

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Communication, B.A.

Department: Communication

Degree or Certificate Level:

College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): July 1, 2020

Primary Assessment Contact: Dan Kozlowski, Chair

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2018-2019 academic year and Spring 2020 exit survey

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2019

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

In the 2018-2019 academic year, we collected data for PLO3: Students will engage in communication research. We also sent an exit survey to graduating students in Spring 2020 as an indirect assessment of all of our PLOS.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

To assess PLO3, we collected data using student research projects created by seniors in upper-division courses in Spring 2019 on both the St. Louis and Madrid campuses. The courses included CMM 3090, CMM 4460, CMM 4600, CMM 4720, CMM 4810, and CMM 4960 on the St. Louis campus and CMM 3110; CMM 3930 Communication, Education, and New Media; CMM 4010; and CMM 4800 on the Madrid campus.

In Spring 2020, graduating students on the St. Louis campus were sent an exit survey measuring their perceptions of learning across all PLOs. Twelve of 37 students completed the survey.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

To assess PLO3, faculty teaching the aforementioned courses evaluated research project assignments by senior Communication majors. That amounted to 41 students from the St. Louis campus and 10 students from the Madrid campus. Faculty used the Communication Research Rubric from our assessment plan, which is modified from rubrics created for the VALUES Rubrics for assessment. The rubric is included as part of our assessment plan.

As mentioned, perceptual assessment data were collected through an exit survey of graduating seniors to assess students' perceptions of learning across all PLOs.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Seventy percent or more of graduating seniors scored at or above the advanced intermediate level of achievement on five of the seven dimensions. For two dimensions, *Limitations and Implications* and *Ethical Considerations*, less than 70 percent of students were at or above the advanced intermediate level. Scores were generally higher for students in the Journalism and Media Studies and Communication Studies concentrations.¹

As with last year, the response rate for our exit survey was much lower than we'd like because we are no longer able to use CMM 4950 as a means of encouraging students to complete the survey. Twelve of 37 students completed the survey. As a department, we need to develop new ways to improve the response rate for this. Below is a report on the means and standard deviations for each item.

¹ See attached report for aggregate data on student performance for each dimension of the rubric. If students' communication research skills were assessed in more than one class, their highest score on the dimension was the only score that was included.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The department assessment committee met in Fall 2019. The committee concluded that the assessment data suggested that our faculty should have a conversation about how and where in the curriculum we are teaching students to synthesize research and draw conclusions and identify ways in which we might do this more effectively. The faculty-wide conversation occurred early in the Spring 2020 semester. We concluded that one of the challenges we faced in assessing PLO3 is that the rubric we use doesn't capture the diverse forms that research takes in our program. We decided that we thus need to change the rubric to better capture the ways in which we incorporate research skills in our curriculum. The assessment committee intended to revise the rubric and collect new data using the revised rubric in Spring 2020, but the challenges of COVID-19 waylaid those plans. We will continue the work of revising the rubric and collecting data in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Related to this, on the Spring 2020 exit survey, students' response to the statement "the program encouraged me to develop my research skills" averaged 3.91 on a five-point scale, which was the lowest score among the items measuring students' perception of their learning across all of our PLOs. In the Fall 2020 semester, the assessment committee will discuss how that finding relates to our efforts revising the PLO3 rubric.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

My answer to question 5 addressed this. In addition, we'll be talking about the Spring 2020 exit survey results at our faculty retreat in August.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

My answer to question 5 addressed this also. We're changing our assessment plan by revising the PLO3 rubric.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

In 2018-2019, we analyzed data for what was then PLO1C: Students will communicate effective digital messages. We then acted, revising our program learning outcomes, drawing in part also on the assessment data from the previous two years related to PLO1A and PLO1B. We decided to merge the three learning outcomes focused on oral, written, and digital messages into a single PLO (PLO1) focused on creating messages relevant to the audience, purpose, and context.

I'll also mention here that based on industry trends, student feedback, and input from our department advisory board, in Fall 2019 we redesigned our Advertising and Public Relations Concentration and renamed it Integrated Strategic Communication.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

The change to PLO1 will be evaluated the next time we assess it.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

TBD

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

TBD

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

ASSESSMENT DATA: COMMUNICATION B.A.

I. Direct Assessment of PLO3: Communication Research

The Communication Research Rubric has seven dimensions. The rubric is available to view in the Communication B.A. Assessment Plan.

For each dimension, 1 = Benchmark, 2 = Intermediate Level of Achievement, 3 = Advanced-Intermediate Level of Achievement, 4 = Capstone.

		Level of Achievement	4	3	2	1	N/A*
Topic Selection	Total:		21	16	9	0	5
	AD & PR		6	9	8		3
	COMM ST		5	3			
	JAMS		5				2
	MADRID		5	4	1		

*Global Media did not evaluate topic selection.

- *Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less-explored aspects of the topic.*

		Level of Achievement	4	3	2	1
Existing Knowledge, Research and/or Views	Total:		16	25	10	0
	AD & PR		3	14	9	
	COMM ST		5	3		
	JAMS		3	3	1	
	MADRID		5	5		

- *Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/ approaches.*

		Level of Achievement	4	3	2	1	N/A**
Design Process	Total:		13	23	10	0	5
	AD & PR		4	10	10		2
	COMM ST		5	3			
	JAMS		1	3			3
	MADRID		3	7			

**Design Process was not applicable to the Digital Storytelling artifact.

- *All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant sub disciplines.*

		Level of Achievement	4	3	2	1
Analysis	Total:		17	23	11	0
	AD & PR		4	15	7	
	COMM ST		3	4	1	
	JAMS		5	1	1	
	MADRID		5	3	2	

- *Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.*

		Level of Achievement 4	3	2	1
Conclusions	Total:	18	24	7	2
	AD & PR	6	12	6	2
	COMM ST	3	4	1	
	JAMS	5	2		
	MADRID	4	6		

- *States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings.*

		Level of Achievement 4	3	2	1	N/A*
Limitations & Implications	Total:	15	16	15	3	2
	AD & PR	3	11	9	2	1
	COMM ST	6	2			
	JAMS	4	2			1
	MADRID	2	1	6	1	

*Global Media had two not applicable.

- *Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.*

		Level of Achievement 4	3	2	1	N/A*
Ethical Considerations	Total:	16	13	10	2	8
	AD & PR	3	10	10	2	1
	COMM ST	5	2	1		
	JAMS	5	1	1		
	MADRID	3				7

**Global Media had one not applicable.

**Ethical Considerations was not applicable to the Ethnography of Communication artifact.

- *Provides a comprehensive explanation of the basis for ethical behavior/ decision by showing evidence of gathering pertinent facts and information that support the behavior/ decision, including matters related to human subjects.*

II. Indirect Assessment of Student Learning: Exit Survey

The following data come from an exit survey of graduating seniors conducted each spring on the St. Louis campus. Students were asked to indicate their agreement (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with a set of statements tailored to fit each of our PLOs. Twelve students completed the survey this year.

Quantitative Perceptual Data

Outcome Dimensions and Items	M	SD
<i>Students will create oral, written and digital messages relevant to the audience, purpose and context.</i>		
The program encouraged me to develop my written communication skills.	4.58	0.90
I have writing skills that will allow me to communicate effectively and independently in a variety of situations.	4.83	0.38
The program encouraged me to develop my oral communication and presentation skills.	4.41	0.90
I have oral communication skills that will allow me to communicate effectively and independently in a variety of situations.	4.66	0.65
The program encouraged me to develop my digital production skills.	4.25	0.75
I am prepared to learn to use new and emerging communication technologies and software.	4.25	0.75
<i>Students will engage in communication research.</i>		
The program encouraged me to develop my research skills.	3.91	1.31
I am able to gather information from multiple sources and make critical judgments about the value of that	4.5	0.90

information.		
<i>Students will critically analyze messages.</i>		
The program encouraged me to develop my critical thinking skills.	4.75	0.45
I am prepared to analyze arguments and information in order to make critical judgments about important issues in my life and my community.	4.75	0.45
<i>Students will demonstrate cultural communication competence.</i>		
The program consistently emphasized the importance of culture and diversity.	4.5	0.79
I have an understanding of cultures other than my own.	4.75	0.45
<i>Students will recognize and address systemic injustice and inequity in pursuit of a just society.</i>		
The program consistently emphasized the importance of social justice.	4.5	0.67
I understand my civic responsibilities as a local and global citizen.	4.91	0.28
<i>Students will apply ethical communication principles and practices.</i>		
The program consistently emphasized the importance of ethics.	4.75	0.45
I am able to make ethical judgments and take action based on broad knowledge.	4.91	0.28