

EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATION EMBEDDED INTO COMMUNICATION CURRICULA

B.A. in COMMUNICATION

December 2014

Assessment Plan

Assessment Information Collected: According to the Department's assessment plan, we collect data on student performance in the form of final papers and digitally recorded presentations in the entry level COMM 180, Introduction to Human Communication course as well as in the senior level COMM 482, Capstone Seminar in Communication. These data are reviewed each May in a meeting of the entire faculty. In this meeting we examine the pre-post data for each graduate for that academic year and the results from a student survey we administer in April to all majors in the program. Each faculty member who has worked with the graduating student contributes his or her insight and evaluation of the student's performance in the program. Another part of the assessment involves reviewing this entire set of individual student assessments for strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and in instruction. The focus of our evaluation is on the intended outcomes/objectives. The faculty reviews the survey results to reflect on strengths and weaknesses in our teaching, course selection, and advising. We have found over the past several years that the survey provides rich, detailed information regarding program need for improvement as well as the program's success.

Communication in the Curricula:

First, the research project and final report in the Capstone course, COMM 482, is an integrative experience and key indicator of student success for our graduates in the program. Secondly, the social science group research project in the introductory course, COMM 180, introduces students to research in a productive, engaging way. The first year of the project's inception had students plan and implement a video-recording of a social science experiment that was presented and described (formal presentation) to 12 sections of the COMM 131 and COMM 141 courses for data collection. The students analyzed the results together which made for an in-depth learning experience regarding social science research reporting (written research report). Third, effective student writing continues to be an area of focus for our department. We routinely refer students to the Writing Center. Additionally, both the introductory course and capstone course (pre and post evaluation of student learning outcomes for assessment) focus on the development and effectiveness of the written social science research report. Finally, we have organized our Communication curricula to include written and oral intensive courses as required and elective courses beyond the introductory and capstone courses. The courses which embed various forms of written and oral communication include: (a) Communication Theory, COMM 425W (required course for major), (b) Nonverbal Communication, COMM 321W (program elective), (c) Communication in Interpersonal Contexts, COMM 322W (program elective), (d) Advanced Group Communication, COMM 3310 (program elective), (e) Organizational Communication, 3350 (program elective), (f) Professional Public Speaking, COMM 4320 (program elective), (g) Communication in Health Contexts, COMM 462W (program elective), and (h) Applied Communication in Training and Development, COMM 475W (program elective).

Example of three of our written and oral intensive communication courses include:

Nonverbal Communication, COMM 321W

- (a) Three short 5-6 page research papers on assigned topics in nonverbal communication.
- (b) Two group presentations on topics discussed in course lecture such as the semiotics of pop culture manner of dress as nonverbal communication and the use of cultural metaphor and gestures in communication as a means of communicating nonverbal meaning.
- (c) Group creation of a rap song (app on Internet to make the rap song) utilizing only nonverbal sounds attached to words as means of implying communication (includes addition of (but not limited to) sarcasm, confusion, disdain, praise, fright, excitement, etc.). Post a group podcast to our class website to describe the process and definition of nonverbal sounds used in the production of the rap song assignment.
- (d) Individual final formal oral presentation on a chosen topic in nonverbal communication (may not select a topic from the three research papers).

Organizational Communication, COMM 3350

- (a) Three group led discussions (45 minutes) of specific organizational theorists and their theories.
- (b) Two group presentations (30 minutes) regarding research on specific organizations discussed in the textbook such as Disney corporation and Starbucks
- (c) A formal oral presentation (10 minutes) utilizing some form of visual aid and 6-8 page research paper regarding communication within a Fairbanks organization (based on research interviews) delivered to class and videotaped for assessment.
- (d) Group posters on an organizational communication topic to be submitted to a regional Communication association conference.
- (e) Individual assignment to email an organizational communication theorist at his or her university to ask two questions about theory. The email questions and reply are to be posted on the course website discussion board for all members of class to see.

Applied Communication in Training and Development, COMM 475W

- (a) Two group workshops on an instructor approved topic. The first workshop to be delivered to class. The second workshop (near end of semester) to be delivered to a public audience of choice (may use another course or an outside venue as an audience).
- (b) Conduct a needs assessment on an organization. Make recommendations in a written report that will be posted on course website. Deliver a 7-minute oral presentation to class which will be videotaped for assessment.
- (c) Two group led discussions (45 minutes) regarding articles assigned in class.
- (d) Group designed and delivered blog regarding the application of techniques discussed in class about training and development (including issues in the delivery and training of others).

Undergraduate Service Instruction:

The Department of Communication offers service courses in the Core Curriculum in direct support of the State Postsecondary Commission's requirement that all Bachelor's degree recipients have one, three-credit course in oral communication. Assessment for student learning outcomes in the two courses that fulfill this requirement, COMM 131X and COMM 141X, are reviewed biennially in a separate report to the Core Curriculum Committee. Our service courses are taught by supervised graduate teaching assistants. Every semester we conduct an inter-rater reliability session to preserve consistency across the service courses in regard to speech evaluation. We invite the new branch campus adjunct professors who teach our service courses to attend at least one of our sessions. We use an embedded assessment technique to gather data on student learning outcomes. We have uniform participation with data collection with the on campus service courses. However, the participation from the rural campuses is less consistent on an ongoing basis. We will continue to encourage the rural instructors to collect the data we require.

The Department also provides support to instructors of the upper division oral intensive courses in the Core Curriculum (approximately 40 sections per semester). Assessment of these course offerings is the responsibility of the Core Curriculum Committee. The Speaking Center collects data from every student and faculty member who uses its services. An internal assessment of the Speaking Center services demonstrates that the Center is providing effective practical support to students and faculty.