

# Interest Rates, Investments, Microfinance, Insurance, and Risk Management through the Lens of Scripture: Biblical Faith Integration in a Financial Markets and Institutions Course

ROBERT H. ROLLER  
LeTourneau University

**ABSTRACT:** This paper illustrates an approach to encouraging students to integrate biblical concepts with course material in a financial markets and institutions course. The importance of biblical integration is presented along with five faith integration exercises concerning interest rates, investments, microfinance, insurance, and risk management. A teaching guide is included for each exercise.

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of a Christian business faculty member—especially one who teaches at a Christian college or university—includes biblical faith integration (Dupree, 2015; Mays & Mason, 2011; Roller, 2013; Smith, 2005). One of the reasons that the Christian Business Faculty Association (CBFA) came into existence was “to encourage, equip, and engage Christian business faculty in the study, integration, teaching, and application of biblical truths in service to the academy, students, and the business community” (CBFA Bylaws, p. 1). But biblical faith integration is not easy, especially in business. Few Christian business faculty members have extensive training in faith integration, and even fewer are biblical scholars. Most can benefit from good examples of biblical faith integration.

Business students also struggle with biblical faith integration. Students may enroll at a Christian university because they desire a Christian worldview in their studies; 26% of evangelical adults desire an “undergraduate degree that focuses on another career, with integrated religious or theological training” (Barna Group, 2018, Most Appealing Faith-Based Education Options section, para. 2). Yet many have limited biblical knowledge; in 2017, only 10% of churchgoing millennials had heard of and remembered the Great Commission, described in Matthew 28:18-20, and

only 34% could correctly identify the Great Commission from a list of five scriptures (Barna Group, 2018, Knowledge of the Great Commission section, para. 1,4). For Christian business faculty members to encourage and assist students to connect “scripture with business practice” (Cafferky, 2016, p. 8), they should provide students with opportunities to read and study Scripture. Biblical faith integration is important in every discipline, especially in finance.

This paper provides an example of discipline-specific integration (Chewning, 2001; Underwood & Havens, 2016) using five faith integration exercises designed around key topics in a financial markets and institutions (FMI) course, including interest rates, investments, microfinance, insurance, and risk management. Roller (2013) describes this approach as strategic integration since these exercises have a central theme linked to course material. Students are encouraged to engage in meaningful dialogue about key FMI concepts, thus contributing to the development of a Christian worldview as a finance professional.

This paper builds on previous work by Liang (2012), who discussed faith integration in the field of finance, examining risk aversion, time preference, and information asymmetry. A review of the literature, however, did not find any faith integration exercises specifically written for an FMI upper-level finance course.

### *The Financial Markets & Institutions Course*

Although undergraduate finance degree programs vary considerably in course content, most include either a financial markets and institutions course or a money and banking course. Normally, the FMI course examines interest rates, securities valuation, monetary policy and the Federal Reserve system, securities markets, commercial banking, other lending institutions, insurance companies, investment banks and investment companies, pension funds, and risk management in financial institutions (c.f. Saunders & Cornet, 2019).

This particular FMI course is taught at the undergraduate level and is offered in two formats: traditional (face-to-face, 15-week semester) and online (5-week course). The course number, name, course description, and learning objectives are identical, although the modality is different. The Principles of Finance course is a prerequisite for FMI. An FMI textbook published by McGraw-Hill (Saunders & Cornet, 2019) is used for the course. Although the textbook emphasizes the importance of ethics in finance, it is a secular textbook that provides no biblical integration. For biblical integration to take place, therefore, a Christian finance professor must integrate biblical concepts into the course material and provide opportunities for students to experience integration.

### *Course Design*

This FMI course is a new course in the university's finance curriculum. The curriculum was recently redesigned around the educational objectives for three certification exams for finance professionals: the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) level one exam, the Securities Industries Essentials (SIE) exam, and the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) exam. The educational objectives indicated that an FMI course needed to be part of the finance curriculum.

As mentioned above, this course is offered in both traditional and online formats with the course being developed by the same professor for both. This provided the opportunity and the challenge of building biblical faith integration into both course modalities. The faith integration elements needed to be relevant to the subject and to both traditional and online students. The exercises also needed to fit within a 5-week online course or a 15-week traditional course.

While the professor who teaches the traditional course was responsible for developing the online course, it is likely that the online course will frequently be taught by remote adjunct faculty members, making it important to design the faith integration elements to be easily taught by others. The university's policies allow for the course author to specify that the faith integration elements not be changed by another faculty member teaching the course.

### FAITH INTEGRATION EXERCISES

For the biblical faith integration exercises to be relevant to the students and the course, it was essential to integrate them with the course material as opposed to being tacked on at the end of the course or being tangentially related to course concepts. In the online modality of the course, four chapters are covered in each unit. One faith integration exercise was developed for each unit; the exercise deliberately correlates with one or more of the chapters for that unit.

For biblical faith integration to take place, it is important to provide students with the opportunity to interact with each other and with the professor and to wrestle with the concepts. The topics in these exercises do not have simple, "Sunday school" answers. One of the goals of biblical faith integration is to help students to live out their Christian faith in the workplace, which goes beyond simply knowing the right answer since workplace financial ethics may deal with complex issues in a rapidly changing business world.

The rubric used for assessing student work on the faith integration elements had to fit within the general framework of online discussion forum rubrics used by the online programs. The specific rubric used (see Appendix) was developed to be consistent with the requirements of the exercises. The rubric is used not only for grading purposes but also to encourage dialog between the student and the professor. The rubric is specifically designed to assess the quality of student postings and not their specific faith background or beliefs; students are informed that "the rubric does not assess your opinions; it assesses the quality of your postings. Please feel free to share based upon your beliefs; your beliefs are not being graded" (Roller, 2020, p. 15).

Each faith integration exercise is designed with four specific steps:

1. Students read the faith integration assignment, which is directly tied to course material for the unit.
2. Students write responses to the prompt and post them to the faith integration forum.
3. Students read each other's postings, and each student responds to two posts of peers.
4. The faculty member reads the student's posts and provides feedback and grading using the faith integration discussion forum rubric.

The exercises are designed to assist students with biblical faith integration. Each exercise correlates with specific course material and includes suggested biblical passages relevant to the topic. Some students do not come from a Christian faith background (or any faith background, in some cases), and some of the Christian students have a limited knowledge of the Bible; thus, it is helpful to provide a

starting point for the discussion both in terms of the course concepts and biblical passages. Students are encouraged to apply these concepts and passages to relevant, current issues in FMI, to their careers as finance professionals, and to their personal lives.

Students then read and reflect on their peers' submissions and choose two of those peer submissions to respond to. Within these responses, which are visible to everyone enrolled in the course, additional insights from the course content, the selected biblical passage, and other references are considered. This raises the consciousness of all in the course as they learn from other students' integrative submissions and responses.

The faculty member reviews each student's initial and response postings. The rubric evaluates student understanding and reflection of the material along with writing and formatting. The rubric, however, accomplishes something more since specific comments are provided to students to further their understanding of the biblical passage, the integration with course content, and their spiritual development and application of concepts.

### ***Faith Integration Discussion Forum for Online Course***

Each exercise follows the same format with the specific prompts changing each week. Students in the online modality are provided with the following instructions:

Your original posting is due by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m.; the normal length for the original posting is 150-250 words. The Faith Integration Discussion Forum Rubric will be used to assess your postings. Please notice that the rubric does not assess your opinions; it assesses the quality of your postings. Please feel free to share based upon your beliefs; your beliefs are not being graded. Then, by Friday at 11:59 p.m., please read and respond to the posts of two of your fellow students. The response posts should be 100-150 words and should substantively respond to the posts.

### ***Faith Integration Assignment for Face-to-Face Course***

For face-to-face classes, rather than an online forum, the exercise can take the form of a short paper (400 to 800 words). After students have researched, written, and submitted their papers, an in-class discussion is used to share and amplify the biblical integration.

### ***Exercise 1: Interest Rates and Excessive Interest (usury)***

*Exercise.* The focus of this week's readings, especially Chapters 2-4, is on interest rates. The Old Testament law prohibited usury (c.f. Ezekiel 18:8-17; 22:12), and some Old Testament passages taught that the Jews should not lend money at interest to other Jews (c.f. Exodus 22:25,

Leviticus 25:36-37, Deuteronomy 23:19). Jews were, however, allowed to charge interest of non-Jews (Deuteronomy 23:20). In the New Testament, however, the "lazy servant" was criticized for not investing his master's money and at least earning interest on it (see Matthew 25:14-30, specifically verse 27).

Discuss how these biblical concepts should and should not apply to the modern banking system. In doing so, please apply the Scriptures to the concepts presented in chapters 2-4 of your text.

### **Teaching Guide**

This exercise goes to the heart of an important issue for Christian students majoring in finance and studying financial markets and institutions: Is it acceptable to charge interest? If so, is there a point where the interest charged is excessive and thus becomes unethical? The Scriptures mentioned in the exercise present multiple perspectives on the issue. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel suggests that a righteous person "does not engage in usury or charge interest" (Ezekiel 18:8, New English Translation), while an unrighteous person "engages in usury, and charges interest" (Ezekiel 18:13). The Law of Moses prohibited Jews from charging interest to other Jews: "If you lend money to any of my people who are needy among you, do not be like a moneylender to him; do not charge him interest" (Exodus 22:25). But it allowed Jews to charge interest of foreigners: "You may lend with interest to a foreigner, but not to your fellow Israelite" (Deuteronomy 23:20). In the New Testament Parable of the Talents, the master criticized the lazy servant, saying, "You should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received my money back with interest!" (Matthew 25:27). Commentators are divided on the question of whether Jesus was endorsing interest or merely recognizing its common use (c.f., Beed & Beed, 2014; Elder, 1999).

Since the modern financial system is built around time value of money concepts and earning a return on investments, students need to wrestle with these concepts, which have received significant attention in the literature. Elder (1999) examined arguments for and against charging interest and concluded "that those of us in economics and finance can keep our jobs. The biblical prohibition against charging interest was not a blanket prohibition for all people at all times. Even in the Old Testament, Jews could charge interest to Gentiles" (p. 39). In a reply to Elder (1999), Porter (1999) defined usury as exorbitant interest and concluded that Christians should avoid usury. Meeks (2011) provides an excellent summary of the historical background of interest and usury and suggests that "lending can be a good and necessary human act," but that "in interest, there

always lurks the possibility of usury and thereby the ruination of human lives and society” (p. 138). Meeks concludes that government regulation of lending is necessary to ensure that the market serves the good of society.

Given the array of viewpoints in the literature, students are likely to present a variety of viewpoints on interest and usury (Halberg, 2010), which should lead to a good discussion. Since most students who take this course are finance majors, however, the probable consensus is that a biblical perspective on interest allows for charging interest—but not excessive interest—and that Christians have a responsibility to avoid enslaving the poor through debt that cannot be repaid with interest.

### ***Exercise 2: Investments, Debt, and Financial Markets***

#### **Exercise**

The focus of this week’s readings is on financial markets, which connect investors and borrowers. Some Christian financial gurus, such as Dave Ramsey, teach that people should be debt free while others, such as Ron Blue, are more comfortable with reasonable levels of debt. Read chapters 5-8 of your textbook. Then read Proverbs 22:7, Matthew 5:42, and Matthew 25:14-30 and research other Scriptures. Based on your research, discuss what you believe a biblical approach to investments, debt, and financial markets should be.

#### **Teaching Guide**

This exercise tackles an important issue related to banking and financial markets: Is debt biblical? An often-quoted verse is Proverbs 22:7 (New English Translation), “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender,” which equates debt with servitude. The popular Christian financial guru, Dave Ramsey, teaches that Christians should avoid debt and that Christians who are in debt should become debt free (Ramsey, n.d.).

In Matthew 5:42, however, Jesus said, “Give to the one who asks you, and do not reject the one who wants to borrow from you.” In Matthew 25:27, the master indicated that the lazy servant should have deposited his money with the bankers and thereby earned interest. While neither of these verses specifically indicates that it is acceptable to borrow money, both imply that borrowing is normal. Thornton (2017) suggests that the Bible is not nearly as concerned about debt as Dave Ramsey is but rather is more concerned with the character of the borrower. Ramsey is also criticized for not distinguishing between good debt and bad debt (Butler & Phillips, 2019) and for his approach to debt reduction (Stoffel, 2016). According to Ron Blue (2010), the Bible does not say that borrowing or lending money is a sin but does say that “it’s wrong not to repay

debts” (Focus on the Family section, para. 1, 5, 10). Blue teaches that “short-term debt is not always wrong, but it always presumes upon the future and it always affects your financial flexibility” (Blue, 2010).

Since many Christian finance majors may have been exposed to Dave Ramsey’s teachings about debt, and many students are borrowing money to attend college, students have a personal stake in this discussion. Some will conclude that being out of debt is a good goal but not a realistic one for a college student. Others may conclude that debt for certain items—such as a college education or a home mortgage—is reasonable while consumer debt is not.

### ***Exercise 3: Reducing Poverty through Microfinance***

#### **Exercise**

This week’s reading focuses on financial markets and commercial banks. Banks exist to serve both borrowers and lenders, and access to banking is crucial to economic development. One challenge of fighting poverty in the developing world is a lack of banking availability for the lower classes. One way this lack has been addressed is through microfinance: small loans that can help the poor to develop small businesses. The Bible addresses lending to the poor in several places (c.f. Exodus 22:25, Nehemiah 5:1-12; Leviticus 25:35-37). You can find several helpful blogs on microfinance at [www.tifwe.org](http://www.tifwe.org); search for microfinance.

Using the above information and insights from the week’s readings, discuss what you believe to be a biblical perspective on helping reduce poverty through microfinance.

#### **Teaching Guide**

The United States has excellent availability of commercial banks, and most business students at U.S. universities take commercial banking for granted. One way to stress the importance of banking is to look at places where banking services are not available to much of the population—especially to the poor—as is true in many developing countries. Microfinance provides small loans to aspiring entrepreneurs in developing countries, usually collateralized by group liability and by savings that are held by the microfinance organization. This not only provides needed capital, but helps to keep the debt holders out of financial bondage. “Microfinance may improve income equality through wider access for the poor to financial services” (Castells-Quintana et al., 2019, p. 145).

According to Clark (2016), “Christians have embraced microfinance as a solution to poverty that helps the poor help themselves” (para. 3). But microfinance may not be a panacea. Microfinance may work better for the rich poor than for the truly needy, and microfinance interest rates tend to be higher than those of commercial banks (Clark, 2016; Fikkert & Mask, 2015; Sherratt, 2016).

The Law of Moses taught that, when lending money to the needy, “Do not be like a moneylender to him” (Exodus 22:25, New English Translation) or lend money at interest or sell him food for profit (Leviticus 25:35-37). While in the process of rebuilding Jerusalem after the return from exile, Nehemiah found that Jews were not only charging Jews interest but were seizing the collateral and enslaving those in debt (Nehemiah 5:1-12). These Scriptures illustrate one of the problems that microfinance attempts to address: providing funds to those who can use them to work themselves out of poverty.

The exercise provides a link to the website for the Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics and suggests that students search using the term “microfinance.” When they do, the first article will be “Can Microfinance Really Help the Poor” (Clark, 2016), which provides a summary of the pros and cons of microfinance and links to several other articles. Given the mixed findings on microfinance, students will have a meaningful and robust discussion of the topic.

#### ***Exercise 4: Insurance***

##### **Exercise**

Chapter 15 discusses insurance as a method of sharing risk. Read the following biblical passages: 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, Acts 4:32-35. You can find several helpful blogs on Acts 4 at [www.tifwe.org](http://www.tifwe.org); search for Acts 4. (You may also want to search on “insurance.”) Discuss what you believe to be a biblical perspective on insurance. You may want to include a discussion on whether insurance should be voluntary or whether mandatory insurance is biblical.

##### **Teaching Guide**

Insurance is a key topic in financial markets and institutions. While it is not likely that students will object to insurance per se, some may object to the concept of mandatory insurance such as the provision of the Affordable Care Act that made health insurance coverage mandatory. While insurance is not mentioned specifically in the Bible, the passages mentioned in the exercise talk about sharing among believers, which is analogous to the risk-sharing concept of insurance. A key passage is 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 (New English Translation): “For I do not say this so there would be relief for others and suffering for you, but as a matter of equality. At the present time, your abundance will meet their need, so that one day their abundance may also meet your need, and thus there may be equality.” The context of this passage is providing relief for the church in Jerusalem, which had suffered economically due to a famine. The Apostle Paul was collecting funds from the churches in Macedonia to meet this need and was soliciting the participation of the church in Corinth. The Acts 4:32-35 passage

illustrates risk sharing through rich believers voluntarily helping poor believers with their economic needs.

These passages provide a biblical basis for risk sharing through insurance. Students may note the growth in health-sharing ministries, such as Medi-Share. While Medi-Share specifically claims that it is not insurance but rather a health sharing ministry, it essentially substitutes for insurance (Medi-Share, Medi-Share Guidelines 1.D., 2020).

Students may also write about biblical principles of caring for the elderly (vanThanh, 2010), such as the Apostle Paul noting the responsibility of families to care for widows and for the church to care for widows in need (1 Timothy 5:16).

The exercise also suggests that students may want to discuss whether insurance should be mandatory. The biblical passages noted in the exercise are examples of voluntary sharing, not mandatory sharing. With the adoption of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), mandatory insurance became an important issue. While recent rulings have relaxed the mandate, the discussion of whether mandatory insurance is biblical is still relevant. Richards (2014) notes that the health insurance mandate of the ACA “violates a perennial theme of Christian theology: the inherent sacredness of work” (para. 13). The Catholic church has fought the contraceptive coverage provision of the ACA in a series of court battles (Andrusko, 2020; Dent, 2018), as has the evangelical Christian-owned company Hobby Lobby. Hobby Lobby’s court battles resulted in a favorable Supreme Court ruling, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores* (Casper & Schoen, 2016; Seppinwall, 2015). The controversies in the literature concerning mandatory insurance should encourage a lively discussion.

#### ***Exercise 5: Risk***

##### **Exercise**

The focus of this week’s readings is on managing risk from the perspective of financial institutions. Risk and reward are always related to each other in finance and in life. But what is the biblical perspective on risk? To explore that question, first read the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), looking especially at the relationship between risk and reward. You may find helpful information at [www.tifwe.org](http://www.tifwe.org); search for “risk.” Use this information to discuss a biblical perspective on risk.

***Teaching Guide.*** Risk and return is a foundational topic in finance and thus one that students should consider from a biblical perspective. This exercise points the students to a well-known parable of Jesus, the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) with instructions to focus on the relationship between risk and reward. In the parable, the master entrusts three slaves with bags of gold, with the

expectation that each of them would put the money to work and earn a return on it. The value of each bag of gold was significant; in today's dollars, a comparable bag of gold is worth approximately \$1.4 million (JM Bullion, 2020). The servant who was entrusted with five talents, therefore, had around \$7 million to invest, the one with two talents had around \$2.8 million to invest, and the one with one talent had around \$1.4 million to invest. The first two servants "put the money to work" (Matthew 25:16) and doubled their investments, while the last servant "dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money in it" (Matthew 25:18). When the master returned and settled accounts with them, he was pleased with the first two servants, and said to each of them, "Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21, 23). When the last servant returned the bag of gold that he had hidden in the ground, the master said:

Evil and lazy slave! So you knew that I harvest where I didn't sow and gather where I didn't scatter? Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received my money back with interest! Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten. For the one who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless slave into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:26-30).

The first two servants took a risk in putting the money to work while the third servant sought to conserve his master's money. The first two servants doubled their master's money and were rewarded greatly. Note that \$7 million and \$2.8 million were considered "a few things," and that the servants were rewarded by being put in charge of "many things" (Matthew 25:21, 23). The last servant was not willing to take the risk of putting his master's money to work and was thrown out as a result (Matthew 25:30).

The Parable of the Talents shows that risk-taking is necessary and that successful risk-takers reap rewards, as is consistent with finance. In other words, risk-taking can be biblical. There is a difference, however, between risk-taking and gambling (Saunders, 2016). The first two servants did not gamble with their master's money, but rather put it to work.

The exercise suggests that students search the Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics website for the keyword "risk." When they do so, they will find blogs that suggest that principled risk-taking is biblical (Ayers, 2018) and that failure is possible when taking risks (Hoerr, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

This paper presents five faith integration exercises designed for use in an upper-level finance course, Financial Markets and Institutions, and includes teaching notes for each exercise. Each of the five exercises coordinates with an important course concept. The structure of faith integration in the course increases the likelihood of spiritual growth for the students in three major ways. First, students are encouraged to integrate course concepts with relevant biblical passages. Second, the faith integration exercises are interactive. In the online version of the course, students not only interact with the textbook and biblical passages, but they also interact with each other, learning from each other's insights and experiences as shared in the forum. In the face-to-face version of the course, students interact with each other via a robust class discussion of the topic. Third, students interact with the professor. In the online version of the course, the professor and students interact both in the forum and through feedback from the rubric and instructor comments. In the face-to-face version of the course, the professor provides feedback on student submissions and leads a class discussion on the topic. The structure of faith integration in the course meaningfully impacts many students' spiritual and holistic development.

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## APPENDIX A: FAITH INTEGRATION DISCUSSION FORUM RUBRIC

Criteria	Outstanding	Proficient	Marginal	Needs Improvement
<b>Initial Post</b> <b>25 pts</b>	<b>25 to &gt; 22.5 pts</b> Posts well-developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.	<b>22.5 to &gt; 20 pts</b> Posts well-developed assignment that addresses all aspects of the task; lacks full development of conceptions.	<b>20 to &gt; 17.5 pts</b> Posts adequate assignment with superficial thought and preparation; doesn't address all aspects of the task.	<b>17.5 to &gt; 0 pts</b> Not completed.
<b>Follow-up Postings</b> <b>20 pts</b>	<b>20 to &gt; 18 pts</b> Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts.	<b>18 to &gt; 16 pts</b> Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation.	<b>16 to &gt; 14 pts</b> Posts shallow contribution to discussion (e.g., agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion.	<b>14 to &gt; 0 pts</b> Not completed.
<b>Content Contribution</b> <b>30 pts</b>	<b>30 to &gt; 27 pts</b> Posts factually correct, reflective, and substantive contribution; advances discussion.	<b>27 to &gt; 24 pts</b> Posts information that is factually correct; lacks full development of concept or thought.	<b>24 to &gt; 21 pts</b> Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion.	<b>21 to &gt; 0 pts</b> Information is incorrect, irrelevant, or off topic.
<b>References and Support</b> <b>15 pts</b>	<b>15 to &gt; 13.5 pts</b> Incorporates textbook and/or biblical texts (required) along with additional sources (optional) in the body of the discussion. All sources are cited with in-text citations. In addition, references are listed at the bottom of the discussion. All citations and references are in correct APA format.	<b>13.5 to &gt; 12 pts</b> Incorporates textbook and/or biblical texts (required) along with additional sources (optional) in the body of the discussion. All sources are cited with in-text citations. In addition, references are listed at the bottom of the discussion. However, either the listing(s) or the citation(s) use incomplete or incorrect APA format.	<b>12 to &gt; 10.5 pts</b> Posting lists some variation of a source and citation, but with errors—not using appropriate APA format	<b>10.5 to &gt; 0 pts</b> No references or supporting evidence.
<b>Clarity, Mechanics and Style</b> <b>10 pts</b>	<b>10 to &gt; 9 pts</b> Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to read style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors.	<b>9 to &gt; 8 pts</b> Contributes valuable information to discussion with minor clarity or mechanics errors.	<b>8 to &gt; 7 pts</b> Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner with some errors in clarity or mechanics.	<b>7 to &gt; 0 pts</b> The writing is unclear and is flawed by several grammatical or spelling errors.