

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): **Communication**

Department: **Communication**

Degree or Certificate Level: **M.A.**

College/School: **College of Arts and Sciences**

Date (Month/Year): **September 2022**

Assessment Contact: **Dan Kozlowski**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **2022**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **2022**

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? **No**

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

In the fall of 2020, our Department implemented a curricular revision. We decided to assess all program learning outcomes (PLOs) this year.

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

PLO 2: Students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

PLO 4: Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

PLO 5: Students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement.

PLO 6: Students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

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

Each students' culminating project (thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam) along with their responses during the oral defense of their projects served as the artifacts used to assess our PLOs.

Additionally, in May 2022, all M.A. students in our program who had completed the three new required courses for the program, as per the aforementioned recent curricular revision, were sent a survey gathering information about their perceptions of their learning across the course learning outcomes for those three courses.

All of the courses required for our program are offered in-person. However, given COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, in the 2020-2021 academic year, students had the option to attend class virtually.

The Madrid campus does not have a graduate program, so they are not included in the learning assessment for the M.A. program.

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 document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

DIRECT ASSESSMENT DATA

Culminating projects (thesis, applied project, or comprehensive exam) and oral defenses for each graduating student were evaluated using the rubrics from our assessment plan (see assessment plan attached). All three committee members for each student jointly evaluated the culminating projects and oral defenses after a student's defense.

Committees submitted a single assessment of each student's project and defense to the graduate program coordinator. Six students completed applied projects, theses, or comprehensive exams by the close of the Spring 2022 semester. Five committees completed assessment rubrics.

PERCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT DATA was collected through a survey of all M.A. students who had completed the required courses in the revised curriculum over the past two years. Students rated their confidence in accomplishing the course learning outcomes for the three required courses in our revised curriculum, each of which support different PLOs. Students also offered qualitative feedback about their learning. Eight out of fifteen students completed the survey.

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)?

DIRECT ASSESSMENT DATA

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

PLO 2: Students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

PLO 4: Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

PLO 5: Students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement.

PLO 6: Students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

4 = Capstone

3-2 = Milestone

1 = Benchmark

Student	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 5	PLO 6
1	1	1	2	2	2	1
2	3	2	3	3	3	3
3	3	2	2	4	3	3
4	3	4	4	3	N/A	3
5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Average	2.8	2.6	3	3.2	3	2.8

PERCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT DATA

Please see attached sheets for perceptual assessment data collected from a survey of students who had completed required courses in the revised curriculum over the past two years. Students rated their confidence in accomplishing the course learning outcomes for the three required classes in our revised curriculum, each of which support different PLOs (noted on spreadsheet).

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

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

DIRECT ASSESSMENT DATA

The direct assessment data collected this year suggests students' capstone projects (theses, applied projects, and comprehensive exams) are, overall, appropriate artifacts for assessment. Students' final capstone projects appear to demonstrate the knowledge they acquired in the program with regard to the PLOs, with the exception of PLO 5 (Students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement). This is consistent with previous assessments. Students who complete a thesis or applied project that does not have a focus squarely focused on theories and practice of social justice and civic engagement do not have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in this area with their final capstone projects.

The data suggests that, taken collectively, students demonstrate learning at the advanced intermediate level. This is consistent with past assessment data collected prior to our curricular revision. However, the learning experience of the students in the most recent graduating cohort is distinctive, given COVID-19 circumstances. Collecting assessment data from students in future cohorts will be important and informative for interpreting direct assessment data.

PERCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT DATA

The data collected from a survey of the M.A. students who had completed the required courses in the revised curriculum over the past two years was informative. Students rated their confidence in accomplishing the course learning outcomes for the three required classes in our revised curriculum, each of which support different PLOs. For all but three course learning outcomes, the average confidence that students reported was between 1.44 and 2.5 (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1=Very Confident).

The three course learning outcomes for which averages were lower were in three learning outcomes for CMM 5801 Quantitative Research Methods for Communication:

Knowledgeably and confidently carry out research projects using the scientific method ($m = 3$).

Use descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze a basic quantitative data set ($m = 3.25$).

Determine appropriate statistical tests for analysis of quantitative data ($m = 3.63$).

These three learning outcomes are associated with PLO2: Students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

In interpreting these findings, it is valuable to note that scholars in Communication develop skills to conduct and evaluate communication research from various paradigmatic leanings; the social scientific paradigm need not be the method of research that students practice in the second year of their MA study. That students, after taking the required foundational classes are, on average, very confident or fairly confident with their ability to accomplish most of the course learning objectives related to PLO2 is affirming. That our students, many of whom enter our program with the intention of conducting interpretive and/or critical communication research, on average reported that they were slightly or somewhat confident in their skills regarding social scientific research after completing one foundational course, is also encouraging. Students appear to be learning and developing skills in their courses that support their achievement of the PLOs.

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?

These assessment results were collected in late spring/early summer of 2022. They will be shared with the department's Graduate Committee and faculty this academic year. We will discuss the results at a faculty meeting.

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.

The Graduate Committee will be asked to take up the question of how PLO5 might be better assessed, given that theses and applied projects that do not have an emphasis on theories and practice of social justice and civic engagement do not offer students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning in this area.

Our Department implemented a revised graduate curriculum in fall of 2020. As such, we have direct assessment data for one cohort of students, and perceptual data from two cohorts of students who have completed the required courses since the curricular revision. While this data is informative, it is a small amount of data collected during a uniquely challenging time for graduate study. Given the findings from the assessment were generally positive, no additional changes at this time seem prudent. We plan to collect assessment data for all PLOs for the next year before considering any changes to curriculum.

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?

We revised our curriculum and implemented curricular changes in the fall of 2020 as a result of assessment findings.

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

We are presently assessing these changes, as described in this report.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

This is the first assessment we have conducted since revising and implementing a new M.A. curriculum in the fall of 2020.

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

After gathering assessment data from students graduating in Spring 2023, we will have additional information to review the effects of the curricular changes on learning outcomes and accordingly make needed adjustments to our curriculum.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Graduate Program Rubrics

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
	3	2	
<p>Demonstrates a masterful understanding of context, audience and purpose. Uses quality, relevant and compelling content, including rigorous, credible sources to illustrate mastery of the subject. Uses graceful and concise language that conveys meaning to the reader/viewer/listener.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a highly competent understanding of context, audience and purpose. Uses appropriate, relevant and compelling content, including the use of quality, credible sources to illustrate in-depth understanding of the subject. Uses graceful and concise language that conveys meaning to the reader/viewer/listener.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience and purpose. Uses appropriate and relevant content and credible sources to illustrate a proficient understanding of the subject. Demonstrates the use of fluent and concise language that conveys meaning to the reader/viewer/listener.</p>	<p>Demonstrates consideration of context, audience and purpose. Uses appropriate, relevant and compelling content to explore ideas. Consistently uses relevant sources to support ideas and uses clear and concise language that conveys meaning to the reader/viewer/listener.</p>

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
	3	2	
<p>Gives a sophisticated summarization of a theory that displays a nuanced understanding of the concepts and assumptions of the theory and its connection to research in the field. Applies a theory to broader contexts in unique ways that yield new knowledge and contributions. Shows expert understanding of a theory's implications and limitations and possibilities for expanding or enriching the field.</p>	<p>Gives a thoughtful summarization of a theory that displays an understanding of the concepts and assumptions of the theory and its connection to research in the field. Recognizes implications of theory in a way that articulates possibilities for differing contexts and applications of the theory.</p>	<p>Gives an adequate summarization of a theory that displays a basic understanding of the concepts and assumptions of the theory and its connection to research in the field. Chooses appropriate, relevant examples to demonstrate a theory's applicability and explains the relationship between theory and examples, with more analysis.</p>	<p>Gives a summarization of a theory with some understanding of how it relates to research in the field. Locates and explains relationships between theory and relevant examples.</p>

PLO 5: Students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement.

Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
	3	2	
<p>Gives a sophisticated summarization of social justice and civic engagement that displays a nuanced understanding of how they relate to communication scholarship and practice. Analyzes both broad and specific communicative practices in unique ways that yield new ways of thinking about just societies. Shows expert understanding of the principles of social justice and civic engagement and can imagine novel possibilities for expanding or enriching the world.</p>	<p>Gives a thoughtful summarization of social justice and civic engagement that displays an understanding of how they relate to communication scholarship and practice. Recognizes the various ways communicative practices contribute to and detract from justice in society, in a way that articulates possibilities for strategic civic engagement.</p>	<p>Gives an adequate summarization of social justice and civic engagement that displays a basic understanding of how they relate to communication scholarship and practice. Chooses appropriate, relevant examples to explain social justice and injustice and explains the relationship between communication and civic engagement.</p>	<p>Gives a summarization of social justice and civic engagement, with some understanding of how they relate to communication scholarship and practice.</p>

PLO 6: Students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
	3	2	
<p>Gives a sophisticated summarization of communication ethics that displays a nuanced understanding of ethical principles and their application. Applies (and critiques) ethical principles to broader contexts in unique ways that yield novel opportunities for ethical action. Shows an expert understanding of ethics, action, and possibilities for expanding or enriching human communication.</p>	<p>Gives a thoughtful summarization of communication ethics that displays an understanding of ethical principles and their application. Articulates (and critiques) ethical principles and their applications across differing contexts.</p>	<p>Gives an adequate summarization of communication ethics that displays a basic understanding of the ethical principles and their application. Chooses appropriate, relevant examples to demonstrate ethical principles and explains how they play out, in context.</p>	<p>Gives a summarization of communication ethics with some understanding of ethical principles and their application.</p>

**Department of Communication M.A. Program
Perceptual Assessment Data - 2022**

**CMM 5000 Graduate Study of Communication
Associated Program Learning Outcomes**

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

PLO 2: Students will evaluate communication research.

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

PLO 4: Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

Please rate your confidence in your ability to accomplish each of the following objectives.

Scale: 1 to 5; 1=Very Confident

#	Course Learning Outcome	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
1	Recognize paradigmatic beliefs and how they dictate what counts as knowledge and research.	1	4	2.25	0.83	0.69	8
2	Explain the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of the post-positivist, critical, rhetorical, and interpretive/naturalistic paradigms.	1	4	2.38	0.99	0.98	8
3	Develop an understanding of your identity, the identities of others, and how that informs the research and learning process.	1	3	1.5	0.71	0.5	8
4	Read, understand, and translate communication literature.	1	3	1.75	0.66	0.44	8
5	Develop reasoned and persuasive arguments for your own intellectual ideas.	1	4	1.88	0.93	0.86	8
6	Understand and apply communication theories to address practical problems.	1	3	2	0.71	0.5	8
7	Understand and apply general principles for effective scholarly writing.	1	4	2.13	0.93	0.86	8

#	Question	Very confident		Fairly confident		Somewhat confident		Slightly confident		Not confident		Total
1	Recognize paradigmatic beliefs and how they dictate what counts as knowledge and research.	12.50%	1	62.50%	5	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
2	Explain the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of the post-positivist, critical, rhetorical, and interpretive/naturalistic paradigms.	25.00%	2	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
3	Develop an understanding of your identity, the identities of others, and how that informs the research and learning process.	62.50%	5	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8
4	Read, understand, and translate communication literature.	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8
5	Develop reasoned and persuasive arguments for your own intellectual ideas.	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
6	Understand and apply communication theories to address practical problems.	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8
7	Understand and apply general principles for effective scholarly writing.	25.00%	2	50.00%	4	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8

CMM 5801 Quantitative Research Methods for Communication

Associated Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

PLO 2: Students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

PLO 6: Students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

Please rate your confidence in your ability to accomplish each of the following objectives.

Scale: 1 to 5; 1=Very Confident

#	Learning Outcome	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
1	Describe and explain the primary social scientific research methods common in communication professions and scholarship.	1	4	2.25	1.09	1.19	8
2	Make informed decisions about which method of research inquiry would be best suited for addressing a particular research question or hypothesis.	1	3	2.13	0.78	0.61	8
3	Write a scholarly review of literature that provides an effective foundation for a research inquiry.	1	3	2.13	0.78	0.61	8
4	Develop a social scientific research proposal appropriate for investigating a research question or examining a hypothesis.	1	4	2.25	0.97	0.94	8
5	Understand, appreciate and exercise sound ethical, culturally aware, and socially just research practices.	1	3	1.63	0.7	0.48	8
6	Understand the appropriate criteria for evaluating social scientific communication research and apply such criteria to assess the strength of a research argument.	1	5	2.38	1.32	1.73	8

#	Learning Outcome	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
7	Knowledgeably and confidently carry out research projects using the scientific method.	1	5	3	1.41	2	8
8	Use descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze a basic quantitative data set.	1	5	3.25	1.39	1.94	8
9	Determine appropriate statistical tests for analysis of quantitative data.	1	5	3.63	1.41	1.98	8

#	Learning Outcome	Very confident	Fairly confident	Somewhat	Slightly confident	Not confident	Total					
1	Describe and explain the primary social scientific research methods common in communication professions and scholarship.	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
2	Make informed decisions about which method of research inquiry would be best suited for addressing a particular research question or hypothesis.	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8
3	Write a scholarly review of literature that provides an effective foundation for a research inquiry.	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8
4	Develop a social scientific research proposal appropriate for investigating a research question or examining a hypothesis.	25.00%	2	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
5	Understand, appreciate and exercise sound ethical, culturally aware, and socially just research practices.	50.00%	4	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	8

#	Learning Outcome	Very confident	Fairly confident	Somewhat	Slightly confident	Not confident	Total
6	Understand the appropriate criteria for evaluating social scientific communication research and apply such criteria to assess the strength of a research argument.	25.00% 2	50.00% 4	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	8
7	Knowledgeably and confidently carry out research projects using the scientific method.	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	8
8	Use descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze a basic quantitative data set.	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	8
9	Determine appropriate statistical tests for analysis of quantitative data.	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	37.50% 3	8

CMM 5802 Qualitative Inquiry for Communication and Social Justice

Associated Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1: Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

PLO 2: Students will conduct and evaluate communication research.

PLO 3: Students will apply communication theories to address problems in a broader context.

PLO 4: Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

PLO 5: Students will apply theories and/or practices of social justice and civic engagement.

PLO 6: Students will analyze the ethical implications of communication and apply ethical principles.

Please rate your confidence in your ability to accomplish each of the following objectives.

Scale: 1 to 5; 1=Very Confident

#	Learning Outcome	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
1	Collaboratively design projects and navigate relationships with research partners.	1	4	2.25	1.09	1.19	8
2	Assess and imagine the possibilities and necessities of justice in a context.	1	2	1.44	0.5	0.25	9
3	Critique and perform qualitative research from at least one of the following social justice traditions: critical, cultural, decolonial, health/wellbeing, Catholic, Jesuit, community-based, participatory, communication ethics, and equity.	1	4	2.63	1.11	1.23	8
4	Engage in ethnographic observation and take rigorous field notes.	1	4	2.5	1.22	1.5	8
5	Design and implement interviews and focus groups or arts-based facilitations.	1	5	2.38	1.41	1.98	8
6	Analyze qualitative data to make claims.	1	5	2.63	1.65	2.73	8
7	Represent ideas to multiple audiences (scholarly and non-scholarly).	1	4	1.88	0.93	0.86	8

#	Learning Outcome	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance	Count
8	Write critically and reflexively positioning the personal and political.	1	4	2.5	1.32	1.75	8
9	Engage in research that generates social and intellectual tools for action oriented with a social justice tradition.	1	4	2	1.22	1.5	8

#	Learning Outcome	Very confident		Fairly confident		Somewhat confident		Slightly confident		Not confident		Total
1	Collaboratively design projects and navigate relationships with research partners.	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
2	Assess and imagine the possibilities and necessities of justice in a context.	55.56%	5	44.44%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9
3	Critique and perform qualitative research from at least one of the following social justice traditions: critical, cultural, decolonial, health/wellbeing, Catholic, Jesuit, community-based, participatory, communication ethics, and equity.	12.50%	1	50.00%	4	0.00%	0	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	8
4	Engage in ethnographic observation and take rigorous field notes.	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	8
5	Design and implement interviews and focus groups or arts-based facilitations.	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	8
6	Analyze qualitative data to make claims.	37.50%	3	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	25.00%	2	8
7	Represent ideas to multiple audiences (scholarly and non-scholarly).	37.50%	3	50.00%	4	0.00%	0	12.50%	1	0.00%	0	8
8	Write critically and reflexively positioning the personal and political.	37.50%	3	12.50%	1	12.50%	1	37.50%	3	0.00%	0	8
9	Engage in research that generates social and intellectual tools for action oriented with a social justice tradition.	50.00%	4	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	25.00%	2	0.00%	0	8