Reading Assessment

The Communications Caucus has developed this **description of college level reading** as well as a **rubric** designed to help instructors rate students as either <u>college level</u> or <u>exceptional</u>. This overall description can be put into your syllabus or used in some other way to help students understand the reading skills and strategies that will be necessary in college work.

To use the rubric, you might choose only some of the aspects of reading you wish to assess. Just copy the sections you want to use. You might add the sections of the rubric to one you already use to rate students on the content area knowledge or skill.

The rubric attempts to describe the criteria for college level and exceptional performance on various aspects of the reading process and resulting comprehension of texts, manuals, assignments, labs, etc. Of course, the point values are entirely up to you to modify so that they work for your grading system.

College Level Readers

- Use effective textbook or technical manual reading skills to learn content, including broad, general concepts as well as important details, steps, processes, or evidence.
- Read complex, multi-step directions accurately and thoroughly
- Read tables, graphs, charts, or diagrams appropriate for the discipline
- Recognize the organization of materials and use it to guide their learning
- Develop their vocabularies to learn both technical and non-technical college level words and building blocks to words, such as prefixes, root words, and suffixes
- Read effectively both on a computer screen and on paper
- Adjust their reading style and speed as necessary
- Apply their reading skills to the testing situation
- Are independent in their reading; they do not rely on the instructor to lecture or explain everything

College Level Readers demonstrate the above skills by

- Creating their own study methods and materials (study cards, outlines, maps, notes) while working with texts, both in terms of the general ideas as well as the important details
- Following directions accurately and completely on assignments, projects, and tests
- Correctly interpreting graphic information, processes, or results
- Identifying, using or reporting the method of organization of the text (such as cause/effect, comparison/contrast, process, etc.)
- Using technical and non-technical vocabulary correctly and appropriately or identifying correct uses or definitions of vocabulary words
- Reading from a computer screen without needing to print it first OR reading web sites accurately (using sidebars and other features effectively)
- Managing the reading load in coursework in a timely manner
- Reading test questions accurately, with no errors resulting from misreading test questions
- Coming to class prepared and understanding the readings or chapters that were required

Reading Evaluation Guide

Outcomes: Student . . .	College Level Students	Exceptional Students
Follows Directions	• Complete all sections of the assignment adequately. • Do what the directions ask in all but one part of the assignment. • Complete a project that is satisfactory.	• Complete all sections of the assignment thoroughly. • Do what the directions ask in all sections of the assignment. • Complete a project that is excellent.
Understands New Terms	• Define terms adequately. • Use terms mostly correctly in speaking or writing.	• Define terms accurately and completely. • Use terms correctly in speaking or writing.
Answers Objective Questions	Answer questions with at least 70% accuracy.	Answer questions with at least 90% accuracy.
Reads Tables, Charts and Graphs	• Answer questions with at least 70% accuracy. • Demonstrate a general understanding of the results or conclusions of the table, chart or graph.	• Answer questions with at least 90% accuracy. • Demonstrate a clear understanding of the results or conclusions of the table, chart or graph.
Processes Information (Summarizes, Maps, Outlines, Takes Notes, or Annotates)	• Identify most of the important points, adequate supporting details, and some of the important vocabulary. • Use a system to differentiate broad, general ideas from specific, supporting information. • Paraphrase most of the time.	• Identify all of the important points, an adequate number of supporting details, and important vocabulary. • Use a clear and easy-to-recognize system to differentiate broad, general ideas from specific, supporting information. • Paraphrase most of the time and do so accurately.
Answers an Essay Question	• Write an answer that addresses most of the issue(s). • Create an adequate thesis. • Develop supporting ideas logically. • Support the thesis with adequate specific details.	• Write an answer that addresses all the important issue(s). • Create a clear, strong thesis. • Develop supporting ideas logically and convincingly. • Support the thesis with ample specific details.

Writing Assessment

At MCTC, college-level writing has all the elements that readers in business, education, and social environments expect to see. So the writing presents a context and purpose that meet the reader's needs and a style appropriate for this context and purpose. The writing is interesting because it has something to say, and the reader can follow this interest to the end of the piece because it is well organized. Finally, the reader finds few, if any, distracting errors that slow what should be a pleasurable, informative process.

Writing Evaluation Guide

Evaluation Area	At <u>College Level Proficiency</u>, the writing demonstrates the writer's developing ability to . . .	At <u>Exceptional Proficiency</u>, the writing demonstrates the writer's ability to . . .
Context	- address the issue at hand - demonstrate an awareness of his/her audience and purpose.	- convey a high degree of focus - provide a clear sense of context for the reader.
Style	- use language that is clear, specific and appropriate to task - establish an appropriate tone - avoid confusion or misuse of terms.	- control style in such a way that the reader wants to read the piece - use effectively sentence variety and word economy.
Ideas & Insights	- think critically and explore increasingly complex ideas or respond to increasingly difficult writing tasks - convey a sense of purpose and focus - express original insights about the topic (if applicable).	- convey superior and original insight about the topic or task thoroughly - support ideas with superior evidence - exert greater control over complex ideas or writing tasks.
Structure & Organization	- use appropriate structure for purpose and audience (to construct a clear thesis if applicable) - gain and hold the reader's attention - construct effective paragraphs (if applicable) - use transitions effectively - order paragraphs logically - close the writing effectively.	- gain and hold the reader's attention (using all the elements of college-level writing) - leave the reader with a strong sense of satisfaction for his or her efforts.
Grammar & Mechanics	- apply and control the conventions of Standard Written English - avoid confusion, misunderstanding or interruption due to errors in spelling, grammar, usage, mechanics, etc. - avoid a wide variety in types of errors - include proper use of source citation and documentation of research (if applicable).	maintain superior control of grammar, mechanics, and documentation with no significant errors.
Process	- plan, write, and revise effectively - identify and correct weaknesses - respond effectively to a variety of feedback.	produce polished writing through a high level of processing, especially in the revising and editing stages.

Public Speaking Assessment

Public speaking is a highly valued skill in our society. At MCTC, students learn to be effective public speakers through proficiency in selecting a topic, researching a topic, constructing a speech and delivering a speech.

Speaking Evaluation Guide

Skill		College Level Proficiency	Exceptional Level Proficiency
Topic Selection	**Audience Analysis**	Audience analysis is used to produce an appropriate topic and purpose for the speech.	Audience analysis is used to its fullest to produce a highly appropriate topic and purpose for the speech
	Narrowing of Topic	An appropriate topic is selected and is narrowed adequately.	A topic is selected which is clearly appropriate and is extremely well narrowed.
	Thesis Statement	A thesis statement which supports the content and purpose for the speech is written adequately.	A thesis statement which greatly supports the content and purpose of the speech is written exceptionally.
Research	**Number and Variety of Sources**	A sufficient number of varied sources is used.	An exceptional number of extremely varied sources is used.
	Verbal Citations	Citations are delivered sufficiently well and provide the audience the sources used for the information.	Verbal citations are delivered extremely well and provide the audience a detailed source citation.
	Documentation	A bibliography with the minimum required sources is included with the speech outline.	A bibliography with all sources used to research the topic is included with the speech outline.
Speech Construction	**Introduction**	The introduction sufficiently states an attention getter, significance, credibility, thesis statement and preview of the main points.	The attention-getter, significance, credibility, thesis statement and preview of the main points are stated exceptionally well and entice the audience to listen.
	Transitions	Transitions are used well to guide the audience from one point to another.	Transitions are used extremely well, allowing the audience to follow the speech easily.
	Body	Main points and sub points are stated well.	Main points and sub points are stated exceptionally well and provide great clarity.
	Conclusion	A review of main points is provided as well as a final statement or call to action.	A review of main points is provided which is exceptionally succinct and well stated. The final statement or call to action provides the audience with something provocative and eloquent.
Speech Delivery	**Eye Contact and Use of Notes**	Notes are used well and sufficient eye contact is maintained.	Notes are used extremely well, giving the audience maximum eye contact.
	Verbal Skills	The speaker uses good volume, pitch, inflection, pauses and rate of speech.	The speaker uses excellent volume, pitch, inflection, pauses and rate of speech.
	Nonverbal Skills	Appearance, gestures, movement and facial expressions are used in ways that complement the verbal delivery of the speech.	Appearance, gestures, movement and facial expressions are used exceptionally well and not only complement, but enhance the verbal delivery of the speech.
	Timing	The speech is delivered in the general time frame required.	The speech is delivered in the specific time frame required.

Information Literacy Assessment

Information literacy is a component of life-long learning. To be information literate a person must possess several skills: an understanding of how knowledge is created and organized, as well as of the political, economic and social context(s) in which knowledge is created and used; the ability to formulate a search question(s); the ability to translate question(s) into a search strategy; the ability to select appropriate tools to locate desired information; and the ability to evaluate material for its credibility and authority, as well as its capacity to meet the need for information.

Assessing Student Research

One way to assess research skills is to have students submit a research portfolio with their research paper or research project. Research portfolios should include the following items:

1. Documentation of how students searched for books, journal articles, web pages (the type of searches conducted (i.e., keyword search, subject search, etc.) and the process used).
2. Explanation of how the resources support the thesis statement and research questions.
3. Evaluation of each resource for credibility and authority and explanation of why student trusts the information.

Research Portfolio Evaluation Guide

Requirement	College Level Proficiency	Exceptional Level Proficiency
Student is able to specify the dimensions of the topic. Student: • Clearly states the focused topic. • States an appropriate working thesis. • Follows appropriate steps to narrow the topic.	Topic has discernable focus and is adequately precise. Thesis statement that is clear and focused and adequately precise. The argument is adequately stated but may need more focus. Research questions address the topic and are adequately precise.	Topic has a very clear focus that is precise, appropriately narrow, and well articulated. Thesis statement is very well focused, concise, and articulated. The argument is clear, focused and well stated. Research questions are very clear, concise and well focused.
Student demonstrates a clear research strategy. Student: • Clearly articulates the process used to identify and locate resources. • Uses specific and effective search techniques.	A clear research process is articulated that takes account of the issues related to the topic. Basic and some advanced search techniques are used, with minor errors in application of search techniques or a lack of connection in search strategies across resources. Use of focused keywords and subject headings is satisfactory.	Student articulates a clear, concise, and well focused research process that takes into account all the relevant issues related to the topic. Student uses (1) basic and advanced search techniques very well and applies search techniques consistently across all resources, and (2) precise keywords and subject headings as well as sub-headings to narrow searches.
Student selects resources that are appropriate for the topic and explains why the resources are appropriate.	The majority of the selected resources are appropriate for the topic. Resource appropriateness is well documented and clearly stated. A satisfactory level of detail is provided concerning relevance of resources to thesis statement, research questions, and topic focus.	All resources are well focused on the topic or specific sub-aspects of the topic. The appropriateness of resources is very well documented with an in-depth analysis of each resource. Clear and detailed explanation of how resources support thesis statement, research questions, and various aspects of the topic is included.
Student is able to evaluate the resources according to specific criteria.	Clear evaluation of resources based upon specific criteria of authority, reliability and bias is present.	Student includes a strong and in-depth evaluation based upon specific criteria, with a clear understanding of the bias, authority, reliability, and credentials of the author, publisher, or web site sponsor.