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CLA Project Reporta

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CLA Project Report: Gregory B. Sadler

1. Course information

- a. In what course(s) did you administer your CLA performance task?

2 sections of PHIL 110 Critical Thinking

- b. Please indicate if the majority of students enrolled in this class are freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

Freshmen

2. Performance task

- a. What was the task?

Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of two different proposals for remedying low standardized test scores in a small, rural, poor town

J. Green advocates an extensive academic support program, including a tutoring center.

W. Jones wants to turn the high school over to a private contractor, College Bound, Inc. He makes three basic arguments

First, he argues that the academic support program will be counterproductive. He references Document E

Second, he argues money would be better spent in bringing in College Bound, Inc. than on academic support programs. He references Documents D and B

Third, he argues that statistical evidence shows the effectiveness of College Bound, Inc. He references Documents C and F

- b. Describe the documents you included in the task. Why did you choose these specific documents?

The documents were used to argue fallaciously for one of the solutions. We provided: 1 Memo, 1 Newspaper editorial, 1 Press Release, 3 statistical documents, 1 set of research abstracts. The reason why we chose the specific documents is that we modeled our documents after the CLA Crime Reduction performance task.

Document A is a memo/report about the Foundation of Excellence in Education, the source of Document D. It indicates that the FEE is funded by **College Bound, Inc.**

Document B is a **Newspaper editorial by S. Jones (brother of W. Jones). It contains some fallacious appeals**

Document C, E, F are statistical charts, appealed to by Jones, but susceptible of different interpretations. F provides a misleading interpretation of C

Document D is a press release by the FEE, lauding College Bound, Inc. It contains some fallacies

Document G is a set of three research abstracts. They do not support the contention that College Bound Inc. works better than other alternatives.

- c. To what extent did a successful response to the performance task require students to integrate information and data in both narrative and quantitative forms? Explain.

In order to succeed in this performance task, students had to be able to assess the reliability and meaning of statistical arguments and artifacts. They also had to assess narrative based documents, such as A, B, and D.

3. Performance Task Administration
a. When did you administer the performance task?

**Feb 9: Reviewed CLA documents,
Feb 11: CLA Exercise in class**

- b. Was the student's score on the assessment calculated in the final grade? If yes, what weight did it have?

Score on Assessment was not calculated in final grade. Students were given points for participation.

4. Student Performance
a. Identify any consistent strengths you found in student performance.

Very few strengths, other than writing abilities not *too* bad.

- b. Identify any consistent weaknesses you found in student performance.

Very few students were able to even call into question any of the purported evidence provided. Most unquestionably accepted claims at face value, and did not examine them. Very few students were able to identify the obvious fallacies built into the documents. To be fair, the CLA was administered (per instructions) very early in the semester, before students had time to study Critical Thinking much. Our one graduating senior did quite poorly

5. Recommendation and follow up
a. Knowing that our students' performance on the CLA will be part of our institutional assessment, what will you will do in the courses you teach to address the skills and competencies assessed by the CLA?

I plan to incorporate CLA type exercises into my future critical thinking classes.

- b. What recommendations would you offer for all faculty members?

Students need to be discouraged from simply expressing their own opinions in papers, exercises, and need to be encouraged to think critically, examine putative evidence.

<u>Student and Banner ID</u>	<u>Evaluation of Evidence</u>	<u>Analysis and Synthesis of Evidence</u>	<u>Drawing Conclusions</u>	<u>Acknowledging Alternative Explanations</u>	<u>Written Communication</u>
. 830672019	2	2	2	2	4
830696445	2	2	2	1	2
830696884	5	5	5	6	5
.830059649	4	4	4	3	4
830685536	5	4	4	4	5
830657515	2	2	2	2	3
830693289	2	2	2	2	3
830692808	2	2	2	2	2
830685572	4	3	3	3	4
830685501	2	2	2	1	3
830687560	2	2	2	2	3
830696030	1	1	1	1	2
830694225	2	2	2	1	3
830696304	2	1	2	2	2
830690513	3	5	4	3	4
830694578	5	3	4	4	4
830080015	4	4	5	4	4
830696316	2	2	2	1	3
830690981	3	3	3	2	3
830697895	5	5	5	4	5
830687280	2	2	2	1	2
830688824	2	2	2	2	2
830028533	2	2	1	2	2
830688730	2	2	2	1	3
830689936	5	5	5	5	5
830689190	3	3	2	2	3
830698133	3	2	3	4	4

<u>Student and Banner ID</u>	<u>Evaluation of Evidence</u>	<u>Analysis and Synthesis of Evidence</u>	<u>Drawing Conclusions</u>	<u>Acknowledging Alternative Explanations</u>	<u>Written Communication</u>
830633287	2	2	2	1	2
830689070	2	2	2	2	3
830685993	1	1	1	1	2
830685699	4	4	4	4	4
830682281	4	3	3	3	3
830694258	4	3	4	4	4
830073438*	2	2	2	2	4
830692197	5	6	6	5	6
830693788	2	2	2	1	3
830696267	1	1	1	1	2
830687312	4	3	3	2	4
830692424	1	1	2	1	1
830692415	2	2	2	2	3
830682633	1	1	2	1	2
<u>41 scores total</u>					
Average (Mean)	2.80	2.61	2.70	2.37	3.22

*senior on line to graduate