

# PERFORMANCE TASK 1

*Created by Kristy Miller, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, University of Evansville, IL, in Chun, M (2010, March/April) "Taking Teaching to Task: Linking Pedagogical and Assessment Practices." Change Magazine, 25; and PowerPoint presentation)*

**Scenario:** You are an advisor to State Senator Nathan Dulce, who is running for reelection against County Commissioner Pat Sauer. Prior to the election, a bill is proposed in the state senate that would ban aspartame, an artificial sweetener, from being added to any soft drink or food product. Senator Dulce is opposed to the bill.

Pat Sauer made three arguments in favor of the bill during a recent TV interview:

First, Sauer said, "Senator Dulce does not care for the health and safety of the state."

Second, that because of the strong correlation between the number of people who consume aspartame and headaches, "banning aspartame would improve the health of the state's citizens." Last, he said that "aspartame should be replaced with sucralose."

## Documents on Course site:

- Document A: *Memorandum from Private Investigator* regarding Sauer's connection to the company that produces Splenda® sweetener.
- Document B: *"A case against Aspartame,"* local newspaper article opposing aspartame
- Document C: *Headaches and Aspartame*, data from the Department of Health
- Document D: *Research brief* discussing the advantages of sucralose for diabetics
- Document E: *Chart* used by Sauer linking aspartame and headaches
- Documents Folder F: *Research abstracts & articles* about aspartame and headaches

**Task:** Senator Dulce wants to make sure he votes appropriately on the aspartame bill, so he has asked you to analyze the strengths and/or limitations of each of Sauer's main points. Use the documents above to prepare your report. In it, be sure to address the following questions:

1. Pat Sauer claims that Senator Dulce's opposition to banning aspartame means "Senator Dulce does not care for the health and safety of the state." What are the strengths and/or limitations of Pat Sauer's position on this matter? Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Sauer's claim? Why? What specific information in the documents led you to this conclusion?

2. Pat Sauer claims that "aspartame should be banned and replaced with sucralose." What are the strengths and/or limitations of Pat Sauer's position on this matter? Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Pat Sauer's claim? Why? Is there a better solution, and if so, what are its strengths and/or limitations? Be sure to cite the information in the documents as well as any other factors you considered (such as the quality of the research conducted on aspartame toxicity) that led you to this conclusion.
3. Pat Sauer claims that "banning aspartame would improve the health of the state's citizens." What are the strengths and/or limitations of Pat Sauer's position on this matter? Based on the evidence, what conclusion should be drawn about Pat Sauer's claim? Why? What specific information in the documents led you to this conclusion?