

**IN 140/IN 183: University Seminar  
2012-2013 Assessment Report  
Dr. Robert Money, Coordinator of University Seminar**

**(1) History and Context**

In the recent past, our curriculum suffered from a lack of clarity regarding the role of IN140, University Seminar; it had been unclear exactly what we wanted IN140 to do. Sometimes, we used it as a “dumping ground.” For example, if we thought a skill set important but did not know where to put it (e.g., oral communication), we put it in IN140, without giving serious attention to the implications that this might have for the internal coherence of the course. In addition, we paid little attention to how IN140 might connect to the larger curriculum. We tended to treat IN140 as less of an academic course and more of a stand alone “orientation to college” course. Our inability to see IN140 as an academic course connected to the larger curriculum was, in part, a function of a lack of full coherence within our University Studies program and a lack of clarity regarding how our University Studies program was connected to the University’s educational mission, values, and goals.

During 2006-2007, a consensus emerged that our University Studies program needed to undergo re-examination and revision. A Nyberg seminar was convened during the summer of 2007 to focus on this project. The Seminar, comprised of six faculty members representing all colleges across the University, was charged with “refreshing the MPSL in ways that better meet our stated University Studies learning objectives.” Accordingly, the Seminar was asked to “produce a definitive set of suggested revisions to the University Studies portion of the MPSL.” The product of the Seminar’s summer work was a formal report, “Refreshing the Millikin Program of Student Learning.” This report proposed numerous revisions to our University Studies program, including several that impacted directly on IN140, University Seminar. The Nyberg report served as the basis for the eventual recommendations for reform of the University Studies program brought to the full faculty by the Council on Curriculum during the fall 2007 semester. Those recommendations were voted on and accepted by the full faculty during the fall 2007 semester.

As a result of these revisions, IN140 was reconceptualized, reformed, and refocused, especially in relation to its function vis-à-vis the larger University Studies curriculum. Among the more important revisions to IN140 were the following:

- IN140 was formally understood as an **academic** course first and foremost, charged with providing students an “*introduction* to academic inquiry at the college level.”
- IN140 was formally understood as the place in our curriculum where students would be *introduced* to the skill of “**critical and ethical reasoning**.” This skill thread would run vertically through the sequential elements of the University Studies curriculum (i.e., IN250, IN251, and IN350).
- IN140 was formally understood as one of two places in our first-semester first-year curriculum where students would engage in **reflection** (the other location is IN150, Critical Writing, Reading, and Research – the other half of the first-year learning community). This skill thread would also run vertically through the sequential elements of the University Studies curriculum (i.e., IN250, IN251, and IN350).
- IN140’s focus on student reflection would be intentionally connected to its use of **service learning**. Connecting student reflection to service learning allows IN140 to introduce students to one hallmark of a Millikin education – the commitment to “theory and practice” and experiential learning.
- IN140 would continue to engage students in specific **orientation topics**, with the help of a First Year Experience Mentor. This allows IN140 to serve as a targeted location within our curriculum where we take seriously our obligation to help students transition to college life, both academically and socially. This embodies our commitment to the education of the whole person.
- IN140 was formally relieved of its obligation to deliver oral communication. A new element within the University Studies program, “Oral Communication Studies,” would target the delivery of that skill.

This reconceptualization of IN140 links it in very clear and very intentional ways to larger University values and to the larger curriculum, particularly the sequential elements of the University Studies program. As a result of these changes, our assessment of this component of the University Studies curriculum had to be revised and refocused. The 2008 report, responding to the larger institution-wide curricular changes that occurred the previous year, sought to establish a clear framework within which the assessment of IN140 could take place. Where possible and appropriate, it suggested that we continue to use methods of assessment used in the past. However, the fundamental reconceptualization of IN140 demanded that new methods of assessment be utilized going forward. Of equal importance, it required that faculty teaching the course be informed of these methods *in advance of teaching the course*.

The 2009 Report was the first report with the opportunity to implement the assessment framework envisioned in the 2008 Report. This year’s Report (2013) continues to

implement and advance that assessment framework. We now have **five** years of credible data to draw from and are beginning to reach the point where we can identify trend lines over time.

## (2) Description and Learning Goals

The formal course description and the formal course learning goals for University Seminar are as follows:

IN140. University Seminar (3) Fall semester freshman year. This course is an introduction to academic inquiry at the college level. Seminar topics vary across sections. Each section engages students in critical and ethical reasoning, includes a service learning component, and addresses specific orientation topics. The learning outcome goals for students taking IN140 are that students will be able to:

1. use ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on issues that impact their personal lives as well as their local, national, and/or global communities;
2. reflect on the significance of contributions to community through service learning; and
3. work collaboratively and creatively with diverse others.

As indicated by the course learning goals, the course asks teachers and students to do several different things. Regardless of the particular substantive content of the course (content is chosen by the particular faculty member teaching the course), each course is expected to do the following: engage students in **ethical reasoning**, engage students in **service learning with reflection**, and discuss **orientation topics** pertaining to the first-year student.

The University Seminar experience is intended to be a *unique* learning opportunity for first-year students entering the university. University Seminar is an *introduction* to academic inquiry; it is not an introduction to any particular major. This distinction is crucial for understanding the learning goals of the course. University Seminar is an academic course designed to facilitate the development of certain specific skill sets while engaging students in a particular substantive content. While allowing for great diversity of substantive content among sections, this introduction to academic inquiry is anchored by two key skills: (1) critical and ethical reasoning, and (2) reflection. By engaging students in critical and ethical reasoning and reflection, the course introduces students to skills that will be further developed by the sequential elements of the University Studies program as well as courses in the students' chosen majors. Moreover, by engaging students in critical and ethical reasoning and reflection, the

course facilitates the development of skills that are indispensable to professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and the discovery and creation of a personal life of meaning and value. By having student engage in reflection about their service learning experiences, the course takes academic skills out of the formal classroom setting and connects them with our larger community. The course, thus, serves as an initial introduction to Millikin's commitment to "theory-practice" education and experiential learning, a pedagogical commitment that will be reinforced in the students' chosen majors.

In addition to its academic focus, the course also provides students with an opportunity to build community on campus. All students enrolled in a fall section of University Seminar participate in First Week orientation. First Week provides students opportunities to acclimate to campus life and to meet and bond with their University Seminar classmates and instructors. This community building function is reinforced over the course of the semester by the "learning community" comprised of IN140 and IN150, Critical Writing, Reading and Research. The students move as a group between these two academic courses. This experience builds community among the students, and allows for the possibility of cross-disciplinary collaboration by the faculty involved.

Finally, the course provides students with an opportunity to engage with specific orientation topics that address a variety of "life skills" issues important for student success during the transition to college. In this regard, the course employs an upper classman as a mentor, again grounding the students on campus and providing them with a "student" resource to consult on numerous topics.

In sum, then, University Seminar is intended to be a place of intellectual growth, shared learning, and community building. In addition, it is the specific location within our curriculum where we take seriously our obligation to help students transition to college life, both academically and socially. We are, after all, interested in the education of the whole person. No other course on campus aims to function in this unique way.

### **(3) Snapshot**

The seminar topics for University Seminar are varied and are selected by individual instructors. Faculty are encouraged to be creative in their selection of topics – the faculty member can create the course he or she has always wanted to teach, or explore an area of interest even if that area is not directly in their area of expertise, etc. Maximum freedom of choice is given to the faculty teaching the course. Regardless of the substantive content, however, all sections are required to deliver the learning goals

that are definitive of the course and address orientation topics pertaining to the first-year student.

During fall 2012 semester, 28 sections of University Seminar were offered. This included 21 “regular” sections, 4 honors sections and 3 “enhanced” sections. All students taking seminar were co-enrolled in a section of IN150, Critical Writing, Reading and Research. Regular and honors sections averaged 18.48 students. The three enhanced sections averaged 15.66 students. In addition, five of the “regular” sections were operated as “learning communities.” Three sections operated as learning communities targeting a specific undergraduate program (business) and two sections operated as residence hall learning communities (Dolson).

During the fall 2012 semester, 15 sections of University Seminar were taught by full-time faculty members, 8 by adjunct faculty members, and 5 by full-time administrators. 9 instructors taught one section, 8 instructors taught two sections and 1 instructor taught three sections.

Given its multiple functions (as described above), University Seminar is best delivered by a diverse and multitalented set of faculty. One of – if not *the* – most important factors in a successful educational experience is high quality teaching. As an institution, Millikin University is committed to providing our students with excellent teachers. This commitment is not confined to the delivery of the major; it extends to the delivery of our University Studies program. Accordingly, faculty quality must be monitored throughout the curriculum. Judgments about quality instruction, however, must go beyond easy to make judgments such as the number/percentage of full-time faculty instructors delivering the curricular component, or the number/percentage of faculty with terminal degrees delivering the curricular component. While these sorts of easily obtainable data may be relevant to whether you are likely to get high quality instruction, they certainly do not guarantee it. Of at least equal importance are faculty passion and commitment to the course, as well as faculty experience relative to the unique nature of the course.

The instructors who taught University Seminar during the fall 2012 semester represent a typical “lineup.” Our use of adjuncts and select administrators to help deliver University Seminar is done in such a way so as to allow those with proper qualifications (both educational and experiential) to help deliver the course. We have a diverse and multitalented set of instructors committed to the delivery of this course. Each of these instructors brings her own distinctive skills and areas of expertise to the course – skills and expertise that fit well with the diverse aims of this unique course.

#### (4) Assessment Methods

As noted in the 2008 Report, given the reforms made to University Seminar in the past few years, new methods for assessing the course were required. The following methods are now established and will be employed going forward:

- Administration of a newly reformed University Seminar Survey (see below)
- Tracking SIR data for University Seminar and comparing that data against similar SIR data for faculty across the University.
- Syllabi audits (using an audit form specifically designed for University Seminar).
- Review of a random sampling of “artifacts” (generally, written papers) collected for purposes of assessing the primary academic learning goal for which University Seminar has sole responsibility during the first year: critical and ethical reasoning.

\*\*\*Comment on Newly Reformed Survey Instrument:

In the 2008 Assessment Report, learning outcomes goals for University Seminar were assessed, in part, through the *Your First College Year* student survey. That survey was administered during the spring semester to students enrolled in IN151, CWRRII. Thus, it was administered during the semester *after* IN140, University Seminar was completed. That survey instrument has been discontinued and was not administered during the 2008-09 academic year. Anticipating its discontinuation, Dr. Money, Faculty Coordinator for IN140, called for the construction and administration of a new survey instrument. This was proposed in the “Trends and Improvement Plans” section of the 2008 Assessment Report. The new survey instrument maintains some overlap with the prior instrument so that we can continue to track trends over time relative to specific elements of the course. However, it also includes revisions that allow it to better track student attitudes and, more importantly, *behaviors* that relate to the specific learning goals of University Seminar. This new survey instrument was constructed in time to be administered by University Seminar instructors during the 2008 fall, at the end of the semester. Here is the new survey instrument:

IN 140 University Seminar Survey

Section \_\_\_\_\_

1. The academic content of my University Seminar course was challenging.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
2. The course caused me to engage in a great deal of critical thinking.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
3. I used ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on an issue that impacts my personal life.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
4. I used ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on an issue that impacts my local, national, or global community.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
5. Our section's service learning project was a purposeful experience.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
6. I could see direct connection between our course content and our class service learning project.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
7. I engaged in reflection on my service learning experience.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
8. The orientation topics that were covered helped me to adapt to college life.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
9. There was a strong connection between the instructors of my IN 140 and IN 150 courses.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
10. The University Seminar course helped me feel more equipped to succeed in college.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree
11. I feel that the University Seminar course was worth taking.  
4 - strongly agree      3 - agree      2 - disagree      1 - strongly disagree

## (5) Assessment Data

The fall 2012 offerings of University Seminar represent the fifth time instructors constructed their University Seminar offerings in light of knowledge of the revisions made to our University Studies program, including the revisions that impacted on the function and role of University Seminar. This Report includes University Seminar Survey data, SIR data, syllabi audit data, and an examination of a random sampling of student work (“artifacts”) relevant to the major academic learning goal for which University Seminar has sole responsibility during the first year, ethical reasoning.

### A. University Seminar Survey<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the fall 2012 semester, all faculty teaching sections of University Seminar were asked to administer the University Seminar Survey. 19 of the 28 sections returned surveys. Approximately 305 of the 536 students enrolled in University Seminar completed the survey. This represents a response rate of 57%. All respondents were first year students. For each survey item statement relating to University Seminar, respondents rated their agreement on a 4-point, likert-style scale (4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). If the survey item represents a continuation from items asked on previously administered YFYC surveys, those previous results will also be identified.

The following charts provide comparative data regarding survey data. The charts include data for the most recent six years of assessment. Data going back beyond six years can be found on prior yearly Reports.

The following chart provides the statistical means for each item on the survey instrument (with comparisons to prior surveys, if available). Means that represent an all-time high are highlighted in green:

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<sup>1</sup> For guidance for future reports, all of the means and percentages in the tables below are calculated based off of the number of survey respondents, not the total number of students enrolled in IN140. Students taking IN140 but not responding to the survey are ignored. Thus, if one adds the percentage of “positive” responses to the percentage of “negative” responses, one will get 100%. This is not the case with the YFYC surveys of 2006-2008. The author of this report *suspects* that those percentage calculations were based off of total number of students taking CWRR, as opposed to total number of respondents.



Question	Spring 2008 (301 Respondents)	Fall 2008 (397- 385 Respondents)	Fall 2009 (115 Respondents)	Fall 2010 (351- 349 Respondents)	Fall 2011 (307 Respondents)	Fall 2012 (305- 290 Respondents)
Course Content Challenging	2.61	3.08	2.94	2.89	2.82	2.91
Engaged in Critical Thinking	2.61	3.14	3.16	3.26	3.25	3.32
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Personal Issue	n/a	2.96	3.07	3.07	3.09	3.23
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Local, National, Global, Community Issue	n/a	2.96	3.12	3.04	3.14	3.22
Service learning was a purposeful experience	2.54	2.88	2.89	3.07	3.14	3.20
Service Learning Connected to Course	2.50	2.77	2.61	2.87	2.72	2.97
Engaged in Reflection on Service Learning	n/a	2.87	3.00	3.16	3.13	3.22
Orientation topics helped me adapt to college life	2.68	2.70	2.68	2.94	2.86	2.97
Cohort between IN140 and IN150 was strong	2.29	2.21	2.40	2.50	2.50	2.41
Course Equips Me to Succeed in College	2.50	2.74	2.71	2.94	2.89	2.95

Course was worth taking	2.76	2.89	2.84	3.00	3.01	3.12
Overall Index Score on Eight Items from Original YFYC Survey	2.56	2.80	2.77	2.93	2.90	2.98
Overall Index Score on Survey as Revised (11 Items)	n/a	2.84	2.86	2.98	2.96	3.05

The following chart identifies the percentage of “**positive**” responses (“strongly agree” and “agree”) to the individual survey item statements. Again, all-time high results are indicated with green highlight:

Question	Spring 2008 (301 Respondents)	Fall 2008 (397-385 Respondents)	Fall 2009 (115 Respondents)	Fall 2010 (351-349 Respondents)	Fall 2011 (307 Respondents)	Fall 2012 (305-290 Respondents)
Course Content Challenging	56%	80%	68%	75%	70%	74%
Engaged in Critical Thinking	56%	79%	82%	89%	87%	90%
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Personal Issue	n/a	71%	80%	84%	82%	90%
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Local, National, Global, Community Issue	n/a	75%	83%	79%	86%	90%

Service learning was a purposeful experience	55%	74%	70%	76%	82%	85%
Service Learning Connected to Course	54%	65%	59%	66%	62%	74%
Engaged in Reflection on Service Learning	n/a	72%	79%	85%	86%	89%
Orientation topics helped me adapt to college life	62%	65%	64%	76%	71%	80%
Cohort between IN140 and IN150 was strong	42%	37%	41%	51%	51%	45%
Course Equips Me to Succeed in College	50%	68%	67%	75%	70%	78%
Course was worth taking	61%	68%	71%	74%	74%	83%

The following chart identifies the percentage of “**negative**” responses (“strongly disagree” and “disagree”) to the individual survey item statements.

Question	Spring 2008 (301 Respondents)	Fall 2008 (397-385 Respondents)	Fall 2009 (115 Respondents)	Fall 2010 (351- 349 Respondents)	Fall 2011 (307 Respondents)	Fall 2012 (305- 290 Respondents)
Course Content Challenging	31%	20%	32%	25%	30%	26%
Engaged in Critical Thinking	30%	21%	18%	11%	13%	10%
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Personal Issue	n/a	29%	20%	16%	18%	10%
Engaged in Ethical Reasoning on Local, National, Global, Community Issue	n/a	25%	17%	21%	14%	10%
Service learning was a purposeful experience	28%	26%	30%	24%	18%	15%
Service Learning Connected to Course	30%	35%	41%	34%	38%	26%
Engaged in Reflection on Service Learning	n/a	28%	21%	15%	14%	11%
Orientation topics helped me adapt to	24%	35%	36%	24%	29%	20%

college life						
Cohort between IN140 and IN150 was strong	42%	63%	59%	49%	50%	55%
Course Equips Me to Succeed in College	35%	32%	33%	25%	30%	22%
Course was worth taking	26%	32%	29%	26%	26%	17%

**B. SIR Data Comparison**

SIR data have been collected for the following four items: (1) scale summary data for course organization and planning, (2) scale summary data for communication, (3) overall evaluation of the instructor, and (4) overall evaluation of the course. The following SIR data compare the mean scores for faculty at the university (first number) with the average mean scores for faculty teaching all IN sequential courses across the entire university (the second number) and faculty teaching IN140 specifically (the third number). The three different categories of IN140 faculty are then identified and average mean scores for each category are provided: full-time faculty (fourth number), adjunct faculty (fifth number), and administrators (sixth number). These data are for the fall 2012 semester. Data for all sections are included. The average response rate for all IN140 sections was **80%**, a rate much higher than the university wide response rate of **60%**. The data in parentheses in the final four columns represent the prior year’s results. The improvements are substantial.

SIR Item	University Means	All IN Sequential Program Instructors Across University	All IN140 Instructors (28 sections)	Full Time Faculty IN140 Instructors (15 sections)	Adjunct IN140 Instructors (8 sections)	Full Time Administration IN140 Instructors (5 sections)
Course Organization & Planning	4.38	4.23	<b>4.40</b> (4.11)	4.53 (4.22)	4.01 (3.77)	4.61 (4.13)
Communication	4.44	4.31	<b>4.46</b> (4.24)	4.58 (4.36)	4.11 (3.85)	4.63 (4.28)
Overall, Instructor	4.38	4.21	<b>4.40</b> (4.09)	4.56 (4.33)	3.93 (3.51)	4.68 (4.03)
Overall, Course	4.23	4.00	<b>4.19</b> (3.83)	4.34 (3.92)	3.81 (3.47)	4.35 (3.89)

The following table indicates the number of sections of University Seminar taught by instructors whose SIR means were at or above the average for the University as a whole. The data in the brackets in the “All IN140 Faculty” column represent results from the pervious year.

CATEOGRY	ALL IN140 FACULTY	IN140 FT	IN140 ADJUNCT	IN140 ADMIN.
Org. & Planning	19 (68%) {9 (36%)}	11	4	4
Communication	17 (61%) {12 (48%)}	9	4	4
Overall, Instructor	19 (68%) {12 (48%)}	11	4	4
Overall, Course	17 (61%) {6 (24%)}	9	4	4

As measured by SIR data, we have made substantial improvements over the past five years. The following table tracks the SIR data for all sections of University Seminar over the past five years. The data indicates a clear trend line of substantial progress in terms of strengthening the quality of teaching in IN140 as measured by this instrument.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Course Org. and Planning	4.11	4.19	4.34	4.24	<b>4.40</b>
Communication	4.21	4.27	4.42	4.33	<b>4.46</b>
Overall, Instructor	4.04	4.12	4.39	4.24	<b>4.40</b>
Overall, Course	3.75	3.84	4.11	3.99	<b>4.19</b>

### C. Syllabus Audit Data

For the fall 2012 semester, 19 syllabi were collected; all sections submitted a syllabus. Each syllabus was audited to see if it contained specific items relevant to the delivery and assessment of University Seminar. The following data provides information regarding the number of syllabi containing the relevant items as specified on the audit form. The top numbers represent results from this year (fall 2012). The bottom number represents results from the previous year (fall 2011).

#### IN140 University Seminar Syllabus Audit Form

	Syllabus is acceptable on item	Syllabus has item included but not in acceptable form	Syllabus does not have item
<b>TOP of FIRST PAGE:</b> Course Identification: course number, course name, faculty, semester	<b>19, 100%</b> 21, 100%		
SOMEWHERE in SYLLABUS:			
Faculty contact info: name, office, office hours, office phone,	<b>19, 100%</b> 21, 100%		

email address			
Course description: Standard description (see below) plus faculty written course description/overview	<b>18, 95%</b> 20, 95%	1, 5%	<b>1, 5%</b>
Standard course learning goals (see below)	<b>18, 95%</b> 21, 100%		<b>1, 5%</b>
Instructor's grading policy - scale and weights for assignments & for the semester	<b>18, 95%</b> 18, 86%	<b>1, 5%</b> 3, 14%	
Instructor's attendance policy – penalties	<b>19, 100%</b> 20, 95%	1, 5%	
Academic honesty & integrity statement (standard)	<b>19, 100%</b> 21, 100%		
University disability statement (standard, see below)	<b>19, 100%</b> 21, 100%		
Specification of a written assignment that will serve as ethical reasoning artifact for assessment purposes	<b>17, 90%</b> 20, 95%	<b>2, 10%</b> 1, 5%	
Specification of a written assignment that will serve as service learning with reflection artifact for assessment purposes	<b>19, 100%</b> 20, 95%	1, 5%	

#### D. Artifact Collection: Ethical Reasoning

For the fifth time, we used an electronic medium (Moodle) to allow students to upload their ethical reasoning artifacts directly to a central storage location. A central course



“shell” was created. Within that shell, two folders were created. One entitled, “Ethical Reasoning,” and the other entitled “Reflection.” Students were instructed to deposit the relevant assignments into the appropriate folder. This method of collecting student work creates a central location for the deposit of student work and relieves faculty of the responsibility of making sure that the work is passed along to the IN140 Coordinator.

The process by which ethical reasoning is assessed in IN140, University Seminar is as follows. Two artifacts (papers) are examined from each section. Assuming full participation by all sections and student enrollments of 20 students per section, this would represent a random review of 10% of students.

**Participation for fall 2012 was again excellent**, continuing the marked improvement that we have seen over the past four years. A total of 56 ethical reasoning artifacts were examined. These artifacts were randomly selected from across 28 sections of University Seminar, with two artifacts coming from each section. All sections provided artifacts. This represents a participation rate of 100% of Seminar sections and a random sampling of 10.45% of the 536 total students enrolled in University Seminar during the fall 2012 semester.

It is worth noting that this is the **third** consecutive year the random sampling has reached the desired 10% threshold. In addition, it is worth noting that a total of 399 artifacts were submitted electronically to moodle and additional artifacts were submitted from two sections in PDF format. If each of these artifacts represented the work of a single student, this would represent collection of artifacts from approximately **75%** of the students enrolled in the. In fact, this is the *minimum* level of participation. This is because some of the submitted artifacts took the form of group work or group projects. While the use of group projects is not widespread, at least one seminar section employs this pedagogical strategy for engaging students in ethical reasoning. Thus, for that section, a single artifact that I count as a single submission represents the work of four or five students. In any event, the participation rate is a minimum of 75% and this rate of participation is excellent and represents **a monumental shift over the past five years**. This progress is represented in a chart in section 6, D, below.

On all artifacts, the assessor used pink highlight to flag specific items relevant to ethical reasoning. Green, yellow, and red highlight was then used to indicate the assessor’s comments. The assessor on all ethical reasoning artifacts was Dr. Money. Assessment was done based on the ethical reasoning rubric (see below). That rubric scores artifacts on four criteria across a three level range: 1 (nominal), 2 (adequate), or 3 (excellent).

Thus, each artifact has a total rubric based score of between 4 and 12. On the basis of its total score, each artifact is tagged as falling into one of three categories:

Nominal (Red – Stop)	Adequate (Yellow – Caution)	Excellent (Green – Go)
4-6	7-9	10-12

Any partial scores are rounded up. So, an artifact with a total score of 6.5 is placed in the “adequate” category while an artifact with a total score of 9.5 is placed in the “excellent” category.

The electronic copies of the artifacts are saved on a disk. Copies of both the electronic and paper artifacts are in the possession of the faculty coordinator of University Seminar (Dr. Money).

The following table identifies the number of artifacts falling into each of the three major categories:

Nominal (Red – Stop)	Adequate (Yellow – Caution)	Excellent (Green – Go)
5 (9%)	22 (39%)	29 (52%)

## (6) Analysis of Assessment Results

### A. University Seminar Survey

When viewed in general and in comparison to previous administrations of the YFCY survey, the survey data for 2012 indicate that we continue to solidify some of the significant gains that we have made in a number of important areas; in many areas, further advancement is clearly seen. Indeed, the mean responses for nine of the eleven individual question items were at all-time highs, including the three question items that target the key academic skills for which the course is responsible: ethical reasoning and reflection. The means for “used ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on an issue that impacts my personal life” (3.23), “used ethical reasoning to analyze and reflect on an issue that impacts my local, national, or global community” (3.22), “engaged in reflection on service learning” (3.22) were all-time best results. Similarly, the mean for the summative question item “course worth taking” (3.12) represented an all-time best

response. As a result, the overall index score mean was very strong (3.05), the first time we have achieved a mean on this item above 3.0.

I would emphasize that the results obtained on each of the survey items emphasizing the major academic skill components of the course received strong marks:

- Engaged in *critical thinking*: 3.32 with 90% of respondents indicating a “positive” response (i.e., strongly agree or agree).
- Engaged in *ethical reasoning* on personal issue: 3.23, with 90% indicating a positive response.
- Engaged in *ethical reasoning* on a local, national, global issue: 3.22, with 90% indicating a positive response.
- Engaged in *reflection on service learning*: 3.22, with 89% indicating a positive response.

In other words, at least nine out of every ten students are indicating a positive response on survey items designed to track their behaviors in relation to the major academic skill components of the course. This is the third consecutive year that we have achieved impressive results on these items. These data suggest, therefore, that we continue to do an excellent job of improving the (perceived) academic rigor of the course and delivering on the goal of having IN140 serve as an introduction to *academic* inquiry.

It is worth noting that the data indicate that we have solidified the very substantial gains we saw last year with respect to service learning. All three items that focus on service learning were very strong:

- Service learning was a purposeful experience: 3.20, with 85% indicating a positive response.
- Service learning was connected to the course: 2.97, with 74% indicating a positive response.
- Engaged in reflection on service learning: 3.22, with 89% indicating a positive response.

In addition, we achieved all-time high positive response on the summative item, “course was worth taking. The mean was 3.12 (the third time we have reached the 3.00 level), with 83% indicating a positive response. In short, over four out of every five students indicate that the course was worth taking. The trend line becomes clear when we notice that the positive response rate on this item seven years ago was 56% and it was 68% four years ago. Clear and steady improvement over time is the clear trend.

As a whole, University Seminar students felt that they benefited from the inclusion of first-year orientation topics within their course. Right at 80% of survey respondents

either strongly agreed or agreed that class orientation topics (citizenship, academic strategies, diversity, healthy relationships, and wellness) helped them adapt to college life.

Survey respondents continue to perceive a weak connection between their IN 140 and IN 150 instructors. Under half of the students (45%) either agreed or strongly agreed that there was a strong connection between their University Seminar and CWRR I instructors.

In sum, the data suggest a clear trend line under which we have solidified the substantial gains that we have made over the past six years, and under which we continue to improve in numerous areas.

## **B. SIR Data**

This is the sixth time in our assessment of IN140 that the SIR data of University Seminar faculty have been collected for review and compared with the SIR data of faculty at the university. SIR data are included in this report as *part* of an effort to ensure faculty quality in University Seminar. The goal of our assessment, after all, is to help us self-monitor and work to ensure that our students receive a quality educational experience in IN140. SIR data seem relevant to the pursuit of that goal. While SIR data are not determinative of teaching effectiveness, they are an important piece of evidence. Faculty members wishing to present a case for tenure and/or promotion are required to include SIR data. Clearly, then, the institution is committed to the value of SIR data, even if that data must be properly contextualized and understood in relation to other dimensions of teaching pedagogy and effectiveness.

During the fall 2012 semester, full-time faculty taught 15 (54%) of the 28 total sections. Adjunct faculty taught 8 sections (28%). Finally, administrators taught 5 sections (18%).

The SIR data for the fall 2012 offerings of University Seminar show that on each of the four evaluated items, the average means scored for IN140 faculty were substantially in line with the mean scores for faculty at the university, with scores higher in three areas and lower in one. On course organization and planning, the mean for IN140 instructors was .02 higher than the university mean. On communication, the mean for IN140 instructors was .02 higher. On overall instructor, the mean for IN140 instructors was .02 higher. And on overall course, the mean for IN140 was .04 lower. This represents a substantial recovery from the losses of the previous year. Indeed, as seen in the table below, the results for this year represent the best results over the past five years in each category.

The 2012 data also show that full time faculty and administrators teaching the course *exceeded* the university means *in each category measured*. In the category of Course Organization and Planning, the difference was at least +.15. In the category of Communication, the difference was at least +.14. In the category of overall instructor, the difference was at least +.18. Finally, in the category of overall course, the difference was at least +.11.

To see the trend line of increasing quality as measured by SIR results, the following table compares SIR mean scores for all instructors of IN140 over the past five years. As the data show, this year's SIR scores represent all-time best results.

SIR Item	All IN140 Instructors (2008)	All IN140 Instructors (2009)	All IN140 Instructors (2010)	All IN140 Instructors (2011)	All IN140 Instructors (2012)
Course Organization & Planning	4.11	4.19	4.34	4.11	4.40
Communication	4.21	4.27	4.42	4.24	4.46
Overall, Instructor	4.04	4.12	4.39	4.09	4.40
Overall, Course	3.75	3.84	4.11	3.83	4.19

The data indicate that we have made substantial progress in our efforts to bring higher quality instructors to IN140 as measured by SIR results. Given the fluctuation that occurs in terms of instructors for the course each fall, we need to continue our efforts to secure high quality instruction as measured by SIRs across all sections, and not just in substantial pockets of the course.

### C. Syllabi Audits

Course syllabi were audited under a formal syllabus audit form that was distributed to faculty in advance of the fall semester. The data reveal that on all items, faculty members are constructing syllabi that target the skills and responsibilities that are definitive of the course. Importantly, all syllabi but one provided the standard description of the course and the standard description of the course learning goals. That syllabus came from an instructor teaching the course for the first time. Similarly, all

syllabi but two explicitly “tagged” a written assignment to serve as the ethical reasoning artifact and the service learning artifact. Given that artifacts were collected from all sections, including the section governed by these two syllabi, the failure to “tag” an artifact in those syllabi is a “formal” deficiency, not a substantive one.

As indicated in section (1) “Context” above, the course has been substantially revised in the recent past. Our instructors have shown an excellent commitment to modifying their courses and syllabi so as bring them into compliance with the course as revised. Syllabi have been adjusted, modified, and organized so as to bring the desired uniformity to the presentation of the course. Again, this uniformity is *not* about substantive content or topic selection, but about the skills and activities that are definitive of the course. In addition, the distribution of the syllabus audit form in advance of the fall semester (as well as posting it online) has likely helped bring about this uniformity of presentation.

The data reveal that instructors have made necessary revisions and that we have achieved near 100% marks on all items for the third consecutive year.

#### D. Artifact Collection

The following table identifies the number of artifacts falling into each of the three major categories:

Nominal (Red – Stop)	Adequate (Yellow – Caution)	Excellent (Green – Go)
5 (9%)	22 (39%)	29 (52%)

This is the **fifth** time that a sufficient number of artifacts have been examined to provide us with meaningful data. We have now established a firm baseline and have reached the point where clear trend lines can be identified. The data allow us to make some preliminary (if tentative) judgments.

The data show that a record percentage of student artifacts demonstrated at least adequate ethical reasoning skills: 91% (compared with 83% and 84% the previous two years). This is an excellent achievement. Interestingly, this percentage is in line with the students’ self-reports on the University Seminar survey instrument regarding engagement in ethical reasoning on personal issues (90%) and on a local, national, or global issue (90%).

The data also show that we have made and continue to make and/or secure meaningful and substantive advances in a range of categories. In order to better see the trend line, the following table places this year's results alongside the results from the previous four years.

Table of Progress Over 6 Years (2007-2012)

Year	Fall 2007 (2008 Report)	Fall 2008 (2009 Report)	Fall 2009 (2010 Report)	Fall 2010 (2011 Report)	Fall 2011 (2012 Report)	Fall 2012 (2013 Report)
# of Students in Seminar	479	482	540	498	434	536
# of Artifacts Submitted	?	?	?	374 75%	330 76%	399 75%
# of Artifacts Selected and Assessed	11	38	44	56	46	56
% of Students who had Artifacts Assessed (goal 10%)	2.3%	7.9%	8.1%	11.2%	10.6%	10.4%
# of Seminar Sections Taught	25	27	28	28	25	28
# of Seminar Sections with Students Submitting Artifacts	All 11 artifacts came from 4 sections	2 artifacts from 18 sections 1 from 2 sections 0 from 7 sections	2 artifacts from 19 sections 1 from 6 sections 0 from 3 sections	2 artifacts from 28 sections	2 artifacts from 23 sections 0 from 2 sections	2 artifacts from 28 sections
% of Seminar Sections Participating	16% fully participating 84% not participating	66% fully participating 7% partly participating	68% fully participating 21% partly participating	100% fully participating	92% fully participating	100% fully participating

		27% not participating	11% not participating			
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To better see trend lines, the following table identifies the number of artifacts falling into each category over the same five year period:

Year	Nominal (Red — Stop)	Adequate (Yellow — Caution)	Excellent (Green — Go)
2012	9%	39%	52%
2011	17%	26%	57%
2010	16%	25%	59%
2009	20%	30%	50%
2008	24%	42%	34%
2007***	n/a	n/a	n/a
2006***	n/a	n/a	n/a

\*\*\*An insufficient number of artifacts were collected in 2006 and 2007 to provide meaningful data.

Regarding the data:

- Each of the past three years, we have collected above the desired 10% threshold.
- This fall (2012), a record percentage of student artifacts assessed at adequate levels or higher: 91%, up from 83% in 2011.
- This fall (2012), we again substantially decreased the number of artifacts assessing as nominal. Only 9% of artifacts assessed as nominal, down from 17% in 2011. The substantial work we have done paying attention to assignment construction has likely made a significant impact.
- This fall (2012), the percentage of artifacts assessing as adequate increased significantly over the prior year: from 26% in 2011 to 39% in 2012. This is partly a result of fewer artifacts assessing as excellent (5% decline in excellent artifacts), but also a result of fewer artifacts assessing as nominal (8% decline in nominal artifacts).



- As was the case last year, most, if not all, of the artifacts that assessed as nominal were classified in that way because the writing simply did not engage in ethical reasoning. In many cases, this could be a result of the type of prompt or assignment that is constructed. For example, the prompt and assignment must be constructed so that students are directed to do more than simply reflect on service learning experiences or reflect on ethical issues in their own personal lives. We have devoted some development energy on assignment/prompt construction and this is likely part of the reason we have continued to decrease the number of artifacts assessing at the nominal level.
- In general, the data indicate that we have solidified our substantial gains and held them across **four** cycles of assessment.

## **(7) Trends and Improvement Plans**

### **A. Improvement in Assessment Methods**

In the 2010 Report, it was noted:

We have now reached the point where we are able to assess a sufficient number of artifacts to provide us with data. We are getting artifacts from the vast majority of sections. Our goal, now, needs to be to *increase the overall total rate of compliance by students*. That is, we need to increase the number of students who are submitting artifacts so that the random sampling taken will, in fact, be a random sampling of IN140 students. We have made the submission process very easy. There is a central depository set up on Moodle. Students are sent step-by-step directions on how to upload their artifacts. Nevertheless, a large number of students simply do not follow through. We need to incentivize the students. How to do so will be a topic for collective discussion. Options might include: (a) penalization of grade for failure to upload the assignment; (b) refusal or delay in releasing student grades; (c) entering all students who upload their assignment into a raffle contest; etc.

Conversations during the fall 2010 semester did, in fact, address the above concern and the results speak for themselves. This current report marks the third time that we have participation by over 90% of seminar sections and the third time that our sampling pool of artifacts crossed the 10% threshold. In addition, this report marks the third time that a truly robust number of artifacts were submitted; as noted 75% of IN140 students

submitted artifacts. Our aim should be to continue to improve in these regards and future reports will track our efforts.

The new University Seminar survey instrument provides us with a way to continue tracking trends in responses to items that used to appear on the YFCY survey while at the same time including items that ask students to report on their behaviors in seminar relative to ethical reasoning and reflection, the two primary academic skills. We will continue to employ this survey going forward.

We have made substantive gains in terms of the contributions made to the delivery of the course by full time faculty, particularly when compared to 2009 when only 46% of the sections were taught by full-time faculty. It is important that we work to ensure that full-time faculty members make significant contributions to the delivery of the course. However, it is far more important that we continue to attract high quality teachers to the program, regardless of their full-time, adjunct, or administrative status.

The strong SIR results are one positive sign that we have attracted quality teachers to the program. We must continue to work to ensure that high quality teachers deliver this important element within our University Studies program.

Finally, it is worth noting that this year's Report was written over winter break. This is the third time the Report has been completed before summer. This early completion will enable those faculty members who taught the course and who plan to teach Seminar during the fall 2013 semester to review our results and engage in conversations and activities that will further solidify the important gains that we have made of the past four years.

## **B. Faculty Development**

As was done last year, immediately following the finalizing of this report, the faculty coordinator will send out a document focusing on the results of our ethical reasoning assessment as presented in this report. This document will contain: (1) the ethical reasoning rubric, and (2) a collection of actual student artifacts that span the range of rubric-based scores. This document will then be sent to all instructors who taught Seminar in the fall 2012 semester and to all instructors scheduled to teach University Seminar in the fall 2013 semester as they become identified. The goal is to put this data and information in front of the faculty teaching the course so that they can think intentionally (and well in advance of the start of the fall 2013 semester) about ways to engage our students in ethical reasoning. Moreover, they will have actual practical examples to reference.

The above document will then provide us with a baseline for faculty development meetings and/or workshops over the course of the upcoming year. University wide workshops were held during the 2008-2009 academic year focusing on the “learning threads” in the sequential program, including ethical reasoning. Power points covering the “nuts and bolts” of ethical reasoning were constructed, reviewed, and made available to all faculty (as well as students). Presentations were made at the fall and spring university-wide faculty workshops on ethical reasoning. During the 2009-2010 academic year, presentations on ethical reasoning were made to faculty teaching (or interested in teaching) IN250/251. Since ethical reasoning is a skill thread that runs vertically through the curriculum, it is important for faculty teaching the sophomore and junior level courses to be familiar with what is taking place in the freshman level course charged with introducing ethical reasoning to students. It is likely that some faculty development efforts will focus on this effort to “pull the threads vertically.”

During the fall 2010 semester, rather than continue to review what ethical reasoning is, the time was ripe to provide workshops that focused on the application of the ethical reasoning rubric to actual student artifacts and general discussion of prompt formation and construction so as to engage students in ethical reasoning. It is likely that instructors will gain more insight into how to target ethical reasoning in their assignments if the workshops are practically focused in this way. During the fall 2010 semester, two instructors with a track record of successfully engaging our students in ethical reasoning, Roslyn O’Conner and Molly Pawsey, made presentations to Seminar instructors. Both talked about their experiences, including how they use First Week to launch ethical reasoning engagement, and each shared assignment prompts and pedagogical strategies that they have found successful. These presentations were well received and our plan is to continue this in the spring 2013 semester.

As was true last year, some artifacts that scored “nominal” had potential. In some cases, it seemed that the way in which the assignment was constructed or “pitched” did not facilitate student engagement in ethical reasoning. For example, an assignment that asks students to identify ethical dilemmas that arose in their service learning experiences is, standing alone, not going to engage students in ethical reasoning because the assignment does not call for or encourage the generation of *argument*. However, the same idea could be reworked so as to ask students not simply to identify ethical dilemmas, but to take a position on those issues and provide an argument in support of the position they take. This would intentionally direct students to engage in ethical reasoning. Thus, the workshops will also include discussion of how to construct better prompts that facilitate student engagement in ethical reasoning.

### C. First Week

Response to the 2008 First Week pilot program on Ethical Reasoning was generally quite positive. A survey was administered to first year students who participated in the pilot program during the 2008 fall semester. Approximately 138 responses were generated to the following question: "If your section of University Seminar participated in the Ethical Reasoning Pilot, how do you feel that Ethical Reasoning will prepare you for the future?" Of the 138 responses, 100 (72.5%) were positive, 23 (16.7%) were neutral, and 15 (10.9%) were negative.

Two main concerns were identified by students and faculty. First, the general consensus was that the program was too long. Second, the general consensus was that the program was too passive and that we would like to have more student engagement in ethical reasoning. As a result, we decided to make specific changes for the fall 2009 First Week Ethical Reasoning Program. Rather than spanning two days, the ethical reasoning program will now take place on a single day, over two hours. During the first hour, a general presentation on the "nuts and bolts" of critical and ethical reasoning will be made. The three members of the Philosophy Department will deliver the presentation, each leading one of three concurrently running presentations. A single reading will be distributed to students the day before the general presentation. Students will be asked to read the essay in advance of the presentation. The power points that are used for these presentations will be made available to all students after the presentation. This will enable students to refer to them over the course of the semester. Immediately following the general presentation, there will be smaller breakout sessions. These breakout sessions will also last one hour. Students will convene with their specific seminar class. The seminar instructor will guide students as they consider a short case study or essay (selected by the instructor, in light of her course content). The case study or essay will then be the backdrop for students to actively engage in critical and ethical reasoning during First Week, at the very outset of their university academic career.

Our goal with this program is two-fold. First, we want to provide students with general information about what critical and ethical reasoning is and, in doing so, increase their own expectations about what is involved in critical and ethical reasoning. They need to understand up front that critical and ethical reasoning is far more than the mere expression of opinion or belief. They need to understand at the beginning of their academic career that critical and ethical reasoning demands reasons and/or evidence in support of belief. This is part and parcel of the intellectual training and development that institutions of higher learning should be about. Second, we want to provide our students with an opportunity to engage actively in ethical reasoning and, in the process, see the crucial elements of critical and ethical reasoning (as discussed in the general

presentation) “in action.” In short, we want to encourage experiential learning in which theory is brought to bear on practice.

The pilot program is now no longer pilot. It has been fully incorporated into the first week schedule and is a standing part of our University Seminar experience. The fall 2012 First Week program continued to include an introduction to ethical reasoning and a breakout session with each section in order to engage students in ethical reasoning at the very start of their academic career.

An additional development activity that was piloted during the spring 2012 semester was running a 1 credit hour course for those students who were chosen to be First Year Experience Mentors for the upcoming (fall 2012) semester. Beth Evans was the lead instructor for this course and she invited Dr. Money to utilize two class periods to review ethical reasoning with those students. This provided an excellent opportunity for Dr. Money to work with the mentors to ensure that they were provided with a clear overview of ethical reasoning and, more importantly, a chance to see ethical reasoning in practice – as they were asked to assess anonymous student artifacts from the past. This was a helpful exercise and we plan to continue this development activity going forward.

### **(8) Closing Remarks**

In closing, it should be noted that a great deal of work has been and is being invested in IN140. First and foremost is the commitment and passion of those instructors who step to the plate to deliver this important element in our University Studies program. As evidenced by the data above, this group of instructors is multitalented and brings a wealth of competencies to the delivery of this unique course.

In addition to the actual delivery of the course, a number of substantial efforts have been made in an effort to improve the assessment mechanisms for IN140, all with the aim of helping us make University Seminar a quality educational experience for our students. We continue to look for ways to make substantive and meaningful efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the educational experience provided by University Seminar. And in the end, providing a high quality educational experience for our students is the point of it all.

## Appendix One: Sample IN140 Faculty Bios for Fall 2012

\*\*\*This appendix does not include bios for all instructors who teach in the program. Its purpose is simply to give a sense of the kind of diversity that is found among the instructor pool.

**Ann Borders** teaches in the Department of Theatre and Dance and in the School of Music. She has degrees in Musical Theatre and Vocal Performance and maintains an active performance schedule. Favorite recent roles include Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and the Beast*, Golda in *Fiddler on the Roof* and Mother in *Ragtime*.

**Denise Green** earned a B.A. from John Carroll University, 1983, a M.L.S. from Kent State University, 1985 and M.A. in Women's Studies from University of Illinois at Springfield, 2003. A librarian and faculty member at Staley Library, her interests include popular culture, library research instruction, electronic resources management and critical thinking.

**Michael Hartsock** received his B.A. from Central Methodist University, 2002, his M.A. (Philosophy) from the University of Missouri, 2006, and his Ph.D. (Philosophy) from the University of Missouri, 2010. His teaching and research interests include the philosophy of science and metaphysics (causation), logic, the history of philosophy, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind.

**Robert Money** received his B.A. from Furman University, 1990, his J.D. from Emory University School of Law, 1993, and his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa, 1999. His teaching interests include ethics and ethical theory, political philosophy, the history of philosophy, philosophy of law, and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Dr. Money serves as Director of the Pre-Law Program, faculty advisor to Millikin's moot court teams, and faculty advisor to the Theo-Socratic Club. Dr. Money is Chair of the Philosophy Department and faculty coordinator for University Seminar.

**Roslyn O'Conner** received her B.S. in Education from Southwest Missouri State University, 1985 and her MA with an emphasis in ecology from the University of Missouri-Columbia, 1990. She began teaching and working as a lab technician at Millikin in the fall of 2000. Before coming to Millikin, she was a high school science teacher, a laboratory coordinator at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and taught biology at Richland Community College. Her responsibilities at Millikin include teaching general biology and interdepartmental courses and preparing various laboratories for laboratory coursework.

**Molly Berry** is an Area Coordinator in the Office of Residence Life at Millikin University. She received her Bachelors Degree in Communication from Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio, and received her Masters Degree in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. She taught a Leadership Theories and Leadership Development course at Heidelberg College as a part of her graduate assistantship as well as leading many diversity and leadership development workshops. Her academic interests include social justice education, spiritual development in college students, and women's programming.

**Carrie Pierson** is the Learning Recourse Specialist at Millikin University. She obtained her Bachelors degree in Special Education and holds certifications to teach students with disabilities and also received her Masters degree in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Carrie's job at Millikin University is to support students with documented disabilities, assist students who have not yet decided on major, assist students who are academically struggling, and set up the tutoring program for the university.

**Amanda (Landacre) Podeschi** graduated from Millikin University with a B.A. in Social Science Secondary Education (2002), and has a M.A. in History from the University of Illinois at Springfield (2005). As a social and cultural historian, she focuses on gender roles in history, oral history, as well as American history, pre-1900. She is going into her fourth year of teaching IN 140, and has focused on bringing oral history into the classroom, both academically and through service learning. She also works as the Associate Dir. of Development in Millikin's Alumni Office.

## Appendix Two: Ethical Reasoning Rubric

Discussion of a rubric must begin by clear identification of what we desire students to be able to do when they engage in "ethical reasoning." The key to ethical reasoning is **the making of argument in support or criticism of an ethical judgment**. From that central idea, we can identify the following items that students should be doing as they engage in ethical reasoning:

- Students should **present an ethical (normative) judgment**.
  - The ethical judgment presented might be the student's own judgment or the judgment of another (e.g., the view of an author the student read in class, the view of a fellow student, the view of the instructor, etc.).
  - The ethical judgment presented must be normative. That is, an ethical judgment does not simply describe what *is* the case or predict what *will be* (or *would be*) the case, but prescribes what should be the case. Typical

linguistic markers for normative ethical judgments include terms such as “wrong,” “right,” “should,” “ought,” “good,” “immoral,” “desirable,” etc.

- Students should **use arguments** to support or criticize ethical judgments.
  - Regardless of whose point of view is represented by the ethical judgment, the student should use argument to support or criticize the judgment.
  - The arguments used will, of course, range in quality. Ideally, we want students to make sound arguments. However, in the introduction of the skill, the first step is to train students to make arguments.
  
- Students should **make good arguments** relative to validity, soundness, and the “three C’s.”
  - Student arguments should pay special attention to clarity, coherence, and completeness.
  - Students should show some awareness of the implications or consequences of the ethical judgments presented, or the reasons (premises) used in arguments.
  
- Students should **think about opposing or different viewpoints**.
  - Regardless of whether the student is defending or criticizing the ethical judgment presented, she should anticipate opposing or different viewpoints and seek to respond to them with arguments. This helps train students to think about the implications of a specific position.
  - Again, student arguments should pay special attention to clarity, coherence, and completeness.

So, if we summarize what we are looking for in ethical reasoning artifacts, we are looking to see:

- 1) That the student presents a normative ethical judgment (thesis).
- 2) That the student uses argument to support or criticize the ethical judgment (thesis).
- 3) That the student’s arguments are good arguments.
- 4) That the student thinks about opposing viewpoints and responds to them with argument.

The following (draft) rubric revolves around the above four desired outcomes.



**RUBRIC FOR ASSESSMENT OF ETHICAL REASONING ARTIFACTS**

**1. Student clearly presents (normative) ethical judgment or thesis.**

<b>RED, 1 Point</b>	<b>YELLOW, 2 Points</b>	<b>GREEN, 3 Points</b>
<p>Fails to present ethical judgment (thesis).</p> <p>Little integration of perspectives and little or no evidence of attending to others' views to qualify own view.</p>	<p>Presents ethical judgment (thesis), though some aspects are unclear or not explicitly stated.</p> <p>Qualifies position, though in a superficial way.</p>	<p>Presents well-formed and clear ethical judgment (thesis).</p> <p>Qualifies position by integrating contrary views or interpretations as appropriate.</p>

Comments:

**2. Student supports or criticizes ethical judgment (thesis) with argument.**

<b>RED, 1 Point</b>	<b>YELLOW, 2 Points</b>	<b>GREEN, 3 Points</b>
<p>No argument is made to support ethical judgment.</p> <p>Writing is purely emotive or purely descriptive.</p>	<p>Rudimentary argument structure is present.</p> <p>Identification of reasons to accept judgment or thesis, though some may be implied.</p>	<p>Argument structure is well organized.</p> <p>Clear identification of reasons to accept or reject the ethical judgment (thesis).</p>

Comments:

**3. Student makes good arguments in support or criticism of ethical judgment or thesis.**

<b>RED, 1 Point</b>	<b>YELLOW, 2 Points</b>	<b>GREEN, 3 Points</b>
<p>Argument, if present, is invalid and unsound.</p> <p>Argument fails to show any competence with the "three C's" (clarity, coherence, and</p>	<p>Effort to make a valid argument; some reasons given to believe argument is sound.</p> <p>Argument demonstrates partial competence with</p>	<p>Argument is valid; compelling reasons given to believe it is sound.</p> <p>Arguments made demonstrate competence with some of the "three</p>

completeness).  Student fails to show awareness of consequences or implications of argument.	some of the “three C’s (clarity, coherence, completeness), though in a limited way.  Student shows some awareness of consequences or implications of argument.	C’s” (clarity, coherence, completeness).  Student shows awareness of consequences or implications of argument.
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Comments:

**4. Student considers opposing viewpoints and engages in critical evaluation of opposing viewpoints.**

RED, 1 Point	YELLOW, 2 Points	GREEN, 3 Points
Fails to acknowledge opposing viewpoints, or significantly misrepresents other positions.  No effort to evaluate support given for other positions.	Student acknowledges opposing viewpoints.  Some effort to use argument to critically evaluate the opposing viewpoint.	Student discusses opposing viewpoints. Analysis of other positions is accurate.  Argument used to critically evaluate the opposing viewpoint.

Comments:

Overall Rating:

Criteria Score

\_\_(1-3)\_\_ 1. Presents own ethical (normative) judgment or thesis

\_\_(1-3)\_\_ 2. Supports ethical judgment with argument

\_\_(1-3)\_\_ 3. Makes good argument(s) in support of judgment

\_\_(1-3)\_\_ 4. Critically evaluates arguments of others

\_\_(4-12)\_\_ TOTAL SCORE

An artifact assessed with the above rubric will then be tagged as falling into one of three categories:

Nominal (Red – Stop)	Adequate (Yellow – Caution)	Excellent (Green – Go)
4-6	7-9	10-12

Any partial scores will be rounded up. So, an artifact with a total score of 6.5 will be placed in the “adequate” category while an artifact with a total score of 9.5 will be placed in the “excellent” category.