

College of Health and Human Sciences  
School of Allied Health & Communicative Disorders  
Communicative Disorders  
B.S., Communicative Disorders  
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## BS in COMD

Students majoring in Communicative Disorders gain an in depth understanding of normal communication processes as well as the nature and impact of communication disorders. Courses in basic sciences provide the foundation for upper level courses that focus on critical thinking and clinical application. Graduates' strong understanding of disability and diversity allow them to find employment in health care and educational settings. Additionally, the program prepares students for a variety of graduate programs such as audiology, dentistry, special education, and speech-language pathology.

### **1. Student Learning Outcomes**

\*modified and accepted by faculty February 20, 2015

Undergraduate-degree recipients from the Communicative Disorders program will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills with a clear central message, evidence of an organizational framework, and audience-appropriate language choices.
2. Demonstrate effective written communication that clearly conveys meaning to the intended audience and is free of errors.
3. Apply quantitative reasoning skills to specific communication-related activities and review of relevant research literature.
4. Identify, evaluate, and apply information technology as it relates to measurement and facilitation of normal communicative processes.
5. Identify and demonstrate appropriate interpersonal professionalism with diverse groups, cultures, and individuals.
6. Apply critical thinking skills to analyze primary sources and discipline-specific challenges including case studies, journal articles, and other media related to communicative underpinnings, development, and disorders.
7. Integrate and synthesize connections between multiple, discipline-specific facts and basic scientific foundations including anatomical, physiological, developmental, and behavioral aspects of sound, speech, language and communication.

## 2. Program-by-Baccalaureate Learning Outcomes Matrix

Each program outcome is delineated below with respect to level of support (strongly supports (S), moderately supports (M), or doesn't support (blank)) for each baccalaureate learning outcome.

| Program Student Learning Outcome                 | Baccalaureate Learning Outcomes                    |                               |   |  |  |                            |   |  |
|--|--|-------------------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------|---|--|
|  | A. Global inter-connections and inter-dependencies | B. Intercultural competencies | C. Analyze human life and natural world inter-connections | D. Critical, creative, and independent thought | E. Communicate clearly and effectively | F. Collaborate with others | G. Quantitative and qualitative reasoning | H. Apply knowledge / skills creatively |
| SLO 1: Oral communication                        | M  | M                             |   |  | S                                      | M                          |   |  |
| SLO 2: Written communication                     | M  | M                             |   |  | S                                      | M                          |   |  |
| SLO 3: Quantitative literacy                     |  |                               |   |  |  |                            | S   |  |
| SLO 4: Information technology                    | S  |                               |   | M  |  |                            | S   |  |
| SLO 5: Diversity, interpersonal skills           | M  | S                             |   |  | M                                      | S                          | S   |  |
| SLO 6: Critical thinking, problem solving        | M  |                               | M   | S  |  | M                          | S   | S                                      |
| SLO 7: Discipline-specific knowledge integration | M  |                               | M   | M  | M                                      |                            |   | S                                      |
| Overall  | M  | S                             | M   | S  | S                                      | S                          | S   | S                                      |

### 3. Curriculum Map

The curriculum map outlines the scope and sequence of courses students will take and aligns them with the degree program student learning outcomes. We will be using this tool for not only sequencing the curriculum and instruction, but also identifying strategic places to formatively and summatively assess student learning outcomes, and to continuously assess strengths and gaps in the curriculum. Please note that although all SLOs are addressed across our curriculum, the matrix below identifies only those courses in which a particular learning outcome will be formally assessed, such that assessment data will be systematically collected at specific time points as students progress through the program.

| Course    | Student Learning Outcome |                          |                          |                           |                                    |                                       |  |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|           | 1. Oral communication    | 2. Written communication | 3. Quantitative literacy | 4. Information technology | 5. Diversity, interpersonal skills | 6. Critical thinking, problem-solving | 7. Discipline-specific knowledge integration |
| COMD 221  | B                        | B                        | B                        | B                         | B                                  | B                                     |  |
| COMD 300  |                          |                          | B                        | B                         |                                    |                                       | B  |
| COMD 305  |                          |                          | D                        |                           | B                                  |                                       | D  |
| COMD 323  |                          | D                        |                          |                           |                                    | D                                     | D  |
| COMD 325  | D                        |                          | D                        | D                         |                                    | D                                     |  |
| COMD 330  |                          | D                        |                          |                           |                                    | D                                     | D  |
| COMD 421* |                          |                          |                          | D                         | D                                  | P                                     | P  |
| COMD 423* |                          | P                        |                          |                           | D                                  |                                       | P  |
| COMD 429  |                          | P                        | P                        |                           | P                                  |                                       | P  |
| COMD 435  | P                        | P                        | P                        | P                         | P                                  | P                                     | P  |

| Course  | Student Learning Outcome |                          |                          |                           |                                    |                                       |  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|   | 1. Oral communication    | 2. Written communication | 3. Quantitative literacy | 4. Information technology | 5. Diversity, interpersonal skills | 6. Critical thinking, problem-solving | 7. Discipline-specific knowledge integration |
| AHCD 494*   | D                        |                          | D                        |                           |                                    |                                       | D  |
| AHCD 498*   |                          | P                        | P                        |                           |                                    | P                                     | P  |
| AHCD 499*   | P                        | P                        | P                        |                           |                                    | P                                     | P  |
| <p><i>Note.</i> Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.<br/>*elective course</p> |                          |                          |                          |                           |                                    |                                       |  |

## 4. Assessment Methods

### Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Outcomes are listed in the first row, and each assessment method is listed in the first column. Assessments are listed in chronological order, from the first students will see, to the last. Each assessment method has been evaluated to determine: (1) which outcome(s) it *primarily* measures, (2) if it is being used for formative (F) or summative (S) purposes, and (3) whether it is an indirect (I) or direct (D) measure of the student learning outcome. This maps out where our degree program is planning to formatively, summatively, directly and indirectly assess each outcome.

| Assessment Method   | Student Learning Outcome |                          |                          |                         |                                    |                                       |  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|   | 1. Oral communication    | 2. Written communication | 3. Quantitative literacy | 4. Information literacy | 5. Diversity, interpersonal skills | 6. Critical thinking, problem solving | 7. Discipline-specific knowledge integration |
| Embedded assessment: Course-specific  |                          |                          | F, D                     | F, D                    | F, D                               |                                       | F, D   |
| Embedded assessment: VALUE rubrics  | F, D                     | F, D                     |                          |                         |                                    | F, D                                  |  |
| Student Survey  | S, I                     | S, I                     | S, I                     | S, I                    | S, I                               | S, I                                  | S, I   |
| <i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment |                          |                          |                          |                         |                                    |                                       |  |

### Explanation of Assessment Methods

Individual student-level targets are often preset scores on an exam, scores on a rubric, etc. Program-level targets are often expressed as the percent of students demonstrating they meet individual student-level targets.

| Method   | Description   | Timeline                              | Person Responsible   | Objectives Addressed |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Course-level direct assessment   |   |                                       |  |                      |
| Embedded, course-specific assessment:<br>Student Lab Assignments, Diversity Assignment, Exam questions | Embedded assessment procedures are used by COMD faculty to gauge student progress on specific assignments related to targeted learner outcomes. Student-level targets will vary per assessment measure. The program-level target is 80%, given the diversity of our student body. | Each semester; data aggregated yearly | All faculty teaching undergraduate courses relevant to targeted outcomes | SLOs 3, 4, 5, 7      |

| Method   | Description  | Timeline                                     | Person Responsible  | Objectives Addressed |
|--|--|--|---|----------------------|
| <p>Embedded VALUE Rubrics: Case Studies, Research Papers, Journal Article Critiques, Presentations</p> <p>*Attached under separate cover</p> | <p>VALUE rubrics (attached) have been designed by the AAC&amp;U to provide shared assessment of student learning outcomes using operational definitions derived from a large database of university faculty. We have modified a subset of these rubrics for our SLOs 1, 2, and 6 and will be using with our faculty to gauge student progress on these outcomes in an aggregated yet reliable fashion across relevant courses.</p> <p>Student-level target: level 4 (Capstone level)<br/> Program-level target: 80%.</p> | <p>Each semester; data aggregated yearly</p> | <p>All faculty teaching undergraduate courses relevant to targeted outcomes</p> | <p>SLOs 1, 2, 6</p>  |
| <p>Program-level indirect assessment</p>   |  |  |   |                      |



| Method                          | Description   | Timeline   | Person Responsible  | Objectives Addressed |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|----------------------|
| Student survey<br>*See appendix | Seniors in our program will be contacted each spring (at the midterm point) via email and asked to complete an electronic survey designed to gauge the extent to which each student feels he or she met targeted Program outcomes. To maximize student participation, the survey will be administered in a senior-level course (e.g., COMD 421). All responses will be anonymous and used solely for program assessment and planning. | Conducted annually for graduating seniors during the spring semester | Assessment coordinator and Area coordinator in conjunction with office staff and AHCD Chair | All                  |

## **Appendix 1**

### **BS in COMD Senior Student Survey (Midterm)**

**\*\*All responses are completely anonymous and will be used solely for future program planning\*\***

Please rate your satisfaction with the following items according to your experiences in courses and/or activities during your COMD program at NIU. Please leave any additional comments that you feel are relevant.

1. Development of your oral communication skills.
2. Development of your written communication skills.
3. Your growth in quantitative reasoning skills (e.g., to measure aspects of communication and/or to interpret results in a scientific study).
4. Your growth in understanding and/or applying information technology, especially to measure and/or facilitate communication
5. Your growth in interpersonal professionalism and diversity awareness
6. Your growth in critical thinking and problem solving skills
7. Your growth in the ability to integrate and connect content from multiple courses
8. Overall curricular content and coverage
9. Your overall undergraduate experience.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

# CRITICAL THINKING VALUE RUBRIC:



**SLO #6: Undergraduate-degree recipients from the Communicative Disorders program will be able apply critical thinking skills to analyze primary sources and discipline-specific challenges including case studies, journal articles, and other media related to communicative underpinnings, development, and disorders.**

## Definition

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

## Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- **Ambiguity:** Information that may be interpreted in more than one way.
- **Assumptions:** Ideas, conditions, or beliefs (often implicit or unstated) that are "taken for granted or accepted as true without proof." (quoted from [www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/assumptions))
- **Context:** The historical, ethical, political, cultural, environmental, or circumstantial settings or conditions that influence and complicate the consideration of any issues, ideas, artifacts, and events.
- **Literal meaning:** Interpretation of information exactly as stated. For example, "she was green with envy" would be interpreted to mean that her skin was green.
- **Metaphor:** Information that is (intended to be) interpreted in a non-literal way. For example, "she was green with envy" is intended to convey an intensity of emotion, not a skin color.

|  | Capstone  | Milestones  |   | Benchmark   |                           |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|
|  | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   | 0                         |
| <b>Explanation of issues</b>   | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.  | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.  | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.                                 | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.   | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Evidence</b><br><i>Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</i> | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.  | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.                      | Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.                         | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Influence of context and assumptions</b>  | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.   | Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.  | Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).   | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</b>   | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.  | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Conclusions and related' outcomes (implications and consequences)</b>                               | Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.  | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.                               | Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.                      | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.                  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |

# ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

**SLO #1: Undergraduate-degree recipients from the Communicative Disorders program will be able to demonstrate effective oral communication skills with a clear central message, evidence of an organizational framework, and audience-appropriate language choices.**

## Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- **Central message:** The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.
- **Delivery techniques:** Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).
- **Language:** Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- **Organization:** The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.
- **Supporting material:** Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speakers credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.

# ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

|                            | <b>Capstone</b><br>4  | <b>Milestones</b>   |   | <b>Benchmark</b><br>1  | <b>0</b>                   |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|----------------------------|
|                            | 3   | 2   |   |  |                            |
| <b>Organization</b>        | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.   | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.  | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.  | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.  | Does not meet Benchmark 1. |
| <b>Language</b>            | Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.  | Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.   | Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.  | Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.   | Does not meet Benchmark 1. |
| <b>Delivery</b>            | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.   | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.   | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.  | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.   | Does not meet Benchmark 1. |
| <b>Supporting Material</b> | A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Does not meet Benchmark 1. |

|                        |  |   |   |   |                            |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|----------------------------|
|                        | presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.  | credibility/authority on the topic.                                   |   |   |                            |
| <b>Central Message</b> | Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.) | Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. | Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable. | Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation. | Does not meet Benchmark 1. |



## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

**SLO#2: Undergraduate-degree recipients from the Communicative Disorders program will be able to demonstrate effective written communication that clearly conveys meaning to the intended audience and is free of errors.**

### Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

### Glossary

- **Content Development:** The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- **Context of and purpose for writing:** The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: who is reading it? who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- **Disciplinary conventions:** Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- **Evidence:** Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.
- **Genre conventions:** Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. reflection papers, academic papers, treatment plans, evaluation reports, progress reports, webpages, SOAP notes.
- **Sources:** Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.



|  | <b>Capstone<br/>4</b>  | <b>Milestones</b>   |  | <b>Benchmark<br/>1</b>  | <b>0</b>                  |
|--|--|---|--|---|---------------------------|
|  |  | 3   | 2  |   |                           |
| <b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b><br><i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>                       | Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.   | Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).          | Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions). | Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience). | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Content Development</b>   | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.   | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.  | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.   | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>APA Style</b><br><i>Counting unique errors once ensures that student is not penalized 45 times for italicizing the article title 45 times instead of the journal title.</i> | Writes with zero errors in APA style conventions   | Writes with only 1-2 unique errors in APA style conventions   | Writes with 3-4 unique errors in APA style conventions   | Writes with 5-6 unique errors in APA style conventions  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b><br><i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms (please see glossary).</i>              | Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices | Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices | Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation                             | Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Sources and Evidence</b>  | Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing  | Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.  | Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.                      | Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.   | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |
| <b>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</b>   | Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.  | Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.  | Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.  | Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.  | Does not meet Benchmark 1 |