Computer Applications

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CURRICULUM FOUNDATIONS

DEFINITION OF COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Computers are an essential part of daily living in society today. Therefore, this computer applications course is designed to incorporate a variety of software applications that can be useful in enhancing personal and professional growth. Students will be exposed to the basic functions of software applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, and electronic presentation software.

Throughout each application emphasized, attention will be placed on skills needed to excel in business and industry. Upon learning the basic skills necessary of each application, students will be more prepared to enter the workforce.

RATIONALE FOR STUDYING COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

With the changing trends in computer technology, it is essential to have some broad base knowledge of the different types of applications and their corresponding functions. Acquiring these critical skills will enable students to better operate in a technology-dominated society. It is almost unfeasible to be able to be competitive or organized without the use of computer’s and their various software applications. For example, if two students or political candidates are running for office, how can the candidate who is not organized in his thoughts successfully compete with a well-structured electronic presentation complete with bullets and graphs?

In addition to this example, these types of skills will allow students a better opportunity to compete in the job market. Bonnie Anderson, Vice President of recruiting and talent development for CNN, says, “Computer skills help job applicants stand out.”¹ A host of other careers also require proficient use of the computer. Some specific careers that address the significance of computer skills include: the hotel management industry, economic consulting firms, and software companies.²

Through classified ads, job descriptions, recent interviews, and newspaper articles, it has clearly been determined that possessing computer skills is not only an advantage in the workplace, but may soon be a necessity for survival in life and in the job search. Therefore, it is critical for business educators to seek the expertise and needs of businesses when designing a curriculum of this nature.

¹ Business leaders discuss essential workplace skills. Keying In. Newsletter of the National Business Education Association (2001,12)
² Business leaders discuss essential workplace skills. Keying In. Newsletter of the National Business Education Association (2001,12)
Similarly, school systems throughout the world concentrate on equipping students with computer knowledge that will enable them to function in this world. Students begin as early as kindergarten by learning basic computer operations. Throughout a student’s constant exposure to education, there is a common goal to learn as much about computers as possible. In this current society, an individual will have the potential to be more successful with an abundance of computer skills.

However, the need for computer literacy does not only stop at the school and business levels. Computers are also essential components of daily living. For example, people are continuously confronted with aspects of computers and their technology with interactions with ATM machines, grocery store databases and electronic banking. Teaching students about basic functions of software applications may provide them with a better appreciation for computers and their additional uses.

**CONTENT SOURCE FOR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

Computer applications consist of various types of software programs. Each program is used to perform specific job tasks. Presently, combinations of these software programs are used in business, industry, and school systems. The software programs that will be reviewed during this curriculum are Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and Power Point.

Microsoft Excel is used in order to prepare spreadsheets and graphs for numerical information. Excel can be adapted to meet a variety of needs. Business and industry uses Excel to keep records, prepare financial spreadsheets related to tax purposes, and to graph income and loss. Teachers and school administrators can use Excel to keep a record of grades or attendance.

Microsoft Word has become an essential part of the business day for a large amount of the population. Microsoft Word enables individuals to produce reports, letters, memos, faxes, etc. Much of the business world relies on Microsoft Word in order to conduct and advance their daily business.

Power Point permits individuals to portray information in a much more professional manner. A power point presentation allows information to be displayed for a large audience and reduces the amount of wasted paper being passed out to each individual. Power Point is the present and future of lecturing.

The content within this curriculum will prepare individuals to be successful in computer applications for schoolwork and business related work. Each area of computer applications will be introduced, studied, and applied in order to help each individual advance themselves.
PROGRAM AIM

The aim of computer applications is to produce efficient and organized business professionals through exposure to various software applications.

In order to achieve this aim, the following goals were developed.

PROGRAM GOALS FOR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

1. Examine the basic functions of various software applications.
2. Create marketable computer skills in all learners.
3. Understand the importance of computer skills in our society.
4. Associate computer applications to their use in business and industry.
5. Discuss ideas about changing trends in computer technology.
6. Examine the effectiveness of the various software applications.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

See Table 1.
CONTENT STRUCTURE FOR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

SPREADSHEETS
  FORMULAS

WORDPROCESSING
  LETTERS
  RESUMES
  TABLES
  FORMATTING

ELECTRONIC PRESENTATIONS
  SPECIAL FEATURES

FIGURE 1.
**Scope and Sequence**

The Computer Applications Curriculum is established for 50-minute class periods, which meets 5 days a week. This curriculum can be covered throughout an eight-week period. This curriculum may also be adapted to meet the needs of a community college based course. **An additional two weeks may be necessary in order to design, complete, and compile a student portfolio, which will be used for assessment and evaluation upon completion of curriculum.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Introduction to Spreadsheets | • Significance of spreadsheets.  
• Enter a Worksheet in Excel. | 4 |
| 2    | Using Formulas in Excel | • Utilize formulas in spreadsheet.  
• Recognize errors in formulas. | 6 |
| 3    | Enhancing a Spreadsheet with Graphs | • What are the advantages of a graph?  
• Adding value and graphics to a spreadsheet. | 5 |
| 4    | Introduction to Microsoft Word | • Define Word Processing.  
• Key a one-page report with cover page.  
• Open, close, and save a document. | 2 |
| 5    | Business letters in Microsoft Word | • History of writing letters.  
• Purpose of letter writing.  
• Components of letters.  
• Different styles of letters. | 5 |
| 6    | Resumes in Microsoft Word | • Define a resume and letter of application.  
• Steps to prepare for a job interview.  
• Create a resume and letter of application. | 4 |
| 7    | Creating a Table in Microsoft Word | • Review effectiveness of tables.  
• Construct a table.  
• Enter data into the table. | 5 |
| 8    | Introduction to Power Point | • Discuss electronic presentation software.  
• View Slides in Power Point.  
• Create slides for a presentation. | 2 |
| 9    | Creating a Slide Show | • Complete a Power Point Presentation.  
• Add, delete, and change order of slides.  
• Run slide show presentation. | 4 |
| 10   | Special Features of Power Point | • Importance of additional features.  
• Edit and revise slides using special features. | 2 |

TABLE 1.
UNIT 1

Introduction to Spreadsheets (Excel)

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 4, 50-minute class periods

GOALS

- Operate the basic functions of Excel, a spreadsheet application.
- Format a professional and functional looking spreadsheet document.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

Spreadsheets play a significant role in the operation of most businesses, today. It doesn’t matter what the core of the business represents, numbers will somehow factor in the daily operations. For example, most accounting firms use some type of spreadsheet application to perform calculations. However, the need for spreadsheet knowledge does not end at mathematically based firms. Any business whether it is defined as for-profit or non-profit, must keep accurate records of their daily, weekly and monthly operating expenses. They must also take inventory of their supplies and re-orders. Spreadsheets allow these basic, but essential business practices to take place with organization and efficiency. It is critical that students understand how to develop professional looking reports that contain expenses and other business transactions. In addition, spreadsheets also impact the everyday life style of students. It can assist them in organizing their personal budgets, expenses, and relevant calculations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Label the tool bars and functions corresponding to each icon.
2. Define terminologies used in Excel.
3. Determine the relevance that Excel has in the workplace.
4. Demonstrate the proper techniques for entering words and numbers into a worksheet.
5. Explain the purpose of formatting a spreadsheet document.
6. Alter the characteristics of spreadsheets using lines, colors and shapes.
7. Perform basic editing functions available in Excel.
8. Combine elements of unit to make personal Excel worksheet.
9. Demonstrate how to effectively open, close and save a document.
UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Peer groups develop games to explain tool bars, icons, and terminologies of Excel.
2. Brainstorm practical uses of spreadsheets in the business world.
3. Do a simulated activity of spreadsheet functions being required of an employee.
4. Enter a worksheet into the computer containing words and numbers.
5. Edit and format a worksheet using lines, colors, and shapes.
6. Design worksheets using own individual style.

REFERENCE:

UNIT 2
Using Formulas in Excel

TIME SPAN
Unit will last 6, 50-minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Make changes to a spreadsheet when errors occur with calculation.
✓ Construct a spreadsheet with properly calculating formulas.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

This unit is designed to teach students how to enter formulas into spreadsheet cells. This ability will provide students with a broad base knowledge of how to perform calculations in their spreadsheets. As mentioned in unit one, these formulas will assist with producing actual documents such as budgets, inventories, and other calculating data. They will learn a variety of calculating functions that will allow them to manipulate any type of mathematical equation. This will be useful in both their future workplace environment, as well as in their continued education process. It will assist them with any problems that may arise of the mathematical nature.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Recite the most widely used mathematical operations in Excel.
2. Discuss the various functions that are available on Excel.
3. Explain the orders of operations used in Excel.
4. Assess problem when different errors have occurred in the calculation process.
5. Combine the proper elements of a formula to be able to add, average, count and maximize numbers in a cell.
6. Generate a calculating spreadsheet using a variety of the mathematical functions.
UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Answer questions from workbook concerning functions and operations used in Excel.
2. Review various error messages that can appear in excel. (LCD screen)
3. Write out formula procedures for each mathematical operation being studied.
4. Create numerous spreadsheets; one for each represents each mathematical operation.
5. Make a spreadsheet with all formulas discussed in the unit.

REFERENCE:
Reisner, T. Teach yourself Microsoft excel in 24 hours. (1999). Indianapolis, IN: Sam’s Publishing Company

UNIT 3

Enhancing a Spreadsheet with Graphs

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 5,50 minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Produce an Excel spreadsheet with a graph that outlines the material.
✓ Produce graphs within Microsoft Excel.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

Graphs serve as a quick evaluation of numbers. Our society depends upon understating percentages in a quick manner. Therefore, it is critical to understand how to effectively prepare a graph. Instead of evaluating an entire spreadsheet full of numbers we can look at a graph to see or the outcome or end result. It is important to comprehend how to create a worksheet along with how to portray the information within a graph. Overall, it proves to be more productive and time efficient to view a graph that explains the numbers in the spreadsheet.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Recognize the importance of a graph within a document.
2. Acquire basic knowledge in order to input a graph in Microsoft Excel.
3. Explain the significance of a legend on a graph.
4. Implement basic functions of graph designing in a spreadsheet.
5. Analyze the components of spreadsheet graphs.
6. Modify graphs using colors and editing functions.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Outline the importance of using graphs within a document.
2. In a group, discuss the basic steps of designing a graph in Excel.
3. Explore available graph designing functions on the toolbar.
4. Illustrate how to make and edit a graph using the toolbars in Excel.
5. Arrange information in the graph to effectively explain the material in the document.
6. Make graphs using favorite colors and borders.

REFERENCE:

UNIT 4
Introduction to Microsoft Word

TIME SPAN
Unit will last 2, 50-minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Utilize the basic functions of Microsoft Word.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

Word processing is an essential component of the education and business world. With knowledge of how to use a word processing application, such as Microsoft Word, students will be able to create professional, error free documents. This ability will increase their chances of performing better on the job as well as in classroom projects. Word processing is a skill that is essential for developing good organization, communications, and documentation. In addition, Microsoft Word is currently widely used in the business sector. Learning this particular word processing software will allow students the capability of integrating works among other software packages.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE UNIT

1. Define word processing application.
2. Specify business projects that can be created using word processing software.
3. Analyze Microsoft Word and other word processing software.
4. List ways that the Word software might be changed to meet changing trends in business and industry.
5. Perform basic features available on Word to include formatting, editing and inserting capabilities.
6. Demonstrate how to effectively open, close, and save a document.
UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. View a brief Power Point slide show to better define word processing applications, functions, and names of word processing application software.
2. Brainstorm ideas for two-minutes to explore what types of projects can be created using word processing software.
3. Discuss in groups how Word could be changed to better meet business needs.
4. Navigate the tool bars in order to see application capabilities.
5. Key a one-page report with cover page.

REFERENCE:

UNIT 5

Business Letters in Microsoft Word

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 5, 50 minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Prepare various types of business letters.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

The practice of writing letters can be traced into the history of the world. From the beginning of time as we know it, people have been constructing letters as a form of communication and contact. Letters are used to inform, notify, update, and report. Letters are used for business purposes, companionship reasons, communication needs, and informational principles. We live in a world filled with different letter styles and categories. It is vital to stay abreast of the modern and present styles of letter writing in order to correspond with others in a functional manner. More importantly, students need to know how to properly communicate using business letters and correspondence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Identify the components of three different types of letters.
2. Arrange the elements of a letter in the correct manner.
3. Recognize the various styles used in letter composition.
4. Explain differences among the various types of letters.
5. Evaluate the importance of a letter in the modern business world.
6. Design a block, modified-block, and simplified-block style letter.
7. Examine the basic features that assist with letter writing in Microsoft Word.

**UNIT ACTIVITIES**

1. Take notes on the components of a letter.
2. Type a short summary on the different styles of a letter.
3. Research the importance of the letter in the modern business world.
4. Compose various types of letters.
5. Key a one-page report that outlines the importance of a letter.

**REFERENCE:**

**UNIT 6**

Resumes in Microsoft Word

**TIME SPAN**

Unit will last approximately 4, 50-minute class periods

**GOAL**

✓ Complete a personalized resume.

**RATIONALE FOR UNIT**

The modern job markets of the world presents a high demand for resumes that reflects an individuals skills, experiences, and educational background. A resume can serve as the beginning and most important step of a job search. The resume serves as a catalyst for introducing a prospective candidate to the job market. Individuals need to comprehend how to create a resume in order to promote themselves for future job opportunities.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT**

1. Define a resume.
2. Examine the role of the resume in seeking employment.
3. Outline the rules and guidelines of a resume.
4. Evaluate the importance of a resume.
5. Identify elements needed to construct a resume.
6. Demonstrate the functions of the resume wizard in Microsoft Word.
7. Apply learned knowledge to create a resume using Microsoft Word.
8. Explain the significance of a letter of application.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. List the components that are necessary to construct a resume.
2. Gather necessary information needed to complete a personalized resume.
3. Select a hypothetical desired job from the local newspaper.
4. Type a letter of application for the job.
5. Using the resume wizard, replace personal information to create your own resume.
6. Review and revise the resume.
7. Save and print resume.

REFERENCE:
Massachusetts.

UNIT 7

Creating Tables in Microsoft Word

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 5, 50 minute class periods

GOAL

✓ Integrate a table into a Microsoft Word document.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

In both business and academic environments, tables are enhancing tools when used within letters and reports. They are quick reference points when explaining important information. Therefore, tables allow material to be organized in the most efficient and effective manners. A table allows the reader to visualize the pertinent material without reading the entire paragraph or document.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Analyze the effectiveness of using tables in a document.
2. Determine the functions on the toolbars that assist with creating a table.
3. Evaluate the precise location for putting a table within a document.
4. Outline the basic steps of creating a table within a document.
5. Construct a table within a report.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. View two identical documents containing data, one with a table and one without.
2. Insert an empty table into a document.
3. Enter data into the table.
4. Format the table to meet the needs of the paper.
5. Select different areas of the table to add shading to the table.
6. Provide a border for the table.

REFERENCE:

UNIT 8

Introduction to PowerPoint

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 2, 50-minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Utilize the basic functions of PowerPoint, an electronic presentation application.
✓ Create two slides using PowerPoint.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

Electronic Presentation software is designed to organize notes, slides and outlines for the purpose of public speaking. Acquiring knowledge of this software will allow students to further display their knowledge by organizing their thoughts in an electronic format. They will be able to recognize the importance of using slides and bullets to display pertinent information about their topic. In addition, this unit will provide them with a framework for creating future slide show presentations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Define electronic presentation and related terminologies.
2. Discuss advantages of using an electronic presentation over using traditional methods of presenting information.
3. Distinguish between all slides types available on Power Point.
4. Analyze the different view screens available on Power Point.
5. Demonstrate basic functions of Power Point, including adding text and changing fonts.
6. Apply basic functions to construct a title and bullet slide.
7. Demonstrate how to effectively open, close and save a presentation.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. View a brief Power Point presentation to define electronic presentation, its components, and various slide types.
2. Perform role-plays to explain advantages of electronic presentations.
3. View the various slide type available on Power Point on LCD screen.
4. Navigate toolbars to discover additional components of the software.
5. Create two slides (title and bullet) with basic functions.

REFERENCE:

UNIT 9

Creating A Slide Show

TIME SPAN

Unit will last 4, 50-minute class periods

GOAL

✓ Create a slide show presentation with basic functions and various slides.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

This unit extends further to explore the genre of electronic presentations by allowing students to actually construct a complete Power Point presentation. This presentation will accurately demonstrate the advantages previously discussed regarding electronic presentations. In addition, students will be able to better comprehend the organizational flow of Power Point software. This ability will enhance the likelihood of better overall presentations in school or in the workplace.

OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT

1. Apply basic functions learned in Unit 8 to create a complete presentation.
2. Demonstrate how to reopen slide shows.
3. Practice adding new slides to a presentation.
4. Demonstrate how to run a slide show when completed.
5. Demonstrate how to change the flow of slides within presentation.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Review basic functions of Power Point by playing a jeopardy game.
2. Create additional slides for presentation.
3. Change order of slides within a presentation.

REFERENCE:
UNIT 10

Special features in Power Point

TIME SPAN

Unit will last, 2, 50-minute class periods

GOALS

✓ Utilize additional features in Power Point to accentuate presentation.

RATIONALE FOR UNIT

Although the basic Power Point presentation may be altogether effective with its simplicity, it is a known fact that the brain is more attentive to color and movement. These additional features will create a presentation that will be pleasing to the eye and organized at the same time. These additional functions stimulate the right brain or creativity functions of a person. If done properly, the end result will prove to be an excellent enhancement to the traditional boring lecture. In addition, the movement and transitions will allow the audience to follow the flow of the presentation with ease and enjoyment.

OBJECTIVE FOR UNIT

1. Synthesize prior knowledge of past two units.
2. Describe various types of transition.
3. Explain how to build on a slide.
4. Compare and contrast transition and build.
5. Demonstrate how to add background color, templates, and graphics to a presentation.
6. Evaluate presentations of classmates.

UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. Socratic questioning for review of previous units.
2. List types of transitions available on Power Point.
4. Take notes on transitions and builds.
5. Add color and graphics to two slides in presentation.

REFERENCE:

Assignment:

The students will construct a portfolio to synthesis all knowledge obtained throughout this course. Students will be required to submit a completed portfolio no later than two weeks after assignment has been issued. The following components need to be included in the portfolio. First, each individual unit grade should be calculated, and then an average of all units should be done to arrive at the final portfolio grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>GUIDELINES</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheets</td>
<td>2 worksheets</td>
<td>Format all w/colors</td>
<td>Insert 1 shape in each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulas in Excel</td>
<td>2 worksheets</td>
<td>Budget with working figures</td>
<td>Grade sheet with averages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheet w/graphics</td>
<td>2 graphs</td>
<td>Graph worksheets w/formulas</td>
<td>from above unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Word</td>
<td>One page report</td>
<td>1 in margin, single space</td>
<td>Cover page Name, date, teacher, 1 graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>3 letters</td>
<td>Block, modified block, simplified block</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resumes</td>
<td>Letter of Application</td>
<td>Rewrite to suit different job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One Resume</td>
<td>Revise one from class period.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables</td>
<td>One table</td>
<td>4 columns, 15 rows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Point</td>
<td>One presentation</td>
<td>Use formatting, special features color</td>
<td>(10 slides needed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall portfolio grade: ________
November 11, 2001

NC Agricultural and Technical State University
601 East Market Street
Department Of Business Education
Greensboro, NC 27411

Dear Dr. McEwens,

My colleague and I have developed a new curriculum for use in a computer applications course. Given your experience in business education; I was wondering if you could please lend your expertise in validating this document. As a chairperson of business education at a University, we hope you find this curriculum to be effective for future educators of computer applications.

We have enclosed the relevant materials needed for your conclusions. If you would please forward the attached survey and any comments you may have to P. O. Box 8222 Norfolk, VA 23502. Thank you so much for your time and advise.

Sincerely,

Leressa Suber

Kimberly Compton

Enclosures:

Computer Applications Curriculum
Survey
Survey of Computer Applications

Please circle the answer that best describes your evaluation of the curriculum:

1. The definition of computer applications…
   a. Is very appropriate
   b. Is inappropriate
   c. Needs more explanation
   d. Does not need any more explanation

2. The rationale influences the reader that computer applications is necessary…
   a. Yes, the rationale is very convincing.
   b. No, the rationale is not very convincing.
   c. More resources are needed for the rationale.
   d. No more resources are needed for the rationale.

3. The content source clearly explains the background of computer applications…
   a. Yes, it definitely has supporting basics of computer applications.
   b. No, it does not clearly state the background of computer applications.

4. The content structure provides a well-devised plan for the curriculum…
   a. Yes, the content structure is easy to follow.
   b. No, the content structure is not easy to follow.
   c. The content structure needs to have a different format.
   d. The content structure does not provide a well-devised plan.

5. The program aim…
   a. Is reasonable and attainable.
   b. Is not reasonable and is unattainable.

6. Program goals for computer applications are…
   a. Easy to comprehend.
   b. Not easy to comprehend.

7. The scope and sequence provides an overview of computer applications…
   a. The scope and sequence is easy to follow.
   b. The scope and sequence is not easy to follow.
   c. The scope and sequence needs to have a different format.
   d. The scope and sequence does not provide a detailed overview.

The following questions relate to the areas located within Units 1-10.
8. The goal(s) for the Unit…
   a. Are reasonable and attainable.
   b. Are not reasonable and are unattainable.

9. The rationale(s) of the Units…
   a. Portray the importance and reasoning of the information.
   b. Do not portray why the units are necessary.
   c. Are appropriate to each unit.
   d. Do not relate to the content of each unit.

10. The objective(s) of the Units…
    a. Easy to understand
    b. Are not easy to understand
    c. Relate to the unit activities
    d. Do not relate to the unit activities

11. The unit activities(s) of the Units…
    a. Present fun and unique ways to learn
    b. Need to present more fun and unique ways to learn
    c. Directly relate to the objectives of the unit.
    d. Do not directly relate to the objectives of the unit.

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Based upon the material in the curriculum, will the student portfolio serve as a good measurement of evaluation and assessment?

2. In your opinion, did the entire curriculum flow together with cohesiveness?

3. Based upon the presented material, what changes would you suggest be made to the curriculum?

4. What were some of the weaknesses in the curriculum, if any?
5. What were some of the strengths in the curriculum?

6. Please provide a brief summary of your thoughts about the entire computer applications curriculum.

7. Other remarks, suggestions, observations, or explanations…