.**

Program Type:

- 1. Undergraduate baccalaureate major
- 2. Credential
- 3. Master's Degree
- 4. Doctorate (Ph.D./Ed.D./Ed.S./D.P.T./etc.)
- 5. Other, specify:

**P7.** Number of **undergraduate degree programs** the academic unit has?

1

**P7.1.** List all the names:

BS in Environmental Studies

**P7.2.** How many concentrations appear on the diploma for this undergraduate program?

0

**P8.** Number of **master's degree programs** the academic unit has?

0

**P8.1.** List all the names:

**P8.2.** How many concentrations appear on the diploma for this master's program?

N/A

**P9.** Number of **credential programs** the academic unit has?

0

**P9.1.** List all the names:

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**P10.** Number of **doctorate degree programs** the academic unit has?

0

**P10.1.** List all the names:

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When was your **assessment plan**...

	1. Before 2010-11	2. 2011-12	3. 2012-13	4. 2013-14	5. 2014-15	6. No Plan	7. Don't know
<b>P11.</b> developed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>P11.1.</b> last updated?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**P11.3.**

Please attach your latest **assessment plan**:

 No file attached


**P12.**

Has your program developed a **curriculum map**?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

**P12.1.**

Please attach your latest **curriculum map**:

 No file attached

**P13.**

Has your program indicated in the curriculum map where assessment **of student learning** occurs?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

**P14.**

Does your program have a capstone class?

- 1. Yes, indicate: Senior Thesis

- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

**P14.1.**

Does your program have **any** capstone project?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

(**Remember:** Save your progress)

## Writing Evaluation Results for Program Review

### **Introduction**

As part of the annual and period program assessment processes, the Program Learning Objective/Outcome B - Ability to write clearly and persuasively - was evaluated quantitatively. Two sets of writing assignments were analyzed to compare students in earlier stages of the program to those finishing the program. For students finishing the program, senior theses drafts were analyzed. All students in the major must complete a senior thesis to graduate, and because they generally take the thesis class during their final semester, theses provide a good estimate of writing skills students have when graduating. Students' first drafts were analyzed because final drafts were influenced by the thesis instructor's advice and edits. This choice may have underestimated students' abilities, given that they knew it was a first draft and that they may have learned more about writing through meeting with their instructor.

The writing assignment used to evaluate students near the beginning of the program was the first writing assignment for ENV5 112, "International Environmental Issues," a writing intensive course for ENV5 majors. For this assignment, students wrote a page in class about an environmental issue that interested them. They took their in-class drafts and submitted them as a one-page draft that the course instructors commented on. Students then researched their issue and expanded the paper to two pages. While students submitted a revised version of this paper, their first two-page version was analyzed to minimize the influence of instructor advice and editing.

The rubric for evaluating students' writing considered performance in the following areas: Thesis or Focus, Organization, Support and Reasoning, Style, and Writing (Appendix A, adapted from Northeastern Illinois University's writing rubric). This rubric contains similar skills as the AAC&U's LEAP VALUE Written Communication rubric, but skills were organized in a way the rater (C. Ishikawa) found more intuitive and easy to apply. The four proficiency categories match well between the two rubrics, so a 4 ("High Proficiency") on our rubric corresponded to a 4 ("Capstone") on the VALUE rubric, and so on for the lower categories.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### *Senior Thesis*

The goal of having at least 70% of students leave with scores of "3-Proficiency" or "4-High Proficiency" was only met for the Style category. Style had over 70% of students in the proficient categories, while other criteria had only 45 to 50% of students in the proficient categories (Table 1). All students had at least some proficiency in style and mechanics and all but one had some proficiency in organization. In general, students were able to construct sentences well and to write in a fairly professional tone. Overuse of strong modifiers and informal phrases were the most common reasons for students receiving "2-Some Proficiency" scores for style. For mechanics, some students may have not submitted their cleanest effort because they knew this was a draft. However, most papers that fell in the "2-Some Proficiency" category for mechanics had errors that repeated. Missing or misplaced commas were common, but run-on sentences and sentence fragments were rare, with only one or two occurring in a paper, if at all.

**Table 1.** Percent of papers ( $n = 22$ ) receiving each score for five criteria (see Appendix \_\_\_ for descriptions of performance required for each score).

	<b>4 High Proficiency</b>	<b>3 Proficiency</b>	<b>2 Some Proficiency</b>	<b>1 Limited Proficiency</b>
Thesis/Focus	14	32	36	18
Organization	14	36	45	5
Support/Reasoning	5	41	36	18
Style	5	68	27	0
Mechanics	0	45	55	0

Organization may have been better than the scores suggest. Each paper had sections arranged in a reasonably logical way, so large-scale organization was fairly proficient for most papers. For three papers, low scores on organization were due to the paper appearing to be written in a scientific paper format but not following the organizational conventions for such a paper well. Most other issues appeared at the paragraph level. For example, some papers had long paragraphs with multiple topics that should have been broken into several paragraphs. Other papers had paragraphs that stuck to one topic, but had topic sentences that did not reflect the topic or help lead the reader through the paper.

The Thesis/Focus and Support/Reasoning categories had more papers that did not meet the qualifications for “2-Some Proficiency” than other criteria had (Table 1). No paper received a “Limited Proficiency” rating for both criteria; four papers received a “limited proficiency” score for Thesis/Focus and four received “Limited Proficiency” for Support/Reasoning. Papers receiving this low rating for Thesis/Focus essentially had no statement of their goal or purpose for writing the paper (though in one case the title described the focus well). Reasons for low support and reasoning scores varied. Two papers appeared to be written with a scientific format but only presented results—no analysis or discussion of the results were present. Another paper had strings of facts and statistics with no connection between them or to the thesis. The fourth paper had limited analysis, with factual errors and overgeneralizations permeating what little analysis was there.

#### *Paper for ENVS 112*

Score distributions tended to be lower for ENVS 112 papers than they were for theses for some criteria (Table 2). In particular, Thesis/Focus, Support/Reasoning, and Style criteria appear to be higher for students later in their course of study, especially when looking at the percentage of papers scoring in the proficient or highly proficient categories (Figure 1). Part of the improvement in the “Thesis/Focus” criteria may be due to the fact that students in 112 had less time to choose their topic, and instructions for the paper did not specify that their paper should state the purpose of the paper somewhere. Thesis students, on the other hand, had written a prospectus, and the instructor had used the prospectus to help students narrow and define their topic.

The length of the assignments may have also led to differences in scores. For example, proofreading two pages takes less effort than proofreading 15 to 20, which may help explain the higher percentage of students with proficient mechanics in ENVS 112. Also, students in ENVS

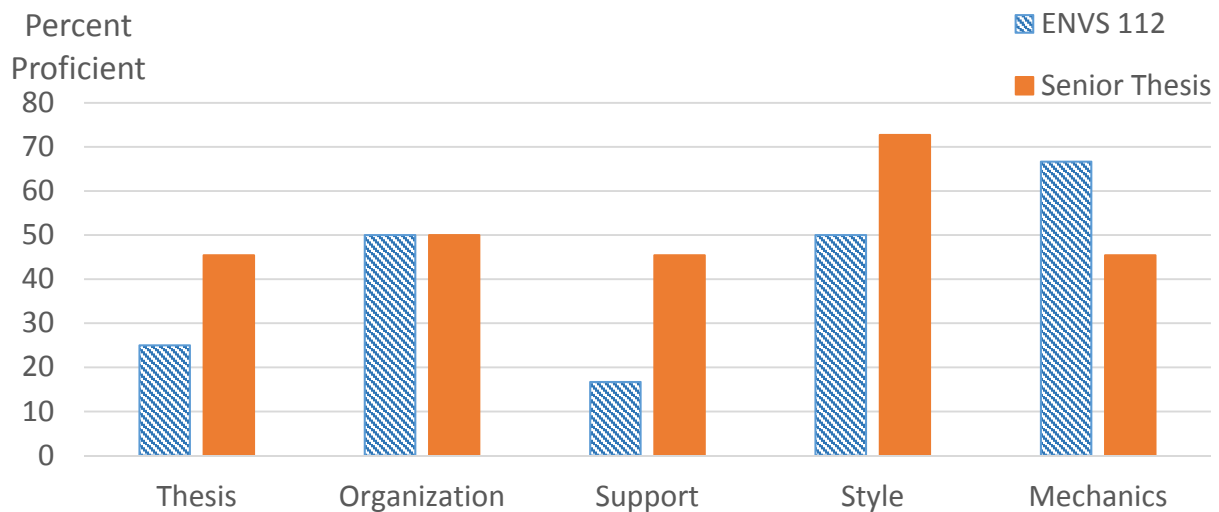


112 may have perceived that with only two pages they did not need to provide much supporting evidence. Students with 2 or 1 scores for “Support / Reasoning” often used one anecdote, described in detail, to support a broad generalization. While some students successfully gave an appropriate amount of evidence, more might have done so had they perceived the assignment as more demanding.

**Table 2.** Percent of papers (n = 12) receiving each score for five criteria (see Appendix \_\_\_ for descriptions of performance required for each score).

	<b>4 High Proficiency</b>	<b>3 Proficiency</b>	<b>2 Some Proficiency</b>	<b>1 Limited Proficiency</b>
Thesis/Focus	0	25	25	50
Organization	8	42	33	17
Support/Reasoning	8	8	67	17
Style	0	50	50	0
Mechanics	8	58	33	0

**Figure 1.** Percent of papers from two classes that received ratings of "Proficiency" or "High Proficiency" for five criteria. ENVS 112, a Writing Intensive course, is normally taken early in a student's course of study; Senior Thesis is normally completed during a student's final semester.



## Appendix A

Rubric used to evaluate student writing, adapted from Northeastern Illinois University's writing rubric ([http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/assessment/rubrics/writing\\_rubric\\_Northeastern.pdf](http://www.csusm.edu/ids/course-design-and-instruction/assessment/rubrics/writing_rubric_Northeastern.pdf)).

Quality Criteria	No/Limited Proficiency (1 point)	Some Proficiency (2 points)	Proficiency (3 points)	High Proficiency (4 points)
1. Thesis/Focus: (a) Clarity (b) Originality	Reader cannot determine thesis & purpose OR thesis has no relation to the writing task.	Thesis and purpose are somewhat vague OR only loosely related to the writing task,  AND/OR unimagative	Thesis and purpose are fairly clear and match the writing task. Thesis and purpose are somewhat original.	Thesis and purpose are clear; closely match the writing task, and provide fresh insight.
2. Organization	Unclear organization OR organizational plan is inappropriate to thesis. No transitions. Does not adhere to organizational conventions for assigned writing format.	Some signs of logical organization in support of the thesis. Transitions are abrupt, illogical, and ineffective. May deviate substantially from organizational conventions.	Organization supports thesis and purpose. Transitions are generally appropriate. However, sequence of ideas could be improved. May deviate slightly from organizational conventions.	Fully & imaginatively supports thesis & purpose. Sequence of ideas is effective. Transitions are smooth and effective. Follows organizational conventions for type of writing.
3. Support/ Reasoning: (a) Ideas (b) Details	Offers simplistic, undeveloped, or cryptic support for ideas; Inappropriate or off-topic generalizations, faulty assumptions, errors of fact.	Offers some support that may that may be dubious, too broad or obvious. Details are too general, not interpreted, irrelevant to thesis, or inappropriately repetitive.	Offers solid but less original reasoning. Assumptions or reasoning connective evidence to conclusion are not always made explicit. Contains some appropriate details or examples.	Substantial, logical, & concrete development of ideas. Assumptions are made explicit. Details are germane, original, and convincingly interpreted.
4. Style (a) Sentences (b) Diction (c) Tone/Voice	Superficial and stereotypical language. Oral rather than written language patterns predominate.	Sentences show little variety, simplistic. Diction is somewhat immature; relies on clichés. Tone may have some inconsistencies in	Sentences show some variety & complexity. Uneven control. Diction is accurate, generally appropriate, less advanced. Tone is	Sentences are varied, complex, & employed for effect. Diction is precise, appropriate, using advanced vocabulary. Tone is

		tense and person.	appropriate.	mature, consistent, suitable for topic and audience.
5. Writing Conventions: Grammar/Spelling/Usage/Punctuation	Mechanical & usage errors so severe that writer's ideas are difficult to understand.	Repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage. Pattern of flaws.	Grammar and syntax are correct with very few errors in spelling or punctuation.	Essentially error free. Evidence of superior control of diction.