

Module 4: Assessing Judgment

1	Title Slide	<p>Welcome to the next module in the series, Assessing Judgment. To advance to the next slide, select the “forward” arrow located on the play bar at the bottom of your screen.</p>
2	Introduction	<p>Reflecting back to the beginning of the module series, one kind of higher-order thinking is “critical thinking” in the sense of applying prudent or wise judgment to a situation. In this module, we will discuss ways to assess judgment in the form of credibility of a source, implicit assumptions, and rhetorical and persuasive strategies. You might recall that we briefly discussed judgment in the module regarding Analysis, Evaluation, and Creation when we asked students to use reasoned judgment when evaluating sources for credibility.</p> <p>Before we get started, let’s observe the following quote from Brookhart:</p> <p>“Examples of the kind of judgment that students are asked to exercise in school include judging the credibility of a source; figuring out what an advertiser for a product, service, or candidate wants the reader or viewer to believe and what persuasive methods are used; appraising the usefulness of a text or a concept of one’s life and purposes; and deciding what to say or how to say something in various academic and classroom situations. These qualities are also important in other aspects of life” (Brookhart, 2010).</p>
3	Learning Objectives	<p>At the completion of this module, the learner will be able to design assessments that assess students’ abilities to apply judgment to information.</p>
4	Assessing Judgment	<p>To assess students’ use of critical judgment, give them a scenario, a speech, an advertisement, or other source of information. Then ask them to make some sort of critical judgment.</p> <p>The kinds of judgments we consider in this module include evaluating the credibility of a source of information, identifying implicit assumptions, and identifying rhetorical and persuasive methods.</p> <p>We will begin by discussing how to assess students’ ability to evaluate the credibility of a source.</p>
5	Evaluating Credibility of a Source	<p>To assess how students judge the credibility of a source, give students material to think about. Then ask them which parts, if any, of the material are credible, which parts aren’t, and why.</p> <p>For example, students in an agricultural communications course may be evaluating the credibility of electronic resources. Students are asked to evaluate three websites and decide whether or not they believe the websites are credible. The instructor could prompt the students by providing additional questions to the assignment, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you wanted to obtain more information about this website, whom could you contact? • What other resources could you use to support or deny the information presented on this website?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And finally, how can you tell if the information contained on this website is true or false? <p>Students would then be asked to create a list of questions that could serve as the criteria in evaluating other websites and then apply the criteria to the three websites they chose, in addition to writing a paragraph to explain the credibility behind the website.</p> <p>In this example, an instructor would look for sound criteria, appropriate application of criteria, and a reasonable conclusion that determines the credibility.</p> <p>In the next slide, we will be discussing ways to assess how students identify implicit assumptions.</p>
6	Identify Implicit Assumptions	<p>Identifying what is assumed in an argument or text is an important skill in itself. Examining assumptions that are not directly stated helps students judge the soundness of arguments.</p> <p>Assessment of student's ability to identify assumptions in most subject area content often can be accomplished with either multiple-choice questions or brief constructed response questions. Multiple-choice assesses whether students can recognize the assumption and constructed response assesses whether students can generate the assumption themselves.</p>
7	Identify Implicit Assumptions	<p>To use a multiple-choice item to assess how students identify implicit assumptions, give students an argument or explanation that has some unstated assumptions. Offer one choice that is a correct implicit assumption and two or more choices that are neither the implicit assumption nor conclusions. Ask students which option is probably assumed or taken for granted and then to write a sentence or two explaining the reasoning behind their choice.</p> <p>Consider the following multiple-choice question that was modified from Brookhart:</p> <p>The Tennessee Beef Industry Council is funded by the Beef Check-Off to help promote beef consumption on the consumer side of the industry. A marketing executive from the Tennessee Beef Industry Council wanted to make the most of her advertising budget. She decided to buy segment time on a cooking show, reasoning that individuals who watched cooking shows would also like to cook, and therefore be willing to cook more beef recipes. What assumption has to be true in order for her argument to represent sound thinking?</p> <p>A. More women than men watching cooking shows, and more women than men buy beef. B. People will want to buy beef if they see beef being used in recipes by professional chefs on cooking shows. *C. People who don't watch cooking shows don't buy beef as frequently as those who do.</p>

		<p>While all the assumptions may or may not be true, students will need to analyze the marketing executive’s argument for sound thinking, making the correct answer to this question C. This multiple-choice question assesses whether students can recognize the assumption in her thinking.</p>
		<p>This question could also be transformed into a version in which an explanation is required. Give students a multiple-choice question that asks them to identify the assumption, then ask them to write a sentence or two explaining the reasoning behind their choice.</p> <p>To use this question constructed-response item, give students the question without the answer choices included and ask them to explain their reasoning.</p> <p>Potential criteria for feedback or rubrics for a constructed response question could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, appropriate statement of the underlying assumption. • Appropriateness of evidence. • And soundness of reasoning and clarity of explanation.
8	Identify Rhetorical & Persuasive Strategies	<p>To assess how students identify rhetorical and persuasive strategies, give students the text of a speech, an advertisement in any medium, an editorial, or any other persuasive communication. Then ask students the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What statements or strategies does the author use? • What effect does the author expect these strategies to have? • And, are any of the statements or strategies deceptive or misleading?
9	Identify Rhetorical & Persuasive Strategies	<p>Consider the following example of identifying rhetorical and persuasive strategies, which comes directly from Brookhart (2010):</p> <p>“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports, ‘An unequivocal warming trend of about 1.0 to 7 degrees Fahrenheit occurred from 1906-2005. Warming occurred in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, and over the oceans.’ The EPA also reports that it is “very likely” that the warming trend will continue and that weather patterns will change as a result. This information can be found by clicking on the Climate Change PDF.</p> <p>[Climate change PDF]</p> <p>In contrast, William Yeatman argued that many people’s definitions and responses to global warming are “alarmist” and may in fact be counterproductive for society. This information can be found in the Yeatman PDF.</p> <p>[Yeatman PDF: http://www.globalwarming.org/category/global-warming-101/]</p> <p>Obviously, the two sources differ in their views on global warming. However,</p>

you will also see they differ in ways in which they attempt to persuade the readers of their points of view. The sources differ in terms of purpose and audience, and therefore they use different strategies to accomplish their purposes and reach their audiences.

Instructions for asking students to identify rhetorical and persuasive strategies in this example, as well as others you create in the future, could be as follows:

Compare and contrast the persuasive tactics used in each of these sources of information. Consider both the information given and how it is displayed on in the files. Use examples from the files to support your decision.

Criteria for this assessment could be as follows:

- Clear, appropriate comparison of the rhetorical tactics used by the two sources regarding whether global warming is a real threat.
- Appropriateness of evidence.
- And soundness of reasoning and clarity of explanation.

Assess students on their identification and explanation of the communication tactics displayed within each source, on the soundness of students' comparison and contrast of the two, and on the clarity and completeness of students' discussion.

10	Formative & Summative Uses of Results	<p>Shown here is a rubric provided by Brookhart that assesses critical thinking that involves judgment. This general rubric could be used to assess specific judgment tasks in summative evaluations, in addition to being used as a formative assessment tool to give students feedback regarding their thesis, evidence, and reasoning.</p> <p>(Brookhart Critical Thinking Rubric)</p>			
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		Thesis (judgment of credibility, identification of assumption or persuasive tactic, etc.)	Thesis is clear, is complete, and answers the question posed by the problem or task.	Thesis is clear and at least partially answers the question posed by the problem or task.	Thesis is not clear or does not answer the question posed by the problem or task.
		Evidence	Evidence is accurate, relevant, and complete.	Evidence is mostly clear, relevant, and complete.	Evidence is not clear, relevant, or complete.
		Reasoning and clarity	The way in which the evidence supports the thesis is clear,	The way in which the evidence supports the thesis is mostly	The way in which the evidence supports the thesis is not

			logical, and well explained.	clear and logical. Some explanation is given.	clear, is illogical, or is not explained.
		(Brookhart, 2010)			
11	Review	As we come to a close, let's consider all we have covered so far. We first started the module by discussing ways to assess students' ability to evaluate the credibility of a source, then we transitioned into how to assess students' ability to identify assumptions, and finally, we uncovered ways to assess students' ability to identify rhetorical and persuasive methods. A common theme that you may have noticed is the importance of providing students materials to think about during assessments. This theme will continue as we progress through the series.			
12	Sources	Brookhart, S.M. (2010) How to Assess Higher-Order Thinking Skills in Your Classroom. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.			
13	Credits	Thank you for viewing this module.			