

Communication Studies Program Assessment Report 2010-2011

I. Introduction of the Communication Studies Major Program

The Communication Studies program offers courses in a variety of communication contexts, including technical, rhetorical, interpersonal, group, and organizational communication. The program serves primarily Communication Studies majors, but also serves a group of students in other fields interested in communication-related course work to complement their chosen major.

II. Program Purpose, Mission Statement, and Objectives

Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Communication faculty reviewed the current program objectives and learning outcomes to provide feedback for change to the program. All of the most recent modifications to the program mission, educational objectives, and learning outcomes are included in the sections below. Although the student learning detailed in this report was assessed in a classroom setting, students had other opportunities to demonstrate their learning in Communication student clubs, honor societies, externships, and regional academic conferences.

Communication Studies Program Mission Statement

The Communication Studies program prepares students for the challenges of a society that is shaped by communication. As participants in the program, students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visual communication and practice skills in group and intercultural communication.

Program Education Objectives

After completion of the Communication Studies program, students should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate communication skills in their lives.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and application in professional and academic endeavors.
3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well-founded perspectives.
4. Build and maintain healthy and effective relationships.
5. Demonstrate appropriate and professional ethical behavior.

Expected Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking.
2. Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication.
3. Apply communication theories.
4. Show an understanding of opportunities in the field of communication.
5. Use current technology related to the communication field.
6. Respond effectively to cultural communication differences.
7. Communicate ethically.
8. Exhibit productive group communication exchanges.

III. Three-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The eight learning outcomes will be assessed, two or three each year, on a three-year cycle as demonstrated in Table 1.

Learning Outcomes	'10-'11	'11-'12	'12-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15	'15-'16
PSLO 1: Critical Thinking		•			•	
PSLO 2: Competence in Comm	•			•		
PSLO 3: Communication Theory		•			•	
PSLO 4: Opportunities in Field		•			•	
PSLO 5: Use of Technology		•			•	
PSLO 6: Cultural Communication			•			•
PSLO 7: Ethics			•			•
PSLO 8: Group Communication			•			•

Table 1. Communication Studies Assessment Cycle

IV. Summary of 2010-2011 Assessment Activities

The Communication Studies faculty will conduct formal assessment of two components of one student learning outcome during 2010-2011. A summary mapping the PSLO to the program curriculum map is found in the appendix of this document (See Appendix A).

Student Learning Outcome 2a: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in oral communication.

Direct Assessment

The oral portion of this outcome was assessed in SPE 314: Argumentation, COM 301: Rhetorical Theory, and COM 326: Communication Research during fall 2010.

Communication Studies faculty members reviewed individual presentations using the OIT Public Speaking rubric criteria contained in Table 2 to measure student proficiency (See Appendix B for public speaking rubric). Nineteen students participated in this assessment.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Content	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	84%
Organization	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	89%
Style	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	79%
Delivery	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	74%
Visuals	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	63%

Table 2. Faculty Assessment Results for Public Speaking portion of SLO 2 in SPE 314, COM 301 and COM 326 Fall 10.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found areas of strength in the following categories:

1. Most students (84%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of **content** by adequately supporting the thesis of the speech with attributed sources.

2. Most students (89%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of **organization** by using an appropriate organizational pattern, including a good introduction, main points, and conclusion.
3. Many students (79%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of **style** by demonstrating competent audience regard for the topic and purpose of a speech. They also demonstrated enthusiasm and remained within time constraints of the given speech.

Areas of Improvement

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found a need for improvement in the following categories:

1. Approximately a quarter of the students (26%) did not demonstrate proficiency in the area of **delivery**, including limited or no use of gestures, little poise, multiple oral fillers, and heavy reliance on notes.
2. Some students (37%) did not demonstrate proficiency in the area of **visuals**, including not referring to a visual, distracting visuals, or limited use of the visual.

Other Areas of Consideration

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found other areas for consideration:

The sample size of 19 students represents approximately one-third of the Communication Studies major population. Although a larger sample than used in years past, this number might not fully represent the level of proficiency of all Communication Studies majors.

Plans for Improvement

The following plans for improvement have been discussed by Communication Studies faculty:

1. Faculty will place greater emphasis on oral communication by providing more opportunities in their classes for formal presentations by students.
2. Faculty will hold students accountable for oral presentations by grading speeches with greater expectations, especially in the areas of style and delivery.
3. Faculty will provide greater levels of instruction or explanation regarding the expectations for exceptional oral presentations in their syllabi.

Student Learning Outcome 2b: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in written communication.

Direct Assessment

The written portion of this outcome was assessed in COM 301: Rhetorical Theory and Applications during fall 2010. Communication Studies faculty members reviewed a written assignment about lifelong learning using the OIT Writing rubric criteria contained in Table 3 to measure student proficiency (See OIT Writing rubric in Appendix C). Sixteen students participated in this assessment.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Purpose and Ideas	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	88%
Organization	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	88%
Support	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	56%
Style	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	75%
Conventions	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	75%
Documentation	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	40%

Table 3. Faculty Assessment Results for Writing Portion of SLO 2 in COM 301 Fall 10.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found areas of strength in the following categories:

1. Most students (88%) wrote with proficient clarity and focus so that the reader could understand the **purpose and idea** of the writing.
2. Most students (88%) demonstrated proficiency in **organization**, demonstrating order and structure in their writing.

Areas of Improvement

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found a need for improvement in the following categories:

1. Some students (44%) did not demonstrate proficient **support** in developing main ideas.
2. A quarter of students (25%) did not demonstrate proficient **style** by using appropriate voice, wording, and sentence structure.
3. A quarter of students (25%) did not demonstrate proficient use of **conventions** to enhance communication.
4. Many students (60%) did not demonstrate proficient use of **documentation**.

Other Area of Consideration

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found other areas for consideration:

1. The assignment students used to assess their proficiency in writing did not clearly require use of documented sources. Many students seemed to understand the paper as a personal reflection paper. This misunderstanding could be reflected in the low score for documentation.
2. As stated earlier, the sample size of 16 students represents less than one-third of the Communication Studies major population. Although a larger sample than used in years past, this number might not fully represent the level of proficiency of all Communication Studies majors.

Plans for Improvement

The following plans for improvement have been discussed by Communication Studies faculty:

1. Faculty will hold students to a greater level of accountability in the areas of documentation, support, style, and conventions by making these categories a more significant part of the grade for each written assignment.
2. As part of holding students more accountable for their writing, faculty will emphasize the importance of effective writing in each of their syllabi.

3. Faculty will focus exclusively on APA style in all major classes.

Additional Assessment

During fall 2010, assessment in support of OIT's institutional learning outcome of lifelong learning was conducted in conjunction with the written communication SLO. The SLO was assessed in COM 301: Rhetorical Theory and Applications. Faculty members from the Communication Studies program assessed students using the OIT Lifelong Learning rubric. The assessment revealed that students in Communication Studies demonstrated proficiency in the areas of lifelong learning and continuing education, but lacked proficiency in the areas of knowledge of professional societies and organizations, credentials, and career planning.

V. Summary of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcome 2a: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in oral, written, and visual communication.

Strengths: Most students (84%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of content by adequately supporting the thesis of the speech with attributed sources. Most students (89%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of organization by using an appropriate organizational pattern, including a good introduction, main points, and conclusion. Many students (79%) demonstrated proficiency in the area of style by demonstrating competent audience regard for the topic and purpose of a speech. They also demonstrated enthusiasm and remained within time constraints of the given speech.

Weaknesses: Approximately a quarter of the students (26%) did not demonstrate proficiency in the area of delivery, including limited or no use of gestures, little poise, multiple oral fillers, and heavy reliance on notes. Some students (37%) did not demonstrate proficiency in the area of visuals, including not referring to a visual, distracting visuals, or limited use of a visual.

Plans for Improvement: Beginning fall 2011, faculty will place greater emphasis on oral communication by providing more opportunities in their classes for formal presentations by students. During fall 2011 faculty will provide greater levels of instruction or explanation regarding the expectations for exceptional oral presentations in their course syllabi. During fall 2011 faculty will hold students accountable for oral presentations by grading speeches with greater expectations, especially in the areas of style and delivery.

Student Learning Outcome 2b: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in, written, and visual communication.

Strengths: Most students (88%) wrote with proficient clarity and focus so that the reader could understand the purpose and idea of the writing. Most students (88%) demonstrated proficiency in organization, demonstrating order and structure in their writing.

Weaknesses: Some students (44%) did not demonstrate proficient **support** in developing main ideas in their writing. A quarter of students (25%) did not demonstrate proficient **style** by using appropriate voice, wording, and sentence structure in their writing. A quarter of students (25%) did not demonstrate proficient use of **conventions** to enhance written communication. Many students (60%) did not demonstrate proficient use of **documentation** in their writing.

Plans for Improvement: Beginning fall 2011, faculty will hold students to a greater level of accountability in the areas of documentation, support, style, and conventions by making these categories a more significant part of the grade for each written assignment. As part of holding students more accountable for their writing, faculty will emphasize the importance of effective writing in each of their syllabi. By fall 2011, faculty will focus exclusively on APA style in all major classes.

VI. Changes as a Result of Assessment

1. During spring 2011, faculty of the Communication Studies program discussed adding an ethics component to one sophomore, junior, and senior level course in the major. They also reviewed the variety of codes of ethics considered by students in the Communication Studies program. The result of the discussion was that most courses in the major have an ethics component already. This component should be given emphasis. Also, advisors were encouraged to suggest that students take COM 255—Communication and Ethics within the first two years of their experience in the major. The group also decided that no code of ethics should be emphasized; rather, students should be made aware of the code of ethics that applies directly to their professional interests.
2. During spring 2011, courses in the Communication Studies program that focus on group communication and interaction were discussed and then mapped on curriculum maps. Group communication will be reassessed both directly and indirectly during its next turn in the assessment cycle.

Appendix A: PSLO Curriculum Maps

SLO 2a: Students with a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in oral communication.

Courses that are shaded below indicate that the SLO above is taught in the course, students demonstrate skills or knowledge in the SLO, and/or students receive feedback on their performance on the SLO. I = Introduced; R = Reinforced; E=Emphasized

Communication Courses	Fall	Winter	Spring
COM 104: Intro to Comm			
COM 105: Intro to Comm Theory			
COM 106: Intro to Comm Research			
COM 115: Intro to Mass Comm			
COM 205: Intercultural Comm			
COM 207: Graphic Design			
COM 215: Creativity in Comm			
COM 225: Interpersonal Comm	IE	IE	IE
COM 226: Nonverbal Comm		R	
COM 237: Intro to Visual Comm			
COM 248: Digital Media Prod			
COM 255: Comm Ethics			R
COM 256: Public Relations	R		
COM 276: Democracy and Media			
COM 301: Rhetorical Theory	ER		
COM 326: Comm Research			
COM 345: Org Comm I			
COM 346: Health Comm			R
COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict	R	R	R
COM 348: Facilitation			R
COM 365: Electronic Comm and Soc			E
COM 401: Civil Engineering Project I			
COM 402: Civil Engineering Project II			
COM 407: Seminar			
COM 420: Externship			
COM 421: Senior Project I			
COM 422: Senior Project II			
COM 423: Senior Project III			
COM 425: Mediation		R	
COM 426: Mediation Practicum			R
COM 445: Org Comm II			
COM 446: Leadership and Comm			
JOUR 211: Pub/Student Newspaper			
SPE 314: Argumentation	R		
WRI 350: Documentation Dev		R	
WRI 410: Proposal and Grant			
WRI 415: Technical Editing		R	
WRI 420: Document Design			R

SLO 2b: Students with a bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies should be able to display competence in written communication.

Courses that are shaded below indicate that the SLO above is taught in the course, students demonstrate skills or knowledge in the SLO, and/or students receive feedback on their performance on the SLO. I = Introduced; R = Reinforced; E=Emphasized

Communication Courses	Fall	Winter	Spring
COM 104: Intro to Comm			
COM 105: Intro to Comm Theory			
COM 106: Intro to Comm Research			R
COM 115: Intro to Mass Comm			
COM 205: Intercultural Comm			
COM 207: Graphic Design			
COM 215: Creativity in Comm			
COM 225: Interpersonal Comm			
COM 226: Nonverbal Comm		R	
COM 237: Intro to Visual Comm			
COM 248: Digital Media Prod			
COM 255: Comm Ethics			E
COM 256: Public Relations	R		
COM 276: Democracy and Media			
COM 301: Rhetorical Theory	E		
COM 326: Comm Research	R		
COM 345: Org Comm I		R	
COM 346: Health Comm			
COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict			
COM 348: Facilitation			
COM 365: Electronic Comm and Soc			E
COM 401: Civil Engineering Project I			
COM 402: Civil Engineering Project II			
COM 407: Seminar		E	
COM 420: Externship			
COM 421: Senior Project I			
COM 422: Senior Project II			
COM 423: Senior Project III			
COM 425: Mediation			
COM 426: Mediation Practicum			
COM 445: Org Comm II			R
COM 446: Leadership and Comm			R
JOUR 211: Pub/Student Newspaper			
SPE 314: Argumentation			
WRI 350: Documentation Dev		R	
WRI 410: Proposal and Grant			
WRI 415: Technical Editing		R	
WRI 420: Document Design			E

Appendix B

OIT Public Speaking Rubric				
Performance Criteria	No/Limited Proficiency (1)	Some Proficiency (2)	Proficiency (3)	High Proficiency (4)
Content	Few or no attributed sources. Supporting materials lack credibility and/or don't relate to thesis. Limited or no attempt to inform or persuade.	Some attributed sources used. Supporting materials are somewhat credible and/or don't clearly relate to thesis. Attempt to inform or persuade.	Adequate number of credible and appropriately attributed sources used. Supporting materials relate to thesis. Informs or persuades.	A variety of credible and appropriate sources used. Supporting materials relate in an exceptional way to a focused thesis. Informs or persuades.
Organization	Lacks organizational structure. Introduction and/or conclusion missing. No transitions used.	Organizational structure present but unclear with underdeveloped introduction and conclusion. Transitions are awkward.	Appropriate organizational pattern used and easy to follow with developed introduction and satisfying conclusion. Main points are smoothly connected with transitions.	Organizational pattern is compelling and moves audience through speech with ease. Introduction draws in the audience and conclusion is satisfying. Main points are smoothly connected with transitions.
Style	No understanding of audience regarding topic or purpose of speech. Little enthusiasm and passion for topic. No regard for time constraints.	Some understanding of audience regarding topic or purpose of speech. Some enthusiasm and passion for topic. Some regard for time constraints.	Competent understanding of audience regarding topic and purpose. Enthusiasm and passion for topic. Speech given within time constraints.	Thorough understanding of audience regarding topic and purpose. Clear enthusiasm and passion for topic. Speech given within time constraints.
Delivery	No gestures or eye contact. Monotone voice or insufficient volume. Little poise. Reading of notes only. Abundant oral fillers and nonverbal distractions.	Some gestures and eye contact. Ineffective use of language and voice. Little poise. Heavy reliance on notes. Multiple oral fillers and nonverbal distractions.	Adequate use of gestures, eye contact, language, and voice. Poised with minor reliance on notes. Limited oral fillers and nonverbal distractions.	Effective use of gestures, eye contact, vivid language, and voice to add interest to speech. Poised with use of notes for reference only. No oral fillers and verbal distractions.
Visuals	No visuals or poorly-designed and documented visuals that distract from speech or do not create interest. Limited reference to visuals or so much reference delivery is hindered.	Visuals present, but simply designed with limited use of documentation. Visuals are referred to but do not create interest. Visuals may interfere with delivery.	Well-designed and documented visuals that clarify speech and create interest. Visuals are referred to and sufficiently discussed, while not interfering with delivery.	Well-designed and documented visuals that clarify speech, create interest, and hold attention of the audience. Visuals are sufficiently discussed and effectively integrated into speech.

Appendix C

OIT Essay Rubric

Performance Criteria	Limited Proficiency (1)	Some Proficiency (2)	Proficiency (3)	High Proficiency (4)
Purpose and Ideas	Writing has limited or no focus. Purpose and main ideas are unclear and require inference from reader.	Reader can discern the purpose and main ideas although they may be overly broad or simplistic.	Writing is clear and focused. Reader can easily understand the purpose and main ideas.	Purpose and main ideas are exceptionally focused, clear, and interesting.
Organization	Order and structure are unclear. Introduction and conclusion are underdeveloped or missing.	Order and structure are overly formulaic. Introduction and conclusion may be underdeveloped or too obvious.	Order and structure are clear and easy to follow. Introduction draws in the reader and conclusion brings satisfying closure.	Order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. Introduction draws in the reader and conclusion brings satisfying closure.
Support	Development is minimal. Some supporting details may be irrelevant or repetitious.	Supporting details are relevant, but are limited or rather general. Support may be based on clichés, stereotypes, or questionable sources or evidence.	The main ideas are well developed by supporting details. When appropriate, use of outside sources provides credible support.	Main ideas are well developed by strong support and rich details. When appropriate, use of outside sources provides strong, credible support.
Style	Voice is inappropriate for topic, purpose, or audience. Wording is incorrect or monotonous, detracting from impact. Sentences tend to be choppy, rambling, and awkward.	Voice is inconsistent for topic, purpose, and audience. Wording is quite ordinary, lacking interest, precision, and variety, and may rely on clichés. Sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid with an overuse of simple sentence structures.	Voice is generally appropriate for topic, purpose, and audience. Generally, wording conveys message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. Sentences are carefully crafted with variations in structure.	Voice is appropriate for topic, purpose, and audience. Wording is fresh and specific, with a striking and varied vocabulary. Sentences are highly crafted, with varied structure that makes reading easy and enjoyable.
Conventions	Numerous errors in usage, spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar. Errors sometime impede readability. Substantial editing needed.	Writing contains punctuation, spelling, and/or grammar errors, but they do not impede readability and are not extensive. Moderate need for editing.	Writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Few errors.	Writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions and uses them well to enhance communication. Very few or no errors.
Documentation	Documentation has major errors or is not present.	Documentation has frequent errors.	Documentation is correct except for a few errors.	Documentation is meticulous.