Fall 2018
Core Curriculum Assessment Report

of

Values

from the

Flex: Communication - Spoken and Interdisciplinary
Core Curricular Area

submitted by

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on behalf of the

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

Methods

How was student work (artifacts) collected for assessment?

Blackboard Outcomes was used to randomly select 50 ACOM 1300 student artifacts from the 2017-18 academic year. There were 49 viable artifacts identified from the 2017-18 academic year.

What type of artifacts were collected?

Informative Service Speech videos

How were the artifacts sampled for assessment?

Using a stratified random sampling technique, 50 (18.5%) video artifacts from ACOM 1300 sections were randomly selected from the two modes of course offerings from the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters. Of those artifacts selected, 30 (60%) represented face-to-face classes, and 20 (40%) represented the online format. Three face-to-face classes did not have artifacts included to pull from for the sample.

However, only 49 of the artifacts were viable for the first values rubric, and only 41 for the second values rubric.

How were the artifacts scored?

Each artifact was scored on two rubrics by a single rater, after inter-rater reliability was established in a norming session.

How was reliability in scoring determined and ensured?

After retooling rubrics to meet the Core Council expectation of a 4 benchmark, the members ofthe CAAC committee participated in norming activities. The norming process included scoring past course artifacts (Informative Service Speech videos) and talking through individual

evaluative elements as a group. Throughout the process, rubric value descriptions were clarified to provide clearer differentiation between scores.

Reflection

In what areas are students doing well?

The CAAC committee interpreted a 4 as "advanced," a 3 as "proficient," a 2 as "novice," 1 as "not met," and 0 as "absent/not scorable."

Core Value 1:
Students will assess the ethical implications of communication in a variety of contexts.   For core value 1, each artifact was assessed on two things. The first was the identification of an ethical implication, measuring how well a student identified and accurately defined in their own words an appropriate ethical implication, and by so doing illustrated a competent understanding of communication. Then they were assessed on how well they provided support for this ethical implication, by using a complete oral citation that included the author, date, and type of the source to support the definition of the ethical implication.

The percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on components of identification of an ethical implication was 71.4% (35/49) and support for the ethical implication was 57.1% (28/49). The average means for the two variables ranged from 2.53 to 2.65. These means differed somewhat for face-to-face and online students.

Section_Type	Support	Identification
Face-to-face		
Mean	2.8000	2.6333
N	30	30
Std. Deviation	.92476	.55605
Online		
Mean	2.1053	2.6842
N	19	19
Std. Deviation	1.37011	1.15723
Total		
Mean	2.5306	2.6531
N	49	49
Std. Deviation	1.15654	.83044

Using an independent samples t-test, there was no significant difference between face-to-face (M=2.63) and online (M=2.68) students on the identification variable, t (23.339, adjusted for unequal variances) = -.179, p = .859. The overall mean of 2.6531 tells us that students are mostly proficient in identifying ethical implications found in the course's Survival Guide, with the majority of the students proficient or advanced in identifying an appropriate ethical implication for application. This means that students are doing a good job overall identifying what ethical implications are.

There was almost a significant difference found between face-to-face (M=2.8) and online (M=2.1) student means on the support variable, t (28.417, adjusted for unequal variances) = 1.947, p = .061. The overall mean of 2.5306 tell us that students are providing oral citations for their ethical implications, with the majority scoring at the proficient and advanced levels.

Core Value 2:
Students will understand the power of communication to influence a community positively or negatively. For core value 2, each artifact was assessed on how well a student's application of the ethical implication was clear and supported explicitly with relevant examples from the service story they told. In order to get a "4" on this item, student examples had to be clearly explained in relation to the ethical implication and explicitly focused on explaining how communication fosters community change.

The percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher on components of application of an ethical implication was 51.3% (21/41). Using an independent samples t-test, there was no significant difference between face-to-face (M=2.5) and online (M=2.33) students on the identification variable, t (18.948, adjusted for unequal variances) = .462, p = .650. The majority of the students are scoring at the proficient or advanced levels.

What areas need attention to improve student outcomes?

Core Value 1:
Some students are struggling to clearly communicate the meaning of the ethical implications they are discussing in their speech. The value rubric requires students to put the definition into their own words in order to earn a '4' on the value rubric. A common reason that students might struggle in this area is that students often define the implication based on their own understanding instead of its true meaning.

Additionally, some students still struggle to provide a clear oral citation for the ethical implications they are discussing in their speech. Specifically, students are leaving out one or two of the three required components for a full oral citation: author, date, and type of source. Some

common reasons that students might fail to clearly cite the source for their identified ethical implication include: (1) students simply forget and/or (2) the ethical implication portion of the speech is rushed because students are running out of time and/or losing resolve in the speech.

Core Value 2:
The overall mean of 2.4390 tells us that students overall have not yet reached proficiency when supporting their claims with clear examples from their service experiences and transferring their communication knowledge and experiences to a larger community context.

Students seem to run out of time in their speeches to get this done extremely well. Since this happens at the end of their outline in the body of their speeches, they need to be reminded of the importance of this, in terms of the overall purpose of the assignment.

Continuous Improvement

What changes in the curricular area and/or courses will be made to improve student learning?

The ACOM 1300 program is committed to the continuous improvement process and thus faculty who teach in the program meet monthly to review the curriculum, norm assignment grading, and discuss ideas for activities that help students learn key concepts and skills.

Identification:
Many students confuse ethical implications from the course Survival Guide for communication concepts from the textbook. They tend to overlook that they should be examining one concept AND one ethical implication in main point three. The pattern of the post-service reflection worksheets and the order of main points/sub-points could be contributing to this confusion of concepts and ethical implications. We need to look at this pattern to see if we could make it clearer to students for future semesters.

Students also struggle to identify and paraphrase ethical implications found in the course's Survival Guide. To help push students to build their ability to synthesize supporting material for ethical implication definitions in the speech, we will also work on emphasizing the skill of paraphrasing supporting material as opposed to directly quoting definitions. This skill is particularly important in a public speaking context as the overuse of direct quotations from sources diminishes not only the voice of the speaker but also the fluency of the speech. We will need to continue to explore how we're framing the use of supporting material, as well as the activities we have in place, in order to better facilitate student learning in this area. As instructors, we need to clearly communicate the expectation of paraphrasing both orally and in our written assignments.

Support:
Students' oral citations were often missing key required elements: author, date, and/or type of source. In our current political climate, the importance of transparent source support is paramount. Moving forward, we will need to be more intentional in providing explicit justifications, as well as activities related to building and practicing oral citations in a public speaking context.

Power of communication to influence:
To support the application of ethical implications to their service experience, we should

consider requiring a service learning journal reflection assignment that focuses on helping students build their story. The assignment could offer prompts that facilitate student reflection on how their communication during their service experiences worked to co-create a better society. We could then revise the Post-service Reflection assignment as well as the Informative Service Speech Outline template to emphasize these connections.

We also need to do a better job making sure the students use the same ethical implication in their identification and support steps, that they use in the application step. These were not always the same, with students not always making the connections between the service story and the ethical implication they defined. We can be more intentional during peer-to-peer outline workshops and have students explicitly check the relationship between the ethical implication and application step.

What changes in the curricular area and/or courses will be made in the assessment process (i.e. different artifacts, common assignments, different time in the semester to collect artifacts, etc.)?

This is the third time ACOM 1300 has used Blackboard Outcomes for Core assessment. Overall, we continue to find the platform extremely useful. We no longer have to worry about collecting and housing artifacts each semester. The ease of using a single attempt dropbox for artifact collection has dramatically improved the assessment process by both convenience and consistency.

This year we made the choice to increase the number of artifacts rated, in order to be able to compare students' scores from face-to-face and online sections. Because of the time commitment, in order to have more artifacts rated, we had to eliminate the second rater per artifact due to the amount of time it takes to do the reviews. Although we normed the rubric together, we realize there would be value in adding a 2nd reviewer per artifact, but without money to pay the evaluators, some of which are adjuncts, we do not see a way to do this differently.

We did not find any statistically significant differences between online and face-to-face students, but we recommend continuing to pull a large enough sample in the future to be able to keep checking for these differences.

Feedback

What changes are recommended for Core assessment?

We would like to see an emphasis on a benchmark of 2 (novice) for Core classes.

The perception that a student leaving a core class has anything but a novice knowledge base and skill set is dangerously and unfairly overselling what most core curriculum is realistically able to achieve in 16 weeks. It also more accurately communicates the importance of major courses continuing to build these respective knowledge and skill sets as students progress in their undergraduate curriculum. There is a common misconception that because students have taken a core class that they are "proficient" or "advanced" in their understanding when, in actuality, they have a foundation of the basics that need continuous practice and refinement. For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Core Council to consider clearly communicating that a 2 (novice) benchmark is an appropriate score for a core class.

Comments

Other comments?

There were slight discrepancies in the percentages in the tables (pie charts), than from what we found. For example, on value 2, we found 21/41 that were at the proficient/advanced levels, which would be 51.2% but the pie chart said 53.9% were at these levels. We double-checked our numbers entered, and can't figure out what is causing the discrepancy. This was true for both values 1 & 2.

END OF REPORT