Communication Studies Program Assessment Report
2018-2019

Contents

I.   Communication Studies Program Mission and Educational Objectives

A. *Program Mission*

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.

B. *Mission Alignment*

The Communication Studies degree typically culminates in an externship, offering students a chance to practice their target career with a current professional. Prior to that hands-on experience, Communication courses offer a variety of open-ended projects and opportunities to engage with professional or public communities as objects of study for research (e.g. COM 326: Communication Research) or practice (e.g. COM 425/426: Mediation and Mediation Practicum).

As every student's 36-credit focused sequence (see below) creates a unique degree program, innovation is a regular feature of the curriculum – students' programs of study vary as much as the students themselves. AY 2018 saw the development of a new introductory-level Communication technologies course (COM 135) meant to support other Communication Studies courses and Business/Marketing courses many students take in their focused sequence. This course will be piloted in AY 2019, with initial artifacts collected for a longitudinal assessment across technology-oriented courses addressing COM PSLO 5.

C. *Additional Information*

The Communication Studies program fills a niche in the Human and Professional Communication world by offering students the opportunity to design a major particular to their career goals. All students are required to complete 36 credit hours in courses of their choosing, forming a Focused Sequence tailored to their individual professional goals. These courses may come from within the Communication department, but many students enroll in courses from Business, CSET, and Psychology to gain specific technical expertises in addition to the interpersonal communication knowledge and skill they gain in a Communication Studies program.

The diversity of our students' career goals results in a graduate body that does not conform to a single mold. Graduates have pursued careers in law enforcement, education, management and marketing, while others have moved on to Communication-focused graduate programs. Each student is guided by their advisor to craft their focused sequence. The student to faculty ratio in our program (69:13 across AY 2018, 48:13 in Fall 2018, Week 4) allows students to work with an advisor with some expertise in their career goal.

Focused Sequence information can be found in II. F. Learning Experiences.

II.   Program Description and History

The Communication Studies program fills a niche in Communication programs nationally. Rather than focus on content production within a specific medium (e.g. television or radio broadcast) or on the dynamics of interpersonal communication, the Communication Studies B. S. gives students the flexibility to craft their own program of study. Students do gain experience in content production through courses like COM 248: Digital Media Production and COM 309: Communication Technology in Use, and they do gain experience in interpersonal communication through OIT's general education requirements and courses like COM 205: Intercultural Communication and COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution. However, these experiences are the foundations for students to develop their specific professional interests.

III.   Program History: AY 2014 to Present

The Communication Studies program was revised and approved by the CPC in Winter 2014. All new courses within the major have been rolled out, but many courses in the major are offered once per year or once per two years. As a result, initial PSLO data has not been collected in many of these courses. Within the same department, the Professional Writing program was approved in Winter of 2017 and its first courses launched in Winter 2018. While it is a distinct program from Communication Studies, the two share many faculty and some courses. As this report discusses in section V: Assessment Cycle of Student Learning Outcomes, the PSLO assessment cycle is undergoing active revision to more efficiently assess these programs.

A. Program Locations

All Communication Studies students are located on the Klamath Falls campus, but the department is developing hybrid and online offerings to make the major more appealing to students in other locations. Communication faculty are present on the Klamath Falls campus (10), the Portland-Metro campus (2) and online (1).

The program serves primarily Communication Studies majors, but also serves students in other fields interested in communication-related course work to complement their chosen major.

B. Enrollment and Retention Trends

According to FAST data, there were 44 total Communication Studies majors in Fall 2018, including 11 first year students, 8 sophomores, 6 juniors and 14 seniors. 7 additional students joined the major during AY 2018.

	AY 2016	AY 2017	AY 2018
Total Students	56	46	51
Graduated at End of Year	8	11	14
Retained from Previous Year	29	23	27

Table 1: Communication Studies B. S. Enrollment and Retention

Retention numbers are presented above by class standing and only count students persisting from year to year. As the Communication Studies program has many students who transfer in from

Community College programs or from other programs at OIT, common retention data focused on first-time freshmen would not accurately describe our retention figures.

C. *Program Graduates*

In AY 2018, 14 students graduated with a Communication Studies B. S. One student also majored in Population Health Management, and another majored in Management (Small Business Option).

D. *Industry Relationships*

The Communication department as a whole does not maintain industry relationships beyond its advisory board, which includes school board members, Jeld-Wen employees and members of the community.

During AY 2018, the Communication department continued its membership in the MadCap Scholar Program, which grants access to the professional MadCap Flare suite of technical writing applications for students (normally $1,799 per license).

E. *Learning Experiences*

In April of 2019, six students presented papers at the Northwest Communication Association's annual conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. These students experienced an academic conference in its entirety, networking with faculty from colleges and universities around the Pacific and Inland Northwest. Their work was presented at the same level as graduate students and faculty.

F. *Program Changes*

The Communication Studies B. S. has no programmatic changes from AY 2017 to AY 2018 due to formal assessment data. Some programmatic changes are occurring due to changes in the faculty and student bodies, but the results will not be known until AY 2018 or AY 2019.

Due to informal focus-group–style data (focused discussion in department and curriculum group meetings) regarding student preparedness to use technology relevant to communication professions (COM PSLO 5), the Communication department designed a new course focused on advanced tools in professional communication software (e.g. Apache OpenOffice or Microsoft Office). This class will be piloted in AY 2019.

Additionally, the assessment coordinator worked individually with faculty through AY 2018 to chart expected development along COM PSLO 5 to begin coordinating the activities of several classes that had previously been offered irregularly and without formal oversight. Early results of that coordination will be discussed in the AY 2019 assessment report.

IV.   Program Education Objectives and Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

A. *Program Education Objectives*

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

1. Apply appropriate communication skills across settings, purposes, and audiences.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and application.

3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well-founded perspectives related to the students' emphases.
4. Build and maintain healthy and effective relationships.
5. Use technology to communicate effectively in various settings and contexts.
6. Demonstrate appropriate and professional ethical behavior.

B. 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. Understand 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. Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges

C. Origin and External Validation
The program objectives are reviewed annually by the department and at each advisory board meeting. They are implicitly discussed at each CSAC (Communication Studies Advisory Committee) meeting, occurring twice per academic term, as individual students' programs of study are reviewed.

The Communication department has not yet begun external validation of these outcomes nor assessment of student proficiency after graduation. In AY 2019, the department will pilot an informal self-assessment of program graduates, hopefully creating a regular graduate assessment routine beginning in AY 2020.

V.   Curriculum Map
The AY 2017 assessment report concluded that the existing curriculum map's focus on individual courses for particular PSLOs and the resulting assessment cycle was suboptimal for a small program with such rapidly changing programs of study (i.e. focused sequences). As a result, a fuzzy ISM analysis (Singh & Garg, 2007) was conducted on courses taught during AY 2018 to begin remapping the curriculum according to faculty perceptions of where each PSLO was emphasized. This mapping process is intended to be recalibrated academic each year. Most courses are taught by the same faculty member or small group of faculty members each year, likely resulting in minimal change in the map over time, but it is believed that this continual recalibration of our map will improve the data received in our annual assessment cycle.
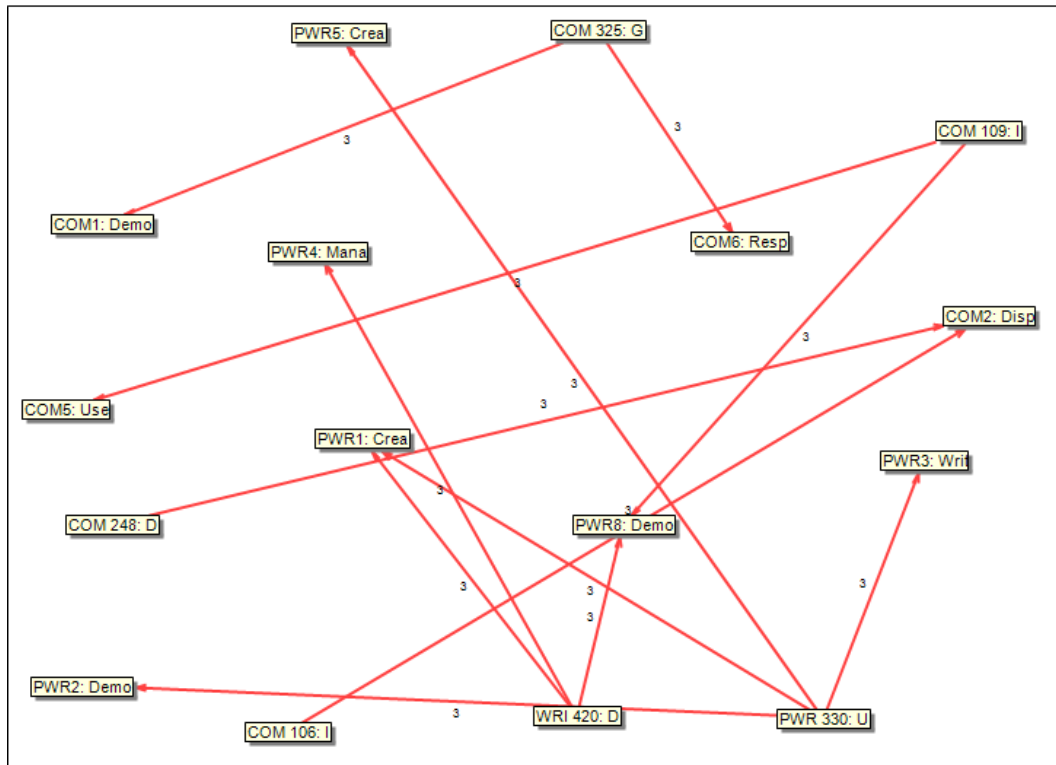
Figure 1: MICMAC Direct Influence Graph, Strongest Influences Only (cf. Godet & Bourse, 2010)

Figure 1 above shows the courses and PSLOs[1] with the most direct, dependent connections to each other – what we might consider the core of our program. Figure 2 below, while more difficult to read, shows the degree of connection between courses and PSLOs with some influence on each other. These maps were generated using the LIPSOR MICMAC method developed by Godet and Bourse (2010). Arrow-heads on lines indicate the direction of influence.

This map was developed by asking each faculty member teaching an in-major course during AY 2018 to rate the importance of each PSLO in determining a student's final grade. Ratings were ranked nominally as Necessary, Important, Tangential or Not Assessed. In the LIPSOR method, impactors are rated on a scale from 3 (strong influence) to 0 (no influence) on other variables, and the software then uses these ratings to determine the structural relationships between variables based on those impacts. In our map, if demonstration of a PSLO had a definite impact on a student's grade (the Necessary rating), this was ranked as a 3. Important ratings were ranked as 2, Tangential as 1 and Not Assessed as 0. Because faculty in the Communication department often rotate courses

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[1] Maps include both COM and PWR prefixes. Communication and Professional Writing course sequences have several overlapping courses, and department faculty teach in both areas. Additionally, Communication and Professional Writing have several similar PSLOs. Rather than attempt to extricate Communication-specific data from the complete set, this report and the Professional Writing report will present shared curriculum mapping data.
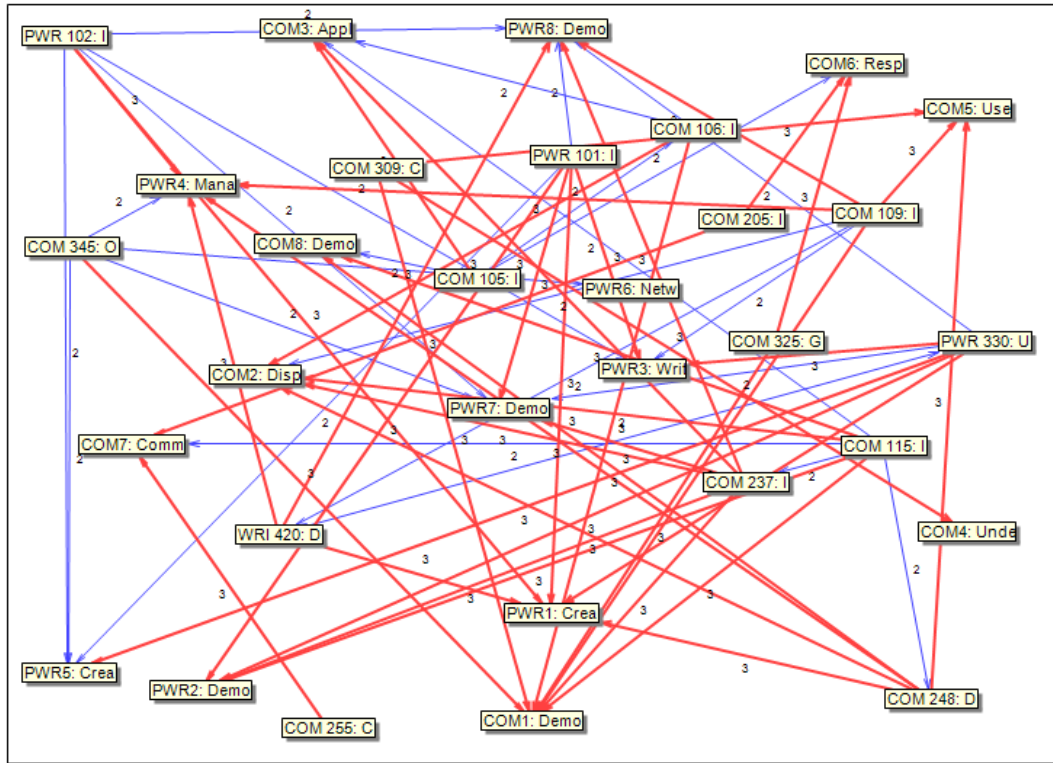
Figure 2: MICMAC Direct Influence Graph, Strongest and Relatively Strong Influences Only (cf. Godet & Bourse, 2010)

between each other, it is assumed that their subjective evaluations need no additional external validation (cf. Buyserie, Macklin, Frye, & Ericsson, 2019, forthcoming).

Because only one round of responses has been collected and because not all Communication courses are offered in a single academic year, the map is not yet complete. In examining impactors only, a preliminary revised curriculum map would look as follows. Checkmarks indicate a course with a Relatively Strong or Strong influence on a student's PSLO development. The AY 2019 assessment report will have gathered sufficient data to indicate expected degrees of mastery in each PSLO and observed student performance in almost all Communication courses.

Course	COM 1 Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking	COM 2 Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication	COM 3 Apply communication theories	COM 4 Understand opportunities in the field of communication	COM 5 Use current technology related to the communication field	COM 6 Respond effectively to cultural communication differences	COM 7 Communicate ethically	COM 8 Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges
COM 104: Introduction to Communication	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 105: Introduction to Communication Theory						✓		
COM 106: Introduction to Communication Research		✓			✓			
COM 109: Introduction to Communication Technology	✓				✓			
COM 115: Introduction to Mass Communication	✓	✓					✓	✓
COM 205: Intercultural Communication						✓	✓	
COM 216: Essentials of Grammar and Punctuation	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 225: Interpersonal Communication	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 237: Introduction to Visual Communication	✓	✓						
COM 248: Digital Media Production		✓			✓			✓
COM 255: Communication Ethics							✓	
COM 276: Democracy and Media	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 301: Rhetorical Theory and Application	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 305: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 309: Communication Technology in Use	✓		✓	✓				
COM 325: Gender and Communication	✓					✓		
COM 326: Communication Research	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 345: Organizational Communication I	✓							
COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	*Insufficient rating data*							

COM 358: Communication and the Law	Insufficient rating data		
COM 424: Capstone	Insufficient rating data		
JOUR 211: Publication / Student Newspaper	Insufficient rating data		
SPE 314: Argumentation	Insufficient rating data		

Table 2: Preliminary Curriculum Map by PSLO and Course

VI. Assessment Cycle of Student Learning Outcomes

Along with recalibrating the curriculum map each year, the Communication department will collect artifacts across most or all of its courses offered, with each faculty member rating a sample of them on all PSLOs. This method follows a model put forth by Buyserie et al. (2019, in press). It assumes that all faculty in a program can act as expert readers of student work produced in that program. While the method loses some finer definition of individual students' performances in each artifact, it does allow for wide-spread data collection and comparison within an individual program.

The previous assessment cycle is noted below. For continuity's sake, this report will offer extra discussion of the PSLOs intended for assessment this year: PSLO 6, 7 and 8.

Learning Outcomes	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20
PSLO 1: Critical Thinking				●		●
PSLO 2: Competence in Comm	●		●			
PLSO 3: Communication Theory			●	●		
PSLO 4: Opportunities in Field			●			
PSLO 5: Use of Technology	●					
PSLO 6: Cultural Communication		●			●	
PSLO 7: Ethics		●			●	
PSLO 8: Group Communication		●[2]			●	

Table 3: Communication Studies Assessment Cycle prior to AY 2018

VII. Summary of 2018-2019 Assessment Activities

The Communication Studies faculty participated in formal assessment of the Ethical Reasoning Essential Studies Learning Outcome (ESLO ER). Direct and indirect assessments of PSLO 6 (Cultural Communication), PSLO 7 (Communication Ethics) and PSLO 8 (Group Communication), the scheduled PSLOs for this cycle, are discussed below.

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[2] A combination of a relatively low number of upper-division Communication Students and a very small number of courses that have a graded group work component, Group Communication was not assessed this year (one class had one major group project, but, given the small size of the class, there were only three articles of student work, which is too small of a sample to provide meaningful results).

Indirect assessments were formed by taking up to five years (AY 2014-2018) of final grade data from FAST, examining student performance in a series of courses (described below). This data is compared to responses in the Student Exit Survey, broadly measuring the agreement between students and faculty about their performance in these outcomes. This inexact process helps fill the gaps in artifact gathering, though it is complicated by a limited response rate from graduating Communication Studies students graduating in Spring 2017 (response n = 5).

Direct assessments were conducted through Portfolium. While faculty continued to have access to Blackboard courses when artifacts were collected, CMS platform changes and other internal workload concerns limited artifact collection. Due to an initial error in setting up the assessment process on Portfolium, each artifact was only rated once. Future reports will include multiple raters per artifact and measures of inter-rater reliability.

Further, **direct assessments** were conducted using a career-long, nominal scale. This scale is not intended to be used by untrained or non-expert raters, and therefore does not intend to be reliable if used by individuals outside the Communication department's current faculty roster. Instead, the goal is to be both reflexive and trustworthy (cf. Lincoln & Guba, 1985), prompting faculty discussion of student performance and desired changes. The scale is presented in Appendix C: Direct Assessment Rating Scale.

As there is some overlap in courses relevant to each PSLO discussed in this report, readers are encouraged to consult Table 2: Preliminary Curriculum Map by PSLO and Course above to see how each course fits in the curriculum overall. Course descriptions are included in Appendix B: Assessed Course Descriptions.

> A.   *PSLO 6: Cultural Communication*
>   1)   *Indirect Assessment: Student Exit Survey and Course Grades*

All students rated themselves as having "High Proficiency" in ESLO 6 (Diverse Perspectives), but only three students rated themselves as having "High Proficiency" in COM PSLO 6: Respond effectively to cultural communication differences (stated in that language on the exit survey). The other two rated themselves as "Proficient."

In comparison, courses that faculty rated as having a strong Cultural Communication component (COM 106, COM 205, COM 325) saw a similar rate from the faculty perspective. Again, as noted above, grades in these courses are not solely based on PSLO performance, but faculty teaching these courses have indicated that PSLO 6 plays a strong role in a student's overall grade. In this indirect look at student performance, it is worth noting that the sophomore-level course (COM 205: Intercultural Communication) saw the largest split between what we might consider "High Proficiency" in course content ("A" scores) and "Proficiency" in course content ("B" and "C" scores).

The cause in this dip cannot be determined from these data, but it is worth noting that a similar trend can be seen over the last five years, indicating that it is unlikely to be a cohort effect. COM 205

does feature a broader survey of content, and future assessments of ESLO 2 (Inquiry and Analysis) and COM PSLO 3 (Apply communication theories.) should examine artifacts from this course if that dip in performance grows or if students are unable to transfer knowledge from that course into other contexts.

AY2018	A	B/C	Below C	AY2014-AY2018	A	B/C	Below C
COM 106	35% n=(6)	53% n=(9)	12% n=(2)	COM 106	56% n=(37)	33% n=(22)	11% n=(7)
COM 115	33% n=(5)	53% n=(8)	13% n=(2)	COM 115	43% n=(28)	45% n=(29)	9% n=(6)
COM 325	100% n=(6)	0% n=(0)	0% n=(0)	COM 325	88% n=(30)	12% n=(4)	0% n=(0)

Table 4: Final Grades for PSLO 6 Relevant Courses: AY 2018 (Blue) and AY 2014-2018 (Yellow)

All students credit their time at Oregon Tech and in the Communication Studies program "very much" in developing this ability. Of these students, only one had started their academic career in a different program (Medical Imaging), transferring to Communication Studies as a junior. The exit survey did not ask how much prior majors (if any) contributed to learning outcomes.

Again, this is a small set of responses from a small program, so the results must be viewed as the individual experiences of these students, rather than a robust assessment of the program as a whole.

> 2) *Direct Assessment: Performance in COM 106: Introduction to Communication Research and Other Courses*

COM 106 concludes with an academic literature assignment applying a communication theory learned in COM 104 and/or COM 105 to a specific instance or medium of communication (e.g. media selectivity and social media feeds). This course follows COM 105, which provides a general introduction to Communication theories as a whole, and precedes COM 326, in which they use their literature review assignment as the foundation for a term-long research study.

The nature of this course as part of a core scaffold in the Communication Studies program and of the Communication Studies student body (composed of traditional college students in their first major, advanced students who have changed majors and non-traditional students) does not imply clear "starting point" for performance. Further, because students were applying theory in Communication Studies—a field heavily focused on cultural contact zones—it is unsurprising that students generally performed at least as expected.

However, the assignment does not explicitly require students to demonstrate an understanding of cultural communication differences. The two artifacts that were not rated as Advanced or Beginning Student were preparing to study monocultural groups and, as a result, did not have an opportunity to demonstrate PSLO 6.

Course	Expert	Advanced Student	Beginning Student	Unobserved	N/A	n
COM 106		2	3		2	7
COM 115		1	3		2	6
COM 237			4		3	7

Figure 3: PSLO 6 Performance in COM 106, COM 115, COM 237

COM 115 (Introduction to Mass Communication) and COM 237 (Introduction to Visual Communication) are courses that require more attention to the effect of culture on communication. COM 115 requires an understanding of both the culture of the sending a message and the culture(s) receiving it. COM 237 likewise requires students to understand the effect of a non-verbal text on different audiences. COM 115 is typically taken in the first year of the program, while COM 237 is taken by both first- and second-year students. Of the 17 students represented in these artifacts, 10 were first-year students at the time of artifact collection.

While it should not be surprising, then, that a majority of students performed at the level of a beginning college student, it is worth noting that students were performing some degree of cultural communication competency even when not explicitly prompted to do so.

> 3) *Discussion: Cultural Communication*

Data indicate that Communication Studies students are generally performing as expected in PSLO 6: Respond effectively to cultural communication differences.

That they likewise perform this outcome well when unprompted (or minimally prompted by course content) is not a large surprise. A primary focus of communication theories is the interaction between a message's sender and receiver(s), a relationship that at least implicitly requires an understanding of and response to each side's cultural standpoint. As this is the first year of assessment activity using a dispersed artifact-gathering process, a longitudinal understanding of how (and where) students progress in this outcome is not yet possible. **Subsequent reports will continue to gather and report on artifacts in this PSLO.** Further, the assessment coordinator has logged the names of students whose work was collected in this assessment. Where possible, individual longitudinal growth will be discussed in future reports.

> B. *PSLO 7: Communicate ethically*
>   1) *Indirect Assessment: Student Exit Survey and Course Grades*

Of the five student exit survey responses received, four students rated their ability to communicate ethically as "High Proficiency," while one rated themselves as having "Proficiency" in this area. All five rated themselves has having "High Proficiency" when prompted to rate their performance in the *Ethical Reasoning: Making Ethical Judgments* ESLO.

Comparing these self-assessments to final grade data in courses, it is worth noting that overall performance in ethics-related courses tends to trend upwards. As noted earlier, COM 115 tends to be taken in the first year. COM 205, as a heavily-enrolled general education course, is taken as soon

as students can get a seat in it (typically in their first or second year). COM 255 is typically taken by second- and third-year students.

AY2018	A	B/C	Below C	AY2014-AY2018	A	B/C	Below C
COM 115	33% n=(5)	53% n=(8)	13% n=(2)	COM 115	43% n=(28)	45% n=(29)	9% n=(6)
COM 205	41% n=(7)	47% n=(8)	12% n=(2)	COM 205	56% n=(32)	37% n=(21)	7% n=(4)
COM 255	71% n=(10)	29% n=(4)	0% n=(0)	COM 255	58% n=(29)	38% n=(19)	4% n=(2)

Table 5: Final Grades for PSLO 7 Relevant Courses: AY 2018 (Blue) and AY 2014-2018 (Yellow)

Final grade data suggests that students may be overestimating their ethical reasoning ability, whether we are judging by the COM PSLO prompt or the university ESLO prompt. **The AY 2019 report should examine artifacts demonstrating prompted and unprompted ethical reasoning and communication practices**.

> *2) Direct Assessment: Performance in Related Courses*

Artifacts collected from COM 106, COM 115 and COM 237 showed high proficiency in ethical communication practices. As each of the assignments were end-of-term research papers, this PSLO was demonstrated primarily through academic attribution practices – "Beginning Student" ratings went to artifacts with accurate use of APA style, while "Advanced Student" ratings went to artifacts that showed significant effort into fully and properly representing ideas within source text.

Course	Expert	Advanced Student	Beginning Student	Unobserved	N/A	N
COM 106		5	2			7
COM 115		2	4			6
COM 237		3	3	1		7

Table 6: PSLO 7 Performance in COM 106, COM 115, COM 237

While it is unsurprising that COM 106 featured the most Advanced Student ratings (as students spend the full term compiling an academic literature review through several rounds of revision and instructor feedback), it is surprising to see that COM 237 students did not carry all of those lessons forward. Whether this was due to implicit differences between the assignments themselves or to a cohort effect is unclear. **However, these gaps are being discussed in curriculum group meetings and between faculty who teach sequenced courses to improve latent knowledge activation in later courses.** As no formal effort or curriculum revision has begun, there are no results or plans to note yet.

> *3) Coordinated Direct Assessment: Ethical Reasoning ESLO*

The Communication Studies program submitted artifacts from two courses (JOUR 211: Student Newspaper and COM 255: Communication Ethics) for the university-wide ESLO assessment of Ethical Reasoning. During the university-wide Assessment Days, artifacts from JOUR 211 were assessed.

The rationale for including COM 255 artifacts in an Ethical Reasoning assessment is fairly straightforward: that is the course in which professional ethics are discussed explicitly and where students are graded at least partially on their ethical reasoning ability. JOUR 211 was chosen as a direct assessment course because it does not explicitly ask students to do any ethical reasoning as part of an assignment – in effect, it would allow us to see students' ethical reasoning abilities when they were not explicitly prompted to show them. The particular assignment chosen was

Ratings (see Appendix A: Ethical Reasoning ESLO Rubric) were given to two artifacts during the Assessment Days event. Rating data shows that the artifacts demonstrated an ethical reasoning ability within one step of their peers, with averaged scores within one standard deviation of peer documents. While this would suggest that Communication Studies students are skilled at applying ethical reasoning to novel situations, more data is needed.

Artifact	Judgment	Logic	Recognition	Theory
COM Student 1	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0
COM Student 2	1.3	1.7	2.3	1.0
All OIT Artifacts	*2.2 (σ = 0.98)*	*2.1 (σ =0.90)*	*2.3 (σ =0.84)*	*2.0 (σ =0.93)*

Table 7: Ethical Reasoning "Assessment Days" Results

4) *Discussion: Communicate Ethically*

During the AY 2019 Convocation, many faculty noted that students seem to rate their own ethical reasoning ability much higher than faculty do. It was unclear whether that was due to the assignments assessed or if it was a genuine gap between student and faculty perceptions. Communication Studies data suggests that there is a gap between our faculty and students – while students may be rated more highly in their later courses, we still do not see 80% of our students' work as "High Proficiency" in ethical reasoning.

As noted earlier, this prompts a need for further, longitudinal assessment across situations where students are prompted to show their ethical reasoning ability and where it may be a side-factor in an assignment.

C. *PSLO 8: Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges*
1) *Indirect Assessment: Student Exit Survey and Course Grades*

Group Communication was challenging to assess. Artifacts were collected from one course assignment requiring group communication, but demonstrations of group communication was limited and inconsistent. Final grades noted in Table 8 below fail to capture group communication adequately as well – COM 115 relies on group and class discussion to investigate course content and generate topics for assignments, while COM 248 required students to work in groups to craft a large, multimedia project. While the ability to work as a member of a team was central to completing both courses, neither graded students primarily on demonstrating that outcome.

AY2018	A	B/C	Below C		AY2014-AY2018	A	B/C	Below C
COM 115	33% n=(5)	53% n=(8)	13% n=(2)		COM 115	43% n=(28)	45% n=(29)	9% n=(6)
COM 248	53% n=(10)	42% n=(8)	0% n=(0)		COM 248	56% n=(19)	38% n=(13)	0% n=(0)

Table 8: Final Grades for PSLO 8 Relevant Courses: AY 2018 (Blue) and AY 2014-2018 (Yellow)

Additionally, four out of five students rated their ability to work in teams as "High Proficiency" (as with Ethical Reasoning, the fifth rated themselves as having "Proficiency") on both the ESLO scale in the exit survey and the PSLO scale.

However, text responses on the exit survey indicated an important factor of "positive group communication" that *artifact* assessment would miss: student perception of *faculty* as a member of their in-group and work-group. Three responses in particular are reproduced below.

Faculty as Group Members in Class

1. The relationships I have formed with a few faculty members have made it easier for me to get the most out of my education, understand concepts, and learn about the world outside of the major. 2. Most faculty try to help you learn through experience and firsthand exposure to concepts. 3. Most faculty have done everything they could do for me as a student.

Faculty as Professional-Group Mentors

Cour d'Alene trip was a memorable experience. Just about all my professors were great. The most important thing was that my professors (save for two) were willing to go out of their way to help me out. They truly wish for our success and our performance is reflective of those actions.

Faculty as Fellow Members of the Student Group

1. Getting to communicate with a wide assortments of students and faculty that have similar interests as you. 2. Having professors that are more out-going with their students then any other department on campus. For example, Kevin Brown hosts is annual Comm. Parties every year, which I enjoy attending for all the great food and conversations. 3. Having a large assortment of classes to choose from. From my experiences, the communication studies degree is very flexible. 4. Honorable mention, NO MATH CLASSES.

2) Future Coordinated Direct Assessment: Teamwork ESLO

While group-crafted artifacts were collected from COM 248, direct evidence of teamwork was not consistently demonstrated. All groups were assigned an analysis explaining product design and each member's role in the group project. Of seven groups of 2-4 students, three composed a group analysis and three groups' members each composed individual memos (the seventh group started as a pair, but one student dropped the course during the project). Because the assignment instructions focused on how groups executed the project requirements, commentaries on groupwork were

limited to discussing how tasks were divided or how initial product brainstorming went. As with COM 115 and other discussion-heavy Communication courses, the *product* of positive group communication was always another artifact without discernible groupwork-based features.

3) *Discussion: Group Communication*

While future assessment efforts would benefit from better artifact collection, exit survey responses suggest that that may be the wrong direction to go. As Communication faculty member Kevin Brown regularly notes, "teamwork is a process" rather than a product. As AY 2019 is the ESLO Teamwork assessment year, the Communication Department will be discussing the best ways to assess teamwork as a practice and process. **Subsequent assessment efforts should seek ways to represent teamwork as a student perception and process**, as group work is typically the means by which work is completed rather than the goal of a task overall.

VIII.   Action Plan

As a result of formal and informal data collected in AY 2018, the Communication department has the following goals.

A. AY 2019

Following recommendations in the AY 2017 report, COM 135 (Communication Software) has been developed for its first offering in Fall 2019. This course will serve as the introductory point for all Communication students to COM PSLO 5. Artifacts will be collected in this course specifically to begin measuring longitudinal development along this PSLO, comparing performance here to COM 109, COM 248 and COM 309.

Additionally, as student self-assessments in this and the AY 2017 report are compared to faculty assessments in the form of final grades, subsequent reports will begin pulling student exit survey responses from the previous five years as well to provide a more robust comparison between student perception upon graduation and faculty perception during their program.

B. Ongoing

As discussed in the Summary of Activities section, the Communication department has shifted its assessment strategy to sample a broad set of artifacts from as many courses as possible each term. Because Communication Studies is a smaller program, this will allow us to measure achievement across the entire program each year rather than focusing on a small number of students in a few courses each year.

IX.   Closing the Loop

A. AY 2017 Report: Longitudinal Tracking

The AY 2017 report suggested that longitudinal tracking of student development could be a more meaningful data collection method than taking snapshots of individual courses each year. While this report only examines artifacts from a small set of courses, the change has led to conversation on additional ways to improve our programmatic assessment using disciplinary methodologies, such as

focus grouping faculty and student feedback or performing natural language processing of survey and reflection data.

      B.   Continuing Conversations

While the loop has not fully closed yet, the Communication department has begun work on several large-scale revisions to its program. Some of this has involved the creation of new courses, and that course creation has underscored the need to hire more faculty to handle both general education offerings and the specific technical skills we teach. This has also led to further discussion of a departmental laptop requirement or other methods of solving technological access problems.

Ultimately, while these conversations center on the allocation of financial and institutional resources, our ability to act on them is limited to (a) faculty who are willing to teach out of load until searches are approved or (b) faculty who are willing to be creative in scheduling access to institutional spaces and resources necessary for these new curricular changes to take effect.

X.   References

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Appendix A: Ethical Reasoning ESLO Rubric

Ethical Reasoning Rubric (2018-19 Assessment)

DEFINITION			
Ethical reasoning is the process of recognizing which decisions require ethical judgements, determining potential reasonable courses of action, finding support for potential courses of action, and then selecting the course of action best supported.			

CRITERIA			
	High Proficiency (4) The work *meets listed requirements* for this criterion; little to no development needed.	**Proficiency (3)** The work *meets most requirements*; minor development would improve the work.	**Some Proficiency (2)** The work needs moderate development in *multiple requirements*.	**Limited Proficiency (1)** The work does not meet this criterion: it needs substantial development in *most requirements*.
Theory: Student demonstrates knowledge of different ethical theories and codes.	The student demonstrates a developed knowledge of different ethical theories and codes, and provides rationale for their preferred theory or code.	The student demonstrates a developed knowledge of different ethical theories and codes.	The student demonstrates a basic knowledge of different ethical theories or a code. Student understands the difference between ethics and law.	The student exhibits no knowledge of different ethical theories and codes. The student may confuse legal and moral codes.
Recognition: Student can recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments.	The student is able to successfully recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments without prompting, and can clearly explain to others why they require ethical reasoning.	The student is able to successfully recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments without prompting.	The student is able to recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments with prompting.	The student is unable to recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments.
Logic: Student demonstrates knowledge of the logic of ethical reasoning.	The student can formulate and test plausible moral principles* and apply them to a case to derive a course of action.	The student can formulate basic moral principles* and apply them to a case to derive a course of action.	The student can take an existing moral principle* (possibly from a code of ethics) and apply it to a case to derive a course of action.	The student exhibits no knowledge of the logic of ethical reasoning, and/or applies it improperly/inadequately.
Judgment: Student can make and support plausible ethical decisions.	The student is able to apply ethical reasoning to novel situations and provide detailed support for their decisions, as well as refuting other possible decisions.	The student is able to make plausible ethical decisions and support them at a competent level. At this level, the student begins to generalize their reasoning to similar situations.	The student is able to make plausible ethical decisions, but their support may be rudimentary or underdeveloped.	The student does not make or support plausible ethical decisions.

XI.   Appendix B: Assessed Course Descriptions

A. COM 106: Introduction to Communication Research

Introduces research in the communication discipline. Students find and analyze quantitative, qualitative and critical research. Introduces communication research as a process composed of methods, data-gathering, analysis, conclusions.

B. COM 115: Introduction to Mass Communication

Provides an introduction to mass media. Focuses on understanding how media operate with emphasis on contemporary social, economic, political, cultural and ethical issues.

C. COM 205: Intercultural Communication

Introduces basic theories and concepts of intercultural communication. Builds understanding and skills enabling students to analyze intercultural interactions and develop and practice effective communication strategies.

D. COM 248: Digital Media Production

Study of the technical aspects of digital media design and production. Hands-on experience in creating and editing video and audio. Production of video and audio for specific contexts.

E. COM 255: Communication Ethics

Examines typical communication situations involving ethics. Provides methodologies for critically evaluating ethical situations. Uses case approach with emphasis on application.

F. COM 325: Gender and Communication

Introduces basic theories and concepts of culturally-derived gendered communication patterns and behaviors. Builds understanding and skills enabling students to analyze those patterns and behaviors in order to develop and practice effective communication strategies.

XII.   Appendix C: Direct Assessment Rating Scale

Communication Studies PSLO scoring uses a nominal rating scale based on the quality of student work. It is intended to cover the range of possibility in a student's work from their first term through graduation. The descriptions are intentionally left broad and subjective. As Communication technology and practices change frequently, and as each Communication student crafts their major for their own narrow career goal, the scale assumes that faculty have the expertise necessary to judge the quality of work according to these broad categories (cf. Buyserie, Macklin, Frye, & Ericsson, 2019, forthcoming).

Expert: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for a Communication professional. This is work that could be used as a class resource.

> e.g. PSLO 6: Respond Effectively to Cultural Communication Differences. The artifact might demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural needs of its audience as well as additional audiences that may encounter the work. The artifact does not compromise the values of its creator's culture.

Advanced Student: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for someone with training in it but who is still learning its application. This is work that is rough around the edges.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact might demonstrate awareness of or sensitivity to the cultural needs of its audience, but it may do so imperfectly. It might also compromise the values of its creator's culture.

Beginning Student: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for someone just learning about it. This is work that shows an ability to identify or understand the outcome, but not necessarily apply it.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact might state its audience's cultural values or needs but not demonstrate any sensitivity to them.

Unobserved: This outcome could be demonstrated in the artifact, but it is not.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact may be written entirely from the creator's cultural standpoint.

N/A: The outcome cannot be demonstrated in the artifact.

> e.g. PSLO 6: A student asked to create a PowerPoint template for a fictional client may not have any way to demonstrate awareness of different cultural communication values.