

Core Competencies Assessment 2008-2009: Area I Courses

New Mexico State University

Comm 265

Communications Competencies

State Competencies (Learning Outcomes Being Measured)	Assessment Procedures Course Name and NMCCN (Process/Instrument named or described – rubric attached)	Assessment Results	How Results Will Be Used To Make Improvements	(Optional) Recommendations/Goals/ Priorities
<p>1. Students will analyze and evaluate oral and written communication in terms of situation, audience, purpose, aesthetics, and diverse points of view.</p>	<p>Evaluated in Spring, 2008</p>			
<p>2. Students will express a primary purpose in a compelling statement and order supporting points logically and convincingly. Students should: Organize their thinking to express their viewpoints clearly, concisely, and effectively.</p>	<p>This outcome has three distinct variables: expressing a “compelling” purpose statement, organizing points logically, & organizing points convincingly. For a “compelling statement,” this was operationalized as one that is clear, concise, specific, realistic, and result oriented. Each of these items were measured on a 5 point, likert-type, semantic differential scale ($\alpha=.85$). The second variable was measured on a nominal basis with the assessor required to identify the type of organizational pattern evident in the speech. The third variable was measured on two items measuring effectiveness and appropriateness of the speech. There is also a nominal measure included regarding a specific persuasive technique.</p>	<p><u>Variable One – Compelling Statement of Purpose:</u> According to the results from the expert assessors, students are able to adequately produce compelling statements of purpose ($M=20.54$, $SD=4.37$, $N=107$, Range 1-25). The highest mean for the individual items was for statements being clear ($M=4.33$, $SD=.97$). The lowest mean for the individual items was for the item measuring statement conciseness ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.14$). These results indicate that students in COMM 265G are able to produce compelling statements of purpose. These data also indicate that improvement can be made particularly in the area of developing concise, result-oriented statements of purpose. <u>Variable Two – Logical ordering of points</u> This variable was measured on a nominal basis. The item asked the assessor to indicate which of the following organizational patterns were evident in the speech: topical, chronological, spatial, causal, none, more than 1. Given that these were persuasive speeches, we would hope</p>	<p>Overall, this assessment suggests that students enrolled in COMM 265G are achieving proficiency in Competency #2. These data also suggest that there is room for improvement. To address organization, a specific recitation section assignment and activity could be included. Specifically, instructors would be encouraged to have students generate main points with differing organizational patterns. The student would not be required to produce four or five different speeches, but this exercise would highlight the importance of organizational patterns. The staff of the Center for Communication Development would also be encouraged to work with students in this capacity. To address the third variable of Competency Two, instructors may consider requiring a speech utilizing Monroe’s Motivated Sequence. This would provide students with an effective persuasive tool and could be assessed in terms of effectiveness at a later date.</p>	<p>This assessment process was effective in that there were multiple measures of the variables associated with the outcome. Future changes may first include a larger sample size along with dedicated training of graduate student assessors for the assessment process specifically. Second, the assessment instrument may include scales with more items to continue the process of developing a more valid and reliable instrument. The two scales employed in this round were highly reliable (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.85$ for compelling statement of purpose and Cronbach’s $\alpha=.89$ for speech engagement). Each of the other variables may be better measured with more refined scales.</p>

Competency 2 Continued

to see a preponderance of causal organizational patterns. The results indicate that most students utilized a topical organization (55.1 %). The second most common organizational pattern was causal (26.2%) followed by students using more than one pattern (15.9%). Students utilizing chronological and spatial patterns accounted for only 1.9% and 0.9%. This clearly indicates that a majority of students (84.1%) are using some coherent logical pattern.

Variable Three – Convincing organization

This variable was measured with two items. The first asked whether the order of points was effective, while the second asked if the order was appropriate. Assessors generally agreed that most speeches were both effective ($M=3.91$, $SD=.81$) and appropriate ($M=3.9$, $SD=.94$). Given that the range for agreement was 1-5 (5=Strongly Agree), it is clear that there is room for improvement in this category.

This variable was also measured on how many steps of Monroe's Motivated Sequence were evident in the speech. For purposes of assessment, we determined that 0-2 steps indicated low to no proficiency, 3-4 steps indicated some proficiency, 5 steps indicated high proficiency, and 6 steps indicated high proficiency. The results for this item are as follows:
Low to No Proficiency = 13 or 12.1%; Some Proficiency=60 or 56.1%; Proficiency = 25 or 23.4%; and High Proficiency = 9 or 8.4%.

<p>3. Students will use effective rhetorical strategies to persuade, inform, and engage. Students should: Select and use the best means to deliver a particular message to a particular audience. Rhetorical strategies include but are not limited to modes (such as narration, description, and persuasion), genres (essays, web pages, reports, proposals), media and technology (PowerPoint™, electronic writing), and graphics (charts, diagrams, formats).</p> <p>(Continued)</p>	<p>The initial measurement was to determine which types of persuasive appeals were evident in the speech. This was done by asking the assessor to indicate the general type of appeal used (i.e., logos, pathos, and/or ethos). Following this, each persuasive appeal was measured for effectiveness on a 5-point, semantic differential.</p> <p>The third variable regarding engagement was measured on a highly reliable 7-item scale comprising measurement of novelty and vividness, effective example usage, facts, effective visual aids, animated delivery, listener involvement, and verbal enthusiasm ($\alpha=.89$).</p>	<p>In measuring pure use of rhetorical strategies, assessors were asked to identify which types of persuasive appeals were evident in the speech. 46.7% of speeches used all three types, 40.2% used at least two types, and 11.2% used only one type. 1 case was coded as having no appeals evident. Students were generally effective in their use of the appeals when evident. Logos ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.12$); Pathos ($M=3.94$, $SD=1.11$); Ethos ($M=3.69$; $SD=1.23$).</p> <p>This competency was also measured on students' ability to engage the audience. As mentioned previously, this variable was measured on a 7 item scale. Results indicate that students performed quite well on this outcome ($M=26.4$, $SD=5.5$, $N=107$, $Range=1-25$).</p>	<p>The assessment of Competency Three indicates that students are proficient in using basic approaches to persuasion. As with the second competency, refined recitation activities may help students to continue to improve. Currently, there are a number of activities already in place to help students in this regard, so some refinement may be necessary. An alternate plan might be to include more theoretical approaches to persuasion in the instruction of the class. Discussing aspects of the Elaboration Likelihood Model may help students to differentiate between central cues (typically associated with logos) and peripheral cues (typically associated with pathos and ethos).</p>	<p>This assessment process was effective in that there were multiple measures of the variables associated with the outcome. Future changes may first include a larger sample size along with dedicated training of graduate student assessors for the assessment process specifically. Second, the assessment instrument may include scales with more items to continue the process of developing a more valid and reliable instrument. The two scales employed in this round were highly reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha=.85$ for compelling statement of purpose and Cronbach's $\alpha=.89$ for speech engagement). Each of the other variables may be better measured with more refined scales.</p>
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Communications Competencies, cont.

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<p>4. Students will employ writing and/or speaking processes such as planning, collaborating, organizing, composing, revising, and editing to create presentations using correct diction, syntax, grammar, and mechanics.</p> <p>Students should: Use standard processes for generating documents or oral presentations independently and in groups.</p>	<p>Evaluation of in 2009-2010</p>			
<p>5. Students will integrate research correctly and ethically from credible sources to support the primary purpose of a communication.</p> <p>Students should: Gather legitimate information to support ideas without plagiarizing, misinforming or distorting.</p>	<p>Evaluation of in 2010-2011</p>			
<p>6. Students will engage in reasoned civic discourse while recognizing the distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.</p> <p>Students should: Negotiate civilly with others to accomplish goals and to function as responsible citizens.</p> <p align="right">End -- Area I</p>	<p>Evaluation of in 2010-2011</p>			

Area I Assessment completed by A. Hubbell Signature

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9/28/09 Date

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