

Spring 2017
Core Curriculum Assessment Report

of

Skills 1 – Communication

from the

**Flex: Communication - Spoken and
Interdisciplinary**

Core Curricular Area



submitted by

Kristen McIntyre

on behalf of the

**Flex: Communication - Spoken and Interdisciplinary
Core Area Assessment Committee**

Methods

How was student work (artifacts) collected for assessment?

A total of 337 students were enrolled in SPCH 1300 during the Fall 2016 semester. Six (6) SPCH 1300 sections were selected for assessment prior to our involvement with piloting Blackboard Outcomes. These sections included 3 face-to-face sections, 1 8-week online section, and 2 16-week online sections. Piloting the Blackboard Outcomes platform, 6 video artifacts were randomly selected for assessment of Skills 1.1 and 1.2.

What type of artifacts were collected?

Informative Service Speech videos

How were the artifacts sampled for assessment?

Blackboard Outcomes randomly selected the artifacts from the available sections.

How were the artifacts scored?

The artifacts were scored using a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 rating scale: 4 = Capstone, 3 & 2 = Milestones, 1 = Benchmark, and 0 = Absent

How was reliability in scoring determined and ensured?

The members of the CAAC, in addition to a SPCH 1300 adjunct (for a total of five (5) CAAC raters), attended the Department of Applied Communication faculty assessment retreat Friday, January 13th. The retreat was in preparation for piloting Blackboard Outcomes for both program and core assessment in the department. During the retreat, department faculty normed program student learning outcome rubrics in the morning and normed Core student learning outcome rubrics for Skills 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1 in the afternoon. The norming process included scoring past course artifacts (Informative Service Speech videos) and talking through individual evaluative elements. Throughout the process, rubric value descriptions were clarified

to provide clearer differentiation between scores. While all faculty participated in the Core norming activities, only the five members of the CAAC participated in scoring the Fall 2016 assessment video artifacts. With a few exceptions, interrater reliability was attained. For the two artifacts that did not have interrater reliability, a third rater was assigned but the new data is not reflected in this report.

Reflection

What was learned from the assessment results?

A rubric score of 2 (out of 4) is the benchmark for SPCH 1300, with a score of 3 expected for students in the midst of their Applied Communication major curriculum, and a score of 4 expected for Applied Communication majors at the end of the Senior Seminar capstone course.

Across all outcomes, the majority of students are meeting or slightly exceeding the 2.00 benchmark in most assessed evaluative elements.

Skill 1.1. Presentational structure. The majority of sampled students met (or exceeded) the benchmark for six of the nine evaluative elements: attention getters (80%, 2.30), speaker credibility (70%, 2.40), preview statements (70%, 2.30), transitions (90%, 2.40), summary statements (77%, 2.11), and clinchers (77%, 2.44). A few structural elements, speaker credibility, transitions, and clincher, were surprisingly strong (2.40+). In terms of student learning, the sampled SPCH 1300 students have a fairly strong foundational understanding of and ability to enact the majority of elements that make up effective presentational structure. However, it is clear that sampled students struggled with establishing listener relevance (30% not attempting, 1.80), stating a clear goal for the speech (40% not attempting, 1.70), and restating the speech goal (44% not attempting, 1.78).

Skill 1.2. Application of communication concepts to interpersonal contexts. The majority of sampled students met (or exceeded) both evaluative elements: selecting communication concepts for application (80%, 2.40) and applying communication concepts (80%, 2.20) to interpersonal contexts. Interestingly, the majority of the sampled students (60%) were able to identify more specific communication concepts for application represented by a 3 and 4 score. This suggests that students are developing a slightly more refined understanding of the complexity of communication than anticipated.

Continuous Improvement

What changes will be made based upon the assessment results?

The SPCH 1300 program is committed to the continuous improvement process and thus meet monthly to review the curriculum, norm assignment grading, and discuss ideas for activities that help students learn key concepts and skills. Given the extremely small sample size of our Blackboard Outcomes pilot, we will not be making drastic changes to the curriculum. However, at our April faculty meeting where we will discuss the upcoming speech assignment, we will devote time to discussing strategies for working with students on developing a better understanding and ability to enact establishing listener relevance, thesis statements, and thesis restatements in the Informative Service Speech. We will also brainstorm strategies for moving students toward identifying more specific communication concepts for application.

Feedback

What changes are recommended for Core assessment?

At the end of the fall 2016 semester, the SPCH 1300 program made two important changes. First, based on the assessment experience the previous year, the Skill 1.1 rubric was significantly revised to include the evaluative elements for the components of structure. The initial collapsed rubric, while efficient, did not provide enough detail to inform meaningful curriculum improvement. The new rubric is much more useful. Second, the SPCH 1300 program faculty decided to revise the summative Informative Service Speech assignment. With the intent to streamline the CAAC assessment process, the assignment was revised to include content areas that would allow this one artifact to serve for assessment of all expected core outcomes.

All SPCH 1300 section modalities now use Blackboard to collect student speech video artifacts through a single attempt assignment drop box. Students may submit videos in a variety of formats; however, instructors will be encouraging students to upload video files into Kaltura or providing students with Google Drive links to their respective video files for submission. We feel that these two modes are most efficient for the variety of processes in place across section modalities for recording and uploading speeches.

Finally, in addition to assessing Skills 1.1. and 1.2, the CAAC also piloted the rubrics for Skills 2.1 and 2.2. Given our rubric pilot findings, the CAAC will need to spend more time norming on rubric Skill 2.1, specifically the evaluative element of listener relevance in the introduction. Since this score should match the score from rubric Skill 1.1 evaluative element listener relevance link (Skill 1.1=1.80 vs. Skill 2.1=1.45), there is clearly a disconnect.

Comments

Other comments?

Undoubtedly, our Skills 1.1. and 1.2 assessment sample size was quite small. For the Blackboard Outcomes platform pilot, the goal was to assign each rater no more than two artifacts as we tested access to and viability of artifacts as well as user-friendliness of the rubrics.

Overall, the pilot of Blackboard Outcomes went smoothly. There were a few issues to troubleshoot during the process, specifically accessing videos uploaded in Kaltura. However, the Blackboard team did a great job quickly generating a fix for the issue. Moving forward, the use of Blackboard Outcomes will significantly streamline the assessment activities for this CAAC, and we look forward to collecting a more robust sample size for our future assessment.

END OF REPORT