

**General Education Project Synthesis using the Lane core ability**  
*Communicating Effectively*

**HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT:**

In the fourth year of the General Education Assessment project at Lane Community College the focus was on one core ability - Communicating Effectively. The Assessment team, in conjunction with the Gen Ed team, decided to focus on one core ability in an effort to get clear and detailed results of assessment and to streamline the project for all parties involved. Thus Gen-Ed projects were conducted by individual faculty during the 2010-2011 academic year using the Communicating Effectively rubric. The process and results of this assessment project are summarized below.

A faculty Gen-Ed Assessment project Coordinator position was developed to increase the breadth and clarity of faculty involvement in the project and to relieve the Assessment team and Gen-Ed team of unnecessary and taxing involvement of the details of the project. The faculty coordinator, JS Bird, served in the winter and spring term of 2011 after being on sabbatical in fall 2010.

A project contest was developed by Lisa Turnbull to offer an award to the most creative use of the core ability of Communicating Effectively in an academic project as a way to increase faculty involvement in focusing on core abilities and generate interest in core ability assessment.

The winning project was developed by Kathleen Caprario-Ulrich: Studio Art.

**Project:** Authentically describe and communicate (*not illustrate*) a portion of appropriated text visually and to include that text in a text/image format, i.e., a poster. The source material was the book used by Lane's "Reading Together" campus-wide initiative *West of Kabul, East of New York* by Tamim Ansary.

The completed designs were exhibited on public transportation LTD buses in Eugene. This project neatly tied together the Reading Together project, multi-cultural awareness, Communicating Effectively and public exhibition of student work.

Other projects submitted:

Sandy Brown Jensen: LLC

Sheri Kendall-DuPont: Health Professions

Cheryl Hankinson: LLC

## **GEN-ED PROJECT ASSESSMENT GOALS 2010/11:**

- Develop and define Faculty Gen-Ed coordinator position
- Refine, streamline, and continue to development overall assessment plan
- Increase faculty involvement in assessment at Lane
- Continue to develop a *culture of assessment* by faculty at Lane
- Streamline and improve scoring and process of artifact collection
- Continue to develop, improve, and use *tools of assessment* (rubrics, scoring process)
- Develop processes and train faculty to provide clear and consistent measure of assessment
- Provide evidence of assessment and make public said evidence
- Increase number of Gen Ed projects and Gen Ed faculty focusing on the *communicating effectively* rubric specifically and Lane core abilities globally

## **CORE ABILITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The process of assessing core outcomes is lengthy, complex, and involves significant faculty involvement along the way. First, core outcomes must be clearly defined, and then a rubric must be designed to accurately assess the specific core ability across all Gen-Ed disciplines. Next, artifacts must be collected by the Gen Ed coordinator and organized, scoring process developed, and artifacts scored – or – faculty are solicited and encouraged to submit projects proposals focused on core abilities to the A-Team for funding, which, if chosen, are then scored by the originating faculty and submitted both verbally in committee and in a written report to the Gen Ed coordinator. Once projects and/or artifacts are scored, the data is synthesized and reported. The data will then be made available to faculty and hopefully used to infuse core outcomes into faculty curriculum to improve student success.

## **GEN-ED PROJECTS USING THE COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY RUBRIC:**

Gen-Ed Projects were solicited across Gen-Ed disciplines from full and part time faculty. Projects were defined as faculty assignments focused on highlighting the core ability of communicating effectively using the CE rubric. The CE rubric was developed by members of the Gen-Ed team to assist faculty in assessing the Communicating Effectively core ability in Lane classes regardless of discipline. The rubric was not meant to reflect the student's grade in the course or on a project; rather, it was designed as a cross-disciplinary tool to gauge the ability of communicating effectively by students across the Gen-Ed curricula. Using the rubric has proved to be a way for faculty to gauge the CE core value among students and to evaluate how well and directly particular projects addressed this core value.

The six dimensions of the Communicating Effectively rubric are: 1) Organization/Structure; 2) Support, Evidence; 3) Content; 4) Technique; 5) Presentation; 6) Purpose or Effect.

These six dimensions are scored at four levels of ability: 1) Unacceptable; 2) Emerging; 3) Proficient; 4) Mastery.

### **Winter Term Projects**

ANTH 103: Into to Physical Anthropology, Denise Couch

BIO 103: Forest Ecology, Pat Boleyn

### **Spring term Projects**

WR 122: Composition, Jose Chaves

WR 121: English Composition, Jennifer von Ammon

FR 103: First Year French, Karin Almquist, Robert Mclauchlin

ART 131: Intermediate Drawing, Satoko Motouji

ART 115: Basic Design, Robin Seloover

ART 115: Basic Design for Graphic Designers, Alice Sundstrom

BIO 102: Ethnobotany, Pat Boleyn

There were also a few projects submitted that were not awarded funding in spring term due to the amount of funding available. It was good to have so many projects submitted, which demonstrated increased faculty awareness and involvement of the project.

SP220: Communication, Gender and Culture, Mara Levin

ED 200 , Merrill Watrous

MATH 65, Art Peck

### **Gen Ed Project changes**

Unlike previous terms, all faculty were required to utilize the rubric without modification and were encouraged (if not required) to score all six dimensions of the Communicating Effectively rubric (attached). Consequently, the scoring data is clear, comprehensive, and more directly related to the rubric and core value. All student projects were scored with the same rubric and the same components of the rubric. Thus, the only variable in scoring is based on the individual faculty, rather than changes or omissions to the rubric. It seems logical, then, that scoring data may be more reliable and measurable than in past years. Additionally, by focusing on one core ability, a higher sample number of scoring data is available. Focusing on one core ability for the Gen-Ed project assessment was very effective in developing a focus on communicating effectively, and, perhaps, more importantly, in meaningful dialogue among faculty about this core value at Lane. Ironically, after reviewing the project reports, it seems apparent that faculty engaged in the process of evaluating their own ability to communicate effectively (the goals and objectives of a project or assignment) before assisting students in developing their ability to communicate effectively. As one faculty stated in her CE project report “...it (this project) has helped me develop as an instructor and has provided me with additional tools for improving how I deliver course content.”

### **SYNTHESIS: Winter Term Projects**

#### **BIO 102H: Forest Ecology, Pat Boleyn**

Goals: Use rubric to redesign and assess final presentation, including poster sessions, slideshows, and group presentations. Design and share a CE rubric for students to assess their own final presentations.

Results: Using the rubric to assess projects in the development stage Pat decided to change some teaching focus to improve final results: “*After use of this rubric in the early part of my class...most students were marginal in their ability to write and organize their ideas...many lacked the technical skills to write in a scientific manner, or to write sentences free of technical errors...it allowed me to add activities which helped the students learn the art of research and technical writing.*”

Because of this work, Pat will make the following changes to her curriculum: “*A longer lesson on research skills and writing techniques...more examples of well written technical reports for students.*”

Student scores: Mastery 12), Proficiency 18), Introductory 25), Unacceptable 5.

### **ANTH 101: Physical Anthropology, Denise Couch**

Goals: Provide a semester long forum for practice with effective communication, using three types of communication, written, verbal, and multimedia. Students will prepare and participate in research colloquium which requires a four page research paper and presentation of their findings using Powerpoint or tri-fold poster.

Results: *“...using the rubric keeps these concepts at the forefront of my mind when designing assignments and activities, even if I don’t use it specially for grading. I continue to work with the rubric, at least in principle, for group projects and other directed writing. I often post the rubric or some modification to my moodle site, or share it with students in some way each term.”*

Student scores: Mastery 6), Proficiency 43), Introductory 43), Unacceptable 16.

### **SYNTHESIS: Spring Term Projects**

#### **WR 122: Composition, Jose Chaves**

Goals: Improve grading process for expository and self-reflective essays. Improve the students understanding of the principles, terms, concepts of communicating effectively, and in demonstrating their understanding and articulation of the critical concepts of communicating effectively. Students will create creative and illustrative examples of what is meant by the specific components of the rubric. Students will then critique and grade peers work using the rubric’s principles. Lastly, students will provide a reflection on the process itself and how it impacted their work and peer assessment.

Results: The rubric... *“forced me to re-evaluate the means by which I grade my students, to make my “internalized rubric” externalized...become more articulate in what I wanted...and more rigorous in my assessment. ...it made me reflect on each aspect of the assignment and how I was going to grade it. I found myself sharpening definitions and providing more examples of what I was looking for.”* Jose created new handouts with clear definitions, co-developed with students, and attendant examples: *“I will continue to use all of them in some form...they were helpful in the articulation of effective communication...”*

Student scores: Mastery 17), Proficiency 82), Introductory 82), Unacceptable 2.

#### **WR 121: Composition, Jennifer von Ammon**

Goals: Assess essay #2, Problem/ Solution focused on Michael Pollan’s “Unhappy Meals.”

Results: The rubric *“...gave me a new language to assess student outcomes on a particular assignment... I may decide to focus on a different reading assignment as a result of this assessment.”* Future changes include *“...spend more time working on writing thesis statements with students...I found the students needed more attention establishing a clear thesis.”*

Student scores: Mastery 18), Proficiency 35), Introductory 29), Unacceptable 2.

#### **Art 231: Intermediate Drawing, Satoko Motouji**

Goals: Assist students in articulating and communicating a stylistic analysis of a chosen artwork during a museum (Jordan Schnitzer) visit and in developing an essay explaining conceptual and artistic choices (current social, economic, or personal issue) used in a surrealist style drawing. Students will also present their drawing and discuss their choices verbally. Utilize the rubric to assist in developing teaching

methods to develop student writing. While the main goal was focused on using the rubric to assess the writing aspect of each project, Satoko was also interested in the rubric as an assessment tool for the artwork itself.

Results: Using the rubric “...*Motivated me to rework the way I incorporate writing assignments in a studio class...and...reexamine my lectures in explaining stylistic analysis of art work.*” Satoko also developed new slide presentations for this project. “*The rubric served as an effective guideline...made me pay attention to more specific conceptual elements in students work. The rubric informs that two separate writing assignments might not be as effective as one...and then allow the students to edit and rewrite their essays...My involvement with this project motivated me to change and improve my class lectures.*”

Student scores, Project 1: Mastery 14), Proficiency 22), Introductory 50), Unacceptable 10.

Student scores, Project 2: Mastery 9), Proficiency 20), Introductory 51), Unacceptable 5.

### **Art 155: Basic Design, Alice Sundstrom**

Goals: Assess final project: create a composition illustrating the meaning of an action word using principles of 2D design and composition. Use rubric to assess communication of artwork at various levels of completion and final result.

Results: The rubric “...*I found the rubric to be very useful. However for grading an art project, the rubric needs to be supplemented with additional comments/critiques...it also pointed out areas in which the assignment has some weaknesses...*”

Future Changes: “*Once I tallied the overall scores it became clear there are areas in which I need to spend more time developing student skills. I will not only alter **how** I teach these skills but **when**...*”

Student scores: Mastery 40), Proficiency 34), Introductory 18), Unacceptable 4.

### **BIO 102: Ethnobotany, Pat Boleyn**

Goals: Assess and help students develop final project: Slideshow assignment.

Results: The rubric “...*this summary helps me to improve my teaching in areas where students did not do as well. For example, I will include a longer lesson on research skills and the use of APA format for references.*” Future Changes: “*I will modify my class to include the use of this rubric for all student projects that involve communication. I will also use it to highlight the sections of my classes that need improvement and those that are already working well.*”

Student scores: Mastery 25), Proficiency 45), Introductory 22), Unacceptable 1.

### **FR 103: Introductory French, Karin Almquist and Robert Mclauchlin**

Goals: Assess students understanding of French language, culture and subsequent communication of that knowledge in final oral report and Powerpoint presentation.

Results: The rubric proved somewhat difficult in scoring beginning students in a foreign language, as proficiency is not a realistic score for this level of course. However “...*in spite of the barrier using a foreign language may present...we gain valuable information as to the qualitative assessment of our students and thus are able to provide them with important “objective” feedback ...and continue towards (mastery) of effective communication.*” *Ultimately... (despite the difficulties of the project and class)...this program allowed our department to successfully implement a new means of assessment into our curriculum through the integration of the CE rubric.*”

Student scores: Mastery 0), Proficiency 98), Introductory 85), Unacceptable 45.

### ART116: Basic Design, Robin Selover

Goals: There were two main goals in Robin's project, one written piece, and one art piece, closely related in content. 1) Research Paper- Assess the student's ability to research an artist, including biographical information and cultural/historical context, artistic practice and product, and analyze three pieces of the artist's visual art. 2) Assess the student's ability to research a visual artist and create an artist book, which pays tribute to the artist while demonstrating clear, purposeful and insightful understanding of the chosen artist visual language.

Results: *"I...provided more examples of the project for student reference. I assign small in-class writing assignments that offer students opportunities to practice writing... I will....develop more exercises with regards to analyzing and writing about visual artwork. This terms written projects were especially disappointing in some ways, but that may be because I was using the rubric to grade them and there for being more scrutinizing of outcomes. I will encourage art faculty to use the rubric, I found the assessment and grading to be effective and informative companions."*

Student scores, written project: Mastery 36), Proficiency 79), Introductory 35), Unacceptable 5

Student scores, artist book: Mastery 71), Proficiency 71), Introductory 21), Unacceptable 2.

\*scores include revised papers and projects

### SUMMARY/ CONCLUSION:

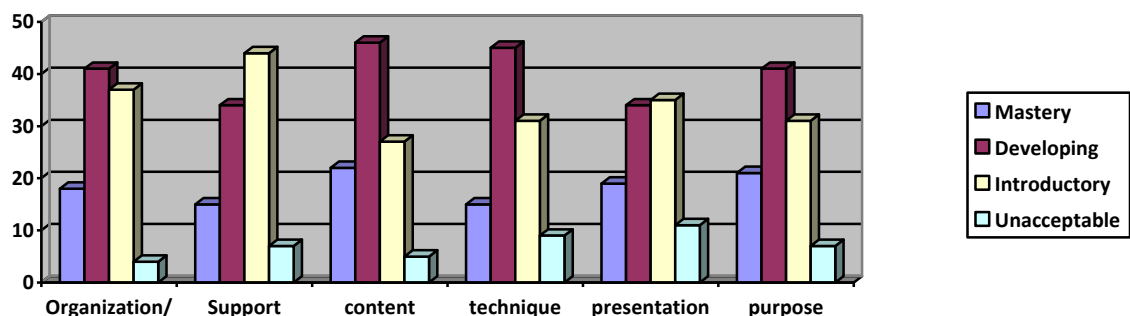
Clear data was created assessing Lane's core ability of Communicating Effectively. Nine projects were funded and scored. A total of 182 students were scored in five General Education disciplines. Some students were graded on more than one project. The major variable of this data is the individual scoring of the projects using the rubric. There was no measured scorer reliability or scoring training in the projects assessment. Again, the main goal of project assessment is involving faculty in focusing on infusing core abilities into individual faculty curriculum.

A breakdown of the data follows:

**Figure 1. Data from the 20010-11 Gen-Ed Projects Showing the Percentage of Students at Exemplary, Proficient, Marginal and Unacceptable Levels for each of the Dimensions of the Communicating Effectively Rubric.**

Dimension of core ability	Mastery level (Exemplary)	Developing level (Proficiency)	Introductory level (Marginal)	Unacceptable	
	4	3	2	1	total
1. organization/ structure	42 (18%)	93 (41%)	83 (37%)	11 (4%)	229 (100%)
2. support/evidence	33 (15%)	75 (34%)	97 (44%)	16 (7%)	221 (100%)
3. content	50 (22%)	104 (46%)	60 (27%)	11 (5%)	225 (100%)
4. technique	34 (15%)	99 (45%)	68 (31%)	17 (9%)	218 (100%)
5. presentation	43 (19%)	78 (34%)	80 (35%)	27 (11%)	228 (100%)
6. purpose/effect	48 (21%)	91(41%)	71(31%)	14 ( 7%)	224 (100%)

**Figure 2. Data from Gen-Ed Projects Showing the Percentage of Students at Exemplary, Proficient, Marginal and Unacceptable Levels for each of the Dimensions of the Communicate Effectively Rubric.**



### Data Analysis

As in previous years, the majority of students fall into the developing level except for the categories of presentation and support/evidence. Using this data would suggest that Lane students may need more assistance in developing support/evidence and presentation, while students seem to be scoring well in content, technique and purpose. Students also scored high in technique in 2009-10. It seems data such as this collected over several years could promote subtle changes in curriculum for Lane faculty.

### Concept Analysis

Apart from data, and as a means of infusing core abilities into general education, this project seems to very successful. While it's true that one of the main goals of this project was to create data, it is clear that using the rubric also had a significant impact on faculty teaching, an equally important goal. During CE project meetings it was apparent that using the rubric, focusing on the CE core ability, and being involved in this project with other faculty created an environment for in-depth, spirited discussions regarding teaching practices, the rubric, communicating effectively, and project scoring. Because of this project and its subsequent meetings most faculty involved spent time altering, rethinking, or reworking their project outcomes, guidelines and/or processes. There was consensus among all faculty involved that this project assisted self reflection in teaching and promoted changes because of that reflection. Clearly, being involved in this project had an impact on teaching, currently, and in the future, and assisted in our goal of developing a *culture of assessment* here at Lane. As art instructor Satoko Motouji stated in her report: *"I immensely appreciate meetings with faulty members involved in this project. It was very helpful to me to listen to other instructor's views and methods in teaching. This kind of meeting...is essential to revisit my teaching and make positive changes."* There is also evidence that being involved with this project will have future impact on faculty teaching apart from the current term. *"I often use this rubric, as well as the critical thinking rubric, to design activities and assignments, so I find it useful even when I'm not participating in a directed project."* Denise Couch.

It is also evident that there are benefits and obstacles that occur when faculty share the rubric with students. Not all faculty shared the rubric; other faculty shared a modified rubric with the students, and some faculty shared the rubric as written. In most cases, the use of the rubric with

students also promoted reflection, evaluation and subsequent modifications to projects and assignments. Benefits included assisting students in their understanding of concepts and terms associated with communicating effectively, developing student peer evaluations, and understanding expectations of a project. Obstacles include the terminology of the rubric, in that students often have a difficult time understanding the language of the rubric. One faculty in particular (Chaves) spent significant time helping his students understand the rubric, even going so far as to co-develop a list of terms and their meanings with his students; a list he intends to share with future classes at Lane. Furthermore, the rubric is not an adequate grading template (nor is it intended to be); and, finally, the rubric may not conform to discipline project objectives (visual art, foreign language), at least in terms of peer assessment.

### **Conclusion**

It is important to remember in analyzing this data that the rubric is not intended as a grading process of discipline knowledge. In fact, students may have mistakes in discipline content and still communicate at a high level, or conversely know the content well but demonstrate poor ability in communicating that knowledge. Additionally, the mastery level should not be seen as a grading equivalent, such as A. It is not a reasonable expectation that the majority of Lane students should attain the level of mastery in the rubric. Depending on the level of course, that may or may not be a realistic goal. Rather, the goal is to *focus* and *improve* upon the core ability of communicating effectively in teaching, so students can improve this same ability in their work. Moving a student from unacceptable to emerging or proficient may prove as important as moving from proficient to mastery, particularly in a community college setting and entry level courses. At Lane, it seems that improving the percentages of students scoring at proficient and decreasing the percentage scoring at emerging and unacceptable is a more realistic goal than expecting the majority of students achieving mastery.

To that end, aside from the data, it appears that using the rubric and focusing on this core ability does indeed improve teaching in terms of core abilities and ultimately assisting the student in improving upon their abilities in communicating effectively. Hopefully, with continued faculty involvement and interest, this project can continue to develop and grow and provide a powerful tool in the strategic goal of infusing core abilities into Lane's General Education disciplines.

#### **Specific project success**

- Focused use of one rubric and one core ability.
- Scoring of all dimensions of rubric without alteration.
- Improved faculty involvement in spring term.
- Improved faculty follow up and completion of projects and data collection. (In the past there was some issues with unfinished projects or lack of specific accurate data)
- Modification/ improvement of teaching practices, methodologies and materials/examples.
- Development and utilization of faculty project coordinator.
- Redevelopment of the report template to solicit more specific feedback from faculty involved with the projects.
- Scoring of 182 students with a single rubric

## MOVING FORWARD: SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS and/or MODIFICATIONS

Feedback by faculty on the effectiveness of the rubrics will be incorporated into the ongoing work of the Assessment Team. While the CE rubric was designed to be used across general education disciplines, it is not yet clear if it is adequate for all disciplines. There was some question as to the ability of the rubric to score foreign language and art projects. More than one art faculty suggested a section on creativity or personal expression, which at best are difficult objectives to quantify.

Results from these projects will lead to the refinement of the rubrics themselves and/or the summary report tabulation sheets. The CE rubric will be improved in winter term of 2011 by the Gen Ed team. Some suggestions by faculty involved with the project follow. Most of the following represent sentiments echoed by more than one faculty:

*Since my project not only involved techniques but creativity, it would have been helpful to have ...a creativity/expression criterion.*

*...there could be a graph function imbedded (digitally) where we could immediately graph our results, to evaluate outcomes more quickly.*

*It might be helpful (to include) examples of key terms to have a better understanding of the distinctions between technique and presentations, for example.*

*I felt the need of having one more evaluation category between marginal and unacceptable.*

*Perhaps adding a section that specifically addresses the student's awareness of audience...audience could be a category of its own.*

*Renaming the categories so they do not sound so pejorative....When I use the rubric I change the categories of "marginal" and "unacceptable" to "emerging" and "needs improvement".*

*I am often confused on whether we use the rubric as a group (meaning we all agree on what exceptional really means) or as individuals (each instructor decides what exceptional should mean).*

**Final Note:** While the projects were creative, successful, and spread across disciplines, the majority of the projects were originated by part time faculty. More full time faculty engagement is necessary to continue to develop a culture of assessment and continue to generate interest and move forward in the goal of core value assessment and the infusion of core abilities into the fabric of teaching at Lane.

Submitted by: JS Bird

## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY RUBRIC

Criteria	4 Exemplary	3 Proficient	2 Marginal	1 Unacceptable
<b>1 Organization, Structure</b>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is logically and fully developed consistent with the constraints of the audience and the intent of the message;</li> <li>Is purposeful and coherent.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contains elements of logical development</li> <li>contains clear transitions</li> <li>has a recognizable flow of ideas.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lacks a logical organization</li> <li>is sometimes disjointed and/or awkward.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has no discernible organizational structure</li> <li>contains random, unconnected elements.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Support, Evidence</b>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is well-developed with varied and appropriate supports:</li> <li>e.g. examples, illustrations, details,</li> <li>e.g. documentation, citations, empirical evidence, outside sources, etc., attributing sources as appropriate. (see note below)</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is developed with appropriate though limited support,</li> <li>generally attributes sources as appropriate.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>includes weak and/or inappropriate support.</li> <li>Sources are inconsistently attributed.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lacks evidence</li> <li>and/or fails to attribute sources.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Content</b>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is engaging.</li> <li>provides significant insight, or new information, or a useful perspective from the work. (see notes below)</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is clear, accurate, and appropriate.</li> <li>provides insight, or enough information to make an informed decision.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is somewhat inaccurate or unclear.</li> <li>provides little insight or information.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is distorted or contains misinformation.</li> <li>confuses or misleads.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Technique</b>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is free of technical errors and/or errors of convention relevant to the specific medium or genre.</li> <li>Technique is used in a sophisticated, or creative, or nuanced manner.</li> </ul>	The message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is generally free of technical errors or errors of convention relevant to the specific medium or genre.</li> <li>errors do not interfere with meaning.</li> </ul>	Repeated technical errors or errors of convention interfere with the audience's ability to understand the intended meaning.	Technical errors or errors of convention make it impossible for the audience to understand the intended meaning.
<b>5 Presentation</b>	The style and tone of the message enhances its effectiveness; the message has discernible style and elegance.	The style and tone of the message supports its effectiveness.	The style and tone of the message supports effectiveness in some aspects and undermines it in others.	The style and tone of the message undermines its effectiveness.
<b>6 Purpose or Effect</b>	The overall purpose or effect of the message is easily understood and clearly conveyed (may require subtlety and nuance in some disciplines).	The overall purpose or effect of the message can be discerned with some effort.	The purpose or effect of the message is vague or unclear.	The purpose or effect of the message is not at all apparent or is missing.
NOTES: If a score falls between categories, give the lower score. Not all artifacts may include citation/attribution of source material "Audience" generally refers to the scorers using the rubric, but may also include original audience members in the case of a presentation, performance or speech.				