

AP[®] SEMINAR

2016 SCORING GUIDELINES

AP SEMINAR PERFORMANCE TASK RUBRIC: TEAM PROJECT AND PRESENTATION COMPONENT 1 OF 3: INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AND REFLECTION

CONTENT AREA	PERFORMANCE LEVELS		
1 Understanding and Analyzing Context	The report identifies the area of Investigation. 2	The report identifies the area of Investigation and identifies various perspectives, drawing few or no connections among those perspectives. 4	The report identifies and richly contextualizes the area of investigation, discusses various perspectives and draws explicit connections among those perspectives. 6
2 Understanding and Analyzing Argument	The report restates information gathered from sources rather than summarizing the information. 2	The report summarizes specific information with some explanation and provides a limited analysis of the line of reasoning. 4	The report explains and summarizes specific information and provides a solid and/or detailed analysis of the line of reasoning. 6
3 Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence	The report identifies various items of information but makes few or no connections between those items of information, their relevance to the argument, and their credibility. 2	The report identifies various items of evidence and makes some reasonable connections between that evidence, its relevance to the argument, and its credibility. 4	The report analyzes various items of evidence gathered from sources and explains in detail why they are relevant and credible enough to support the argument. 6
4 Reflection	The reflection provides little or no insight into the initial views of the problem or the approach to conducting research and solving the problem. The reflection also describes little or no consideration of revisions in the student’s writing and thinking. 2	The reflection provides reasonable detail about the personal views of the problem and the approach to conducting research and solving the problem. The reflection also describes some consideration of revision in writing and thinking, based on discoveries made during the research and writing process. 4	The reflection insightfully explains the initial views of the problem and the approach to conducting research and solving the problem. The reflection also describes consideration of extensive revision in writing and thinking, based on discoveries made during the research and writing process. 6
5 Selecting and Using Evidence	The report contains little or no evidence of attribution or citation. 1	The report contains an uneven or inconsistent use of attribution or citation. 2	The report contains few flaws in attribution and citation. 3
6 Grammar and Style	The report contains many flaws in grammar and style that interfere with communication to the reader. 1	The report contains some flaws in grammar or style that minimally interfere with communication to the reader. 2	The report contains few flaws in grammar or style and clearly communicates to the reader. 3

ADDITIONAL SCORES: In addition to the scores represented on the rubrics, readers can also assign scores of **0** (zero) and **NR** (No Response).

0 (Zero)

A score of **0** is assigned to a single row of the rubric when the response displays a below-minimum level of quality as identified in that row of the rubric.

Scores of **0** are assigned to all rows of the rubric when the response is off-topic; a repetition of a prompt; entirely crossed-out; a drawing or other markings; or a response in a language other than English.

NR (No Response)

A score of **NR** is assigned to responses that are blank.

Environmental Art

Some of the most significant problems in today's society concern the issues surrounding the environment. People are scrambling to find solutions to global warming, expiring fossil fuels, and ecological degradation. Further education and awareness about these problems is needed, and can be achieved through the use of visual art. In order for this to happen, more emphasis should be placed on environmental art education. Doing this will expand the group of artists who are able to provide a way to educate citizens about environmental issues and restore damaged ecosystems in artistic ways.

One of the main reasons as to why environmental issues continue to go unsolved is because of a lack of education about them. However, environmental art is a solution to this issue. Sharon Hendry, a graphic designer and artist, stated, "Artists have two main objectives when they do art: One is to put something in a visual format to express a message; and second is that they use art as a medium of communication. Art can communicate without words" (Goto). In her paper on the connections between environmental education and ecological public art, Young Imm Kang Song, a professor in the Creative Arts in Learning Division at Lesley University, argues that this wordless communication facilitates an "appreciation, awareness, and sense of shared responsibility for nature" (13). A study done by Pani Stathopoulou, a graduate of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris, France, found that when taught about environmental problems in an artistic, audiovisual way, students' thoughts and actions about these issues were more influenced because they remembered the images longer than they would have remembered words (3). As shown by these studies, education through art can be more influential than traditional teaching methods, and can even teach skills that can be applied in

other fields. In her paper on teaching environmental art for the journal *Ethics & The Environment*, Ann T. Rosenthal, a renowned eco-artist from the Carnegie Mellon School of Art, argues that eco-art serves as an instrument for identifying relationships in information, solving problems, collaborating, and taking responsibility for the environment (154). Due to this, being taught eco-art will be helpful to all students who enter fields that require creative answers to combat the problems humans have created (Rosenthal 154).

Many ecological artists create their work with the goal of raising awareness for the world's numerous environmental problems. Jackie Brookner, an ecological artist whose work focuses on water remediation, said, "My commitment is to revitalize ecosystems while providing pleasure and raising awareness that the vitality of any community and the continuity of its cultural heritage depends upon the health of the natural world that embraces it" ("Jackie Brookner"). One of Brookner's most famous works, *The Gift of Water*, does just that. The sculpture of two concrete hands covered in moss is located in a wetland in Grossenhain, Germany (Brookner). It filters the water for a public swimming pool without the use of chemicals like chlorine by aerating the water as it flows into the hands and through a misting fountain (Song 17). This dampens the mosses, which purify the water (Song 17). This sculpture, along with others, can facilitate discussions about the environment and raise awareness of environmental issues (Song 18). Clearly, using art to educate society about environmental problems is an effective teaching method that should become a more common practice. If this were to happen, the public as a whole would be more aware of environmental problems and more willing to fix them.

In addition to the increased use of art to teach the public about environmental issues, better environmental art education programs could lead to more artists restoring damaged ecosystems. Currently, 25% of the Earth's land is degraded (FAO). The earth's ecosystems need to be restored, and this can be done artistically. A paper done by Doug Blandy, Kristin G. Congdon, and Don H. Krug for the journal *Studies in Art Education* reported that damaged ecosystems are being recreated in ways that try to imitate natural patterns of recovery (231). In their paper on restoring ecosystems for *Écoscience*, M. Luisa Martinez and Fabiola Lopez-Barrera argue that in order for an ecological restoration to be successful, human-environment relations must be "harmonious" (Martinez and Lopez-Barrera 2). Art promotes this relationship by providing an outlet for humans to use their talents to connect to the environment. In some cases, environmental degradation is extreme and restoration is nearly impossible. To solve this problem, synthetic systems called "designer ecosystems" can be created to reduce unfavorable conditions of ecosystem functions (Martinez and Lopez-Barrera 2). Art can be implemented in these designs in order to beautify the new ecosystem. Although testing still needs to be done to ensure the practicality of this, designer ecosystems could serve as a solution in the future. Once ecosystems have been restored, their health benefits for humans will return. For example, trees reduce pollution by filtering out pollutants that can lead to heart disease, respiratory illness, diabetes, and cancer; rivers regulate the climate by absorbing and releasing heat; and lakes purify drinking water and provide a food source ("Healthy Ecosystems - Healthy People"). By increasing education in this field, more artists can use their talents to help restore the earth.

Certain artists have been the leaders of this new phenomenon. Betty Beaumont was one of the first to restore an ecosystem in an artistic way. *Ocean Landmark Project* was constructed between 1978 and 1980, forty miles from the New York Harbor (Beaumont). It is an “underwater sculpture reef” made of coal fly-ash blocks that counter the negative effects of overfishing and waste disposal (Blandy, Congdon, and Krug 238). This pollutant turned habitat is now a home for fish, a food supply, a recycling plant, and an example for future projects in this field (Beaumont).

Despite these positive effects, there are arguments that an increased amount of environmental art education would not benefit society. Allen Carlson, a professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Alberta in Canada, argues that some environmental works of art fail to be assimilated into the particular aesthetic of an area, defeating their purpose (638). Nevertheless, art can be interpreted in many ways, so the messages of these works could still get across. Some members of Congress believe that instead of spending money on the arts, government funding should go towards creating jobs, lowering national deficit, and helping the economy recover (Stelluto). However, the amount of funding given to the National Endowment for the Arts is so small that cutting it would not do much to decrease the national deficit, and arts organizations contribute ten-times the amount they are given to the economy (Stelluto).

The more the earth degrades, the more important it is for humans to take action to fix it. In order for this to be done, there needs to be an increase in environmental art education. Primary and secondary schools could offer environmental art courses or workshops to their students. This would expand the group of people able to use their talents to teach the public about

environmental problems and restore ecosystems artistically. If this were to happen, our earth could begin to be restored, making it a sustainable habitat for years to come.

Words: 1199

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Reflection

At the beginning of this process, I was very wary of writing a paper about art. I thought this topic would be difficult to find information on and form an argument for. However, it seemed like a unique topic, and my group members were excited about researching art for our paper, so I decided to keep an open mind about it. Before writing this paper, I didn't have an extensive knowledge of art although it has always been something that interests me. The first thing we did as a group was narrow down what forms of art we would focus on. We chose the visual and performing arts. Then, we discussed which side of the argument we thought we should take. This led to us deciding that we wanted to argue for why we need to revitalize art in our society. Although we knew what we wanted to argue for, we agreed that if one of our lenses found more convincing information regarding the opposite side, we could use that as a counter-argument. This way, we could still let our research shape our opinions. We thought that picking a side before researching would make writing the group paper easier since each of our individual parts would most likely be arguing for the same thing, just from different perspectives.

I was assigned the environmental lens. Before researching, I had no idea how art and the environment could be connected. However, once I began researching, I realized that there are many connections between the two. I found that environmental art can educate people about environmental problems, and art can be used to restore ecosystems in artistic ways. I decided to focus on these two points for my individual part. Once I had my two points, I decided to refine my argument to focus on why we need environmental art education. So, I began looking for sources that included information about how teaching about the environment by using art can be an effective teaching method. From there, I began to research how much the earth is degraded

and how ecosystems can be restored in artistic ways to create healthy environments while also beautifying the earth. During my research, it was very difficult to find peer reviewed sources with information relevant to my paper. This issue was especially prominent while researching how ecosystems can be restored in artistic ways. This is a relatively new phenomenon, so there has not been much research done on it thus far. Despite this problem, I was able to pull relevant information from some peer reviewed sources, and I found reliable non-peer reviewed sources.

My understanding of the topic developed a lot during the research process. As previously mentioned, I did not realize that there was such a strong connection between art and the environment, and I originally did not have an opinion on the topic. Prior to research, some of my group members already had strong opinions on this topic, so they knew what they were going to do with their paper, but I had no direction. This meant that while researching I could let my sources shape my argument. Ultimately, I found more credible sources about the positive outcomes that occur from society placing more emphasis on environmental art education. This convinced me to support the argument about society needing to place more emphasis on environmental art education. I did find a few sources that took an opposite side to my argument, but they enabled me to better understand my topic and write a paper that contained multiple perspectives.

Working with a group was a good experience, although we faced some problems throughout the process. Everyone in the group had extremely hectic schedules which made it quite difficult to find time to meet outside of school. We ended up having to do a lot of our group work over google hangouts at inconvenient times to compile the paper. We also faced some communication issues. At the beginning of the thirty days, we set up a group text. However, one

group member had a phone that didn't work half the time, so she didn't receive some of our texts regarding group meetings. This resulted in her not being present when we met over google hangout. Once we fixed this problem, though, we were able to get everyone's input for the paper, and we could compile and revise it more efficiently.

Despite these inconveniences, working in a group was a good experience. I was able to discuss ideas with four other people, and there was always someone who could read and edit my revisions. The process of revising our individual and group paper taught me how to better give and receive constructive criticism. Working as a team on this project enabled me to become more open-minded by looking through many perspectives, and taught me skills that I will be able to apply in future collaborations.

Words: 816

Increasing security measures on all surrounding borders of the United States is a significant topic for the reason that it can affect how people view this country and the citizens that live here. We, the United States, are looked upon as one of the most powerful countries worldwide. I believe we need to protect citizens in the United States from any harm that may be introduced because of the current border safety. Families, children, teens, and businesses are at risk too when it comes to Border Patrol Safety. According to recent resources available, there are at least 12.3 million enslaved adults and children around the world "at any given time in which at least 1.39 million are victims of commercial sexual servitude, both internationally and within national borders ("Canada-US Talks on Border Security, Trade Issues"). Illegal immigration and the current security measures for the Borders is a controversial issue because some people say that illegal immigration benefits the US economy additional tax revenue, expansion of the low-cost labor pool etc. They also say that immigrants bring good values such as work ethic and the motivation to achieve the American dream. Other disagree by saying that people who break the law by crossing the U.S. border without proper documentation or by overstaying their visas should be deported and not rewarded with a path to citizenship and access to social services, since they acted in such a disloyal way to achieve the position they are in now. Opponents believe that people in the country illegally are criminals and socially, economic burdens to law-abiding, tax-paying Americans.

Increasing the number of troops to the borders surrounding the U.S, such as the U.S-Mexico border and the U.S- Canada border, is the most effective way to increase security measures and possibly reduce illegal immigration. Not only will it secure the borders in a way where it will facilitate the 9.98 million square kilometers in the Canada-U.S border but also the 7,000 miles of land Mexico-U.S border Border Patrol officers have put control in our borders before and will continue doing so by increasing their size and the training that they already had and will continue to master throughout the years("Canada-US Talks on Border Security, Trade Issues").

The rise of border patrol officers, I believe would help increase security measures and possibly prevent illegal immigration and the trafficking of narcotics. Homeland security and border patrol have been working hand in hand to secure both the U.S- Mexico and U.S-Canada borders and so far it has been effective. For 91 years the Customs and Border Protection has been protecting the public from dangerous people and materials while enhancing the Nation's global economic competitiveness by enabling legitimate trade and travel. President Obama wants to ensure the border and protect immigration as he sends one-fifth of the troops and in support of an amendment that to bring 6,000 troops where it is much needed. If the volume of visitors rises annually between 3.4% and 4.1% over the next 4 years within the border it should also mean that we need to increase the number of Border Patrol troops. For the moment, there are more than 42,000 frontline CBP officers and Border Patrol agents protecting nearly 7,000 miles of land border and 328 ports of entry. According to a study at the University of Southern California by the National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events, adding a single CBP Officer equates to annual benefits of: 33 jobs added to the economy (Werner). Many Border Patrol agents and customs officers don't have a complete understanding of their

agencies' rules on when they are supposed to use force, according to a report issued Tuesday by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, in response to the congressional request (Foley). However, if we advance Border patrol officer's training, then we will make them realize even more the importance of being fully equipped and capable of protecting our borders from dangerous acts that leave and come to the United States.

Cost for the long run would also be cheaper than stationary and mobile technology that would help security in other aspects of border security. The study by the National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events at the University of Southern California, adding a single CBP Officer equates to annual benefits of: \$2 million increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) \$640,000 saved in opportunity costs. (Clifton) Customs and Border Patrol have been benefiting the borders without us realizing, we always believe that there are other form of protection that is better than having an actual person other than some type of technology. Drones, infrared eyes and even a wall would help prevent illegal immigration to a certain degree, but to actually be there in person and having face-to-face interaction has a better knowledge of what is currently going down in the border. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a \$331 million plan to bolster Mexican civilian law enforcement agencies. (Levine). If we can get a better understanding and clear image of a person giving reports like a border patrol officer than our borders will be a much easier task to take on. It is important that both countries within the border wants to better not only their security but also their economy. We need to better our patrols in order to have full security.

A new and more in depth training will create a more advanced troop within the borders will be also effective, we just need to increase the numbers and the way they establish themselves as a military force. Within the agency, CBP has implemented comprehensive training for its Frontline personnel with more forthcoming. Other than the reason of illegal immigration is the trafficking of drugs into and out of the United States that also brings violence into both countries which lead to the use of military. Washington is trying to put an emphasis in military operations and also Mexico, the Nogales Program does just this. The program involves civilian agents on both sides of the border. The New York Times wrote "As part of the program, the Border Patrol has been training Mexican police officers in Nogales, which has helped American agents to come to know individual officers, they will work with, Mr. Self said." If this program achieves its purpose which is will most likely will since the officers being trained have worked hard to be in their position and are the best in what they do. (CBP's Role in Strengthening the Economy) Being an officer means you would have to evolve in any circumstance that they may face in the future. If Canada and United States and Mexico work together we can achieve our purpose, to increase security measures by increasing well informed and trained Border Patrol Officers to hopefully prevent illegal immigration.

Some say, having an addition of drones can benefit both borders; drones can cover a greater distance between the borders. While drones do cover a bigger territory that troops cannot at all times. However, drones are a new technology that has not fulfilled the needs that the border is required to have in order to fully protect the land, especially in the U.S-Mexico

border. Also, drones are just an overview of the land which can help, but we need the troops to be aware and stop completely the action of the smuggling of drugs and the trafficking of groups of people.

In recent matters, the construction of a wall would prevent many illegal acts such as the smuggling of drugs and possibly reduce illegal immigration at a greater rate. The United States offer the American Dream to the people that come into this country legally and fairly, without dishonesty and fear of getting caught. The United States cannot help those who force themselves here are also bringing their own families to achieve the American Dream. However, building a wall will not stop those who dedicate themselves into creating a crime. According to DHS, the vast majority — more than 70 percent — of illegal aliens and contraband attempting to move across our border through official ports of entry will succeed. (PRESTON). Either to put their own lives and others in danger through dangerous paths, also some might commit the crime of smuggling or exporting drugs. These people will find a way and a wall won't stop them but the officers who are located in these borders every day and knows what goes on and who some of these people are.

Increasing the number of troops for the borders around the U.S is the most effective because not only will it secure the borders in a way where people could feel completely comfortable with having around the 9.98 million square kilometers in the Canada-U.S border but also the 7,000 miles of land Mexico-U.S border. We have the responsibility to protect and prevent illegal immigration and the smuggling of narcotics to better not only us, the United States but also Mexico and Canada. To do so, we need to increase and better train border patrol troops on both north and south borders.

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Reflection

Before I started researching about my Team's Issue, I only knew a small portion of what illegal immigration is and what was currently happening in the United States. I had heard this issue on the news and what the Presidential candidates discussed about illegal immigration. Some of the information given to me gave me a biased opinion concerning on the type of people who came into the United States and the way this issue should be solved.

In the beginning, the way I organized my information was to create a memo pad to make sure I had what was needed and I could follow up later on. Once I did that I revised it so that I could be well informed of the topic and know the background history. However, as I moved on further, I found that the solutions to follow on illegal immigration were still new and developing. The possible solutions were not concrete, as I hope it will be. Afterwards, my plan to finding relevant information on illegal immigration was to find out specific time ranges and try to find exact statistics towards the solution. Furthermore, I gathered my evidence mostly from the Homeland Security and Border Patrol website and prestigious news articles. I chose to use these sources because I knew without a doubt that they would be credible. The credibility of these websites were proven to me because not only did I get the links from the official page concerning immigration but also because the news articles I used had sources to back up what they were saying. In addition to these sources, there was some that I chose not to refer them in my evidence for the reason that I didn't think they were credible. Some even contradicted the information given from the original source.

The process of writing through self-editing and the peer editing and the use of Turnitin, helped me learn that I had to go over my information frequently since information on illegal immigration is constantly changing. As I went on to research further, I continued to find more current information. Throughout this whole process, I didn't find pattern of errors except that I had to figure out if illegal immigration had strong evidence regarding certain solutions that were being done or planning to make. I was good at looking through every small detail of evidence and recorded anything that I thought was helpful to better understand the topic. Perhaps making the flow of the entire paper was a bit difficult since I had a substantial amount of information that I didn't really know how to integrate in an organized manner. I couldn't really decide what I wanted to say first or what I should say next for it to be a well-written flowing paper. As a researcher, I was forced to be more organized in my findings and in my final product. I still need to learn though how to manage the process in a way where I could get comfortable around working with others and communicating our ideas.

I really learned a lot about the issue of illegal immigration and I will continue to learn more about it. I have a different view of illegal immigration then what I thought originally. Before, I thought illegal immigration was an unsolvable solution that certain people constantly talked about. When in fact, it is an issue that can be solved and is in the process of being solved. With this information, I will tell more people about this topic and what is currently being done.

In the beginning, my team and I learned about various solutions to solve illegal immigration. However, as we communicated more about our findings we realized that we

didn't like two of our proposed solutions because they were not realistic nor a wise decision to make. The solutions of the finalized construction of the wall and fences around the borders were too expensive and not an effective way to solve the issue of illegal immigration. We came to this conclusion, when we spoke about other effective solutions being done or suggested and their cost. The credibility of our sources was important.

To summarize, researching in general is not an easy and short process. Researching takes time and patience to arrive to all your final sources. Although, working in a group makes the process easier. And you learn by discussing different viewpoints. Overall, this taught me that I sometimes I have to get out of my comfort zone to come to a greater understanding of different issues to be researched

Ethics of the Death Penalty

Is the Death Penalty morally just or unjust?

Word Count: 912

The death penalty has been around virtually since the beginning of time the first death penalty was chronicled to be at 1608 the reason for that execution was treachery. Now the death penalty is used when someone kills another person the U.S bases their laws on religion the law is basically from the bible passage "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". The death penalty is wrong mainly for the fact that what good does it do to kill someone because they killed someone else, there has been times where families of victims have tried to oppose the murderer of the penalty and other times where they have unrightfully killed the prisoner and years later more evidence is found and an innocent life has been lost once again. The death penalty violates human rights everyone has the right to live whether they are free or imprisoned no one has the right to take that away from them even if they have killed someone killing them would just be the easy way out. The ethics of the death penalty are unjust.

The death penalty is a violation to human rights and gives murderers the easy way out. Murderer, robber, and kidnapper John Louis Evans was convicted of killing Edward Nassar a pawn shop owner before being convicted he told the jury that if they did not sentence him to the death penalty he would escape and murder each and every one of them proving the fact that killers want the death penalty they do not want to be sitting in a cell they want to be put out of their misery and killed so they can get the easy way out. Although, the easy way out is not what John Louis Evan received in this excerpt is a detailed description of his execution by Russell F. Canon on June 22, 1983. "At 8:30 p.m. the first jolt of 1900 volts of electricity passed through Mr. Evans's body. It lasted thirty seconds. Sparks and flames erupted from the electrode tied to Mr. Evans's left leg. His body slammed against the straps holding him in the electric chair and his fist clenched permanently... An overpowering stench of burnt flesh and clothing began pervading the witness room" (Radelet, Facing the Death Penalty). After that two doctors examined him and found him alive. He was then electrocuted two more times and was finally pronounced dead; his execution lasted 14 minutes. John Louis Evans death was torturous and immoral. Methods to execute the death penalty are lethal injection, electrocution, lethal gas, firing squad, and hanging; keep in mind all of these can go wrong in some way.

Those who support the death penalty will make statements such as the damage killers do are irreparable and that they need to be killed for their actions. Those same people would follow up by reciting the passage in the bible which says “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” but leave out that there are many other quotes from the bible that go against this point of view. With that being said if those same people really believe that the justice system should be an eye for an eye How come rapists do not get raped? Why are arsonists not burned? If the world went by “an eye for an eye” the whole world would be blind. Gandhi said it best “Violence can never bring an end to violence; all it can do is provoke more violence”.

On top of the death penalty being unjust and cruel unusual punishment there has been cases where after they have executed the inmate they are then found innocent. For example, the case of Cameron Todd Willingham he was found guilty of burning his house with his two daughters in it. Willingham escaped the fire with minor injuries prosecutors charged Willingham for starting the fire as an attempt to cover up abuse of his daughters. Although his wife testified and said he never abused them he actually “spoiled them rotten” the prosecutors were not hearing it. Furthermore, Willingham was considered a sociopath by a psychiatrist whose reasoning for calling him that is his Iron Maiden and Led Zeppelin posters which the psychiatrist believed that Willingham had a fascination with violence and death. Willingham was given the opportunity to spend life in jail if he pleaded guilty but he rejected it because he was claiming his innocence. Willingham was executed by lethal injection on February 17, 2004. In June 2009 the State of Texas ordered an unprecedented re-examination of the case and may issue a ruling on it at a later date (Listverse). This shows how inhumane and excessive the death penalty is; Why would you take someone’s life if you were not sure if they were guilty or not? Also, how can you rule someone a sociopath by their posters? An innocent man lost his life due to hypocrisy and prejudice.

The death penalty is completely unethical. It is cruel and unusual punishment and sometimes innocent lives are lost to it. What good does it do to take someone’s life for taking another’s it does not bring the victim back or give the victim’s family any closure there are times where the families oppose to the killers getting the death penalty. Also, it is no

punishment to let killers get the easy way out by killing them. No arguments can outweigh the value of another human beings life. Capital punishment cannot be morally justified.

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Reflection

While researching the death penalty I was really shocked about the methods used and reading about individual cases where things can go wrong and sometimes people can be wrongfully accused of a crime. When I was first assigned the project I definitely did not want the death penalty to be the topic of research since I did something similar to this my 10th grade year; although somehow my group came to the topic. Already having background knowledge I knew my position on the topic. As I began doing more research on the death penalty I found that there are some benefits such as if the court finds you innocent you get paid a certain amount for every year you were falsely imprisoned or that some people are actually scared of the death penalty. For example, instead of killing someone during a robbery they would just rob them. My group used history, political, social and ethical lenses which I feel worked really well with the topic.

My lens in which I was supposed to write my paper in was ethical. At first I had the economics of the death penalty which would have been good but I thought it was way too complicated and I honestly did not know how to word the information that I found so I ended up changing it to the ethics of the death penalty. I enjoyed the ethical lens because I got to look up cases where it showed how capital punishment was just unethical and morally unjust which fit perfectly with my groups' question which is "Is the death penalty morally just or unjust?" Although, the first task was independent I liked how my group helped each other stay on track and made sure we were all on the same page and put in the same effort. Some complications I faced while writing my independent paper was correctly citing work in APA format this was something new to me since in non-AP classes they did not ask for this type of writing although they should since this is what they do in college. I definitely did not meet the 1,200 word count and that got me so nervous because I really did not know what else to say and I did not want to sound repetitive but, my teacher told us that 1,200 words is just approximately what the Capstone program was asking for so the lowest we could go was about 900 and I ended up with 912. Even with my low word count I am confident that I wrote a great research essay.

When my teacher first introduced this process to us I hated the fact that there was a group task. I really dislike working in groups because I am usually the person who does all the work and just tells the other people to put their name on it or I just work by myself. Even though I did not have the best attitude in the beginning about the group work I came to love my group because we were all very determined to get our work done and we had fun while doing it what was funny is that we are all very head strong but we came together so well and really only had one argument which was just a simple miscommunication about who was going to print the group paper at the end of the day we got our work done and appreciated the experience. This experience really taught me that it's not that bad to work with other people and get their input; it actually creates a better outcome since they might notice something that needs fixing that you looked over. If I had to do this all over again it will certainly be with the same people and the same way we dealt with our problems.

Coming into the Capstone Seminar class and now I can say I underestimated how hard it would be. Even though it was not easy I can say I loved this class because it was a taste of the real world and what it is like to have to meet due dates by yourself, not having someone baby you or guide you step by step and having to work and rely on other people. My teacher really prepared us for this task through little exercises that led up to the big research topic and ever since the beginning she gave us that freedom and responsibility of having to do work correctly without her hovering over us. At the end of the day I am glad I took this class because it was certainly a good eye opening experience.

Word Count: 778

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2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

Performance Task 1 — Individual Research and Reflection

Overview

This task assessed students' ability to:

- Investigate a particular approach, perspective, or lens of the team's research project;
- Based upon this investigation, produce an evaluative, analytic report about research on the chosen academic or real-world problem or issue;
- Analyze the lines of reasoning within the research;
- Analyze the credibility of the sources in which the evidence is located;
- Analyze the relevance and credibility of the evidence, and
- Produce a thoughtful, written reflection of the research process.

Sample: A

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1 Score: 6

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 Score: 6

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 Score: 6

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4 Score: 6

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5 Score: 3

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6 Score: 3

HIGH SAMPLE RESPONSE

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1

The response earned a score of 6 because it identifies a clear area of investigation (environmental art). The report fully engages perspectives/arguments from academic journals (art as communication, art as activism, art as restoration, the failure of environmental art). The writer connects perspectives in academic journals with primary art sources through transitions and explicit discussion. The bibliography provides a rich context for a research report on the subject, including varied, authoritative, relevant, and relatively current sources (several academic articles, artist websites, organizational websites, a dissertation, & a government website).

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 (in the research)

The response earned a score of 6 because it traces, in detail, arguments in the research. Summary of information is analytical than descriptive. (e.g., "Art can be implemented in these designs in order to beautify the new ecosystem. Although testing still needs to be done to ensure the practicality of this, designer ecosystems could serve as a solution in the future" (p. 3) This line identifies a research claim that needs to be tested. Examples like this are plentiful in the body of the report.)

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 (from the research)

The response earned a score of 6 because the report fully addresses relevance and shows evidence of evaluation of credibility in the source selection and deployment (i.e., all arguments are derived from peer-reviewed academic journals). Within the body of the paper, attribution blends description and analysis (e.g., The student identifies Brookner as "an ecological artist whose work focuses on water remediation" [p. 2] and quotes her artist statement to augment the academic research.)

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2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

Performance Task 1 — Individual Research and Reflection

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4

The response earned a score of 6 because the reflection contains an insightful description of what was learned through the research. The student describes in detail an initial state-knowing nothing about the topic-and notes this as a positive: "I could let my sources shape my argument." This research led the student to "support the argument about society needing to place more emphasis on environmental art education." The Reflection contains insightful description of the research process, corroborating what is evident in the report proper-a keen awareness of peer-reviewed research and an analytical sense of when it's beneficial to link academic and non-academic sources.

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5

The response earned a score of 3 because elements of the Works Cited are consistent and complete (i.e., citations contain the necessary components and are represented in a consistent bibliographic style). With one exception-it's unclear whether the Stathopoulou information on p. 1 comes from a source missing from the Works Cited or from Song or Rosenthal-internal citations clearly attribute material and clearly link to the Works Cited.

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6

The response earned a score of 3 because the prose is adequate to the task of a research report. The prose expresses complex ideas clearly and in an organized fashion; word choice is precise and apt. There are few grammatical or stylistic flaws.

Sample: B

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1 Score: 4

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 Score: 4

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 Score: 4

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4 Score: 4

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5 Score: 2

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6 Score: 2

MEDIUM SAMPLE RESPONSE

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1

The response earned a score of 4 because the report identifies an area of investigation, albeit quite broad (regulating border security). The introduction does not establish a clear lens or subtopic to narrow the report subject. Overall, the bibliography and introduction allow for some general context for broad pro/con perspectives/arguments. While the bibliography shows evidence of research, it includes a few websites of unclear provenance, and The Huffington Post is overrepresented (almost half the sources are from the source).

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 (in the research)

The response earned a score of 4 because the report summarizes and explains specific information and provides some limited, overly general analysis of reasoning in the sources (e.g., "If we can get a better understanding and clear image of a person giving reports like a border patrol officer than our borders will be a much easier task to take on" [p. 2] or "Being an officer means you would have to evolve in any circumstance they may face in the future" [p. 2]).

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2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

Performance Task 1 — Individual Research and Reflection

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 (in the research)

The response earned a score of 4 because the report identifies items of evidence and connects that evidence to the arguments. There are descriptive statements that make clear the relevance of the subject (e.g., University of Southern California by the National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events on p. 1), but the statement does not provide any detail about the Center, nor does it mention beyond citation the source of that information (in this case, an article by Erica Warner in The Huffington Post).

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4

The response earned a score of 4 because the student provides reasonable detail about initial and changing views of the research topic, about research, and about writing. For example, the student discusses credibility at length, but without insight (e.g., anything on the Homeland Security website or in a news source is automatically credible and without bias).

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5

The response earned a score of 2 because attribution is uneven and inconsistent. While all internal citations match to the Bibliography, necessary information is missing in some citations (e.g., It's clear that "Canada-US Talks" is a 2011 piece found on the internet, but beyond that the provenance is unclear). Treatment of last names is inconsistent, and the citations are neither alphabetically nor chronologically ordered.

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6

The response earned a score of 2 because while the descriptive writing is generally clear, the communication of analysis contains some flaws in clarity and precision. (e.g., "However, if we advance Border patrol officer's training, then we will make them realize even more the importance of being fully equipped and capable of protecting our borders from dangerous acts that leave and come to the United States" [p. 2] or "Drones, infrared eyes and even a wall would help prevent illegal immigration to a certain degree, but to actually be there in person and having face-to-face interaction has a better knowledge of what is currently going down in the border [p. 2])

Sample: C

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1 Score: 2

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 Score: 2

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 Score: 2

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4 Score: 2

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5 Score: 1

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6 Score: 1

LOW SAMPLE RESPONSE

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Context — Row 1

The earned a score a 2 because it identifies an area of investigation in the title. There is a single example anchored to a source (the case of Willingham, which comes from the source Listverse), but there is no clear statement of a perspective/argument derived from this source. (The paragraph with the Evans example comes from "Radelet, Facing the Death Penalty," a source without more descriptive attribution and not found on the References page. It's unclear from the report whether this source advances a perspective/argument.) Sources for the paper demonstrate evidence of research, but are mainly websites identified only by a URL, making the context for this research report difficult to evaluate.

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2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

Performance Task 1 — Individual Research and Reflection

Content Area: Understanding and Analyzing Argument — Row 2 (in the research)

The response earned a score of 2 on this row because it summarizes information presumably from sources. Argumentative statements are present ("Those who support the death penalty will make statements such as..." [p. 3]), but these instances are not linked to any research source, but instead, presented as unsubstantiated personal argument.

Content Area: Analyzing and Evaluating Evidence — Row 3 (in the research)

The response earned a score of 2 on this row because information is clearly identified from only one source, Listverse (p. 3), so connection is not possible. As for credibility, there is neither an attributive phrase nor any commentary about the source.

Content Area: Reflection — Row 4

The response earned a score of 2 because much of the Reflection describes anecdotal thoughts about the generalities of the course and of the group dynamic. There is little to no insightful reflection about the research and writing processes or about how research changed initial views.

Content Area: Selecting and Using Evidence — Row 5

The response earned a score of 1 because there is only one (flawed) instance of attribution, the Listverse example on p. 3. The attributions within the paper are vague and uneven. The connections between the citations and the bibliography are difficult to find and / or non-existent.

Content Area: Grammar and Style — Row 6

The response earned a score of 1 because numerous run-on sentences and instances of scrambled syntax interfere with communication.