

Digital Communication Assessment

Completed in Fall 2018 for the 2017-18 Academic Year

2017-18 Program-Level Assessment Activities

The learning outcomes set for the Digital Communication (DC) major are as follows:

Students successfully completing the major will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Explain the context and impact of traditional and new media technologies on human communication.
2. Write effective text for digital media.
3. Create web pages using HTML and CSS.
4. Write computer programs for websites.
5. Set up and administer a Web server.
6. Recall database terminology and design, implement, and use database servers in conjunction with websites.
7. Create documents containing multiple media elements, laid out in an attractive, usable, and effective way.
8. Produce and edit images, video, audio, and other media.
9. Use social media for effective communication.
10. Evaluate communication on the Web from aesthetic, rhetorical, and Reformed Christian perspectives.

Program-level learning outcomes assessed

For 2017-18, the following courses and learning outcomes were assessed:

CS 262, Software Engineering

Outcome 6 - *Recall database terminology and design, implement, and use database servers in conjunction with websites.*

IS 337, Website Administration

Outcome 2 - *Write effective text for digital media.*

Outcome 3 - *Create web pages using HTML and CSS.*

Outcome 4 - *Write computer programs for websites.*

Outcome 5 - *Set up and administer a Web server.*

Outcome 6 - *Recall database terminology and design, implement, and use database servers in conjunction with websites.*

Outcome 7 - *Create documents containing multiple media elements, laid out in an attractive, usable, and effective way.*

Outcome 8 - *Produce and edit images, video, audio, and other media.*

Outcome 9 - *Use social media for effective communication.*

Outcome 10 - *Evaluate communication on the Web from aesthetic, rhetorical, and Reformed Christian perspectives.*

Summary of Findings

Faculty in CS 262 and IS 337 provided three samples of student work for relevant assignments that represented the full range of student performance - one high, one low, and one median. Three faculty members from Computer Science and three from Communication evaluated these assignments to determine whether the relevant outcomes were being adequately addressed.

For CS 262, we noted the following:

- Databases are definitely covered in 262 and the committee believes the outcome is being achieved. However the data being collected in 262 does not actually demonstrate that learning outcome #6 is being achieved.
- When Keith VanderLinden teaches 262, students work in 5-6 person groups and each group completes a course project; when Pat Bailey teaches 262, there is a single (large) project on which all students work. When there are many group projects, the chances of a student getting hands-on experience with a database is good; when there is a single group project, the chances are correspondingly reduced.

For IS 337, we noted the following:

- Topics covered include project management, systems analysis, website administration using Drupal, Linux system administration, and some programming (PHP), so outcomes #2 through #7 are being covered adequately in IS 337.
- Coverage of some learning outcomes (#8, #9, #10) is marginal in IS 337.
- IS 337 is being discontinued (see below).

Actions Taken

On 2018-12-03, Faculty Senate approved a set of recommendations from the CS department, which included the following:

- That the DC major transition from being a group major shared by Communication and Computer Science to being a major “owned” by Communication.
- That IS 337 (and most other IS courses) be discontinued.

In assuming ownership of the DC major, Communication will be revising the DC program and has begun work on that revision, which will likely include CS 336 (*Web Development*). The DC Oversight Committee accordingly recommends the following:

1. That the Communication Dept:
 - a. Revise the DC Assessment Plan when it revises the DC major.
 - b. Advise most Communication students to take CS 100 in their first year, so that year 2 students who decide to pursue DC can complete the major in three years.
 - c. Create 3- and 4-year schedules showing how students can complete the major.
2. That the CS Dept (faculty resources permitting):
 - a. Offer CS 336 every year so that students who start the DC major as sophomores can complete the program in three years.
 - b. Offer two sections of CS 100 per year so that first year students can take it.

Film and Media Assessment
Completed in Fall 2018 for the 2017-18 Academic Year

Program-Level Assessment Activities

The SLOs of the Film and Media major are to equip students to:

1. Articulate the implications of the Reformed perspective as a framework for the study and production of film and media. | Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Faith
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the centrality of narrative and its relationship to audiovisual design in the creation and reception of screen stories. | Meets the Educational Framework Goals of Learning and Vocation
3. Demonstrate an understanding of film and media theory, history, and criticism in cultural and global contexts. | Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Learning
4. Demonstrate competence in the pre-production, production, and post-production processes of creating audiovisual media for a specific audience. | Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Learning
5. Collaborate successfully with others in a framework of student leadership, developing self-knowledge related to individual gifts and callings as producers and consumers of film and media. | Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Vocation
6. Demonstrate an ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media. | Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Citizenship

Program-Level Learning Outcomes Assessed

The outcome assessed is #6: Demonstrate an ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media.

Measures, Data, Summary of Findings

Three Film and Media faculty members, but not the course instructor, assessed this SLO by reviewing a sampling of papers (10) from the Spring 2018 section of CAS 201 that were provided by the instructor. The papers were rated as Exemplary, Substantial, Developing, or Minimal. Here are the results.

	Exemplary	Substantial	Developing	Minimal
Outcome #6	2	7		1

Meaning of Ratings:

Exemplary: Demonstrates ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media based on relevant readings and class discussions.

Substantial: Demonstrates a moderate level of ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media based relevant readings and class discussions.

Developing: Demonstrates a basic level of ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media based relevant readings and class discussions.

Minimal: Little demonstration of ability to identify and discern social and cultural issues related to the study and production of film and media based relevant readings and class discussions.

Observations

Overall, while the papers are generally well-written and thoughtful, with a number of students demonstrating an understanding of game genres, many of them display little relation to the SLO. For that reason, our evaluation of the papers appears to be higher than our assessment of them in terms of this specific SLO. The papers tend to be more descriptive, a common occurrence with undergraduate students, relying on personal observations rather than research-based criticism. Only the best can be considered “analytical” in terms of investigating social and cultural issues. The essays that stood out in that regard considered matters of gender regarding Lara Croft, the protagonist in *Tomb Raider*.

Departmental Action

Future writing assignments will be crafted to include specific language requiring students to identify and discern social and cultural issues in their analysis of video games or other media to address SLO #6.

Update on Previous Action

Last year all four final projects from the Spring 2017 CAS 351 class were assessed by four faculty members from the Film and Media major (one faculty member is on sabbatical, and one could not make the meeting). Overall, we were pleased with the caliber of the student films. Areas for improvement had to do with aesthetic style, lighting, and a desire for students to have a stronger vision for the style and mood of their projects. To address this, CAS 290 is now requiring use of tungsten light kits (as opposed to LED light kits) to improve students’ lighting skills prior to taking CAS 351. To unify aesthetic style, students in CAS 351 are now required to come up with three films in their genre that exemplify the visual style and mood that their short film is aiming for.

Plan for Program-Level Assessment Activities for 2018-19

In the academic year 2018-19, in accord with our assessment plan, we will assess CAS 290 with regard to SLO #5: Collaborate successfully with others in a framework of student leadership, developing self-knowledge related to individual gifts and callings as producers and consumers of film and media (Meets the Educational Framework Goal of Vocation).

Communication faculty members reviewed and discussed this report, and all major assessment reports, at the February 6, 2019 departmental meeting.

Assessment Report for September 2018

Organizational Communication

SLO: Understand communication as an ongoing symbolic process of creating, sustaining and negotiating meaning.

CAS 362 Organizational Communication; Essay answer from in-class final exam—8 randomly chosen

Essay question: Explain the differences between theorizing communication as information transfer (conduit model) versus as constitutive of social reality (social constructionism or the constitutive model).

In your answer, draw from various sources from the semester including the Mumby case study on the conduit model; Cheney et al. textbook discussion of the models; Koschmann video shown in class, etc.

As you discuss differences between the two perspectives, discuss how scholars taking each view differ in how they understand power. Finally, consider the ways that each approach to communication is enabling and constraining as a lens for studying organizational communication. (4 pages maximum)

Two Organizational Communication professors (one of whom taught the course) read and evaluated the student work.

Scale: 1 (Missing) –3 (average) -- 5 (Excellent)

1. Understand the constitutive view: average score 3.5
2. Understands power as constituted through communication: average score 2.9
3. Articulates implications of the constitutive view for the study of organizational communication: average score 2.5
4. Clarity of writing: average score 3.25

Summary: Students seemed to struggle with understanding power as constituted through communication; and articulating implications. Students were better at critiquing conduit model than constitutive model. Students were fairly clear writers, given that this was an in-class exam.

Recommendation: Based on this assessment, the professor plans to change the Mumby case study reviewed in class with one that is more explicitly linked to the constitutive view. In addition, in class lecture and discussion, there will be more exploration of implications of the constitutive view.

Communication faculty members reviewed and discussed this report, and all major assessment reports, at the February 6, 2019 departmental meeting.

Major Assessment: Strategic Communication Fall 2018
CAS 399: Advanced Communication Study

Strategic Communication Program Learning Objective:
Articulate the relationship between vocation and faith.

Explanation of the Material and Data Collected

We collected final exam essay questions from CAS 399 Fall 2017 (13 essays). All student essays were collected and evaluated by two Strategic Communication professors, one of whom taught the course.

SLO	Exemplary	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Articulate the relationship between vocation and faith.	9	4	0	0

Meaning of Ratings

Exemplary: Demonstrates insightful consideration of Christian perspectives on vocation, based on all relevant readings and class discussions. Good: Demonstrates a moderate level of insight into Christian perspectives on vocation, based on most readings and class discussions. Adequate: Demonstrates a basic consideration of Christian perspectives based on some of the assigned readings and discussions. Inadequate: Little demonstration of an understanding of Christian perspectives on vocation, and familiarity with few of the readings and few of the discussions.

Summary of Findings

In the best papers, students were not merely able to identify relevant Christian aspects of vocation but were competent at integrating those ideas in their thinking about discipline-specific issues, practices, and attitudes. These papers demonstrated that the students were thoughtful in terms of their thinking about academic and vocational interests and that often involved them having some sort of realization that resulted in them revising their thinking during the course of the semester. In the papers that were not as strong, students tended to personalize Christian virtues and perspectives.

One sample quote from student work: “Through this final communication class, I was able to think more critically about how faith and my career blend together.”

Response

The professor for this section reflected on possible changes for the course. In future semesters, there will be more emphasis of virtues related to vocations. Overall, we were satisfied with the percentage of students who were able to clearly articulate the relationship between vocation and faith.

Student Learning Objectives	Type of Assessment	Schedule of Assessment
Analyze communication situations and contexts using appropriate communication theories.	Essay exam questions or research papers	Complete in Fall 2020: Random sample of student work from either CAS 240, CAS 263, or CAS 264
Interpret messages in order to understand a message's function and the perspectives of others presented.	Analysis papers	Completed in Fall 2017: Random sample of student work from either CAS 141 or CAS 305
Analyze target audiences and related ethical issues using appropriate communication theories and skills in order to know what message(s) will be best suited to the audience and situation.	Analysis papers Final class projects	Complete in Fall 2019: Random sample of student work from either CAS 285 or CAS 311
Develop clearly organized and rhetorically effective and ethical oral, written, and/or visual rhetoric.	Persuasive speeches submitted for the CAS 101 contest. Final speech in CAS 200.	Complete in Fall 2019 Every other year (in addition to assessment of other learning goals)
Apply theoretical knowledge and technical skills to professional, social, and civic life.	Alumni surveys— <i>which are no longer done by CSR; replace with CAS 346</i>	Complete in Fall 2021 work from CAS 346
Articulate the relationship between vocation and faith.	Essay exam questions Essay	Complete in Fall 2018: Random sample of student work from CAS 399

Communication faculty members reviewed and discussed this report, and all major assessment reports, at the February 6, 2019 departmental meeting.