ISBN 0-944811-27-2

NATIONAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION
www.natcom.org

A COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PRIMER

Backlund and Wakefield

NCA

A COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PRIMER

Editors
Phil Backlund and Gay Wakefield

Published by
National Communication Association

NCA

A COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PRIMER

Editors
Phil Backlund and Gay Wakefield

Published by
National Communication Association

All NCA Publication Program materials are reviewed within the spirit of academic freedom, promoting the free exchange of ideas. The contents of this publication are the responsibility of its authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of the National Communication Association, its members, its officers, or its staff.

National Communication Association
1765 N Street, NW
Washington, DC, 20036
www.natcom.org

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:
ISBN: 0-944811-27-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ASSESSMENT, EDUCATION, AND NEOLIBERALISM

We are currently living in, according to Noam Chomsky (1999, p. 19), the new "global order" of neoliberalism. As public policy, political ideology, and mode of governmentality, neoliberalism is premised on the extension of "free" market relationships characterized by unrelenting push for deregulation, minimal government and the disappearance of "public" goods and services, expanding privatization, and promotion of individual freedom of choice (Giroux, 2008; Lee, 2008). As a result, education is increasing becoming privatized and commodified. As a commodity, education is, in Henry Giroux's (2007, p. 102) words, turning into an "academic factory." This new model of education demands that the "product" that universities and institutions of higher learning are "selling" be increasingly standardized (e.g., all public speaking courses should be teaching the same content in terms of knowledge and skills regardless of individual, sociocultural, and historical concerns such as the Eurocentric and patriarchal views undergirding dominant models of public speaking in the U.S.). To ensure this process of standardization, accrediting bodies, businesses, and government institutions are, in the name of public accountability, requiring assessment of the products that we are, as university faculty, offering. As such, assessment has become an integral part of the fabric of higher education in recent decades.

Although critical debates over assessment and the neoliberal takeover of education continue—and they should, in my view—university faculty and administrators are facing pressures from institutions outside of higher education, such as funding bodies and businesses, to provide data on student-learning outcomes. Assessment experts from other disciplines are becoming involved in this process. These experts are not necessarily familiar with the content or history of the communication discipline. To reclaim this specificity, there is a need for assessment models and methods that are sensitive to our disciplinary legacy.

Edited by two communication scholars and offering the prospect of improving our teaching through assessment "in our own terms," *An Assessment Primer: A Guide to Developing Successful Educational Assessment Programs* is a comprehensive step-by-step guide to develop ways to measure student-learning outcomes that are specific to the communication discipline. With detailed discussion of issues such as student-learning outcome design, assessment techniques, data collection and reporting, evaluation of results, and application of assessment results to improve student learning in our classrooms, this volume is invaluable for anyone involved in assessment related activities in the field of communication.

Gust A. Yep

San Francisco, California

References

Chomsky, N. (1999). *Profit over people: Neoliberalism and global order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2007). *The university in chains: Confronting the military-industrial-academic complex.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Giroux, H. A. (2008). *Against the terror of neoliberalism: Politics beyond the age of greed.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm.

Lee, W. (2008). For the love of margins: Neoliberal classrooms, neoliberal institutions, and repoliticizing education. In O. Swartz (Ed.), *Transformative communication studies: Culture, hierarchy and the human condition* (pp. 115-136). Leicester, UK: Troubador.

AN ASSESSMENT PRIMER: A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

Educational assessment is here to stay. For better or worse (we like to think better), assessment of student-learning outcomes has become an integral part of higher education over the past thirty years. A wide variety of factors account for this development, with much of the impetus to assess student learning comes from institutions outside of higher education such as accrediting bodies, businesses, and state and federal governments. These outside institutions do want accountability, but there are more important reasons to assess the outcomes of learning that sometimes are lost in the forest of outside pressures. The primary purpose of assessment is based on instructional improvement and is found in two basic questions: what do we want our students to learn? how do we know they are learning it? These two questions ought to be in front of us at all times, they should not have to be imposed on us from the outside. Assessment could and should be a continuous process of self-examination and self-improvement.

The question then becomes "How can we, as communication faculty, help insure that our students learn the knowledge, develop the skills, and embrace the attitudes that we deem important to our discipline?" The answer to that question is answered by the manner in which we assess the results of our educational programs. As communication faculty, we benefit from viewing assessment as an opportunity to improve students' learning—for their personal and professional growth—and in so doing, to provide evidence of student learning to those entities holding us accountable.

The purpose of the present volume is to help communication departments more effectively develop assessment programs that lead to improved student learning. The book includes discussions of numerous issues in assessment that communication faculty likely will face, including student-learning outcome design, assessment techniques, data gathering and reporting, evaluating the results of assessment, and using assessment results for program and student-learning improvements. In addition, the book covers specialized assessment contexts such as general education, service learning, P-12, and intercultural communication.

Handled well, assessment can have a positive impact on the quality of education offered to our students, and can provide strong evidence to external agencies that we are meeting our responsibilities. The information in this book is developed and designed by communication faculty who have seen the value of assessment and want to support their colleagues in their assessment efforts. We invite all communication faculty, from the skeptics to the supporters, to become more fully involved in this intriguing and beneficial process.

Phil Backlund and Gay Wakefield

CHAPTER 1

ASSESSING COMMUNICATION KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES

Phil Backlund, Central Washington University
Timothy J. Detwiler, Cornerstone University
Pat Arneson, Duquesne University
Mary Ann Danielson, Creighton University

Every assessment, regardless of its purpose, rests on three pillars: a model of how students represent knowledge and develop competence in the subject domain, tasks or situations that allow one to observe students' performance, and an interpretation method for drawing inferences from the performance evidence thus obtained.

~ Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment

Purpose and Preview

For better or worse, we like to think better, assessment of student-learning outcomes has become an integral part of higher education over the past thirty years. A wide variety of factors account for this development, but much of the impetus to assess student learning comes from institutions outside of higher education. Federal agencies expect accountability for the dollars they invest in higher education, and state governors and legislators also want to assure that public dollars are well-spent. Businesses want a better-educated and a more competitive workforce. Both regional and specialized accrediting agencies require assessment of student learning. This means that the measures of institutional quality have shifted, and traditional gauges of quality—an institution's resources, quality of students admitted, or its reputational ranking—increasingly hold less value than proof of student learning.

As we begin the introductory chapter to this volume on assessment, we make a distinction between two purposes for assessment. In the paragraph above, we focused on external pressure to assess—"assessment for accountability." As Frye (1999) notes, assessment for accountability is "essentially a regulatory process, designed to assure institutional conformity to specified norms . . . a set of initiatives others take to monitor the results of our actions, and to penalize or reward us based on the outcomes" (p. 1). Assessment for accountability holds little appeal to most educators.

A contrasting, and far more productive, perspective is to approach assessment as an opportunity to improve student learning—"assessment for excellence." As Frye (1999) summarizes, assessment for excellence is "an information feedback process to guide individual students, faculty members, programs, and schools in improving their effectiveness. Assessment instruments are designed to answer a wide range of evaluative questions related to one larger question: "How well are we accomplishing our mission related to student learning?" (p. 1). The assessment-for-excellence approach to student-learning outcome assessment guides this volume.

Unfortunately, not all faculty understand this approach, and then grumble about assessment in response to accountability. Accountability is a growing force gaining continual momentum in higher education, so it is unwise to think it might go away. But if faculty see assessment only as accountability, we can expect complaints and resistance to prevail. On the other hand, if faculty focus on assessment for excellence, they more easily can concentrate their assessment attention where it is most appropriate—on student learning. We make this distinction at the outset to point out the difference between internal and external motivations for assessment activities, and to establish the reason why this volume focuses on "assessment for excellence."

How can we, as communication faculty, help insure that our students learn the knowledge, develop the skills, and embrace the attitudes that we deem important to our discipline? The answer to that question is answered by the manner in which we assess the results of our educational programs. As communication faculty, we benefit from viewing assessment as an opportunity to improve students' learning—for their personal and professional growth—and in so doing, to provide evidence of student learning to those entities holding us accountable.

We invite all communication faculty, from the skeptics to the supporters, to become more fully involved in this intriguing and beneficial process.

Purpose and Organization

The purpose of this volume is to help communication departments more effectively develop assessment programs that lead to improved student learning. Consequently, the book includes discussions of numerous issues in assessment that communication faculty likely will face, including student-learning outcome design, assessment techniques, data gathering and reporting, evaluating the results of assessment, and using assessment results for program and student-learning improvements. In addition, the book covers specialized assessment contexts such as general education, service learning, P-12, and intercultural communication.

The National Communication Association (NCA) long has been a leader in providing its members with information on assessment. NCA offers a selection of publications to members and maintains a limited number of resources on the NCA Website. The NCA National Office reports that communication departments regularly ask for assessment materials and support. Such resources sometimes are difficult to find since they are in various locations and lack consistency and coordination. Consequently, the Communication Assessment Division of the National Communication Association undertook this NCA-sponsored assessment publication to pull together disparate NCA resources and supply current, relevant material in one focused and applicable volume.

Target Audience

The primary target audience for this publication is communication faculty and administrators in higher education. The volume does contain one chapter that specifically discusses P-12 education, as that level also faces a wide variety of pressures to assess communication studies. However, pre-college education is not the primary focus of this volume. The content of this book directly addresses the communication assessment needs of higher education. Given that virtually all collegiate communication departments in the country are affected by assessment—including public and private community-college, four-year, and graduate institutions—a quality publication meeting assessment needs of communication faculty and administrators serves a wide target audience.

Organization and Preview of Chapters

One or more experts in various dimensions of assessment have developed each chapter. Authors were asked to write in a reader-friendly style, without being overly scholarly or obtuse. The goal was understandability and application. The chapters of the book can be read in any order, depending on the needs of the reader. However, we recommend that the reader begin with the first chapter, as it describes the purpose of this publication, basics of the assessment process, relevant terms, and the educational context in which assessment normally occurs.

Chapter 2 focuses on something all universities and departments face: review by regional accreditation agencies and professional associations. All accreditation agencies require departments to develop and implement assessment plans. This chapter describes typical accreditation standards, how they may be similar to or different from local assessment requirements, and how to approach the standards effectively.

An overview of assessment planning and the role it plays in the larger context of department and university effectiveness is addressed in Chapter 3, along with sample charts for organizing various aspects of assessment plans. Concepts introduced in this chapter are developed further in later chapters.

Assessment as integral to the learning process is the subject of Chapter 4. Included among the topics are the role of student-learning outcomes in assessment programs and principles for developing student-learning objectives for both courses and programs.

Chapter 5 discusses the value and role of curriculum mapping for identifying the alignments between the curriculum and student-learning outcomes. It also highlights some commonly used direct and indirect assessment measurement tools and provides an example of the linkage between program goals, student-learning outcomes, and assessment tools when creating a comprehensive assessment plan.

The timing of assessment is addressed in Chapter 6. Departments frequently are required to assess student learning at a variety of levels during each educational program. The first half of this chapter describes capstone courses and other end-of-major assessment procedures.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve instructional programs. Chapter 7 describes how assessment results can be used for program and curriculum improvement. The chapter also addresses related aspects of faculty development.

Chapter 8 describes program review as an overall evaluation of departmental effectiveness, required for many campuses in addition to direct assessment of student learning. This chapter describes the common purposes of such program reviews, typical program-review procedures, and how to prepare effectively for a program review.

Oral communication is a component of many universities' general education programs, yet departments frequently struggle with assessment for effectiveness of this component. Chapter 9 offers advice and examples for effectual assessment of this important aspect of general education.

A relatively new component of student learning, service-learning, has become a regular part of the curriculum in many communication departments, and provides a means for practical application of theoretical concepts. Chapter 10 describes how a department can assess whether service-learning curricula meets the needs of its students.

Intercultural communication is increasingly important in our global society. Chapter 11 describes issues related to assessment of intercultural communication competence, recommending procedures and models for implementing such assessment programming.

Chapter 12 deals with the needs for assessment within the public-school context. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the challenge of promoting oral communication assessment in the P-12 classroom and to provide a structured oral-performance assessment system that can be incorporated into existing curricula.

The last chapter addresses a wide range of internet sources and support for curriculum assessment. Chapter 13 summarizes relevant sources, provides links to useful Websites, and details internet use to support curriculum and assessment development.

The remainder of this first chapter provides background to the assessment movement, addressing the past, present, and future of communication assessment, the uniqueness of assessing communication, factors related to improving assessment results, and the broad context of student-learning assessment in higher education. The narrative not only presents assessment as part of our educational life-story (Countryman, 1995), but also its function to continually recreate our educational reality—a reality that does and will include assessment. As educators, we have an obligation to participate in the ongoing development of this narrative in order to shape an effective future for communication education (Arnett & Arneson, 1997).

The Past

The National Context. The choice-based curriculum of the 1960s led to the undergraduate curriculum reform of the 1980s. During this time, many students were not prepared adequately for college and students graduating from college sometimes lacked skills necessary for workplace success—a condition that some might claim has not changed in forty years. The Reagan administration viewed education as key to renewing confidence in America. Three major themes that emerged from the debate about curriculum reform culminated in the call for educational accountability: high standards, active student involvement in the learning process, and explicit feedback on performance (National Institute of Education, 1984). Following is a brief chronology of key policy developments that inspired incorporation of assessment in educational reform.

The landmark report, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), offered a broad analysis of problems in the American educational system. At an educational summit in 1989, the nation's 50 governors agreed that six ambitious educational goals were needed to move this country into the 21st century. This summit

established that the National Education Goals Panel was to monitor progress toward these goals (U.S. Department of Education, 1992).

In 1990, the National Governors Association asserted that doing a good job of assessment requires definition of what students need to know, determination of whether they know it, and learning measurements that are accurate, comparable, appropriate, and constructive (Chesebro, 1990). This model, in various forms, serves as the basis for virtually all assessment programs.

President Clinton signed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994. This act codified into law the original six National Education Goals developed in 1989 and added two goals to encourage parental participation and the professional development of educators (Clinton, 1993). The national goal on literacy and lifelong learning is of particular importance to communication educators: "The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially" (Lieb, 1994, p. 1). While the "communicate effectively" portion of the objective might not have received the full attention communication educators believe it deserves, it does provide a national rationale for communication education. The national goals and accompanying legislation gave further impetus to the assessment movement. This impetus received added support through President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" campaign in 2001, which gave strong emphasis to high-stakes testing (particularly in the K-12 system).

Efforts over the past three decades have not led to the change and improvement promised by early writings on assessment; consequently, public calls for change persist and are growing stronger. U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spelling's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, for example, details perceived shortcomings in higher education and calls for standardized tests of students' critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. This report and its recommendations have stirred a great deal of discussion on the most appropriate forms and types of assessment. Two public-college groups, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, proposed a "Voluntary System of Accountability" (VSA) that focuses less on standardized tests and more on traditional accountability elements as graduation and retention rates, financial aid, tuition and other costs, and—most controversially—students' performance on measures of learning outcomes (*Inside Higher Ed*, 2007). At the time this volume goes to publication, the only certainty is that legislative and higher-education organizations will continue to push for assessment of student learning in one form or another—especially since federal funding is at stake.

Two influential organizations, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2008), have articulated the belief that colleges and universities should hold themselves accountable for assessing their students' best work, feeding into what they term the "pedagogical imperative." This imperative requires that faculty assume responsibility for student learning—dramatically refocusing the traditional faculty viewpoint that they are responsible only for imparting knowledge and that students are solely responsible for learning that knowledge.

The point is made, and we concur with it, "that assessment all by itself is an insufficient condition for powerful learning and improvement" (Schnieder, 2007, p. 1). Far more important than data gathering is knowledge of how to interpret that evidence and how to act on it responsibly. These and other writings point to two issues: (a) the evolution of assessment is by no means complete, and (b) agreement has not been achieved regarding what must be done. These issues leave the door open for communication faculty and administrators to devise their own programs that work well in their particular contexts. One goal of this volume is to facilitate movement toward that end.

Faculty have reacted to the various unresolved issues in assessment in a number of ways. By the 1990s, faculty members in higher education were becoming aware of the significance of assessment issues related to accountability and accreditation. Campuses were receiving pressure from several directions, cautioning them to look carefully at student learning, to articulate learning objectives, to set high standards for accomplishment, and to assess whether students have met those standards (Palomba & Banta, 1999). The six regional accrediting associations in the U.S. moved from voluntary-compliance to exhibited-compliance of these initiatives (Chesebro, 1990). In addition, there was increasing momentum to assess student outcomes related to both undergraduate- and graduate-degree accomplishment.

Institutions and faculty reaction to these developments ranged from "this is a good idea for student learning" to "they can't tell me what to do." Many faculty saw (and some still see) assessment and accountability as unwanted and

unnecessary governmental interference in the education process. Indeed, the motives of some external bodies seemed driven more by fiscal and political concerns than by the desire to improve student learning. In addition, the accountability and assessment movement clearly has changed the relationship between institutions of higher education and their governing bodies. The autonomy once enjoyed by colleges and universities—and their individual faculty members—has eroded. Educators' classroom autonomy has shifted, and many faculty are dismayed and rebellious. Two publications found in Academe Online (Barrington, 2003; Linkon, 2005) detail faculty reservations regarding assessment and accountability. Barrington (2003) states that, "The even more distressing consequence of these new assessment policies is the choice they offer to professors; produce misleading (or dishonest) assessment data or abandon the core ideals of a liberal arts education." (p. 1) While those certainly are not the only two options available to faculty, the statement does reflect the degree of skepticism some faculty feel about the assessment movement.

Faculty concerns seem to come down to four main points. Strada (2001) suggests that faculty lack confidence in (a) assessment's relevance and applicability, (b) its ability to truly measure learning outcomes, (c) the cost/benefit ratio, and (d) assessment's significance. Strada goes on to make the point that assessment done badly reinforces faculty concern and resistance, and that these issues need to be addressed directly if assessment is to succeed.

Many other writers express belief in the value of assessment as a means to improve student learning. Trudy Banta has written about the assessment phenomena since its inception and asks, "Can assessment for accountability complement assessment for improvement?" (2007). This question mirrors the distinction we made in the beginning of this chapter, and Banta goes on to make the point strongly that the two purposes should be complementary—detailing how assessment for accountability purposes actually can strengthen assessment for improvement (excellence).

We share Banta's view on the two motivations for assessment; they need not be mutually exclusive. Throughout this book, we will argue for the blending of the two motivations. A well-designed program of assessment for excellence can be used to satisfy assessment for accountability. In large measure, the climate for implementation is relatively permissive and allows individual institutions to identify an assessment plan best suited for their local educational objectives. Regional accrediting bodies do not mandate how assessment be done, just that it must be done. The design is left up to the institution, so long as that design is effective. Accrediting associations place a premium on the use of assessment data for improvement of learning and of educational programs as a whole—and a well-designed program of assessment for excellence usually meets the requirements for accountability assessment.

The strongest statement related to the role of faculty, colleges, and universities in creating a viable system of assessment applicable to both accountability and excellence comes from a joint report of the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Council for Higher Education Achievement (New Leadership, 2008). That report outlines six principles and eight action steps that should be undertaken by colleges and universities. These include stating that the primary responsibility for achieving excellence falls on colleges and universities themselves (not on accrediting bodies or legislatures), that colleges and universities should develop ambitious, specific, and clear goals for student learning, that evidence should be gathered regarding how well students achieve learning goals, that this information should be used to improve education, and that assessment information should be widely shared. The report makes the point that the better job we do assessing ourselves and using data for improvement, the less likely we will be to face strict government mandates on how assessment must be done.

National Communication Association Assessment Initiatives. The National Communication Association, formerly known as the Speech Communication association, has actively developed a national assessment agenda since the 1970s. The Speech Communication Association Task Force on Assessment and Testing, formed in 1978, was charged with gathering, analyzing and disseminating information about the testing of speech communication skills (Backlund & Morreale, 1994). This task force has evolved into the NCA Communication Assessment Division, which addresses activities such as defining communication skills and competencies, publishing summaries of assessment procedures and instruments, publishing standards for effective communication programs, and developing guidelines for program review. Student-learning assessment and program review are similar concepts, but deserve separate attention both in the literature and in practice.

NCA has supported faculty efforts in this area by making communication assessment instruments available and publishing related materials (described in subsequent chapters). A Website also supports communication educators in their ongoing assessment initiatives (see www.natcom.org). NCA efforts were evoked by, and serve to drive, additional scholarship in two key areas: communication program assessment and communication learning assessment.

Communication Program Assessment. The purpose of program assessment should be continuous improvement through self-evaluation. Program assessment requires departmental members to examine curricula, educational experiences, and student learning that occurs. Evaluation may be part of a campus-wide effort (Backlund, Hay, Harper, & Williams, 1990) and/or may focus around departmental initiatives (Makay, 1997; Shelton, Lane, & Waldhart, 1999;). Work in this area also is associated increasingly with mandates from state agencies and accreditation boards. Program assessment demands a close relationship among program goals (including administrative outcomes, as well as student-learning outcomes), measurement of the progress toward those goals, analysis of related measurements, and a feedback mechanism for communicating the results back to the goal setters (Graham, Bourland-Davis, & Fulmer, 1997). Program assessment provides an opportunity for departmental members to exhibit to their administrators the unique contributions of their departments, and to fend off threats.

Communication Learning Assessment. Faculty ultimately must "own" assessment of student learning; they are the ones who write student-focused learning objectives, select appropriate instruments of assessment, collect data, meet to analyze and interpret the data, and then use the data for course and program improvement. Developing student-learning outcomes in communication begins with defining communication competence as related to desired educational outcomes of communication instruction programs.

Communication competence can be evaluated by examining a communicator's affect toward communication, cognitive development, and skill development (Morreale, Spitzberg, & Barge, 2000). The affective domain of learning examines an individual's attitudes and feelings regarding cognition, skills, and values in a content area. Cognitive assessment examines an individual's knowledge and understanding of the content under consideration (Neer & Aitken, 1997; Rubin, 1994a). Skill assessment focuses on an individual's behavioral development in a content area (Lane, 1998). Similarly, values assessment focuses on an individual's attitudinal development in a content area (Lane, 1998). Cognition, skill, and attitude development are related—students need knowledge (theory) to undergird appropriate attitudes and skilled performance.

Several volumes discuss various approaches to examining communication competence (Christ, 1994; Morreale & Backlund, 1996; Morreale, Brooks, Berko, & Cooke, 1994; Morreale, Spitzberg, & Barge, 2000). The literature includes information related to areas noted above, as well as competencies in the areas of public speaking, interpersonal communication, listening, intercultural communication, group communication, organizational communication, mediated communication competence, and general communication competence.

Over the last 20 years, scholars have contributed to shaping the narrative of educational assessment by developing numerous approaches and multiple instruments for examining development of communication competence. Much work has been done. As we turn to a discussion of the present, we ask, "Has this work been worth the effort?"

The Present

One common and legitimate faculty complaint is frequent, multiple requests from a wide variety of groups. Legislatures, accrediting bodies, state boards of education, and internal review groups all want to know if the education students receive has the desired effect. While the form of the questions and requirements posed by these groups may vary, they all come down to six fundamental questions (Morreale & Backlund, 1998):

1. Who are you and why do you exist (Mission)?
2. What do you want to accomplish (Goals and Objectives)?
3. What procedures will you use to determine if the goals/objectives have been met (Assessment)?
4. What are the results of your assessment (Analysis)?
5. What changes will you make to your goals/objectives/outcomes/processes based on these results (Application of Results)?
6. What evidence do you have that this is an ongoing cycle (Continuous Improvement)?

These questions form the basis for virtually all accountability efforts, so posing these questions provides a useful starting point to develop an effective assessment program for both excellence and accountability. In addition, as can be seen from this list of questions, assessment has developed into part of an overall process of educational-program

definition, review, and improvement. This process makes good academic sense. Effectively answering these questions provides a number of advantages for both students and educators.

First, answering the six questions results in better education for students, which should be any educator's primary concern. When faculty have a clear idea of their school's or institution's mission (and you may be surprised how many different conceptions of "why we exist" are present on the average college campus), they are more able to act in concert with one another to meet the mission of the school. When schools, departments, and faculty clearly describe their educational outcomes, students, the public, and the faculty themselves have a much better sense of what students are expected to learn. This leads to more effective educational programs and strategies.

Second, answering the six questions results in a better informed faculty. One clear effect of the assessment movement has been increased conversation and coordination between faculty colleagues. In the past (and this is still true for some colleagues), faculty members taught their classes with little or no regular conversation with other faculty, even in the same department. The assessment movement has spawned a great number of conversations between previously separate individuals. Where this has happened, answering the six questions identified above required that conversations were needed and they were held—resulting in greater communication and shared awareness campus-wide. Some of these conversations were uncomfortable, as differences between faculty perspectives were uncovered. But at least the differences were brought into the open for discussion. Where these questions have been answered, faculty feel a greater sense of community and shared purpose that has resulted in better education for students. Where these questions have not been answered, the process needs to begin.

Third, answering the six questions results in a better school or college. With clear answers to these questions, we are involved in a process that is explainable and defensible. Educational institutions that have answered these questions are far better prepared to meet the demands of accrediting bodies and legislatures. The old adage of "if you can't manage yourself, someone will do the job for you" is very true in education. A great many agencies are more than willing to manage what should be our own affairs; the way to combat impending takeover is to meet the concerns most commonly expressed by the public and its agencies. Answering the questions above will go far in accomplishing this purpose.

The Future

Assessment is here to stay—not only because state legislatures and accrediting bodies require it, but primarily because it is educationally effective. As noted earlier, assessment programs serve two purposes (excellence and accountability); the focus of both is student learning, and effective assessment leads to improved student learning. For those convinced of the value of assessment to students and programs, we take the unusual step of offering prescriptive advice regarding the future of assessment within the communication discipline. This advice can be summarized in a few simple statements. First, engage in conversation with whoever does not understand and appreciate the value of assessment. In this conversation, the argument for developing an effective assessment program centers around four points: create clear objectives, focus on communication, create an effective program and do the research, and redesign the plan as needed.

Create Clear Objectives. When students are engaged in a program of instruction, whether it is television production or public speaking, faculty need to know a number of things about the effects of their instruction: (a) whether the instruction has had any effect, (b) how the resulting skills and knowledge levels of their students compare with predetermined target levels, (c) whether their students are learning some aspects of the curriculum faster than they are learning others, and (d) how their students compare in ability to other students in similar classes. Faculty need to be able to analyze these effects in a systematic fashion, with confidence that the findings are both reliable and valid. This approach has formed the basis of effective assessment programs in the past, and remains the focus for the future.

For any measurement program to work, it must be based on a clear set of educational objectives. We cannot decide to measure speaking and listening skills and simply begin by looking for a test instrument. There are simply too many available. When a decision is made to test communication knowledge and skills (or any academic learning), the most critical step is to pinpoint the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes you wish for students to possess. Clear student-learning objectives are the first step in developing a successful measurement program. If the student-learning objectives are not clear, nothing else will make sense.

Focus on Communication Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes. Our discipline is somewhat unique in that communication skills can be seen as more important than communication knowledge. For most of the educational community, skill in use of the spoken word (with attendant nonverbal behaviors and response-ability) is the primary goal for students. Many of our departments place a great deal of emphasis on student skill in public speaking, interpersonal communication, group communication, and similar topics. However, students (particularly undergraduate majors) need to understand the communication theories and processes that describe and inform the practice. Communication departments need to develop student-learning objectives that adequately cover the communication knowledge deemed important, the attendant communication skills and attitudes, and the students' motivation and confidence to use knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned. Communication knowledge and attitudes can be assessed through methods shared by the majority of other academic disciplines (knowledge tests, projects, research papers, etc.), but communication skill assessment requires methods of assessment that other academic areas might not employ. A later section of this chapter addresses this point in more detail.

Create an Effective Assessment Plan. Given that assessment is a reality of our academic institutions, how do we best engage in assessment? As noted earlier, the process for developing an effective assessment plan involves departmental or unit assessment, not simply individual or course assessment. Department or unit assessment addresses administrative goals, in addition to the student-learning objectives incorporated in academic program assessment. The following guidelines address components of an effective assessment plan:

1. Develop assessment plans for all academic programs, both undergraduate and graduate, and provide separate assessment plans for each academic program.
2. Involve all of an academic program's faculty members in review/development of goals, objectives, and measures for that program.
3. Use a conceptual framework for assessment: cognition (knowledge), affect (attitude), behavior (skill).
4. Include at least one direct measurement technique for every student-learning objective (although one technique can address several objectives). Every assessment technique must generate information that is interpreted and put to use in some productive way.
5. Employ multiple measures to address the three domains of the conceptual framework (cognition, affect, behavior).
6. Determine enhancements to be made in teaching, learning, and curriculum, based upon assessment findings.

Following these guidelines will help insure an appropriate fit between the overall goals of a department and the student-learning outcomes. The next section addresses actions taken based on assessment results.

Close the Loop. A model of continuous improvement underlies implementation of an educational assessment program. There is no point in collecting the data unless that data is analyzed and results in improvement to academic programs. The following process outlines steps for completing an assessment cycle:

1. The program's faculty should, based on findings results of completed assessment measures, review its mission, goals, and objectives, and discuss any warranted changes.
2. The program's faculty should evaluate current processes for implementing student-learning assessment (measurement techniques, data collection, performance targets, who is responsible for coordinating assessment activities, etc.) and determine what changes are needed to improve the next assessment cycle.
3. The program's faculty should review results generated by assessment and how those results are interpreted: Do the results redirect curriculum, teaching, and learning? Are the results interpreted in ways that provide valuable feedback to faculty, students, administrators, and the public? Are the results shared on a regular basis with faculty, students, administrators, and the public?
4. The program's faculty should determine processes by which assessment data will be used to improve the program and the department. For example, they may decide to change one aspect of the curriculum every term until they accomplish all the changes they want to make. Or they may decide to make one change every academic year so they can concentrate their efforts on a particularly important piece of the assessment plan.

Implementing an assessment program requires being responsive to the needs of various stakeholders in the education process. Articulating a position for assessment that illustrates this sensitivity includes creating clear objectives, focusing on communication knowledge/skills/attitudes, creating an effective program and doing the research, and redesigning the plan as needed.

For Communication Studies Faculty

Unfortunately, some faculty have not been enthusiastic adopters of student-learning assessment projects. The reasons are many and varied and include the fact that few have professional training in educational theories and methods and, thus, find the subject of objectives, instruments, curriculum mapping, etc., a bit like a foreign language. Faculty often assume the task of assessment will be time-consuming and unrelated to the tasks necessary for tenure and promotion. Some faculty have philosophical resistance to the practice of measuring student learning in an attempt to quantify something they consider as humanly ineffable as the act of education. Still others balk at doing something they perceive an administrator or a regulatory bureau is forcing them to do. Regardless of the reason, a perceptual shift needs to take place so that faculty can embrace the processes of assessment for the positive benefits it provides to students and academic programs. What, then, are a few specific steps we might take in leading a local community of scholars—or the academy at large—forward in the practice of academic assessment?

A first step is "learning the language" of assessment. In order to become an assessment practitioner, a certain terminology should be understood. Below are some of the most commonly used terms in this book and in the assessment movement.

Assessment and Accountability—Although the terms "assessment" and "accountability" often are used interchangeably, they have important and significant differences. In general, when we assess our own performance, that is assessment; when others assess our performance, that is accountability. In other words, assessment is a set of initiatives we use to monitor results of our actions and make our own improvements; accountability is a set of initiatives others take to monitor the results of our actions, and to penalize or reward us based on the outcomes.

Assessment—Assessment is the systematic process of determining educational objectives and then gathering, using, and analyzing information about student-learning outcomes to make decisions about programs, student progress, and accountability to constituent groups.

Benchmark—Benchmarks are established when criterion-referenced performance is used for comparative purposes. A program faculty can use their own data as a baseline benchmark against which to compare future performance. They also can use national standards or data from another program as a benchmark.

Curriculum Map—Also known as "course map," "curriculum alignment," or "assessment audit," a curriculum map provides visual representation of how faculty prepare students to meet a program's established student-learning objectives. The process involves identifying where in the curriculum each student-learning outcome is introduced, developed, and mastered.

Direct measures—Direct measures of student leaning require students to display their knowledge, skills, and attitudes for measurement. Objective tests, essays, presentations, portfolios, and classroom assignments all are examples of this criterion; tools such as student-perception reports or alumni surveys do not meet this criterion because they measure student perceptions about learning, rather than measuring actual student learning.

Evaluation—Broadly covering all potential investigations with formative or summative conclusions about institutional effectiveness, evaluation may include assessment of student learning, but it also includes non-learning-centered investigations (e.g., student satisfaction with recreational facilities or financial-aid packages).

Goals—Long-term in nature, program goals form the foundation for student-learning assessment. Directly linked to the program's mission, goals stipulate the major principles the program serves (e.g., to develop student competence meeting employer demands in the field of practice).

Formative assessment—Formative assessment is used for progressive improvement (at the individual or program level) rather than for final summative decisions or for accountability. This interim process can provide

feedback at various points in the academic program to improve teaching, learning, and curricula, and to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

Indirect measures—Indirect instruments such as surveys and interviews ask students to reflect on their learning, attitudes, and skills, rather than to demonstrate them. Direct measures are preferred highly over indirect instruments.

Measurement—The systematic investigation of students' performance, whether direct or indirect, encompasses assessment measurement.

Norm—Norms reflect scores on a measure, focusing on the rank ordering of students and not on their performance in relation to set criteria.

Objectives—Short-term in nature and directly linked to the program's goals, student-learning objectives encompass the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to achieve through their college experience; expected or intended student-learning outcomes.

Outcomes—Outcomes are the results of learning, the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students actually develop through their college experience. Outcomes are assessment results.

Performance-based assessment—Performance-based assessment involves gathering data through systematic observation of a behavior or process and evaluating that data based on a clearly articulated set of performance criteria.

Rubric—Rubrics are scoring instruments that list the criteria for a piece of work, or "what counts" (e.g., purpose, organization, and mechanics are often what count in a piece of writing); they also articulate gradations of quality for each criterion, from highest to lowest.

Summative assessment—Summative assessment is a sum-total or final-product assessment of achievement at the end of a course of study.

Value-added—The effects educational providers have on students during their programs of study comprise the value-added feature of academics. Participation in higher education has value-added impact when student learning and development occur at levels above those that occur through natural maturation; usually measured as longitudinal change or difference between pretest and posttest.

Triangulation—Measures of student learning need to be triangulated, meaning that results of at least two measures need to point to the same conclusion; one or more of the triangulated measures must be direct.

As you develop an increased knowledge of assessment, other possibilities begin to present themselves. An emerging sub-field of interest within any traditional academic discipline is that which merges content-area expertise along with the actual work of assessment. The National Communication Association is in need of individuals who understand the complexity of human symbolic interaction and are willing to learn the language, processes, and politics of student-learning assessment. This is certainly a legitimate avenue of scholarship, one which is not being traveled by many (see Trudy Banta's *The Scholarship of Assessment*).

In addition to the need to develop the literature of communication studies and assessment, there is a growing need for fully qualified Ph.D.-level professionals to populate a growing employment area in higher education—deans or directors of academic assessment. If you are looking for an alternative or fast-track path into academic administration, the opening provided by becoming an "expert" in assessment is a way to proceed with all due speed. As stated at the 2006 Data and Decisions Conference of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), one good combination of characteristics for an individual seeking a job in assessment for an institution of higher education is (a) quantitative and qualitative understandings of research, (b) the desire and ability to work with data in decision-making, and (c) an ability to communicate with many people in an organization in multiple communication contexts. Certainly, it is possible (with a bit of effort) to learn the history and purposes of assessment, to learn the processes of assessment, and to lead a program, department, or institution in meeting the demands of increasing social responsibility for higher education—verifying our effectiveness to a challenging set of internal and external constituents.

The next section of this chapter turns attention to characteristics specific to communication assessment.

Communication Assessment Specifics

Methods of assessment used in other academic areas are not always adaptable to communication studies, particularly to the assessment of oral communication skills. Most disciplines can employ such measurement methods as achievement tests and objective or subjective tests of content. Mead (1982) argued that in many academic areas, a great deal of the educational experience involves acquiring knowledge for some unknown application later in life. But communication generally is seen as a process skill, similar to reading and writing. It is as important to assess students' knowledge about how they should communicate, but we also must assess students' communication performance in realistic situations. Thus, communication skills generally have been assessed with performance measures, while communication knowledge and attitudes have been assessed with more traditional assessment tools.

Due to the unique nature of the practice, assessment of communication performance encounters certain limits and challenges. Communication is an interactive process so its correctness is situational, usually with more than one possible "correct" approach. Therefore, evaluation of a communicator must depend on criteria that are culturally and situationally based. For example, while talking is a very appropriate social behavior at a cocktail party, it can be bothersome in a library reading room. Cultural evaluations become even more problematic. Such factors make the assessment of oral communication difficult, but not impossible.

It is possible to define in clear, behavioral terms the aspects of communication to be assessed. Competence criteria that take cultural and situational differences into account must and can be identified, since a communication behavior might be "right" in one situation and not in another. Because communication is shaped by culture, the danger of rater- and test-bias is substantial. Methods that assess performance consistently and accurately need to be developed through efforts to increase reliability and validity. If developed effectively, these methods can work in a variety of situations with a variety of trained raters. Finally, some objections can be, and have been, raised regarding assessment feasibility. Objections tend to center around problems of expensive equipment, extensive training needed for raters, or the requirement for multiple ratings. Any assessment procedure needs to be developed with an eye to practicality, and it is possible to develop effective assessment programs that account for such issues.

Another concern is the slippery definitional nature of some communication variables. One example is listening. Listening is an important skill, yet researchers disagree about virtually every aspect of the listening process—definition, dimensions, methods of measurement, and techniques for improving listening ability. Thus, validity is one of the greatest difficulties posed by listening tests. Since there is no clear agreement about what listening is, researchers may wonder whether listening tests actually measure listening. For instance, definitions of listening have ranged from the ability to respond appropriately when "Fire!" is shouted in a school, to the ability to gauge accurately the internal emotional state of the speaker. That covers quite a range. This is not to say that tests of listening are useless; they are, in fact, highly useful. The key is to match student-learning objectives with appropriate measures for the desired outcomes. If listening and other communication objectives are defined clearly, then assessment can be designed to measure those specific objectives effectively.

Finally, we are faced with uncertainty about whether our educational programs work—no matter what the assessment results. The determination of competence in communication is complex, with a large number of factors impinging on an interaction at any given time. Each student handles such situations with a different degree of expertise. Success depends on student knowledge of, and skill in handling, the purpose, topic, person or persons involved, and time and place. To determine, once and for all, whether a student consistently performs to a given level of competence would require us to follow the student around and observe the student's performance in all kinds of situations. From this perspective, results of student-learning assessment are more predictive than certain.

Faced with the limitations imposed by the situational character of communication behavior and by practical factors, we only can infer a given student's ability to communicate competently in situations beyond those directly assessed. This is both a strength and a weakness of communication assessment. It is a strength in that it fits well with the overall goals of competence-based education—to educate students who are at least minimally competent to function inside and outside the classroom. It is a weakness in that we never can know for certain how competent a student truly is outside of the classroom, and no current educational measurement procedure can provide a definitive answer. This is a common problem of academic assessment in various disciplines, so it is important to recognize that assessment ultimately looks beyond demonstration of skill attainment in one setting to expectation of skill applied in future similar settings.

Conclusion

Academic assessment has come a long way, and we believe the narrative of education is enhanced by its practice. Assessment is not the answer to all of our educational problems, but assessment can have great positive benefit when the focus is on assessment for excellence. The danger lies in attempting to implement an assessment program without grounding it in a context of instructional development and increased student learning. Without this context, assessment becomes an empty exercise that accreditation commissions and faculty rightly criticize. Done well, student-learning assessment provides a means to improve communication between colleagues and to enhance our collective educational success.

Assessment typically has received mixed reviews from faculty. The rhetorical framing, by some, has reflected disinterest and avoidance. Some perceive it as interference by a "big brother" who does not know what is, or should be, accomplished in the discipline. But forward-thinking educators embrace student-learning assessment as a scientific process guiding their efforts to improve their teaching, their students' learning, and their programs of study. This book sprang from communication professors asking: What is assessment and what can it do for individuals and communities of scholars? The answers to that question can lead to enhanced instructional programs and improved student learning, and can respond effectively to those demanding accountability.

> ***Something important should be learned from every assessment situation and the information gained should ultimately help improve learning.***
>
> *~ Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment*

References

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing programs in higher education*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

Arnett, R. C., & Arneson, P. (1997). Educational assessment as invitation for dialogue. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *5*, 81-94.

Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2008). *New leadership for student learning and accountability: A statement of principles, commitments to action*. Washington, D.C.

Backlund, P., Hay, E. A., Harper, S., & Williams, D. (1990, April). Assessing the outcomes of college: Implications for speech communication. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *72*, 13-20.

Backlund, P., & Morreale, S. P. (1994). History of the Speech Communication Association's assessment efforts and present role of the committee on assessment and testing. In S. Morreale, M. Brooks, R. Berko, & C. Cooke (Eds.), *1994 SCA summer conference proceedings and prepared remarks* (pp. 9-16). Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association Publications.

Banta, T. (2007). Can assessment for accountability complement assessment for improvement? *Peer Review*, 9. Retrieved on Sept. 17, 2008 from http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-sp07/pr-sp07_analysis2.cfm.

Barrington, L. (2003, November-December). Less assessment, more learning. *Academe online*. Retrieved September 17, 2008 from http://wwwaaup.org./AAUP/pubsres/academe/2003/ND/Feat/barr.htm.

Brown, K. L., Backlund, P., Gurry, J., & Jandt, F. (1979). *Assessment of basic speaking and listening skills* (2 vols.). Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Research and Assessment.

Chesebro, J. (1990, July). *A national context*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association Conference on Assessment, Denver, CO.

Christ, W. G. (Ed.). (1994). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech, and theatre educators*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

CIC/AIR Conference. (2006). Personal notes. Clinton intends to establish national academic standards. (1993, February 24). Greeley Tribune, p. A1.

Committee on the Foundations of Assessment, Pellegrino, J. W., Chudowsky, N., & Glaser, R. (2001). Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, & National Research Council (Eds.). *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment* (pp. 53, 257). Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

Countryman, J. (1995). Academic narratives: What's the story? *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *3*, 18-27.

Ewell, P. (2002). An emerging scholarship: A brief history of assessment. In T. W. Banta (Ed.). *Building A Scholarship of Assessment* (pp. 3-25). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act, PL 103-227. (1994). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Graham, B., Bourland-Davis, P. G., & Fulmer, H. W. (1997). Using the internship as a tool for assessment: A case study. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 5, 198-205.

Greenbaum, H. H., Kaplan, I. T., & Damiano, R. (1991). Organizational group measurement instruments: An integrated survey. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *5*, 126-148.

Gronlund, Norman E. (2004). *Writing instructional objectives for teaching and assessment*. (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Merrill-Prentice Hall.

Hernon, P., & Dugan, R. E. (2004). *Outcomes assessment in higher education*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Higher Education Act of 1965, Public Law 89-329, 79 STAT 1219. *Inside Higher Ed*. (June 26, 2007). Campus Accountability Proposals Evolve. Retrieved September 12, 2008 from http://insidehighered.com/news/2007/06/26/accountability.

Lane, S. D. (1998). The development of a skill-mastery assessment for a basic speech course. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *6*, 97-107.

Lieb, B. (1994, October). *National contexts for developing postsecondary communication assessment*. U.S. Department of Education: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Linkon, S. L. (2005, July-August). How can assessment work for us? *Academe Online*. Retrieved September 17, 2008 from http://wwwaaup.org./AAUP/pubsres/academe/2005/JA/Feat/link.htm

Makay, J. J. (1997). Assessment in communication programs: Issues and ideas administrators must face. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *5*, 62-68.

Maki, P. L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Marchese, T. J. (l987, January/February). Assessment: Fact or fad? *Change*, *19*, 4.

Mead, N. (1982). *Assessment of listening and speaking performance*. Paper presented at the National Symposium on Education Research, Washington, D.C.

Morreale, S. P., & Backlund, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Large-scale assessment in oral communication: K-12 and higher education (2nd ed.)*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association Publications.

Morreale, S., Brooks, M., Berko, R., & Cooke, C. (Eds.). (1994). *1994 SCA summer conference proceedings and prepared remarks*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association Publications.

Morreale, S. P., & Backlund, P. (1998). Assessment: You've come a long way, baby. *Popular Measurement*, *1*, 20-24.

Morreale, S. P., Moore, M. R., Taylor, K. P., Surges-Tatum, D., & Hulbert-Johnson, R. (Eds.). (1993). *The competent speaker: Speech performance evaluation form*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association Publications.

Morreale, S., Spitzberg, B., & Barge, K. (2000). *Human communication: Motivation, knowledge, and skills*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

National Communication Association (1993). *Criteria for the assessment of oral communication: A national context*. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association Publications.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform: A report to the nation and the secretary of education*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Institute of Education Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education. (1984). *Involvement learning: Realizing the potential of American higher education*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Neer, M. R., & Aitken, J. E. (1997). Using cognitive assessment testing to evaluate and improve a university program in communication studies. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, *5*, 95-109.

Nichols, J. O. & Nichols, K. W. (2005). *A road map for improvement of student learning and support services through assessment*. Flemington, NJ: Agathon.Pellegrino,

James W., Chudowsky, Naomi and Glaser, Robert. (Eds.). (2001). *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Rubin, R. B. (1994). Assessment of the cognitive component of communication competence. In S. Morreale, M. Brooks, R. Berko, & C. Cooke (Eds.). *1994 SCA summer conference proceedings and prepared remarks* (pp. 73-86). Annandale, VA: SCA Publications.

Schneider, C. G. (2007). *Forward to: A brief history of student learning assessment: How we got where we are and a proposal for where to go next*. Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Shelton, M. W., Lane, D. R., & Waldhart, E. S. (1999). A review and assessment of national education trends in communication instruction. *Communication Education*, *48*, 228-237.

Spitzberg, B. H. (1995). *Conversational skills rating scale: An instructional assessment of interpersonal competence*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association Publications.

Stevens, D. D. & Levi, A. J. (2004). *Introduction to rubrics: An assessment tool to save grading time, convey effective feedback and promote student learning.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Strada, M. J. (Fall, 2001). Assessing the assessment. *Liberal Education*, 42-49.

Suskie, Linda. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

U.S. Department of Education. (1992). *World class standards for American education* (OAS 92-6024). Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Walvoord, Barbara. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS FROM THE REGIONAL ACCREDITATION COMMISSIONS

Scott A. Chadwick, Canisius College

Important Note

Accrediting commissions continually update and revise their standards and expectations, so readers are cautioned to double-check the most recent standards published by regional accrediting commissions for their current assessment expectations.

Purpose and Preview

The first chapter described the history and basics of the assessment movement. One of the major forces behind this movement is regional accreditation commissions (RACs), charged with meeting U.S. Department of Education demands related to higher education. The oldest regional accreditation commission is the New England Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, founded in 1885. The other five RACs were founded in the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools: Higher Learning Commission (1895), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: Commission on Colleges (1895), the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (1917), the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools: Commission on Higher Education (1919), and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (1962).

History

The commissions were formed as a service to the general public (particularly the tax-paying public, in the case of colleges and universities receiving any government funding), the federal government, and agencies and foundations providing grants and scholarships. Accreditation is driven, in large part, by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). While the DOE does not accredit educational institutions directly, it does endorse certain accrediting commissions as "reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education and the higher education programs they accredit" (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Each regional accrediting agency is recognized by the DOE and is supported by, and in turn works to accredit, colleges and universities within its region (see chart below). Public and private colleges and universities voluntarily support, and request accreditation from, their regional RACs.

Appendix 1: Regional Accrediting Commissions

Regional Accrediting Commissions	Contact Information	States and Territories in the Region
Middle States Commission on Higher Education	3624 Market Street Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267) 284–5000 http://www.msche.org/	Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands
The Higher Learning Commission (of the North Central Association)	30 North LaSalle, Suite 2400 Chicago, IL 60602-2504 (800) 621-7440 http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org	Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, including schools of the Navajo Nation
New England Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education	209 Burlington Road, Suite 201 Bedford, MA 01730-1433 (781) 271-0022 http://cihe.neasc.org	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	8060 165th Avenue, NW, Suite 100 Redmond, WA 98052 (425) 558-4224 http://www.nwccu.org	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington
Southern Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Colleges	1866 Southern Lane Decatur, GA 30033-4097 (404) 679-4500 http://www.sacscoc.org	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia
Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities	985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100 Alameda, CA 94501 (510) 748-9001 http://www.wascsenior.org	California, Hawaii, the United States territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and areas of the Pacific and East Asia where American / International schools or colleges may apply to it for service

Some institutions might dispute the degree to which accreditation is voluntary, as any institution that does not earn regional accreditation status is barred from receiving federal funds for research, student aid, or other educational purposes. Thus, the process of accreditation is a form of self-governance and oversight, not dissimilar to other professional organizations such as the American Bar Association for lawyers and the American Medical Association for physicians.

The RACs review candidate institutions for accreditation, offering suggestions and recommendations and imposing sanctions as warranted. As such, accreditation is a forward-looking event, seeking both to verify the public's trust in higher-education institutions and also to provide guidance to help those institutions continue improving. The RACs' standards for student-learning assessment have evolved over time, moving steadily toward their current view of assessment as an essential and strategic tool for continual improvement of academic programs. This view is phrased succinctly by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (2003):

> . . . Assessment of educational quality has always been at the heart of the accreditation process. In earlier times, this assessment tended to focus more upon process measures and structural features; hence, there was considerable emphasis placed upon resources available to enhance students' educational experiences such as the range and variety of graduate degrees held by members of the faculty, the number of books in the library, the quality of specialized laboratory equipment, and the like. More recently, while still stressing the need to assess the quantity and quality of the whole educational experience, the communities of interest served by the accreditation enterprise have come to appreciate the validity and usefulness of using output evaluations and assessment as well as input measures. (p. 37)

Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness

Since 2003, the regional accrediting commissions have concurred on the essence of assessing student learning and assessment's relationship to the institution-level accreditation process. Under the auspices of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC) (2003) was formed with representatives from each of the six regional accrediting commissions, who agreed to adhere to the following four principles for documenting student learning:

1. Setting clear goals, which speak to both content and level of attainment;
2. Collecting evidence of goal attainment using appropriate assessment tools;
3. Applying collective judgment as to the meaning and utility of the evidence; and
4. Using this evidence to effect improvements in programs (p. 3).

Each of the RACs has assessment standards adhering to those four principles, though variations exist in the specific requirements each RAC expects of institutions seeking accreditation. For example, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (2003a) provides a student-learning criterion stating that "the organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission" (p. 6). To prove that it satisfies that criterion, the Higher Learning Commission (2005, p. 1) expects an institution to provide evidence, primarily direct measurement, answering the following questions:

1. How are your stated student-learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, degrees, and students?
2. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?
3. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
4. How do you ensure shared responsibility for student learning and assessment of student learning?
5. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) (2008) asserts that, to earn accreditation, an "institution achieves its institutional purposes and attains its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning. It demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively and that they support one another in the institution's efforts to attain educational effectiveness" (p. 20). Within this standard (Standard 2), WASC lists a number of "Criteria for Review" which must be met, some that focus on support for learning and the following that focus on assessment:

1. The institution's student-learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level.

2. The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members, including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders.
3. The institution's faculty take collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations. The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to achieve high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and on-going feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.
4. The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.
5. All programs offered by the institution are subject to systematic program review. The program review process includes analyses of the achievement of the program's learning objectives and outcomes, program retention and completion, and, where appropriate, results of licensing examination and placement and evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations (pp. 20-21).

In our last example, expectations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges (2008) go beyond solid assessment of student learning. This commission requires each institution to create a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the nature of which is to engage in a "comprehensive and thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the learning environment for supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution". An acceptable QEP has the following characteristics:

1. A focused topic (directly related to student learning).
2. Clear goals.
3. Adequate resources in place to implement the plan.
4. Evaluation strategies for determining the achievement of goals.
5. Evidence of community development and support of the plan (p. 21).

Regardless of the manner in which an institution must demonstrate student-learning assessment for its particular accrediting commission, all institutions of higher education must provide the following assessment information: student-learning outcomes, measurable evidence of learning success (whether quantitative or qualitative), analysis of that evidence, results of faculty deliberation of the results, systemic feedback, and action plans for curricular and/or programmatic changes as warranted by the assessment process.

Regarding assessment data gathered, all accrediting commissions seek evidence of student learning. That evidence can be direct, as in the form of exams, research projects, theses, performances, or well-constructed portfolios, or indirect, as in the form of student self-reports, satisfaction surveys, engagement surveys, or student participation rates in certain curricular and co-curricular events (Whittlesey, 2005, p. 12). In all cases, direct evidence is privileged over indirect evidence because the former provides demonstrations of student learning rather than student, alumni, or faculty beliefs and attitudes about presumed learning. When indirect measures are used, they must be accompanied by direct measures supporting results and conclusions drawn from indirect measures. (See following chapters for further discussions of assessment measures and data use.)

Emergent Themes

With such a pronounced focus on assessment of student learning, it is easy to lose sight of how that focus interacts with other themes common in the RACs' standards. The three over-arching themes across all of the RACs are: mission, learning, and institutional effectiveness. In an accreditation self-study document, institutions may write about each of those themes separately, but they need to fully address each theme in light of the others. This integration creates a meta-theme for the institutional self-study process: integrity.

The RACs strongly advocate that institutional mission matters. A starting point in the accreditation process for all institutions is to describe who they are and what they do. The assumption of the accrediting agencies is that colleges and universities are not a commodity. Rather, each institution exists for a unique purpose and has structures and operations to achieve that mission. Accordingly, faculty, staff, and student work in an institution should be connected in a clear and meaningful way to the institution's mission.

The first criterion for accreditation by North Central's Higher Learning Commission (2003b) represents this position quite well: "The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students" (p. 3.1-1). That criterion asks institutions to encompass the entire domain of what they do (the processes), how they are organized (the structures), and who does what (the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students). Starting the accreditation discussion with mission sets the stage for an institution to look at everything done in the school, then ask these two questions, "How does what we do help us achieve our mission?" and "If we cannot connect what we do to our mission, why then are we doing it?"

This theme grounds learning in traditional ways and then expands the "location" of learning beyond the classroom and faculty. Intense focus on assessment of student learning helps institutions provide evidence of student learning that occurs as faculty engage in their normal teaching processes. It also provides a venue to discuss what learning experts and student-affairs professionals long have asserted: a considerable amount of student learning occurs outside of the classroom.

With many faculty members working hard to ensure their disciplines' facts, theories, methods, and values are taught in an objective manner, it is not always clear to faculty where students will learn additional values and dispositions the institution espouses. However, student-affairs professionals, and faith-based institutions with campus-ministry units, assert that students learn—and enact—those values and dispositions through residence-hall programming, leadership activities, and direct service to others. If staff members and their programming are seen as a direct path to student learning, then they should be included in the assessment process to give the fullest view of student learning. The RACs expect that full view. Criterion 2.11 in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Handbook of Accreditation (2008) requires that, "consistent with its purposes, the institution develops and assesses its co-curricular programs" (p. 16).

Looking more closely at the wording of that criterion, notice that there is an expectation that co-curricular programs will be designed with learning goals in mind, as are academic programs. This requires the institution to design a specific process for students to learn beyond the classroom. Underlying this process is a paradigm in which faculty and staff work together to create a total learning experience for students, rather than assuming that students only learn in the domain of faculty and only live and play in the domain of student affairs staff. A first step to demonstrating co-curricular learning is to document that students learn across their experiences at the institution. The next step is to document the ways in which faculty and staff work together to develop and assess student learning across the institutional hierarchy (e.g., the division of student affairs and the division of academic affairs).

The attention to mission and to extension of student learning across the institution leads to the third theme: institutional effectiveness. Years ago, institutions could compile a descriptive list of resources (e.g., number of books in the library, number of faculty members, dollars spent per student on instruction) and compare their numbers to peer institutions and standardized lists to show that they were adequately resourced. The problem with that approach is that it does not actually demonstrate that the resources are being used well or that the work the resources support is achieving the institution's goals.

Instead, RACs expect institutions to show their effectiveness in light of institutional mission and student learning. For example, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's (MSCHE) (2006) Standard 7 states that, "The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards" (p. 25). Nationally the term "assessment" increasingly is limited to student learning, while "evaluation" is the term used to appraise all other parts of the institution, so it is unfortunate that MSCHE conflates assessment with evaluation in its statement. Still, the importance of this standard is clear: everything the institution does must be goal-directed toward its mission and must be integrated with all other aspects of the institution. The MSCHE further expects both learning assessment and institutional evaluation to be useful, cost-effective, reasonably-accurate and truthful, organized, systematized, and sustained (pp. 26-27).

The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (2003b) addresses institutional effectiveness by requiring each institution to demonstrate that its "allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities" (p. 3.1-3). The intent of this requirement is that institutions are goal directed, develop plans to achieve those goals, allocate resources according to those plans, and integrate evidence of student learning as a driver for planning and resource allocation—making student learning one of the central forces in planning, budgeting, and mission.

The meta-theme of integrity is addressed explicitly by each of the RACs. There is a unified, national expectation that institutions will engage the accreditation process openly, transparently, and fairly. More than that, there is an expectation that institutions will operate in an open, transparent, and fair manner. This is the theme driving the future of accreditation. All institutions have mission statements and most institutions work toward those missions in some way. Despite some faculty resistance to assessing student learning, assessment exists in most institutions. Institutional infrastructure, policies, and support mechanisms for assessment rapidly are developing and maturing at most institutions. Senior administration and boards of trustees and regents must have a keen eye for assessment, as well.

Similar to the resistance against assessment, some faculty fear the corporatization of the academy via the financial and operational analyses required to show institutional effectiveness. However, when faculty see those analytical tools applied to reallocate resources toward teaching and learning, in light of the institution's mission, their fear tends to dissipate. The brilliance of the RACs' requiring institutional integrity is that they are positing a "way of being" for institutions. To have integrity means that:

1. the institution is true to itself and to those it serves,
2. the institution looks carefully and keenly at what it does to see if it can be made to work better, and
3. the barriers preventing collaboration, information sharing, and trust building need to be dismantled.

Assessment of student learning is an integral part of that process. But it is not an end; it is one of the means to the ultimate end espoused by the RACs—institutions operating with optimal effectiveness for their students, faculty, staff, and communities.

Preparing for an Accreditation Site Visit

Preparation for an accreditation site visit essentially comes down to four questions: Why? How? Who? and Toward what end? The answer to the "why" question shows where on the compliance/self-reflection continuum the institution operates. The answer to the "how" question shows the level of transparency and integrity the institution enacts. The answer to the "who" question shows the level of inclusivity used by the institution. The answer to the "toward what end" question shows the extent to which the institution envisions an integrated or disparate future.

Why? When discussions about re-accreditation activities begin, faculty consider the requirements for accreditation in light of their institution's current practices. If assessment is applied inconsistently, or if the assessment loop is not implemented consistently and completely through the feedback and change stages, faculty naturally take an "accreditation is about compliance" point of view. The compliance viewpoint also is prevalent when faculty and staff perceive that planning and resourcing are not aligned with the institutional mission. In short, if faculty are not charged to improve the institution through student-learning assessment—and are not empowered to do so by appropriate budgeting—then accreditation appears hollow and compliance mentality ensues.

On the other hand, if an institution empowers faculty through student-learning assessment and institutional evaluation processes—and by linking budgeting to planning and mission—then accreditation becomes a process for renewal and growth. In this case, preparation for a site visit allows the institution to engage in integrated self-reflection for better understanding of what it does, how well it does it, and what it can improve. Individuals on an accreditation site-visit team are trained to discern if an institution is self-reflective or merely compliant. When they encounter the latter, their review becomes more critical because they know they are looking at a dis-integrated institution.

How? and Who? Practically speaking, these questions are inseparable. Does the institution prepare for the site visit by having an administrative team write the self-study documents, or by building broad-based mechanisms for campus-wide input and review? To get the most out of the self-study process, institutional leaders help all members of the institution understand how to use the self-study for institutional improvement in light of the institution's mission and goals. They build a systematic process that allows access to the process for every person with relevant information. They empower a core group of campus leaders with the authority to find and use all information about the institution, in a way that is fair, respectful, and future-oriented.

Traditionally, this is accomplished through a set of committees, each focusing on specific accreditation standards or criteria with a self-study organizing team coordinating committee efforts. Inclusivity is infused into the process when

these committees are populated by faculty, staff, and students from across the institution. Some institutions are finding they can achieve the same level of inclusivity by empowering a small number of people to conduct interviews and focus groups across the institution. These internal consultants use accreditation standards and criteria as the basis for their inquiries, but they allow others in the organization to build content for the self-study documents in their own words. It is the consultants' job to make sure that everyone with information has a say, that all evidence of learning and effectiveness is displayed and that all of this material is presented truthfully, in one voice. While the workload on the consultants is heavy, the workload on faculty is greatly diminished by the absence of numerous committees.

Toward what end? Is accreditation an end, or the means to an end? If the former, then a powerful opportunity is squandered. Regardless of an institution's RAC region, the accreditation standards and criteria are designed to help the institution align its goals, practices, and resource allocations. Given the bureaucratic nature of higher education, the inherent tensions between faculty and administrative governance, and the inadequate level of resources available to most institutions, this alignment is very difficult. But RAC assessment team members do no expect perfect alignment; they expect that institutions make progress toward alignment. Thus, accreditation and self-study processes provide the basis for organizing the institution around openness, transparency, truly shared governance, and goal-directed action.

Let us look at how this can play out with assessment. During the time between accreditation site visits, the administration should work openly with faculty and staff to build a campus-wide assessment process that is accurate, systematic, and not overly burdensome. In preparation for an upcoming accreditation site visit, faculty and staff—supported by administration—should document thoroughly the state of assessment practices, identify institutional initiatives designed to advance assessment and the use of assessment data, and identify the personnel and committees in place to assist with assessment.

While accreditation site visitors will look for this information, it has more value to the institution going forward. For example, RACs now want to see assessment websites articulating learning goals for each program and college, as well as the institution as a whole. Software designed specifically for this purpose is being adopted by campuses nationwide, providing consistency from program to program, with page templates detailing each academic program's goals, student-learning objectives, measurement methods, findings and analysis, follow-up action plans, and annual summary reports. Employing such assessment-reporting software allows faculty throughout the institution easily to access and learn from what is working in other areas of the institution. This can become a form of transparent institutional feedback to academic programs, which makes the assessment website a dynamic resource rather than a static collection of documents. An assessment website that includes campus assessment guidelines, how-to's, and best-practices information also helps demystify the practice of assessment. Such web pages can hold all of the assessment information an accrediting commission wants to see. They also help the institution's constituents understand the campus' assessment strengths and weaknesses, allowing focus where attention most is needed.

Likewise, the institution needs to focus attention on review of the processes by which assessment, planning, and budgeting are linked campus-wide. Strong research evidence produced over the past several decades reveals that when an institution integrates assessment—and the data it generates—into academic support, student support, and budgeting systems, a robust culture of assessment can be developed and sustained (Banta, 2004). This institutional review seeks to find and describe all cases of disconnected assessment, planning, and budgeting—not to affix blame, but to identify any weaknesses so they can be corrected.

Remember that the purpose of assessment is to stimulate student-learning improvement as a result of the review process. Changes that can be made immediately should be made; changes that cannot yet be made should be documented and incorporated in future plans. Doing so moves the institution a giant step forward toward re-accreditation. More importantly, it lays a solid foundation upon which effective teaching, learning, and other essential institutional outcomes are grounded.

References

Banta, T. W. (2004). Documenting the impact of assessment. *Assessment Update, 16*(6), 3, 10, 13, 16.

Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions. (2003). *Regional accreditation and student learning: Principles for good practices*. Chicago: Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. (2006). *Characteristics of excellence in higher education: Eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation*. Philadelphia: Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. (2005). *Standards for accreditation*. Bedford, MA: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. (2003). *Accreditation handbook*. Redmond, WA: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Southern Association of Schools and Colleges: Commission on Colleges. (2008). *The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement*. Decatur, GA: Commission on Colleges.

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. (2005, Apr.). *Student learning, assessment, and accreditation*. Chicago: The Higher Learning Commission.

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. (2003a). *Institutional accreditation: An overview*. Chicago: The Higher Learning Commission.

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. (2003b). *Handbook of accreditation (3rd ed.)*. Chicago, IL: The Higher Learning Commission.

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *Accreditation in the United States: Overview of accreditation*. Retrieved September 24, 2008 from http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation.html#Overview

Western Association of Schools and Colleges. (2008, January). *Handbook of accreditation*. Alameda, CA: Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Whittlesey, V. (2005). Student learning outcomes assessment and the disciplinary accrediting organizations. *Assessment Update, 17*(4), 10-12.

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Rebecca Wolfe, Cornerstone University
Gay Wakefield, Tarleton State University

Purpose and Preview

The previous chapter described a major external force in the assessment movement; the present chapter focuses on assessment's role in a significant aspect of the internal workings of the university—assessment in the planning process. Planning is an integral part of the accreditation process, and colleges and universities that regularly integrate these two essential processes greatly improve their program quality (Astin, 1991; Banta & Associates, 2002; Nichols, 1989).

Institutional effectiveness hinges on effectual strategic planning, assessment plans are an essential component of strategic planning, and reinforcement and linkage are critical elements of assessment plans. As displayed in the box below, the mission and goals of each college must reinforce and link directly to the university's mission and goals, and the mission and goals of each academic department must reinforce and link directly to its college's mission and goals. Once missions and goals are established for each unit, every objective created needs to reinforce and link directly to at least one unit goal.

Reinforcement and Linkage

University Mission
⇑
University Goals each reinforce and link directly to University Mission.

⇑

College Mission reinforces and links directly to University Mission,
⇑
College Goals each reinforce and link directly to College Mission, and
⇑
College Objectives each reinforce and link directly to College Goals.

⇑

Departmental Mission reinforces and links directly to College Mission,
⇑
Departmental Goals each reinforce and link directly to Departmental Mission, and
⇑
Departmental Objectives each reinforce and link directly to Departmental Goals.

At the departmental level, two types of plans are developed: department-effectiveness plans and student-learning assessment plans.

Department-Effectiveness Plans. Department-effectiveness objectives relate generally to administrative aspects of the department (budgeting, recruiting/retention, advising, faculty production, facilities, personnel changes, student/faculty ratios, credit-hour production, program review/development, etc.). Progress regarding each year's objectives is a significant component of the department's annual report for that year and informs the department's action plan and objectives for the following year. Many university systems require routine unit reviews every few years and department-effectiveness plans and reports supply information essential to those reviews. Chapter 8 focuses on departmental effectiveness and its relationship to the program-review process.

Student-Learning Assessment Plans. Student-learning objectives (SLOs) for each academic program direct program faculty's annual measurement of progress toward SLOs, including data collection, findings analysis, and implications for program improvement. The annual process loop closes with developing a plan to put those improvements into action, revising SLOs for the following year, and providing a summary report to the department as a whole. Each program's summary report informs the department's annual report for that year and may affect the department's action plan and objectives for the following year. Chapter 5 provides an example of linkage between program goals, SLOs, and measurement tools, and Chapter 7 describes how assessment results can be used for program, curriculum, and faculty development.

The concept of a student-learning assessment plan is fairly basic: faculty plan to assess evidence of student learning. The idea of educational planning is not new. Faculties have developed student-learning plans since the conception of the teaching profession. However, in the age of accreditation and assessment, the factors, causes, and guidelines for planning are increasingly multifaceted and continually growing in requirements and sophistication. Regional and specialized accreditation agencies sometimes use terms and phrases that are vague and open to interpretation, and the requirements for planning and assessment often are perceived by faculty as extra work passed down by administrators, adding to faculties' usual and customary teaching, research, and service duties.

Despite these perceptions, assessment planning does not have to be unnatural or an add-on process. This book already has familiarized you with key terms and elements of assessment. This chapter will assist you in putting those pieces together into a coherent, practical assessment plan.

Determining a Mission Statement

The process of planning for department effectiveness or for student-learning assessment is no different than the process of planning a vacation. The first component of any good plan is a vision of the desired outcome. What makes a "good" vacation? How do you discern a good vacation from a bad vacation? People take vacations for different reasons—inspiration, relaxation, pleasure, etc. Based on their expectations, they choose a place to vacation. Not everyone would choose the same location, because their expectations are not the same. This concept holds true with planning for department effectiveness or for student-learning assessment. A department or program faculty must have a vision, and their vision likely will differ from visions of other faculties at different colleges—even in the same discipline. In most organizations, the desired vision is declared in a mission statement.

The mission statement concisely articulates a clear vision of the desired future. It serves as an anchor to keep a department or organization from losing its purpose and drifting, and it should correlate with the program's official catalog description. As an anchor, the mission statement provides stability, yet also allows some flexibility. A degree of flexibility is important in our rapidly changing world, and for this reason a mission statement does not discuss methods to accomplish the vision. Successful vision statements include passion and vision for the desired future, as exemplified in the example below.

Step One: Mission Statement Example

The mission of the Communication and Media Studies Division is to instruct, equip, and mentor students to engage the marketplace of ideas in strategic and creative ways as skilled professionals and agents of reconciliation.

The following template is included in Tarleton State University's online campus assessment guide (2009b):

The mission of [*insert name of program here*] is to [*academic programs insert primary educational purpose here—for example, to provide certain types of skills such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, writing or communication skills, or broad background/theoretical foundation in a certain academic discipline (art history, biology, philosophy, sociology, etc.; departments/budgetary units insert primary functional purpose here—for example, to provide certain types of services such as lab facilities, student support, training, etc.*] (p.1).

A good mission statement will not be written in one brief meeting. The group writing the mission must consider the unit's core values and goals and must be sure the unit's mission directly supports mission statements held more broadly by the institution. The mission statement should be clear and concise. For a divisional/departmental assessment plan, this mission statement should reflect accurately the desired vision of a collective group of faculty. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that one or two people can accomplish this purpose for the entire academic unit. As Alexander Hamilton said, "[People] often oppose a thing merely because they have had no agency in planning it, or because it may have been planned by those whom they dislike."

A mission statement, and assessment planning in general, will be most successful when the process includes all stakeholders equally. Achieving a consensus requires time for discussion and collaboration, but time invested in the communication process is well worth the effort—both in the process of writing the statement and in promotion of the finished product. Promotion of the mission statement is essential to its value, whether in large-scale promotion, on the Web, or in materials used for marketing.

Determining Program Goals

Once the vision is defined clearly, the second step is developing goals that support the program mission. Goals consist of a few long-term, big-picture statements of what the program's faculty members expect the program to accomplish over the next few years. Goals should be clearly and concisely stated and must support the program's stated mission. For programs offered on more than one campus or via alternate delivery modes, at least one goal should focus on obtaining comparable results for multiple campuses/delivery modes in order to meet accreditation demands. The following box provides an example.

Step Two: Program Goals Example

1. *Students will learn the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for professional employment in the field, assuring equal preparation on the main campus and on the branch campus.*
2. *Students will learn to solve professional problems strategically and creatively, assuring equal preparation on the main campus and on the branch campus.*
3. *Students will learn to act as agents of reconciliation, assuring equal preparation on the main campus and on the branch campus.*

The assessment-plan review form for goals that appears on the next page was adapted from one that Tarleton State University's (2009a) Academic Assessment Committee developed to guide faculty in developing effective goals.

Example: Assessment Plan Review Form for Goals

ASSESSMENT PLAN REVIEW FORM

Goals

Please rate criteria according to this scale: **S = satisfactory**

R = revise

	Clearly supports program mission	Clearly stated	Long-term in nature (≥ 2 yrs)	Adequately addresses multiple campuses and alternate delivery modes, if applicable
Program Goal No. 1				
Program Goal No. 2				
Program Goal No. 3				
Program Goal No. 4				
Program Goal No. 5				

Determining Student-Learning Objectives

Once the academic goals are in place, the next step is identifying student-learning objectives that make the goals operational. SLOs are those student-centered statements that describe how the program faculty will know whether students actually learned what the program faculty expected them to learn. Student-learning objectives consist of short-term statements regarding the specific sets of knowledge, skills, and attitudes the programs' faculty expects students to exhibit over the year. As noted in Chapter 1, student-learning objectives comprise a primary aspect of assessment examined by regional accrediting bodies. As exhibited in the example below, model SLOs are written in the following format: "Upon completion of _____ [*insert course, major, minor, degree program, etc*.], students will . . ."

Step Three: Summative Student-Learning Objectives Example

(loosely adapted from Monmouth College)

Upon completion of a communication arts major, students will:

1. *Construct effective oral and written messages by using appropriate theory and supporting materials. (linked to goals 1 and 2)*
2. *Evaluate the historical and cultural contexts (i.e., political, legal, social) of communication practices. (linked to goal 1)*
3. ***Evaluate messages from a variety of media competently, using multiple methods.*** *(linked to goals 1 and 2)*
4. *Demonstrate proficient oral communication within multiple contexts. (linked to goals 1, 2, 3)*

On the next page is a form adapted from one at Tarleton State University (2009a). It is designed to guide program faculty in assuring that their objectives—whether for department-effectiveness evaluation or for student-learning assessment—are designed well. This chart also includes guidelines to assure chosen measures are matched closely with the SLOs to which they are linked, which we address in the next section.

Once the complete set of student-learning objectives is created, faculty should choose only a small number (1-3) of SLOs to assess each year (as indicated by bold type in the example above). Attempting to assess everything at once can be overwhelming and often undermines faculty buy-in for assessment. Assessment is a process that takes time to do well. Faculty members have only so much energy and the pool of students to test and survey is limited, so a plan that is too aggressive leads to both faculty members' and students' burnout and interest loss. For additional information on the role of student-learning outcomes in assessment programs, and principles for developing SLOs, see Chapter 4.

Determining Appropriate Measures

The next step is identifying appropriate measures to assess student learning. Measures can include portfolios, projects, tests, papers, presentations, feedback from internship supervisors, and many other types of evidence. Remember that the purpose is to measure actual student learning against the selected SLO. For additional information on different types of assessment measures and their benefits and drawbacks, consult Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Be sure to choose assessment measures with the intended audience in mind. Most colleges and universities have three broad constituency groups: the university itself [administration, faculty, staff, parents, students]; the legislative community [federal and state regulative groups and accreditation commissions]; and the disciplinary bodies that publish general guidelines concerning what should be taught [National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), American Medical Association (AMA), etc.]. Much of the focus in the modern assessment movement has been on making sure that the legislative community is satisfied, but successful assessment plans focus equally on all three groups.

Evaluations for the unit itself often are indirect—surveys of student satisfaction, review of faculty syllabi; assessments that make sure the university is true to its mission and stated objectives. Others, such as reviews of academic programs, are direct and involve student-learning assessment plans. For student-learning assessment, every SLO must have at least one direct measure; increasingly, assessment experts insist on two direct measures. Indirect measures also may be used for supplementary information, but are not acceptable as the basis for curricular decisions.

The movement among accrediting commissions is for "triangulation" of assessment measures, requiring that results of at least two measures point to the same conclusion for every SLO. Using two direct measures, supplemented by an additional direct or indirect measure, for each student-learning objective nearly guarantees that two of the findings will reinforce one another. This is not as overwhelming as it might sound, since a single measure (such as summative portfolios, senior projects and presentations, exit exams, etc.) usually apply to more than one SLO—so long as relevant aspects of the findings are reported for each SLO separately. This is analogous to completing one research project incorporating multiple factors and then reporting on each factor separately. For additional insights on triangulation, see Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 9.

A misconception frequently held by novice assessors is that course grades will suffice as direct measures, but this is a faulty assumption. If grades served as acceptable program assessment measures, there would be no assessment movement. There are a number of reasons that grades are not acceptable measures in academic assessment plans, but two are dominant. First, grade inflation and similar problems have deteriorated the meaning of course grades in the minds of the public, legislators, and accreditation teams, rendering them impotent as measures. Second, course grades normally summarize scores on a variety of assignment types and tests over the class term, making them global reports of students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes on an assortment of course topics—rather than targeted measures of programmatic student-learning outcomes. Instead, accountability for the program's effectiveness requires selection of measures specifically gauging student progress toward each student-learning objective being assessed.

Example: Assessment Plan Review Form for Objectives

ASSESSMENT PLAN REVIEW FORM

Objectives

Please rate criteria according to this scale: **S = satisfactory**

R = revision needed

Objective No. ☐

	If SLO, check which of following is expected from students:	Clearly supports one or more program goals	Clearly stated	Short-term in nature (≤ 1 year)	Clearly measurable	Desired output obvious	Strategies clearly lead to desired output	Adequately addresses multiple campuses & alternate delivery modes
Check Type of Objective								
Student Learning	Knowledge							
Departmental	Skill							
	Attitude							
	Not clear							

		Directly measures desired outcome	Realistic performance criteria	Challenging performance criteria
Related Measure No.				
Related Measure No.				
Related Measure No.				

Accountability assessment for the legislative community is a formal process. State and regional accreditation requirements vary, so it is important that assessment planners are well informed of the specific requirements associated with the institution's home-state regulations and regional accrediting policies. The primary concern of accrediting agencies is that the institution adheres to and sustains its assessment plan over time, especially focusing on use of findings to improve future student learning (Indiana State University; Michigan State University, 1996). For more insight regarding regional accrediting commissions, see Chapter 2.

Assessing against a professional body of knowledge, skills, and values is relatively easy to accomplish. Summative assessments fall into this category and encompass such instruments as subject-specific tests from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Major Field Tests by Educational Testing Service (ETS), and other more specialized tests, such as Area Concentrated Achievement Tests (ACAT) offering flexible-content pre-post tests for a variety of majors. Professional exams such as those for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) or Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) also fall into this category. The major benefit of such standardized examinations is that they are externally validated. Some disciplinary groups, including the National Communication Association, also offer common learning objectives, rubrics, and other guides to assist its members in identifying appropriate measures.

Each of the three major assessment audiences—university, legislative community, and disciplinary bodies—must be persuaded of the program's efficacy. Hence, it is best to adopt measures applicable to all three whenever possible. Some agencies, like the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC), or the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), provide additional accreditation in specific fields. These discipline-specific accreditation agencies operate in much the same way as the regional accrediting bodies, periodically sending reviewers on campus visits to ensure that the standards of the discipline are being upheld. Such accreditation is based on summative assessment, which is the initial and primary focus of most academic assessment programs. An example appears in the box below.

Step Four: Summative Measures Example

Linked to SLO #3
Upon completion of a communication arts major, students will evaluate messages from a variety of media competently, using multiple methods.

Media studies course [COM 223]	*Students will begin portfolios that they will add to in future courses. For this course, students will analyze two public service announcements and evaluate their effectiveness for behavior change.*
Film studies course [COM 231]	*Students will write two- to four-page critiques evaluating a current film to add to their portfolios.*
Argumentation course [COM 334]	*Students will write one- to two-page analyses of a student debate they have observed in class to add to their portfolios.*
Senior seminar [COM 415]	*Portfolios will be assessed by at least two program faculty members, employing the portfolio rubric developed by the program faculty.*

For programs employing formative assessment as well as summative assessment, it is important to choose measures accordingly. Some courses introduce students to a topic, but the knowledge/skill/attitude addressed is not fully developed or mastered until later in the program. Assessment in such courses should employ formative assessment measures leading up to the program's summative measures. Care must be taken to use the tools accordingly. For example, in a freshman public speaking class, faculty may want to expose students to debate. Notice that the fourth objective designated for assessment (in the SLO example presented earlier in this chapter) is to demonstrate proficient oral communication within multiple contexts. Also observe that the SLO statement begins at the top of the chart with "Upon completion of a major in communication arts, students will . . ."—making this a summative, rather than formative, student-learning objective. But sometimes it is beneficial to know what levels of accomplishment students reach at various key points throughout the program. For this reason, at least on departmental or internal literature, some faculty prefer to include formative student-learning benchmarks that students should achieve on their way to the program's summative student-learning outcomes.

Following is another form adapted from Tarleton State University's (2009a) assessment program. This one guides program faculty in assuring that measures are delineated clearly and that the process for administering them is defined. This document combines with the measures portion of the Tarleton form for objectives (displayed in the previous section of this chapter) to provide a full picture regarding planned measures. Note also that the measures portion of the Tarleton objectives form addresses the need to establish performance targets that, in addition to being well matched to SLOs, are both realistic and challenging.

Example: Assessment Plan Review Form for Measures

ASSESSMENT PLAN REVIEW FORM

Measures

Please rate criteria according to this scale: **S = satisfactory**

R = revise

	Measure clearly defined	Clearly states who does data gathering	Clearly states time period for data gathering	Clearly states process for off-campus/alternate delivery-mode data gathering, if applicable
Measure No. 1				
Measure No. 2				
Measure No. 3				
Measure No. 4				
Measure No. 5				

Developing Performance Criteria

After establishing the manner in which you will assess students, the next phase is to determine performance criteria. For example, must all students meet the requirements 100% of the time? Is it acceptable if 85% of students meet the requirements 65% of the time? Performance targets must be set and well-documented in the assessment plan. Factors to be considered when determining performance criteria include: (a) the type of students admitted to the university, (b) the level of achievement in required classes, and (c) the performance level that demonstrates acceptable competence. Another way to determine a performance target is to tie outgoing student performance to incoming performance, such as expecting a 30% increase in scores on a performance rubric. Of course, this approach requires determining pre-instruction performance levels as a benchmark for later comparison. See the box below for a performance-criteria example related to the SLO example we are considering in this chapter.

Step Five: Performance Criteria Example

SLO #3
Upon completion of a major in communication arts, students will evaluate messages from a variety of media using multiple methods.

Measure
Portfolios will be assessed by at least two program faculty members, employing the portfolio rubric developed by the program faculty.

Performance Criteria
100% of students will score a combined average of at least 4 out of 5 on the program's portfolio rubric.

For the first year of assessment implementation, some programs choose not to include performance criteria in their plans. Instead, the first year's data establish the benchmarks for determining realistic and challenging performance criteria for the next year. This generally is acceptable to accrediting bodies, as long as the approach is made clear and data are collected in that first year and used to set clear performance criteria for the next year.

Developing Curriculum Maps

Once the assessment plan is in place, the next step is to check it against the reality of how the academic program currently grooms students to meet the established objectives. Curriculum mapping provides visual representation of that reality, identifying where in the curriculum content related to each SLO should begin, continue, and culminate.

The curriculum map is a chart indicating which of the academic program's student-learning outcomes are being addressed, to what extent, and how often. Curriculum mapping exhibits whether an objective is "introduced", "developed" and/or "mastered" within a given course. This analysis allows the program's faculty to see quickly and easily whether the program curriculum is cohesive, providing systematic progress toward desired student-learning outcomes. The map reveals any content gaps in the program that could make it difficult for students to meet the SLO performance criteria. Curriculum maps also reveal whether an objective is getting "overkill" in the program. Such revelations from curriculum maps often drive some curricular revision even before assessment data are collected and evaluated.

Since academic programs rely on required courses to achieve summative objectives—those major, overriding SLOs essential for all program graduates—elective courses are not included in curriculum maps. All required courses, whether housed within or outside of the department, should be included in curriculum mapping. If the program also requires co-curricular participation of students, separate from required courses, that information also should be included on the program's curriculum map. Activities included within a required course would not fall into this category, since they are included via mapping of that course. But if the program requires something in addition to required coursework—fulfilled or submitted separate from mapped courses—then that requirement should be on the map (i.e., exit exams, attendance at professional conferences, etc., if not part of a required course).

The sample Curriculum Map below indicates that objectives one and five are cultivated well in this hypothetical program, objective three is acceptably nurtured, objective two is orphaned after the developmental level, and objective four expects student mastery in an area that is neither introduced nor developed prior to the capstone course. This information helps the program's faculty identify needed changes in master syllabi and related faculty syllabi. For additional insights about curriculum mapping, and an alternate format for creating a map, consult Chapter 5.

Example: Curriculum Map

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP

Required Courses & Activities	SLO 1	SLO 2	SLO 3	SLO 4	SLO 5
101	I				I
152		I			I
201	D		I		D
220	D		D		D
310		D			
238	M				M
410			D/M		
480 (capstone)	M		M	M	M
Conference Presentation	M			M	M

I=Introduced, D=Developed, M=Mastered

Adapted from Allen (2004).

Developing Implementation Plans

After performance criteria are set, the primary components of your plan are in place. The next critical step is to plan its implementation. Who will be responsible for each piece of the plan? Remember that assessment should be part of each faculty member's role, not simply the responsibility of the unit chair. Who will handle logistics of instrument administration? When and how will program faculty analyze the findings? How will the results be communicated to those inside and outside of the institution? What access should students have to the information? Who will manage the data?

The following charts lay out some different ways to think through the process of planning and reporting. The first chart is common to many universities, designating where in the program each objective is assessed, what evidence is measured, and criteria for successful performance. Notice that both formative and summative assessments are included, with higher-level courses requiring an increase in percentage of students able to meet the summative objective. Lower-level courses, including general-education courses, will be populated by many students who do not intend to enter the communication field or who determine early in the program that they are not cut out to be communication majors. So proficiency for lower-level courses may be set at a minimally acceptable level. Once students are into the upper-level courses, they must demonstrate higher levels of proficiency in the discipline.

For this Assessment Plan chart, all student-learning objectives are listed. This is just an example. Remember that it is best to start assessment gradually to avoid faculty and student burnout. For the first couple of years, you may want to assess only one or two of the objectives. You also might want to rotate objectives so that a few are assessed each year. Either way, remember that accreditation teams expect to see at least two years' results for each objective.

The weakness of this first chart is that it does not provide room for results reporting and action plan designation, nor does it list the party responsible for each assessment or the timetable. So the Assessment Report and Action Plan chart below may be preferred (only the first SLO is delineated in this second chart). However, this format can become cumbersome in a graphic format, so some assessors may prefer to use the first chart for goals and then attach a page for each course that lists the specifics of implementation and results. A sample addendum for courses listed under an SLO might look similar to the example that follows.

Example: Assessment Plan

Assessment Plan for Communication and Media Studies Division

Mission

The Communication and Media Studies Division exists to instruct, equip, and mentor students to engage the marketplace of ideas in strategic and creative ways as skilled professionals and agents of reconciliation.

Student-Learning Objectives	Course Correlation	Evidence of Accomplishment of Objectives	Validation/Assessment of Evidence (Criteria and Means for Assessment)
1. Construct effective oral and written messages by using appropriate theory and supporting materials.	COM 101	Formal oral presentation with written outline and references	90% of students will see an increase of at least 30% from the first speech to the second
	COM 223	Two varying oral presentations, one public speech, one media-based presentation (audio or video)	90% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on the public speaking rubric and on the appropriate rubric for the media-based presentation
	COM 315	Essay exam on philosophy and theory of communication	85% of students will score an 85% or higher
	COM 334	Debate presentation with both oral and written argumentation	85% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on both the oral and written debate rubrics
	COM 415	Portfolio	100% of students will demonstrate proficiency (a combined average of 4 or higher) on at least one document from each major class
2. Evaluate the historical and cultural contexts (i.e., political, legal, social) of communication practices.	COM 334	One section of the written debate materials must include a two page analysis of context for the debate issue	85% of students will score a four or higher on the context analysis section of the rubric
	COM 342	Paper analyzing foreign culture communication and facilitation of a group exercise that incorporates communication practices from multiple cultures	90% of students will score a combined average of four or higher on the analytical paper; 95% of students will incorporate the six principles of intercultural communication into their group activity
	COM 415	Senior thesis must include a section (3-5 pages) on the context of the research question	100% of students will score a 4 or higher on the context section of the senior thesis

3. Evaluate messages from a variety of media using multiple methods.	COM 101	Quizzes on evaluating messages	75% of students will score an 80% or higher
	COM 224	Quizzes on evaluating messages from specific media using three different methods of evaluation Peer evaluation of debates	85% of students will score an 85% or higher
	COM 334	Peer evaluation of group exercise facilitation	90% of students will score an 85% or higher on the peer analysis scoring guide
	COM 342	Comprehensive examination containing an essay section on evaluation given a multiple	90% of students will score an 85% or higher on the peer analysis scoring guide
	COM 415	messages in different media and a method of evaluation	100% of students will score an 85% or higher on the evaluation section of the exam
4. Demonstrate proficient oral communication within multiple contexts.	COM 101	Public speaking presentation	80% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on the public speaking rubric
	COM 223	Media presentation, audio or video	90% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on the appropriate rubric for the media-based presentation
	COM 251	Role-playing through interpretation of literature or theatre	90% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on their final presentation
	COM 334	Debate presentation	85% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on the oral debate rubric
	COM 415	Video and/or audio segments of the portfolio	100% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on at least 4 of the 5 video and/or audio segments of the portfolio

Example: Assessment Report and Action Plan

Assessment Report and Action Plan for Communication and Media Studies Division

Mission

The Communication and Media Studies Division exists to instruct, equip and mentor students to engage the marketplace of ideas in strategic and creative ways as skilled professionals and agents of reconciliation.

	Course Correlation	**Evidence of Accomplishment of Objectives**	**Validation/ Assessment of Evidence (Criteria and Means for Measurement)**	**Timetable for Completion and *Person Responsible for Compiling results***	**Data Summary**	**Recommen-dations**
1. Construct effective oral and written messages by using appropriate theory and supporting materials.	COM 101	Formal oral presentation with written outline and references the first speech to the second	90% of students will see an increase of at least 30% from *Course coordinator*	First speech 9/25; second speech by 11/13 by 39.4%	92% of students' scores increased	None
	COM 223	Two oral presentations, one public speech one media-based presentation (audio or video)	90% of students will score a combined average of 4 or higher on the public speaking rubric and on the appropriate rubric for the media-based presentation	12/1 *A Professor J. Teacher (2 of the COM 223) professors)*	94% w/a 4+ on public speaking; 62% w/a 4+ on media-based presentation	More emphasis on media-based presentation
	COM 315	Essay exam on philosophy and theory of communication	85% of students will score an 85% or higher	Exam given 12/6 Report by 1/6 *R. Professor*	71% w/an 85%+	Add weekly quizzes or reports on reading
	COM 334	Debate presentation with both oral and written argumentation	85% of students will score a combined average of 4 or highter on both the oral and written debate rubruics	Results compiled by semester's end *B. Instructor*	93% w/a 4+ on oral rubric; 80% w/a 4+ on written rubric	Meet with freshman composition coordinator to tie in methods learned in Eng. Comp.
	COM 415	Portfolio	100% of students will demonstrate proficiency (a combined average of 4 or higher on at least one document from each class	Portfolios reviewd by 11/15 *Rotating panel of 3 communication professors*	97% of students achieved proficiency	Most weaknesses seen in COM 223; review results after changes *above are* implemented

Example: SLO Course Addendum for Implementation and Results

Student-Learning Objective:
Construct effective oral and written messages by using appropriate theory and supporting materials.

Course: COM 101

Student outcome:
Formal oral presentation with written outline and references

Performance criteria:
90% of students will see an increase of at least 30% from the first speech to the second

Selection of sample:
For this assessment, all grades of students in each section of COM 101 will be used.

Timetable for completion:
The total scores for the first round of speeches will be entered and reported to the course coordinator by September 25; the second round by November 13.

Person responsible for completion: Each faculty member teaching COM 101 will be responsible to get the results from their sections to the course coordinator on time. The course coordinator will be responsible for compiling the results and reporting those results to the faculty members teaching the course. The course coordinator and the faculty then will discuss recommendations for the next assessment plan. Once the results and recommendations have been finalized, course coordinator will report the results to the Communication Division Chair.

Assessment Results:

Overall: 92% of students' scores increased by 39.4%
Average increase per student: 61.3%

Section 01: 96% of students' scores increased by 35%
Average increase per student: 54.2%
Section 02: 90% of students' scores increased by 32%
Average increase per student: 45%
Section 03: 98% of students' scores increased by 38%
Average increase per student: 74%

[And so on, for all sections]

Recommendations based on the evidence:

No changes in curriculum appear necessary at this time.

However, as we completed this assessment, we realized that there is another piece of assessment necessary. Some sections of the course, such as section 3, increased significantly, but began at a much lower percentage (41.6%). Other sections, such as section 2, began with a much higher class average (71.3%), and consequently did not increase as much. For next year's assessment plan, we will keep the first validation of accomplishment and add a second validation that 75% of students will receive a 4 or higher on the public speaking rubric.

The second chart provides the added benefit of results and action plans appearing on the same page with a comprehensive implementation plan. This chart also incorporates essential assessment logistics regarding when each measure is administered and by whom, Horizontal layout of this chart could allow additional columns designating who will oversee statistical analysis, deadlines for data review, and other information faculty deem necessary or useful. The next chart provides similar information, but in a narrative style that also could be expanded to include additional pertinent categories of information.

Other charts also can aid with assessment planning, such as task maps or assessment calendars. These are supplements to assessment planning and help program faculty stay on track in their assessment efforts. The task maps below include a basic list of assessments to complete, and give the cycle for repeating assessments regularly over the span of time between accreditation visits. This length of time does not mean that assessments may not change during that period. The span of years simply allows one to see the overall flow of assessment over time.

Following these three implementation plans is a student-learning outcomes map representing the assessment plan's sustainability over time, an important aspect of assessment planning from the viewpoint of regional accrediting agencies. This example indicates which SLOs will be assessed in each year over a decade's time. The measurements task map that appears next provides similar display of the years in which each approved measurements will be used in assessment.

Example: SLO Sustainability Task Map

Communication and Media Studies Division Assessment Task Map
(2011-2021)

Assessments	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
1. Construct effective oral and written messages by using appropriate theory and supporting materials.	X				X				X	
2. Evaluate the historical and cultural contexts (i.e., political, legal, social) of communication practices.		X				X				X
3. Evaluate messages from a variety of media competently, using multiple methods.			X				X			
4. Demonstrate proficient oral communication within multiple contexts				X				X		

Example: Measurements Task Map

Communication and Media Studies Division Assessment Task Map

(2011-2021)

Assessments	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
1. Freshman Speech pretest	X				X				X	
2. Senior Speech post-test				X				X		
3. Argumentation and Debate campus presentations			X				X			
4. Senior Thesis presentation		X				X				X
5. Senior Portfolio review	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

An assessment calendar like the final example in this section also lists the measurement activities carried out each year. However, it is restricted to a one-year look at assessment tasks to be completed in a single assessment cycle and stipulates specifically which courses will be used for data collection and each measure being employed during that year's assessment cycle. This type of assessment calendar is revised annually after the action plan is completed and assessment-plan changes for the following year are agreed upon by program faculty. Naturally, a corresponding long-term measurements task map, similar to the one directly above, provides the foundation for development of the annual assessment calendar.

Example: One-Year Assessment Calendar

January

COM 315 Exam reporting
COM 415 Sr. thesis review
Comp. exam report
Portfolio examination

February

COM 101 First speech
COM 223 Media rubric results

March

COM 334 Context analysis
Peer evaluation
COM 342 Analytical paper

April

COM 101 Second speech
COM 224 Quiz results
COM 251 Theatre rubric eval.
COM 342 Group exercise
COM 415 Portfolio eval.

May

COM 101 Quiz results
COM 223 Rubric results
COM 315 Comp. exam given
COM 334 Rubric results
COM 415 Comp. exam given

June

COM 315 Exam reporting
COM 415 Sr. thesis review
Comp. exam report
Portfolio examination

July

Complete Divisional Assessment Report

August

Update Divisional Assessment Plan

September

COM 101 First speech
COM 223 Media rubric results

October

COM 334 Context analysis
Peer evaluation
COM 342 Analytical paper

November

COM 101 Second speech
COM 224 Quiz results
COM 251 Theatre rubric eval.
COM 342 Group exercise
COM 415 Portfolio eval.

December

COM 101 Quiz results
COM 223 Rubric results
COM 315 Comp. exam given
COM 334 Rubric results
COM 415 Comp. exam given

Developing Action Plans

After program faculty analyze the findings and resulting implications for program improvement, they develop action plans to put those improvements into place (like those exhibited in examples found in the preceding section). For performance targets that are not met, or met only partially, action plans focus on assuring more progress in the future by developing new strategies, adjusting current strategies or measures, modifying course requirements, or making other relevant changes. For performance targets that are met, action plans indicate whether the program will continue current activities, raise the performance target, focus on a different objective for the next year, etc.

Action plans also include alterations planned for objectives, measures, performance criteria, or other aspects of the assessment plan. Be sure to include the deadline for completion and the responsible party for carrying out each planned action. If an action requires resources, discuss whether these are new or reallocated resources, how those resources will be used, and what is planned if the resources are unavailable (e.g., lowering a performance target might be necessary). When the action plan is completed, a summary report should be provided to the department as a whole. Chapter 7 describes how assessment results can be used for program and curriculum improvement and addresses related aspects of faculty development.

Conclusion

More than one university has spent a great deal of wasted time and energy implementing an ineffectual assessment plan, then been forced to backtrack and redesign what actually was inoperative from the beginning. This chapter has described the role of assessment in planning and the basic process of developing an effective assessment plan, which does much to ensure successful assessment and saves faculty and administration needless work and frustration. Time and energy spent on refining the initial assessment plan is time well spent, and this book is intended to assist you in designing your assessment processes effectively from the beginning. Toward that end, the next chapter continues our discussion regarding academic assessment's critical element of student-learning objectives.

References

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Astin, A. (1991). *Assessment for excellence.* New York: Macmillan.

Banta, T. & Associates. (2002). *Building a scholarship of assessment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hamilton, A. (n.d.). Quote DB. Retrieved May 18, 2006 from http://www.quotedb.com/ quotes/1597.

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. (2003). *Handbook of accreditation (3rd ed.)*. Chicago: The Higher Learning Commission, 3.1-4.

Indiana State University. (n.d.). *Writing an assessment plan: Guidelines for implementation.* Retrieved May 15, 2006 from http://www.indstate.edu/acad-aff/assessment/ writing_an_assessment_plan.pdf.

Michigan State University. (1996). *Fulfilling higher education's covenant with society: The emerging outreach agenda.* Retrieved July 17, 2006 from http://www.msu.edu/ ~partners/pubs/capstone/ch4_2.html.

Monmouth College. (2006). *Learning objectives for communication and theatre arts majors.* Retrieved May 18, 2006 from http://department.monm.edu/CATA/learning-objectives.htm.

Nichols, J. (1989). *Institutional effectiveness and outcomes assessment implementation on campus.* New York: Agathon.

Tarleton State University. (2009a). *Assessment rubrics*. Retrieved March 13, 2009 from http://www.tarleton.edu/ ~academicassessment/weave/WEAVERubrics.xls.

Tarleton State University. (2009b). *Developing a quality assessment plan*. Retrieved March 13, 2009 from http://www.tarleton.edu/~academicassessment/documents/TSUAssess-mentGuide061719.pdf.

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING

Diane S. Krider, Central Michigan University

Purpose and Preview

The previous chapter dealt with assessment and planning, introducing concepts related to program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives (SLOs). These three common assessment terms provide an area of uncertainty for many communication educators and this chapter focuses on clarifying the distinctions. Explanations of each term are provided, along with examples of how each of these assessment phases is both necessary and useful in developing an effective assessment program. The chapter also discusses the use of program goals in developing student-learning outcomes and types of data produced from different learning outcomes.

Value and Role

Program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives often are misused synonymously when describing student learning. However, understanding the similarities and subtle differences between program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives ultimately enables faculty to create a functional assessment plan generating valuable results. So our next task is to distinguish between program goals, student-learning outcomes, and learning.

Program Goals

Program goals describe what programs/departments seek to achieve and may, or may not, necessarily focus only on the learning experience. For example, program goals might be to sponsor a debate tournament, be the premier program in the state, build an observation lab, or prepare graduates to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Although these goals ultimately affect student learning, they do not describe the specific learning that is targeted for instructional activities such as a tournament being held or working in a lab, nor do such goals describe how the evaluators will recognize students' transferring classroom learning to an organizational setting or the world at large.

Program goals further can be distinguished by inclusion of five common characteristics: (a) A focus on the end result rather than the process; (b) broad statements that reflect the institutional, departmental, or program mission; (c) the use of general language that is not specific to how the goals are achieved; (d) descriptions of the values of an organization; and (e) a top-down orientation driven by external forces such as the institution or an accrediting body (Allen, 2004). When goals are written on the program level, they often are general statements within the context of the discipline and serve to guide faculty in program design as well as in monitoring and improving student learning throughout course of study.

Student-Learning Outcomes

As goals move from the institutional level to the departmental level and ultimately to the curriculum level, they begin to reflect expected student learning. When learning is the focus, goals are exemplified by learning outcomes. Sometimes departmental goals reflect program needs as well as student learning; however, learning-outcome statements specify how students will demonstrate their mastery of the subject matter related to a stated program goal and student-learning objectives. For example, if a program goal is to increase the rigor and quality of the program, data might include university admission standards, pre-post grade points, completions rates or graduate-school acceptance rates.

However, program data do not provide direct evidence of the learning that took place in the program that contributed to completion rates, graduate school acceptance, etc. Although learning goals often are linked to program goals, learning outcomes focus on what students actually learn. Therefore, when designing effective learning outcomes, it is important for a department to reconceptualize the process of goal setting and to separate desired results according to whether they are program goals or learning outcomes.

Again, it should be noted that program goals and student-learning outcomes are not mutually exclusive (Allen, 2004). In fact, each learning outcome must be related directly to at least one specific program goal in order to be a justifiable part of the assessment process—and information acquired when conducting assessment often provides strong justification for why programs need additional resources.

When creating learning outcomes, the faculty must come to a consensus about what they want students to learn. This may be a challenging (though potentially invigorating) process. The collective vision of what knowledge and skills students should exhibit and what attitudes and values they embrace are essential to an effective, useful assessment program.

"Successful campuses have a common theme: Faculty and departments have a strong influence on the purposes, processes, and methods of evaluation and on the evaluation questions asked" (Wergin & Swingen, 2000, p. 10). Although stipulation of desired learning outcomes might be a difficult discussion, it is essential to create a unified vision for each curricular program. Otherwise, assessment becomes merely an academic exercise designed to please administration or external constituencies, such as accrediting bodies—and, as noted in previous chapters, faculty attitudes diminish accordingly when they feel they are involved in assessment for accountability.

Once a common understanding of the program goals and the value of providing concrete evidence for students learning is established, conversations about student learning should focus on three primary assessment domains: knowledge (cognitive), skills (behavioral) and attitudes (value-based). The three domains of assessing student learning have gained increased attention in the assessment literature as educators move toward a greater understanding of student learning and stronger evidence that learning has occurred (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Angelo & Cross, 1991). Each domain will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Knowledge (cognitive). Clearly, the easiest domain for which to determine expected learning outcomes is knowledge. Communication has a rich history grounded in a common body of knowledge that was traditionally taught through memorization, vocabulary, models, and repetition. Although classroom instruction has been modified to reflect the ways learners now acquire knowledge (i.e., internet, media, virtual groups, applied experiences, etc.) the common body of knowledge within disciplines still exists. For example, communication students readily can cite the three parts of a speech, describe the parts to a basic model of communication or define communication. Knowledge-based learning-outcomes statements easily are recognized by the use of verbs such as define, summarize, explain, and list, like those in the example below. In a classroom environment, textbooks and course readings often provide the knowledge base, which easily lends itself to objective testing as a method to measure student learning.

Example: Knowledge (cognitive) Learning Outcomes

1. *List and discuss the essential parts of a speech.*
2. *Identify and explain the different methods used to study communication.*
3. *Define communication and discuss how the definition has historically changed.*

Skills (behavioral). The second domain of learning is skills that fall into three categories: critical thinking skills, communication skills, and performance skills (Suskie, 2004). It is not out of the ordinary to see an article taped on a faculty's door listing the top skills valued by employers with the "ability to communication" usually circled in bright red.

Just as employers identify the skills needed to effectively perform a job function, faculty must identify the skill sets students need to master while in the program. Therefore, it is essential to carefully design expected learning outcomes to reflect the specific skills expected from students. Critical thinking skills should specify the desired level of critical thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, etc.), as exemplified below. Verbs should be selected to reflect the specific desired outcomes.

Example: Critical-Thinking Learning Outcomes

1. *Identify and explain the parts of a speech. (analysis)*
2. *Design and conduct a communication research study. (synthesis)*
3. *Identify a communication problem and methods for solving the problem. (evaluation)*

Communication skills can include speaking, nonverbal, listening, and writing within various contexts such as individual assignments and projects, presentations, group projects, and teamwork, to name a few. It is important when stipulating communication-based learning outcomes that they be specific to the desired results. Is the goal to write a paper, to listen, to observe, to lead a group, or to be an effective group member?

Emphasizing communication, when the intent is only to produce a final product, does not result in more effective communication. For example, if the desired outcome is for groups to write a collective paper, it is important to recognize that collaboration on a final written project, rather than mere production of the paper, is the desired learning outcome. Assuming that effective communication must have taken place in order for the paper to be completed is inherently faulty, since students first must learn how to collaborate effectively in order to complete the task successfully.

For instance, there is frequently a disconnect between communication as a natural process (the individuals' desire to communicate) versus using learned group-communication skills to produce a collective outcome (understanding how individuals function within a complex communication environment). One has to look no further than a group project that resulted in a series of individual presentations with only information dissemination (knowledge) occurring when the expectation was for the group to function collectively and present a collaborative final product (skills). Hence, skill-based communication learning outcomes should clearly specify desired outcome, as in the example below. Then the instructor must identify the essential steps necessary for students to reach this outcome through course objectives and course content.

Example: Communication Learning Outcomes

1. *Apply basic problem-solving skills within a group to develop a communication plan for implementing change within an organization.*
2. *Advocate and defend your view on a controversial subject.*
3. *Participate in a problem-solving group project and identify the emergence of different types of leadership within that group.*
4. *Identify and evaluate the effectiveness of nonverbal listening behaviors.*

Performance skills often are easy to identify because they are behaviorally based; students are physically doing something. Delivering a speech, presenting a group project, creating a portfolio, or using technology all are examples of performance skills. As in the example below, it is important when writing performance-based learning outcomes that the verbiage reflects the specific desired outcomes. For instance, writing a speech utilizes different skills from delivering a speech.

Example: Performance-Skills Learning Outcomes

1. *Participate effectively in a group presentation.*
2. *Design and implement a fundraising event utilizing measurable outcomes.*
3. *Use technology effectively to communicate complex information.*

Attitudes (value-based). The final learning domain of assessment is attitudes. This domain of learning is also labeled values or dispositions. Attitudinal learning outcomes include appreciation and becoming more aware of one's own values, attitudes, and opinions, as well as individual evolution, maturation, integrity, character, confidence, and enjoying the value of learning (Suskie, 2004, p. 86). Examples appear below.

Example: Attitudinal Learning Outcomes

1. *Appreciate the complexities of language when constructing effective communication messages.*
2. *Understand the ethical implications of communication behaviors within different communication contexts.*
3. *Use communication to develop mutually rewarding social and professional relationships.*

In this section, a foundation has been developed for understanding the value and role of program goals and student-learning outcomes. The next section of this chapter will discuss how to link learning objectives to learning outcomes.

Student-Learning Objectives

Another term associated with student-learning outcomes assessment is "student-learning objectives" (SLOs). Student-learning objectives are detailed and specific statements used by faculty "to describe the tasks to be accomplished to achieve the goal" (Suskie, 2004, p. 75). Learning objectives are process orientated and operationalize the steps needed to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes.

Operative student-learning objectives emerge from effective student-learning outcomes, and effective student-learning outcomes are grounded in solid program goals. In course syllabi, instructors often include course objectives linking each assignment to specific outcomes, such as: The student will write a 10-page research paper with a minimum of 20 sources focusing on the role of communication in relationship development. This is a statement of the student-learning outcome expected from students, exemplifying the student-learning objectives below. For additional perspectives regarding student-learning objectives, see Chapters 3, 5, and 6.

Example: Student-Learning Objectives

Student-Learning Objective

The student will write a 10-page research paper with a minimum of 20 sources focusing on the role of communication in relationship development.

Related Student-Learning Outcomes

1. *Understand the importance and function of communication in relationship development.*
2. *Recognize and select credible literature sources appropriate for academic writing in the field of communication studies.*
3. *Write effectively in a style appropriate for academic writing in the field of communication studies.*
5. *Apply appropriate ethical attitudes to the role of communication in relationship development.*

Application:

Creating Program Goals, Student-Learning Outcomes, and Student-Learning Objectives

The previous section discussed how operative student-learning objectives emerge from effective student-learning outcomes and how effective student-learning outcomes are grounded in solid program goals. This section will outline how these three elements are combined to achieve a well-rounded and holistic student-learning assessment plan.

Program Goals. Ultimately, program goals need to be linked to learning. However, on the surface, some program goals do not appear to be learning based. It is important to make this linkage and identify how learning can be affected if the program goals are achieved (i.e., how will students benefit from state-of-the-art facilities, national standing, accreditation, an increase in tenure-track positions, etc.) Once the student-learning benefits have been identified, the goals should be worded as student-learning outcomes and constructed using student-learning outcomes assessment terminology.

As discussed in the previous section, learning falls into three primary domains: skills (behavioral), knowledge (cognitive), and attitudes (value-based). Knowledge-based program goals focus on what students should know. Skill-based program goals are behaviorally based and demonstrate what students should do. Attitude-based program goals focus on what students should value and appreciate. Although program goals, student-learning outcomes, and SLOs all should address the domains of learning, it is important to remember that program goals are more general, do not specify how to achieve the desired SLOs and focus primarily on end results. In the example provided below, note that the language is general and does not specify the required principles, concepts, theories, statistical programs, communication skills, ethical standards or values that students acquire in the program.

Example: Program Learning Goals

Knowledge Domain

1. *Students know basic communication principles and concepts.*
2. *Students understand the major theoretical approaches to communication research.*

Skills Domain

1. *Students can utilize statistical programs to analyze communication data.*
2. *Students have effective interpersonal, group and public speaking skills needed to function in organizations.*

Attitudes Domain

1. *Students use ethical standards to guide them when creating message strategies.*
2. *Students value and respect multiple approaches to understanding communication.*

Student-learning Outcomes. Once the program goals are established, the next step in creating an effective assessment plan is to determine the desired student-learning outcomes based on the assessment domains. Good student-learning outcomes are learner focused, rather than program focused (Huba & Freed, 2000) and, as is the case with program goals, created by utilizing the three domains of learning: Knowledge (cognitive), skills (behavioral) and attitudes (values-based). Suskie (2004) suggests considering the following when writing student-learning outcomes:

1. Student-learning outcomes should not be too broad or too specific. The best student-learning outcomes are at a midpoint between these two extremes.
2. Use concrete action verbs that describe what students will be able to do in explicit, observable terms.
3. Define fuzzy terms such as think critically, write well or proficiently, understand or be familiar with, demonstrate knowledge and appreciate a viewpoint.
4. Focus on the end, not the means. What will students be able to do after successfully completing the program, not the tasks they are to do while in the program.
5. Focus on your most important learning outcomes by limiting your program goals to three to six.
6. Work with colleagues so that multiple perspectives are represented. Some faculty are more task- and detail-oriented while others have a more global, theoretical orientation (pp. 78-79).

Writing student-learning outcomes that include carefully selected verbs, focused on exactly what is expected from the learner, will yield more targeted and fruitful results. For example, being able to identify types of speeches will produce evidence of student knowledge, while delivering a speech produces evidence of student skill. If the desired student-learning outcome is for students to write and deliver a speech using multiple forms of support, a student-learning outcome focusing only on knowledge related to effective presentations will not produce evidence of the desired skill set.

Often faculty are disappointed with the assessment data that is generated because it does not provide the type of evidence they expected. To offset this problem, (a) know exactly what domain of learning is being assessed, (b) write targeted student-learning outcomes with verbiage reflecting the desired learning domain, and (c) select appropriate measurement/assessment tools. Also, be realistic when linking student-learning outcomes to specific courses. Large lecture courses tend to be more knowledge based, so expecting students to have a specific skill set upon completion of the course would not be an achievable student-learning outcome unless the course is structured to promote skill-development opportunities.

Another consideration when developing student-learning outcomes is the desired depth of processing. Surface learning enables students to name, describe, provide examples, etc.; deeper learning moves students toward synthesis and evaluation. Bloom's taxonomy identifies six levels of learning, starting with surface learning and progressing to deeper learning: (a) Knowledge; (b) Comprehension; (c) Application; (d) Analysis; (e) Synthesis; and (f) Evaluation (Bloom, 1956).

In introductory courses, knowledge, comprehension and some application are often desired student-learning outcomes, but as student move into upper-level courses, student-outcomes should include more application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Allen, 2004). Again, it is important to select the verbiage that reflects the desired learning level within the three assessment domains of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Although the example provided on the next page are written specifically to identify primarily one level of learning, summative student-learning outcomes often combine multiple levels within a single outcome to reflect all levels of learning achieved upon completion of the program. The program's student-learning outcomes then can be adapted to a specific course by identifying the desired formative outcomes appropriate to the level and nature of the course.

Note that all of the student-learning outcomes listed above could link directly to a single program goal, such as "to provide a strong academic program that prepares students for graduate programs and/or professional careers." The stated student-learning outcomes, unlike the program goal, specify what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need in order to be competitive when entering graduate school and/or securing employment. Program goals often have multiple components embedded in one goal, going beyond student learning. For example, in order for a communication program to be strong academically, preparing students for graduate school and/or professional careers, it might also need additional budget allocations, library resources, state-of-the-art facilities, specialized equipment, and additional faculty. Although all of these factors have impact on learning, when writing student-learning outcomes, it is important to abstract only the part(s) of program goals applicable to learning.

Student-Learning Objectives. Once student-learning outcomes are specified, they can be linked to specific courses. This easily is accomplished by creating a curriculum-mapping matrix, which lists student-learning objective rows down the left side of the sheet and courses in columns across the top of the paper. This is an alternate layout to the course-mapping matrix presented in Chapter 3; either layout is acceptable in either case—just be consistent across various departmental programs, to avoid confusion. As noted in Chapter 3, curriculum maps chart which student-learning outcomes are being met, to what extent, and how often.

Example: Student-Learning Objectives—Bloom's Taxonomy

Knowledge

1. *Identify and label the parts of a communication model.*
2. *Describe the process of effective communication.*

Comprehension

1. *Diagram and explain the various communication models.*
2. *Explain and provide examples of typical interpersonal communication problems students experience with roommates.*

Application

1. *Demonstrate proper distance between males and females during a greeting.*
2. *Organize interview questions utilizing an inductive model.*

Analysis

1. *Select conflict resolutions strategies that can be applied to groups and include rationales for each of your selections.*
2. *Analyze a parent and child communication problem and select an appropriate strategy for solving the problem.*

Synthesis

1. *Construct a reasoned argument.*
2. *Design a communication plan.*

Evaluation

1. *Compare and contrast the comparative benefits and drawbacks of human relations theory and human resource theory.*
2. *Measure the results of a communication plan, make recommendations based on those results, and justify your findings.*

When the SLO is the primary focus of a course, determine whether that course provides introduction, development, or mastery of the material—if introduction, place "I" in the corresponding SLO box where the column and row intersect; if development, place "D"; if mastery, place "M". Although a student-learning objective might be applicable to more than one course, Bloom's taxonomy provides a framework for understanding the levels of learning that occur in a specific course.

For example, communication theory could be the focus of a lower-level fundamentals theory course and an upper-level rhetoric course. However, the lower-level course might focus only on knowledge and comprehension, while the upper-level course might build on this foundation and require students to do an original research study encompassing theory application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Although theory is the focus for both, ultimately the level of learning and the assignments are significantly different in the two courses, and that fact should be reflected in the corresponding course objectives and prerequisites for each of the courses. Hence, it might be expected that students in a higher-level course conduct original research, but not until they have acquired requisite knowledge in the lower-level course, then expanded upon that knowledge in a mid-level course or two prior to undertaking the upper-level course.

It usually is standard practice that higher-level courses have prerequisites and course objectives that build on learning in the prerequisite courses, in order to achieve higher levels of learning. Curriculum mapping helps assure that prerequisites and course objectives indicated by the map are applied in appropriate courses and their master syllabi. Additional guidance regarding curriculum mapping is available in Chapters 3 and 5.

Once program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives are determined to achieve a well-rounded and holistic student-learning assessment plan, the next step is to identify the kinds of data generated to provide evidence of student learning.

Data Use

The previous section discussed how to create program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives. This section examines the different types of data produced by student-learning outcomes and the importance of triangulation—using multiple measures when collecting learning-outcomes data—as defined in Chapter 1 and discussed in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 9.

Student-learning outcomes, by nature, can produce different types of data: qualitative or quantitative; direct or indirect; and formative or summative. Multiple measures for each outcome are recommended for an assessment plan to be comprehensive, so care must be taken to write student-learning outcomes that produce the desired level of learning and also provide evidence that targeted learning takes place. When collecting assessment data and writing final reports, it is also important to communicate to students that assessment data is reported collectively and not individually. Furthermore, adhering to good data-collection guidelines, regardless of the methods used, will provide more reliable data and provide a better understanding of what learning actually takes place in the program.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data. Quantitative data can be collected in the form of objective tests, standardized national exams, or instruments designed to produce averages, distributions, norms, and other statistically generated results. As is the case when creating objective tests for classroom use, objective assessment instruments are designed to have only one correct answer and are scored easily (Suskie, 2004). A known risk of using national exams, generating much debate in the media, is teaching to the test rather than being true to the curriculum. Also, national exams may, or may not, reflect the desired student-learning outcomes for your particular program. Identifying a common knowledge-set grounded in student-learning objectives for the curriculum, then adapting or constructing assessment instruments measuring students' learning, enables faculty to identify the level of learning in the program and also to pinpoint where in the program students may be having difficulty.

Qualitative data collection enables educators to understand student learning from multiple perspectives, since there are no right or wrong answers. Quality, creativity, and critical thinking are just a few examples of desired outcomes that can be assessed by collecting qualitative data. Of course, there is a risk when too much data is collected because analyzing it can become a time drain on faculty. However, one way to offset the mere volume of essays, research papers, portfolios, and other qualitative data generated is to have faculty randomly select students' work, set time limitations, and code as many papers as possible in the allotted time. To assist with the analysis of qualitative data, develop a user-friendly coding rubric. Also, holding a rater-calibration session where lunch is provided will go a long way toward keeping both your results and your faculty members effective. This approach enables faculty to identify desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and levels of learning when reading written work or viewing presentations, providing results that are directly linked to the program's learning outcomes. The rubric should be designed to link the qualitative instrument to the desired student-learning outcomes, decreasing subjectivity, time consumption, and overabundance of unneeded data. Remember, best practices for assessment dictates that at least two qualified raters must review each subjective measure (including presentations, portfolios, etc.).

Direct and Indirect Data. Assessment data also is categorized as direct or indirect. Direct data is linked to observable learning, focuses on knowledge, skills, and attitudes and is "tangible, visible, self-explanatory evidence of exactly what students have and haven't learned" (Suskie, 2004, p. 95). Direct data provides evidence of whether or not learning has taken place and also can explain why students are not learning as expected.

Indirect data, however, provides evidence from peripheral sources (student/alumni surveys, placement rates, national norms, graduate-school admissions, etc.) It is not uncommon for programs to use this type of evidence when discussing the merits of a program (i.e., 99% placement rate, impressive rankings by employers, etc.) But this type of

data does not link the program to specific student learning. Of course, it can be assumed that if a program is ranked highly, its student must learn—but there is no direct evidence that student learning actually took place in the program.

Although indirect data can be particularly useful when reporting to external constituencies, it only should be used in tandem with direct measures. Unless employed as part of a comprehensive assessment plan with direct measures of actual student learning, indirect measures provide very little useful information to assist with the improvement of programs and their student learning. Additionally, most accreditation bodies will not accept indirect measures unless triangulated with substantial direct measures of student learning. Triangulation of measures is discussed in Chapters 3 and 9.

Formative and Summative Data. Formative data is collected at various points throughout the program, providing the opportunity for immediate curricular modifications, while summative data is comprehensive and collected at the end of the program (Krider, 2003). Although formative data informs summative data, primary emphasis is on summative data because a comprehensive assessment plan must provide evidence to external constituents of cumulative learning at the end of the program. However, formative data provides faculty the opportunity to identify points in the program where specific learning should have occurred, so can be valuable for informing curricular changes—especially as part of an action plan addressing missed summative performance targets. For example, if students are required to take a set core of major courses so that they have a common body of knowledge, it could be beneficial to assess student learning upon completion of the major core (formative assessment) in order to ensure that students are prepared to meet the challenges of more advanced or specialized courses.

Formative assessment also can provide specific course information. Suppose, for instance, that a program has identified an introductory research-methods course as producing a specific knowledge and skill set, but summative data collected shows that students have difficulties conducting a research study and writing a capstone research paper; formative assessment conducted at the conclusion of the research course will provide a baseline of student knowledge and skills at that point in the program. Thus, the formative data collected could help identify whether the problem is poor student learning in the research course or poor application of learned research knowledge and skills when students complete their capstone projects. Formative assessment in courses responsible for introduction and development of critical programmatic knowledge and skills can produce valuable information helping to assure eventual mastery for student learning.

Formative and summative data collection also are useful in identifying the desired level of learning, as outlined in Bloom's taxonomy. It is important that all levels of learning are present in summative data collection. However, formative data can focus on one level of learning at a particular point in the program and provide faculty the opportunity to assess what learning takes place at different points in the curriculum, so that they can restructure courses or their prerequisites accordingly (Trice, 2000). Formative assessment focuses on learning gained at specific points in the curriculum and how the curriculum can change to better meet the learning needs of students, while summative data focuses on the learner's performance regarding end-of-program student-learning outcomes. Again, inclusion of both formative and summative data collection can ensure a comprehensive assessment plan, and can help identify programmatic issues such as needed enhancement of fundamental knowledge and skills, re-sequencing of courses, and further development of specific knowledge and skills between introductory and mastery courses.

Conclusion

Although the challenges of creating and implementing an assessment plan can seem daunting at times, faculty involvement in assessment creates a unified vision for the delivery of quality educational programs. Embedded in the assessment process is a new vocabulary grounded in learning theory that helps solidify this shared vision. Well-articulated learning outcomes and cooperative assessment efforts benefit not only the students, but also faculty as they enter into pedagogical dialogue during the process of assessment development, implementation, and evaluation. Therefore, it is essential for faculty to understand how program goals, student-learning outcomes, and student-learning objectives are interconnected as they create a comprehensive assessment plan.

Program goals create a unified effort (based on the university, department, and program missions) and focus on the end results desired. Often, departmental goals go beyond the scope of learning to address facilities, funding, faculty needs, etc., all of which ultimately impact instruction. Although program goals identify what a program does to support the departmental mission, it is useful to understand how the program goals ultimately can impact classroom instruction and the quality of learning.

When student learning is the focus, the responsibility to provide evidence of what learning occurs in the program lies with the faculty. As discussed in this chapter, the most difficult conversation for faculty to engage in when creating a comprehensive assessment plan is what they expect students to know, do, and value upon completion of the program. It is imperative that program faculty, as a whole, assess and take responsibility for student learning in their program. Once faculty gain a unified vision and targeted learning outcomes are identified, they can create student-learning objectives that provide valuable evidence of learning levels occurring in the program—and powerful rationales for additional resources.

Finally, well articulated learning outcomes and learning objectives provide faculty guidance for creating course objectives that are focused, specific, and measurable. Measuring these course objectives can provide formative data leading to more effective learning at the end of a program (supplying summative data). Faculty understand the need to be responsible for the learning that takes place in individual courses; however, when the collective vision is embraced of the whole (program) being greater than the sum of its parts (individual courses), assessment efforts truly benefit students by providing dynamic, verifiable learning experiences.

References

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Anderson, R. S., & Speck, B. W. (Eds.). (1998). *New directions for teaching and learning.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bloom, B. S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of education objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain.* White Plains, New York: Longman.

Huba, M. E., & Freed, J. E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting the focus from teaching to learning.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Krider, D. S. (2003). Assessing public relations education. In Sallot, L. M., and DeSanto, B. J. (Eds.). *What you need to know to develop a successful teaching career as a public relations educator (3rd ed.)*, (pp. 195-203). New York: Educators Academy of the Public Relations Society of America.

Suskie, L. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Trice, A. D. (2000). *A handbook of classroom assessment*. New York: Addison Wesley.

Wergin, J. F., & Swingen, J. N. (2000). *Departmental assessment: How some campuses are effectively evaluating the collective work of faculty*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

Wiggens, G. (1998). *Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

CHAPTER 5

LINKS BETWEEN STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Diane S. Krider, Central Michigan University
Timothy J. Detwiler, Cornerstone University

> ***Assessing our students' work is the most important thing we ever do for them. Our assessments influence their whole lives and careers, so it is crucial that the quality of our assessment is as good as we can make it.***
>
> *~ 500 Tips on Assessment*

Purpose and Preview

Providing evidence for educational program learning can be challenging. Frequently, elaborate assessment plans are developed that become overwhelming to faculty when they attempt implementation. Educators always have provided evidence of learning in the classroom environment; however, when attempting to provide similar evidence at the program level, often their plans becomes complex and difficult to manage. Helping communication students learn should be at the heart of creating any assessment plan. As described earlier, this process can provide numerous opportunities for focused dialogue about learning and has the potential to clarify what we teach and its impact on our students. In order to systematically guide communication faculty through this process, this chapter will (a) discuss the value and role of curriculum mapping for identifying the alignments between the curriculum and student-learning outcomes (SLOs), (b) highlight some commonly used direct- and indirect-measurement assessment tools, (c) and provide an example of the linkage between program goals, SLOs, and assessment tools for creating a comprehensive assessment plan.

This chapter also lays out a variety of questions we need to consider when determining what sort of assessment tools and measures best fit the specific need, whether for evaluating a course or a program of study. This chapter provides assistance in selecting the proper assessment tool from the multitude of available instruments. Selection of assessment instruments is connected significantly to a proper understanding of whether or not student-learning objectives are being met and what sort of student learning actually occurs.

The development and implementation of communication assessment plan usually (as described in previous chapters) involves the following steps (the foci of this chapter are in bold text):

1. Define purposes and goals of the course/program of study;
2. Write student-learning objectives;
3. **Select assessment method(s);**
4. **Administer assessment tool(s);**
5. **Collect assessment data;**
6. Examine and interpret the data; and
7. Use findings in decision-making processes and program improvements.

Value and Role

In order to more fully understand the link between outcomes, courses, and assessment tools, communication faculty first should identify the courses that support specific program SLOs. Often faculty assume that all outcomes are being achieved in individual courses and, although this may be true to a certain extent, the various levels of learning and domains of learning may not be represented equally (see Chapter 4 discussion of Bloom's taxonomy). For example, a small-group course may have a targeted goal to teach students effective group communication by equipping them with a specific skill set (behavioral outcome), while other courses may use groups merely as a conduit for project fulfillment (knowledge outcome). So it is important to know exactly how individual courses contribute to the entire curriculum.

Once the desired learning is identified, the next step is to link program SLOs to individual courses in the program based on when and where knowledge, skills, or attitudes related to the student-learning outcomes are introduced, emphasized, and/or reinforced. This is often referred to as curriculum mapping (also see Chapters 3 and 4 for additional perspectives on these points).

Curriculum Mapping

Just as a long-distance road trip requires a map, assessment efforts also need a map. Communication faculty understand what they teach and how they meet student-learning objectives in their individuals courses, but often there is a disconnect transferring that understanding to the program as a whole. Therefore, identifying what data already is being produced in the communication program that can formalized, systematically collected, and used to provide evidence of student learning enables faculty to move toward making the connection between what they do in their individual classrooms and how that learning supports the program as a whole. A curriculum map enables faculty to see visually the link between individual courses and program SLOs.

Following the concepts presented in previous chapters, the first step in curriculum mapping is to identify the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected from all students upon completion of the program (student-learning objectives) that can be found in the major-core (required) courses. The major-core is used because it represents the common body of knowledge expected from all students. In order to assist faculty in this discussion, providing a curriculum map (see example on next page) will enable them to visualize how the SLOs are linked to the major-core courses.

The second step involves linking the student-learning outcomes major-core courses in the program. This enables faculty to identify points of intersection between courses and SLOs in order to identify when particular student-learning outcomes are introduced, emphasized, and reinforced. An "I" should be placed in the appropriate box for when the identified learning is first introduced to students, "D" where it is developed and emphasized—fully explicated and the primary focus of a course, and "M" where student should have it mastered.

For example, if a program SLO is that students will research, write, and deliver effective speeches, introduction of this knowledge and related skills could occur in a fundamentals-type course. The program then might require a public-speaking course and a speechwriting course in which the knowledge and skills are developed, and a capstone course where students are expected to utilize what was taught in the fundamentals, public-speaking, and speechwriting courses to exhibit mastery of the knowledge and skills related to researching, writing, and delivering speeches.

Example: Curriculum Map

Required Courses →

Program Student-Learning Outcomes ↓	101	212	223	340	403
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

As shown in the example below, the knowledge and skills for writing a speech first were introduced in COM 101 (fundamentals), developed in COM 212 (public speaking) and 223 (speechwriting), and mastered in COM 403 (capstone). It is important to note that multiple courses often reinforce learning. Bloom's taxonomy can further assist in identifying the desired levels of learning expected in specific courses.

Example: Curriculum Map

Required Courses →

Program Student-Learning Outcomes	101	212	223	340	403
Research, write, and deliver speeches in a variety of communication contexts	I	D		D	M

Often programs which have concentrations or tracks that students must select as part of their program of study (interpersonal, group, organizational, public relations, media, etc.). A comprehensive assessment plan also assesses the learning within the various tracks. This necessitates faculty going through the same process of identifying the student-learning outcomes for a particular track (concentration) and link the learning that occurs, in required courses within the track, to the desired outcomes. Often program outcomes are written in general language to encompass all communication activities, so it might be necessary to reword outcomes in language that reflects the tracks within the program. For additional insights about curriculum mapping, consult Chapters 3 and 4.

After completing curriculum maps, faculty may find that some SLOs are not linked to any required courses, but rather are a cumulative effect resulting from the entire program or from a lifetime of learning—appreciation of the complexities of communication in diverse organizations, for instance. One way to determine if the SLO is assessable is to ask whether the desired outcome is something that actually can be taught in a classroom environment (Suskie, 2004). For example, courses rarely teach being responsible, spontaneous, or intuitive. This is not necessarily grounds to abandon the student-learning objective, but rather to examine the SLO for what is measurable now and what can be measured in the future. It is not uncommon to continue measuring student-learning outcomes after students graduate by utilizing tools such as alumni surveys and employer questionnaires.

Application

Once a curriculum map has been completed, the next step is to select tools to measure the desired student-learning outcomes. There are a variety of assessment tools available when creating a comprehensive assessment plan. However, it is crucial to select assessment tools for the evidence they provide that supports specific SLOs. It is better to utilize a few well-constructed and focused tools than to attempt using one complex tool that produces very little evidence of actual learning.

Keep in mind that one tool can serve multiple purposes, saving faculty time and effort. Also, as part of other program or course activities, frequently programs already produce assessment information useful as evidence of learning for assessment purposes. As faculty consider appropriate assessment tools, the following set of questions may guide efforts to move forward with an assessment plan (Chapter 3 and 4 provide additional information on these points):

1. What is the purpose for collecting assessment data? (a course, a program, a division)
    a. Is the intent to grade/evaluate students?
    b. What student focused learning objectives are being measured?
    c. Are student attitudes being measured?
    d. Is student improvement the variable being evaluated?
    e. Is the assessment intended to measure knowledge or its application?
    f. Are student skills or behavioral actions being assessed?

2. What type of data should be collected?
    a. Should the assessments methods be quantitative or qualitative?
    b. Is there a mix of direct and indirect methods, with at least one direct measure for each SLO?
    c. Is formative or summative data being sought?
    d. Is the purpose norm-referenced assessment measuring change in achievement over time?
    e. Is the desired outcome criterion-referenced assessment measuring student learning against minimum achievement levels?
    f. How often should particular learning objectives be evaluated?

3. What type of measurement tools/instruments should be selected?
    a. Do the tools provide direct or indirect measurements?
    b. Can one tool provide evidence for multiple learning outcomes?
    c. Are there existing tools already utilized in the program that might be useful?
    d. Are the tools user friendly, easy to administer, and cost effective?
    e. Are the selected tools appropriate for measuring learning, specifically the programs designated SLOs?
    f. Do the selected tools represent multiple methods of data collection?
    g. Should locally or nationally developed instruments be employed? Are local comparisons being sought? Are comparisons with students at other institutions the goal?
4. What is done with the data collected from the assessment effort?
    a. What are the implications for program and course improvement?
    b. How effective were the measurement tools?
    c. Were performance criteria both realistic and challenging; are changes in targets needed next time?
    d. How will results be disseminated?
    e. What related budget requests need to be made?
    f. What action plans will be implemented for program/curriculum changes? Who will be responsible for implementing various aspects of the action plans, and on what timetable?

Once these or similar questions are addressed, the assessment effort moves forward with a sense of the important variables grounding the assessment program. The above set of questions should be used in early stages of discussions about assessment, guiding the processes of assessment, helping select the assessment instruments, and providing parameters for the ever-growing sophistication of a campus assessment project. Please remember that this list of questions is only the starting point of an investigation, but it provides insights into whether what is happening in the classroom is effective for student learning.

This set of questions should be asked only after program goals and student-learning objectives are established for the educational program and are understood fully by all program faculty. Placing the selection of assessment tools (based on answers to the questions) into an assessment plan allows for all involved to conceptualize the evaluative process from beginning to end. The previous chapter described different categories of assessment, including qualitative/quantitative, direct/indirect, and formative/summative. With that background in mind, the following section describes various assessment tools.

Portfolios. Portfolios often are used for communication assessment because they contain numerous pieces of direct evidence of such as writing, organization, synthesis, and problem solving skills, as well as the fact that they promote deep learning levels. There are two major types of portfolios: (a) learning portfolios that require a large number of pieces of evidence (videotapes, papers, speeches, projects), evidence of learning over time, and a reflective student essay that links learning outcomes to the learning evidence provided by the student; and (b) professional (career) portfolios designed for employment purposes, usually including a resume, philosophy of work statement, and only the most professional, polished work samples (Williams & Hall, 2001). Often components of both types of portfolios are required in a single capstone portfolio—but it is important for students to understand that employers are more interested in end-results than in the process. Successful learning portfolios require that students keep their own work and submit clean copies, rather than graded papers, so that reviewers will not be swayed by instructor comments or previously assigned grades.

Electronic portfolios, or "e-portfolios," easily can be used for learning and professional portfolios. Students can upload papers, projects, videos, and other artifacts, making review of submissions convenient and providing no bulky storage challenges. If the campus has not yet adopted e-portfolio software, students can be directed to submit their portfolio materials via a portable device, a classroom management system such as Blackboard, or on a CD. The type of portfolio being created and the intended use should be considered when determining where to store portfolio materials. In addition to numerous pieces of direct evidence contained in traditional portfolios, e-portfolios also can provide evidence of a student's ability to effectively and appropriately use communication technology.

Portfolios produce qualitative data; hence, a rubric for reviewing portfolios should be developed for their analysis. This ensures that desired student-learning outcomes are linked to the evidence in the portfolio. As is the case with all qualitative data, at least two independent, calibrated reviewers are needed to score portfolios. Providing a scoring rubric addressing categories of the desired SLOs and providing space for written remarks provides a focused review of portfolio materials. The reviewers should discuss any disagreements about the level of performance, evidence provided, or evaluation problems (Stiggens, 1994).

Performance Assessments. Performance assessments require students "to apply previously acquired knowledge and skills to complete some performance task" (Backlund, 1994, p. 214). Performance assessments can be obtrusive (speeches, group presentations, etc.) or unobtrusive (observing students working in groups, interacting before or after class, etc.) Data produced by performance assessments can be quantitative, qualitative, or both, depending on construction of the measurement instrument. Often scoring rubrics are utilized for oral presentations (speeches, group presentations, interviews, etc.), focusing on specific knowledge/skills/attitudes and providing categories for notation of progress toward the requisite learning.

Local Assessments. Local assessments are created by program faculty and are program specific, integrated into a program as stand-alone tests or add-ons. Stand-alone tests typically are administered in a summative experience, such as a capstone course or at the end of a field experience. This type of assessment instrument must be aligned with courses in the curriculum to assure students have introductory, developmental, and mastery exposure to the requisite material. Furthermore, local assessment should (a) use simple, direct language, (b) possess sampling reliability, and (c) cover a broad range of learning, rather than isolated segments (Allen, 2004). Common test items used for local assessments include:

1. Multiple-choice items measuring numerous concepts in a short period of time (recognition),
2. True-false items measuring factual knowledge (recall),
3. Matching items measuring knowledge and factual information (recognition),
4. Completion items measuring vocabulary and basic knowledge (recall), and
5. Essays for measuring higher-order thinking skills (recall) (Davis, 1993, McKeachie, 1999, Miller & Miller, 1997, Nilson, 1998).

Published Assessments. Published assessments, commonly known as standardized tests, usually are direct recall measures. "Direct assessments often involve quantitative measurements, and experts have developed a number of techniques for developing measurement procedures and evaluating quality" (Allen, 2004, p. 75). Many published tests produce quantitative data with only one correct answer per item and no professional judgment needed to score the instrument correctly. This type of assessment has received significant attention in the P-12 assessment literature because of educator accountability to external constituencies (Chapter 12 addresses P-12 communication assessment). There often is an efficiency component to quantitative assessments because they are easy to administer, tabulate, and report; "quantitative data is often summarized using descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation and range" (Allen, 2004, p. 8).

When considering use of published assessments, costs, special administration training, and administration logistics should be considered. It is important for faculty to examine alignment of the test with the program's student-learning outcomes and curriculum. If published tests do not align with the curriculum, they are a costly source of very little use as a direct measure. The instrument should be carefully scrutinized to ensure it is a valid measure of what students in the program are expected to learn. Bear in mind that "validity is always about inference . . . An authentic test should yield valid results" (Wiggens, 1998, p. 310).

There are a variety of assessment tools available on a national level that may be applicable to local situations. The National Communication Association (NCA) currently publishes four assessment documents (http://www.ncastore.com/Assessment.html):

Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form and Manual (1993, 2007)—Originally co-authored by Sherwyn Morreale, Michael Moore, K. Philip Taylor, Donna Surges Tatum, and Ruth Hulbert-Johnson, this instrument is a standardized test assessing public-speaking competencies at the higher-education level. The tool can be used to evaluate persuasive speeches, for testing-in or testing-out (placement) purposes, as a way for instructing and advising students, or to generate assessment data for departmental and institutional accountability. This tool has been used successfully at a variety of institutions.

Conversation Skills Rating Scale: An Instructional Assessment for Interpersonal Competence (1995, 2007)—Brian Spitzberg developed this instrument, described by the National Communication Association promotional materials as a multi-trait, multi-method approach to interpersonal competence. The assessment tool is written with a thorough research base and includes model forms made for copying and classroom use.

Assessing Motivation to Communicate (2007)—Sherwyn Morreale, Roger Hamilton, and Roy Berko compiled two tools for assessing communication apprehension in this package. The first is the "Personal Report on Communication Apprehension" and the second is the "Willingness to Communicate" survey. Both instruments are in Macintosh or PC-based administration and include supporting documents, administrator directions, and a lecture guide for instructors and related articles.

Large Scale Assessment In Oral Communication: K-12 and Higher Education (2007)—According to the NCA website, this book edited by Sherwyn Morreale and Phillip Backlund reviews assessment instruments designed for measuring communication competencies and abilities. This edition includes separate sections for K-12 and two- and four-year institutions. A set of summary tables provides easy reference.

In addition to these nationally published communication assessment tools, there are locally developed assessment instruments produced by many colleges and universities. A search on the World-Wide-Web yields many samples from across the nation and provides a rich context for development of your own locally developed assessment measures. A few samples are provided below to provide a glimpse of what is available:

The Association of American Colleges and Universities has an "oral communication assessment" at www.aacu.org/issues/assessment/oral_communication.cfm that leads to a number of rubrics, scoring guides, and assessment tools for measuring effective oral communication skills.

Following is one specific example of a locally produced scoring guide and assessment rubric from the second author's home institution. This sample illustrates the nature of a locally developed instrument based upon a set of criteria nationally recognized as encompassing effective oral communication skills.

Example: Scoring Guide Created at Cornerstone University

ORAL PRESENTATION ASSESSMENT

Individual Student Name: _____

Today's Date: _____ Course: _____

Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Total Time: _____

Delivery Style (individual presentation)	**Organization** (individual/PLT presentation)
Physical Actions 0 1 2 3 4 (gestures, eye contact, stance)	Introduction 0 1 2 3 4 (preview, purpose)
Voice and Delivery 0 1 2 3 4 (vocal variety; enunciation; lack of ums, ahs, and other crutches; clarity)	Preparation 0 1 2 3 4 (rehearsal, background research)
Dynamics 0 1 2 3 4 (pace, humor, confidence)	Transitions 0 1 2 3 4 (flow, movement to next idea/person)
Language 0 1 2 3 4 (vocabulary, grammar, technical language)	Content 0 1 2 3 4 (understandability, articulation of ideas, quality of research)
Visual Aids 0 1 2 3 4 (professional, readability, use)	Conclusion 0 1 2 3 4 (summary or call to action, passion about subject, objective conclusions)

Grading Key: 0 – Poor; 1 – Needs Improvement; 2 – Minimally Acceptable; 3 – Satisfactory; 4 – Excellent

Additional Comments:

Overall Grade: _____

Rubrics. Rubrics are instruments allowing an instructor to systematically and objectively evaluate student performance on a host of assignments, particularly performance-based tasks. Rubrics are generally a formal set of agreed-upon guidelines useful for single classes or for multiple-section courses. For the multiple-section courses with multiple instructors, rubrics help keep everyone on the proverbial same page with coordinated assessment across sections sharing the same student-learning objectives. Thus, a rubric is valuable in across-the-curriculum measurements of student learning (up, down, and sideways in a curriculum map). Rubrics provide assistance in evaluating student performance regarding SLOs.

Example: Oral Presentation Rubric

DELIVERY STYLE	Excellent	Satisfactory	Minimally Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Physical Actions (gestures, eye contact, stance)	Uses arms and hands naturally; gestures are used only to reinforce or complement spoken words. Has good eye contact with individuals in audience. Stands comfortably.	Relatively few distracting gestures. Usually has good eye contact with individuals in audience. Appears reasonably comfortable.	At times, keeps hands in pockets or arms in an unnatural position. Exhibits some distracting gestures. Sometimes focuses on only a portion of the audience or looks away from audience. Looks down at notes for extensive periods of time. At times seems uncomfortable standing, rocks back and forth, or moves around considerably.	Arms and hands are frequently held in an unnatural position. Frequently makes distracting gestures. Does not have good eye contact with audience. Appears uncomfortable standing in front of an audience.
Voice and Delivery (vocal variety and enunciation; lack of ums, ahs, and other crutches; clarity)	Voice is well modulated and audible. Words are enunciated clearly. Rarely or never uses crutches. Speech is always clear, concise, and convincing.	Voice is usually well modulated and audible. Words are usually enunciated clearly. Occasionally uses crutches. Speech is usually clear, concise, and convincing.	Voice is sometimes audible; has a monotone quality. Words are not always enunciated clearly. Often uses crutches. Speech is not always clear or well thought out. At times elaborate and wordy, including superfluous detail. Sometimes lacks conviction.	Voice is frequently inaudible and has a monotone quality. Words are frequently not enunciated clearly. Constantly uses crutches. Speech is frequently unclear. Speech is always elaborate and wordy and includes superfluous detail. Lacks conviction.
Dynamics (pace, humor, confidence)	Always speaks at a deliberate pace and with confidence; incorporates humor.	Usually speaks at a deliberate pace and with a fair amount of confidence; some humor included.	Sometimes speaks at a pace that is too rapid, too slow, or sporadic. Lacks confidence. Little or no humor.	Frequently speaks at a pace that is too rapid, too slow, or sporadic. Lacks confidence. No humor.
Language (vocabulary, grammar, appropriateness of technical language)	Speaks fluently, with a varied vocabulary suited to the audience. Avoids clichés, junk words, and fad words. Technical language is always appropriate to the audience. Always speaks in well-constructed sentences, using correct agreement, verb tense, punctuation, etc.	Speaks with a relatively varied vocabulary. Usually avoids clichés, junk words, and fad words. Technical language is usually appropriate to the audience. Usually speaks in well-constructed sentences, using correct agreement, verb tense, punctuation, etc.	Speaks with a limited vocabulary. Sometimes uses clichés, junk words, and fad words. Sometimes uses technical language the audience does not understand. Sometimes uses rambling or incomplete sentences, improper word agreement, verb tense usage, punctuation, etc.	Speaks with a very limited vocabulary. Frequently uses clichés, junk words, and fad words. May use technical language the audience does not understand. Frequently uses rambling or incomplete sentences, improper word agreement, verb tense usage, punctuation, etc.
Visual Aids (professional, readability, use)	Makes very effective use of visual aids. Visual aids are always simple, clear, and easy to interpret.	Makes good use of visual aids. Visual aids are usually simple, clear, and easy to interpret.	Limited use of visual aids. Aids used were difficult to read; needed explanation in order to interpret.	Poor use of visual aids. Visual aids are frequently too complex, unclear, or difficult to interpret.

ORGANIZATION	Excellent	Satisfactory	Minimally Acceptable	Needs Improvement
Introduction (preview, purpose)	Gave an effective preview and clear purpose of presentation.	Gave a relatively effective preview and purpose of presentation.	Gave unclear preview. Purpose of presentation might not have been included.	No preview or purpose of presentation given. Jumped right into the content.
Preparation (rehearsal, background research)	Presentation obviously well prepared, researched, and rehearsed.	Fairly well prepared, researched, and rehearsed.	Presentation lacked some polish; needed more rehearsal.	Little to no evidence of preparation.
Transitions (flow, movement to next idea/person)	Excellent transition. Flow was smooth and moved easily and naturally to the next idea/person.	Transition was handled relatively well. Movement to ideas/next person could have been smoother.	Choppy transitions. Poor movement to next idea/person.	Lacked transition. Little or no connection to next idea/person.
Content (**understandability, separation of ideas, quality of research**)	Subject matter is thought provoking and interesting. Clearly demonstrates mastery of the coursework and thorough research of the presentation topic.	Subject matter is usually interesting and presentation reflects substantial research efforts.	Subject matter is treated superficially. Inadequate research efforts are reflected in the failure to reach a valid conclusion.	Subject matter is too vague, too broad, too narrow, too technical, or too specialized to permit meaningful research, thereby resulting in failure to reach any conclusion.
Conclusion (**summary or call to action, passion about subject, objective conclusions**)	Effectively summarized the presentation and gave a motivational conclusion to audience. Clearly impassioned about the subject. Conclusions are objective.	Satisfactorily summarized presentation, but lacked motivation to engage audience to act. Relatively impassioned about subject. Conclusions are mostly objective.	Vague summary. Left audience unclear as to purpose of presentation. Lacked passion. Failed to reach a valid conclusion.	No summary or call to action. Lacked motivation and passion.

Identifying and refining benchmarks for each dimension is an on-going process of reflecting succinctly on a rubric the SLOs of a course or program. One useful technique is a structured brainstorming session for all faculty involved, focused on how best to measure student learning on each student-learning outcome. Guided brainstorming allows generation of SLO- and curriculum-appropriate ideas. Note that the information contained in the Oral Presentation Rubric example (following the Scoring Guide Created at Cornerstone University below) provides a classroom scoring guide focused on the specific SLO variables under assessment.

Embedded Assessments. Embedded assessments are measures that already exist in the program and provide solid evidence of learning. A curriculum map can be used to identify what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are linked to—and currently measured in—particular courses. Embedded assessments are easy to collect because they already are being administered as part of a course, providing obvious advantages over add-on assessment strategies. Examples of course-embedded assessments include such student-learning outputs as papers, tests, speeches, group presentations, and projects. Quantitative and qualitative data can be produced from course-embedded assessments. Programs also may require other learning experiences that provide embedded assessments, such as capstone experiences, portfolios, theses and dissertations, comprehensive exams, field experiences, practicum experiences, and internships.

Entry/Exit Assessments. Entry assessments are used when students first enter the program, while exit assessments occur upon completion of the program. Although assessment ultimately should identify learning at the end of a program (summative assessment), entry tests provide baseline measurement for later comparison. Entry baseline measures, coupled with exit tests, provide evidence of whether the learning occurred before or after entering the program. This is particularly useful in programs with a large number of transfer students or nontraditional students. Although pre-/post-tests often produce quantitative data, writing samples, case studies, and other qualitative measurements also can be used.

Add-On Assessments. Add-on assessments can be categorized as assessments that (1) go beyond the classroom experience, (2) are generated through other program data, or (3) can be tagged on to other existing instruments. The first type of add-on assessments includes such techniques as requiring all graduating seniors to submit a portfolio, take a standardize test, or participate in exit interviews or focus groups outside of the classroom environment. Compliance in non-course data collection poses the greatest challenge because these activities occur outside of scheduled classes. Sponsoring an assessment day, providing students with food or connecting assessment to other program activities (senior retreat, alumni event, employment fair, etc.) may be appealing to some students, but the only way to ensure that all students participate is to make it a requirement in order to complete the degree.

Add-on assessments that are generated through other program data can be found in existing information gathered for other purposes (specialized accreditation or certification, program reviews, external reviews, etc.). Often accreditation reports and program reviews include evidence of student learning. The use of information available in reports linked directly to student-learning outcomes will decrease the need to duplicate assessment efforts.

The third kind of add-ons is used in conjunction with existing instruments. For example, institutions may have a mechanism for including additional questions that are learning based, rather than instructor based, on end-of-course evaluations. Standardized tests also may provide the opportunity to localize some of the questions and/or include separate questions at the end of the instrument. Adding additional assessment questions to course-specific exams also can yield localized assessment data.

Collecting Direct Assessment Data. Once tools are selected, the next step is deciding when to collect direct assessment data. Assessment data can be collected at touch points in the program (formative) or at the end of the program (summative). When formative data is collected in specific courses, it is used primarily in our teaching strategy, thus placing accountability for learning on the instructor (Trice, 2000). It is process based, can help enhance delivery of materials, and can be implemented to improve learning immediately.

Formative data ensure students possess the SLO knowledge, skills, and attitudes linked to a specific course. This is especially useful when the requisite knowledge/skills/attitudes are necessary for successful completion of later required courses. For example, assume summative assessment data provides evidence that students cannot do research independently in the capstone course. Assessment conducted at various points in the program can provide insight regarding which prerequisite courses are not transferring the level of knowledge/skills/attitudes expected of students at the end of the program.

Direct assessments also can produce summative data collected at the end of the program, providing an evaluative summary of learning in the program. Unlike formative assessment that places the onus for learning on the instructor, an underlying assumption of summative assessment is that learning is the shared responsibility of instructor and student (Trice, 2000). Summative data is outcomes based, rather than processed based like formative assessments data, so students do not get immediate feedback in order to alter their performance levels (Suskie, 2004). Although collecting formative data is a useful part of an assessment plan, it does not replace summative assessment because program SLOs focus on cumulative learning at program completion.

After identifying data-collection points in the program, faculty operationalize logistics for collecting data. Faculty may wish to keep papers, videotapes of presentations, rubrics and scoring sheets. Also, a database can be created for local, entry- and exit-test scores. Responsibility also can shift to students, requiring them to keep their own papers, projects, videotapes, and other pieces of evidence for submission at the end of their programs. Electronic portfolios are a cost-effective method for storing assessment evidence. By placing materials on a server, students can upload papers, speeches, videos, etc., and faculty can access the materials at will.

Regardless of assessment type used, if students are responsible for keeping materials, it is important to clearly articulate this expectation to them. Among the multiple of methods for communicating information to students about assessment artifacts they are responsible for saving, the following methods especially are recommended. Consistent reminders increase chances for compliance and better end results:

1. A one-page handout can be given to students when they declare their majors, outlining what they should keep and how it will be used. Staple this sheet to their signed degree plan after discussing it and emphasizing the importance of keeping both documents for later reference.

2. Placing explanations of what materials students must keep, and how those items will be used, can be included

in syllabi for all courses in the program. When the syllabus is reviewed at the beginning of each class, the instructor should draw special attention to this requirement.

3. The information regarding artifacts to be saved and how they will be used for assessment also should appear on the departmental Website.

Linking Assessment Data to Outcomes

The final step in creating a comprehensive communication assessment plan is to identify methods for collecting assessment data for each outcome, keeping in mind that one tool can be used to measure multiple student-learning outcomes. SLOs then should be linked to specific tools providing direct evidence for learning. Although some indirect assessments can be used as supplementary data, direct assessments are a must. Also, take care to employ triangulation by using multiple measures for each student-learning objective (see Chapters 3, 4, and 9 for further discussion of triangulation).

In the locally developed example provided earlier in this chapter, there are five primary tools: Pre-test/post-test quantitative instrument, pre-test/post-test qualitative ethics case study, internship experience, course-embedded instruments, and alumni surveys. Although a pre-test is not necessary for authentic assessment, this data can help identify problems with point-of-entry into the program and also provide baseline measurement for SLOs related to knowledge, writing, critical thinking, and the like; the same instrument is administered again at completion of the program so that value-added data can be reported. Finally, many institutions use models requiring that all outcomes be assessed at the end of a designated cycle, such as a three- or five-year assessment rotation with different outcomes assessed each year. This enables faculty easily to manage annual assessment responsibilities. Additional discussion of these approaches is included in Chapter 3 and 4.

Conclusion

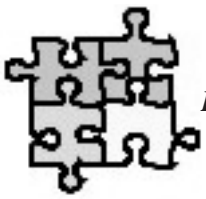
Selecting assessment tools and linking them to student-learning outcomes to create a comprehensive communication assessment plan sometimes might feel like a daunting task. As discussed in this chapter, there are easy-to-follow steps that lead to systematic completion of the process and provide faculty the opportunity to explore how the courses are linked to SLOs. Of course, assessment strategies should be cost-effective and need to yield benefits utilizing faculty time wisely. Many of the tools discussed in this chapter provide efficient, effective ways to assess student learning.

No matter what assessment tools are selected to evaluate student learning, the keep the following items in mind:

1. The evaluation of student learning needs to be a formal systematic process;
2. An effective assessment program is sustained, coordinated, and monitored;
3. The campus/program/course assessment plan must be owned by the stakeholders;
4. An assessment plan must include complete, ongoing review cycles (writing student-learning objectives, collecting of data by using appropriate instruments, and the use of data in decision-making).

When considering professional activity involved in the process of student learning, Brown, Race, and Smith (2000) suggest we need to realize the importance of assessment: “Assessing our students’ work is the most important thing we ever do for them. Our assessments influence their whole lives and careers, so it is crucial that the quality of our assessment is as good as we can make it (p. 38).”

Student learning can be evaluated through a diverse set of assessment methods. Just remember that assessment is a process, never a finished product. Finally, no matter what is done, use the data to make informed logistic and strategic decisions bettering your academic programs.



Putting it all together … piece by piece by piece, over time

References

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Backlund, P. M. (1994). Oral communication assessment: An Overview. In Christ, W. G. (Ed.). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech & theatre educators.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Bloom, B. S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of education objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain.* White Plains, New York: Longman.

Brown, P., Race, B., & Smith, S. (2000). *500 tips on assessment*. Great Britain: Biddles, Ltd.

Christ, William G. (Ed.). (1994). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech and theatre educators*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

CMU Toolkit. *What are you already doing that can be used for student learning outcomes assessment.* Retrieved May 15, 2006, from http://provost.cmich.edu/assessment/ toolkit/alreadyused.htm.

Davis, B. G. (1993). *Tools for teaching.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

McKeachie, W. J. (1999). *Teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers (10th ed.)*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Miller, W. R., & Miller, M. F. (1997). *Handbook for college teaching.* Sautee Nacoochee, GA: Pinecrest.

Morreale, S. P., Moore, M. R., Taylor K. P., Surges-Tatum, D. & Hulbert-Johnson, R., (eds.). (1993, 2007). *The competent speaker speech evaluation form and manual*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Morreale, S. P., & Backlund, P. M. (1996). *Large scale assessment in oral communication: K-12 and Higher Education (2nd ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Morreale, S. P., & Backlund, P. M. (2007). *Large scale assessment in oral communication: K-12 and Higher Education (3rd ed.)*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Morreale, S. P., Hamilton, R. M., & Berko, R. (2007). *Assessing motivation to communicate*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

National Communication Association list of available assessment instruments. Retrieved March 15, 2009, from http://www.ncastore.com/Assessment.html.

Nilson, L. B. (1998). *Teaching at its best: Research-based resource for college instructors.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

Stiggens, R . J. (1994). *Student-centered classroom assessment.* New York, NY: Macmillan College Publishing Company.

Spitzberg , B. (1995, 2007). *Conversational skills rating scale: An instructional assessment of interpersonal competence*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Suskie, L. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Trice, A. D. (2000). *A handbook of classroom assessment*. New York: Addison Wesley.

Wiggens, G. P. (1998). *Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Williams, A. G., & Hall, K.J. (2001). *Creating you career portfolio: At a glance guide for students (2nd ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

CHAPTER 6

END-OF-MAJOR ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Sherry Wien, Monmouth University

Purpose and Preview

The previous chapter described the links between learning and assessment tools. The present chapter focuses on the timing of assessment. For most higher-education institutions, assessment occurs at the end of the major. Students, typically graduating seniors, participate in a variety of assignments, exams, surveys, and interviews in order to provide data on what they have learned in their major programs. These summative (end-of-major) assessment tools are used to answer questions such as: Is the academic program achieving its program goals for student learning? Are designated student-learning objectives (SLOs) being met by students in that communication major? What evidence is collected to answer those questions? How is that evidence obtained? How are results analyzed and utilized? What resulting actions are taken to improve the program and its curriculum?

To see where summative assessment fits in the bigger picture, assessment can be summarized as a continuous four-step cycle. Assessment is the ongoing, essential process of:

1. Establishing clear, measurable expected student-learning *outcomes*.
2. Ensuring that students have sufficient *opportunities* to achieve those outcomes.
3. Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting *evidence* to determine how well student learning matches performance criteria.
4. Understanding student learning, based on evidence collected, and implementing program *improvement* for better student learning (Suskie, 2004, p. 3).

End-of-major assessment involves students providing evidence of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they have learned from program faculty, allowing those faculty members to determine whether the evidence of student learning matches their expectations of what students should have learned in the major. If faculty members are not satisfied with the results and find that students are deficient in one or more areas, then they have the opportunity to review or revise learning expectations and/or alter learning opportunities and teaching strategies employed by the curriculum.

Summative assessment serves to "document student learning for transcripts and for employers, donors, legislators, and other external audiences" (Suskie, 2004, p. 95). To address concerns of important external stakeholders interested in what students have learned in the major, higher-education institutions commonly report summative assessment externally. In contrast, formative data immediately identifies student weaknesses while there is still time to modify instruction and enhance learning before graduation. Formative assessment is typically used within courses and reported internally. Regardless of summative or formative methods, the continuous four-step cycle of outcomes, opportunities, evidence, and improvement assessment remains the same.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a variety of procedures that communication departments can use to assess student-learning outcomes at the end of the major. For more information about student-learning outcomes and objectives, refer to Chapters 3 through 5. Common examples of direct measures are capstone projects, portfolios, exit exams, and performance on national or professional tests. These methods are used most commonly for summative assessment but can apply to formative assessment in many cases.

This chapter reviews assessment tools described in previous chapters, particularly four of the most common direct approaches for end-of-major assessment: the capstone course, senior portfolios, faculty-created exit exams, and standardized tests. Each method is described in terms of its value and role in an assessment program, its practical application, how communication departments can employ such assessment data, and how to modify them for use as formative assessment tools.

Assessment and the Capstone Course

The capstone course is an opportunity for students, usually graduating seniors, to demonstrate what they have learned throughout the major and how they can synthesize and apply such knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A capstone course intended to help students synthesize preceding course work and apply it to their own futures is often called a senior seminar. Generally limited to 25 or fewer students, a senior seminar typically hinges on a unifying theme…and themes may vary from year to year or instructor to instructor. Another approach to the capstone course is "to require advanced student projects . . . and usually include in-class presentations" (Eastman, 1994, p. 364).

As a venue for assessment at the end of the major, capstone courses allow students to demonstrate that they have achieved learning goals established by their program faculty. "The course should be designed to assess cognitive [knowledge], affective [attitudinal], and psychomotor [skill] learning and to do so in a student-centered and student-directed manner that requires the command, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge and skills" (Moore, 1994, p. 155).

Value and Role. The capstone course is valuable because it has many advantages over faculty-created exit exams and standardized tests (Moore, 1994). There is great flexibility to design the course to accommodate the resources and expectations of the department. Depending on course structure, it usually requires students to perform at higher levels of learning because they must analyze and synthesize past learning and apply it to new experiences. Students can work independently and tailor research projects to individual career aspirations, while at the same time having a final common-learning experience as a group.

The capstone course can include various assignments serving as assessment measures, such as a senior thesis, an applied project, public oral presentation, and/or a portfolio. The capstone course in communication can integrate disciplinary knowledge with other disciplines in the college or university to better meet the goals of a liberal arts education, and the communication skills component can create partnerships with local business and industry through applied research projects or campaigns.

Application. In order to design a capstone course that helps students synthesize previous learning and provides opportunities for strong summative measurement, program faculty must be knowledgeable of and committed to the academic-assessment process. Developing a capstone course is a program-wide process. As described in earlier chapters, faculty must discuss and agree on the student-learning outcomes (SLOs) for the major. It is important for program faculty to determine in advance what students should learn from courses serving as capstone-course prerequisites, as well as what students should know/do/value at the end of the capstone experience. Faculty and students can work together to design appropriate assessment instruments to measure SLOs, if that approach makes sense for the program. Some programs provide options for students to choose how to assess their learning at the end of the major. Students can provide input for the types of presentations, portfolios, or final projects that are most appropriate for their individualized coursework. The capstone-course instructor can be responsible for the data collection and analysis, or if there are multiple sections of the capstone course, instructors can work collectively on assessment. Of course, at least two calibrated raters are needed for subjective measures such as portfolios and presentations. No matter what the course design, make sure all program faculty are involved in designing and administering the assessment measures and using data results to improve future capstone learning.

When using a course, such as the capstone, for assessment purposes, take care to keep assessment data separate from course grading. For example, if the capstone course includes assessment measures such as a senior survey or comprehensive exit exam, then students' answers should not be graded for course credit. Students might show poor performance on the cumulative exam because their prior courses did not prepare them as well as needed—or because too much time elapsed between the prerequisite courses or recent courses did not reinforce learning that occurred earlier in the program, leading to knowledge-retention failure. Also, students might provide falsely positive responses when answering senior-survey questions if they believe negative answers will affect course grades. Assessment data is used to identify strengths and weaknesses of the major program, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of student learning. The capstone course can have assessment assignments (senior survey, exit exam) to measure comprehensive student learning, but there also should be assignments that measure learning that occurs within the capstone course itself (senior paper or project).

Portfolios can be graded for course credit, as well as providing assessment data. Some programs choose to grade portfolios using a standard grading scale; other programs grade them as pass/fail; while others simply award points for

submitting a portfolio. For programs such as public relations, it is helpful to the program and to students if qualified practitioners serve as raters for portfolio reviews. Program alumni, employed in the field of study, usually enjoy such participation with their alma maters—and frequently provide job leads to those students whose portfolios they find impressive. Prior to reviewing student submissions, anyone (including faculty) involved in subjective evaluation of student artifacts should attend a training session that includes rater calibration and practice materials prior to reviewing student submissions.

Logistical Planning. Logistics comprise an important consideration when designing the capstone experience. Will it be one single capstone course or a small group of courses? Will the capstone project last one semester or one year? How many sections of the course are needed (based on number of graduating seniors)? Will the course be conducted as small sections or as a large seminar with breakout discussion groups? Will the sections be divided by concentrations in the major or will each section have a mix of concentrations? Will the course be graded pass/fail or with a letter grade? If a letter grade will be assigned, is there a minimum grade requirement for graduation? What type of work will be required (senior thesis, applied project, internship, portfolio, presentation, exams)? How will faculty evaluate this work (individually or simultaneously as a small panel or as a whole)? How can alumni and community members be involved in the capstone experience (as outside evaluators, audience members, guest speakers)?

There are numerous ways to administer the capstone course. One example is the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where a capstone project is divided into two courses, SPCH 4300 Human Communication Theory and 4110 Advanced Applications in Human Communication. Seniors take SPCH 4300 in the fall as a three-credit course and "write a comprehensive case analysis of a personal communication situation by using a communication theory of their choice as the foundation" (Ulmer, Thombre, Driskill, & Mirivel, 2008, p. 3). In the spring, seniors take SPCH 4110 as a one-credit course that requires them to "prepare and deliver a 25-minute presentation on their fall project. The presentation is delivered to an audience of faculty members, stakeholders from the community (e.g., Alumni, local members of industry, etc.), and undergraduate students" (Ulmer, Thombre, Driskill, & Mirivel, 2008, p. 3).

In the Speech Communication Department at UALR, faculty share responsibility and involvement in the capstone experience. Faculty who teach the capstone course help students draft their papers. Other faculty serve as mentors for communication seniors (usually one or two students for each faculty sponsor) and all faculty are responsible for evaluating several capstone presentations. Both faculty and external stakeholders contribute to assessment in order to refine classroom teaching.

At Minnesota State University–Mankato, the Speech Communication Department requires a research project, paper, speech, and digital portfolio for SPEE 485 Senior Seminar. Students pretest standardized exams in earlier required courses and post-test in the capstone course. Students also participate in a senior exit survey. Meanwhile, Abilene Christian University's Communication Department has a course called COMS 499, Communication Practicum, in which students review learning in their major and also conduct communication/leadership internship work at local organizations.

The Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication at Augusta State University in Georgia offers COMS 4970, Senior Capstone Project. Students can choose from three options: (a) senior thesis (15 page minimum) with annotated bibliography, (b) internship (50 hours minimum) with learning journal and comprehensive exam, or (c) another type of application project with project report and comprehensive exam. Each student works with a faculty sponsor to create the report and to deliver a 10-15 minute public presentation before a panel of faculty, interested students, and campus administrators.

The most common assignments for the capstone experience are research projects or papers, speeches, portfolios, and exit surveys. However, a department can use comprehensive exams, senior letters or reflective essays, group projects such as peer training or coaching, case studies, in-basket exercises, or student exhibits. Design choices should be based on program learning goals and logistical considerations.

Caution should be used when designing the capstone course. If multiple assessment activities are used within the capstone experience, too much data might be generated and the data might not be properly analyzed. Departments can rotate assessment plans yearly to examine portfolios one year, comprehensive exams the second year, and exit surveys the following year—being careful to apply triangulation methods each year (see Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 9 for discussion of triangulation).

Every SLO does not need to be assessed closely every year. The department can designate an area to improve and pay more attention to that one criterion for a few years. Data can be discussed and used right away, but it is best to allow multiple years of data collection, to determine definite trends, before the department makes significant changes to its curriculum. Departments should be prepared for some faculty to resist changing their courses after identifying weaknesses in a program's curriculum. There is a danger with academic assessment that faculty may feel their teaching is the focus of assessment—rather than the intended assessment focus on student learning. When discussing assessment, faculty need reassurance that this is a collective effort to make improvements to the program and that assessment is not designed to evaluate or penalize individual faculty members.

Data Use. In addition to comprehensive exam questions or exit surveys, typical data generated by the capstone course include student-work artifacts such as writing samples, speech presentations, creative performances, portfolios, speeches written, etc. "They can all be scored using a rubric and provide important evidence of the overall effectiveness of a program in achieving its major learning goals" (Suskie, 2004, p. 137). It is important that faculty have a common understanding of what constitutes good or poor student performance. This can be accomplished by developing a shared scoring rubric and assuring reliability across raters.

As a group, faculty should examine the scoring forms or rubrics already in use within the department. Faculty can discuss their common expectations in order to develop a mutual evaluation form that emerges holistically from various sections or courses. Assessment efforts can be simplified and enhanced if faculty use the same form or forms with similar criteria in classes throughout the curriculum. The rubric should reflect the student-learning outcomes that have been identified for the program. Faculty need not all agree to use the same rubrics in course grading, but they do need to use the same rubrics when rating student work for assessment purposes.

Faculty at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock use a standardized evaluation form for the capstone defense. The content and delivery of videotaped presentations are evaluated. A passing grade from two of the three faculty evaluators is required for students to graduate. This evaluation form is available online within the department's annual assessment report at http://ualr.edu/cps/index.php/home/assessment/speech-communication.

Augusta State University has evaluation rubrics for each of three options in the COMS 4970 Senior Project. Internship projects are evaluated using a 10-point scale based on journal entries containing description of examples, exposition of relevant communication theories, application of theory to example, and quality of writing. Seminar papers are evaluated using the same 10-point scale based on technical skill (quality of writing, formatting) and content (introduction, defining the research object, rationale, specific texts/objects, methods, literature review, analysis, discussion, conclusion, works cited). Oral presentations are evaluated using a 100-point scale based on content and delivery.

The purpose of assessment is not simply to collect data, but to use the resulting information to understand and improve student learning in order to "close the loop" in the assessment cycle. The capstone course can provide regular feedback for faculty on how well students are prepared to write, make presentations, apply their knowledge and skills, and express appropriate attitudes. This feedback can be used to update course content as well as to improve teaching methods.

For example, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Speech Communication Department added a sophomore-level research methods course because their assessment data showed that students were not adequately prepared to analyze research or use APA style in citing sources. The University of Wisconsin-Parkside has used capstone data to establish content standards, consistent across sections and instructors, for their public speaking course. At Abilene Christian University capstone course data are utilized to cultivate networking and public relations opportunities with alumni and community members, who observe student presentations. Even at its most basic level, each student can use his or her own capstone work as discussion points in job interviews. The next major section of this chapter will focus on a summative assessment procedure, senior portfolios, providing an even stronger focus on such career applications.

Formative Variation. The capstone course is the primary example of summative assessment, since its purpose is to measure student learning at the end of an academic program. However, programs can modify the capstone experience to occur before the senior year, providing formative assessment opportunities. Capstone projects usually have a course prerequisite of research methods. Despite this requirement, programs sometimes learn that seniors are weak in certain methodologies after it is too late for remedial education, and capstone projects suffer. To reduce this occurrence, the

research methods course could require a pilot study of the proposed senior capstone project. Another option is to offer various one-credit research methods modules after the formal research methods course. These modules provide workshops for particular methodologies. Students get immediate feedback and can address methodological weaknesses of their projects before the formal capstone course. Another approach is to require students to focus on various aspects of their eventual capstone projects in various prerequisite courses.

Assessment and Senior Portfolios

Suskie defines a portfolio as a collection of "compelling evidence of what a student has learned" (2004, p. 186). Portfolios may show many different kinds of knowledge and skills that can be examined individually or holistically. Not only can a portfolio show the results of what a student has learned, it can show how the student has matured over the college experience through the learning process.

Value and Role. As students prepare portfolios, they engage simultaneously in assessment and in learning through reflection on the work they have produced throughout their work in the major. By tailoring portfolios to students' professional objectives and strengths, this self-assessment procedure fosters diversity rather than conformity. "With so much of our [communication] curriculum devoted to preprofessional training, it makes sense to participate in a process designed to enhance and credential career preparation" (Orlik, 1994, p. 145).

Application. The communication program's faculty must first agree on programmatic SLOs expected in student portfolios. Faculty should develop a checklist or template of competencies that will be used to assess portfolio contents. Next the program should determine what artifacts or evidence should be collected. Finally evaluation rubrics should be designed to determine the quality of student learning when comparing artifacts with the list of competencies. By requiring students to save their work over time, the program—and its students—can assess how well students are progressing as they achieve a variety of goals and learning objectives.

Assessment portfolios must emphasize student self-assessment, since each student portfolio is distinctive, and must have rigorous standards of documentation. "Documentation evidences the *doing*, whereas self-assessment validates the *learning*" (Orlik, 1994, p. 135). Therefore the design of senior portfolios should include (a) documentation of learning from artifacts and (b) self-assessment of learning from student-reflection statements. Student statements should explain why each artifact exemplifies achievement of a particular student-learning outcome. "The requirement of the reflection component insures students move beyond a simple catalog of activities to a reasoned discussion of the place and function of the artifact in their overall program in speech communication" (Johnson-Curiskis, Cronn-Mills, & Sandmann, 2007, p. 82).

For example, as exemplified in the example below, the Communication Studies Department at Minnesota State University–Mankato (2009) requires student-reflection statements on seven specific components: (a) presentations, (b) relationships, (c) contexts, (d) diversity, (e) influence, (f) technology, and (g) research. Each component requires artifacts from across the communication curriculum and a reflection statement with a minimum of 100 words.

For example, how does a particular assignment demonstrate individual public-speaking ability? How do assignments collectively demonstrate growth or competency as a speaker? If a student cannot find appropriate assignments, there is an option to write a 1,500-word essay addressing student competency with the learning standard for each competency except research.

Example: Portfolio Rubric

Communication Studies Department
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Senior Portfolio

for

[Your Name]

[Semester] [Year]

***1. Presentations*:** Assignments demonstrating increased confidence and competence in public presentations.

A. Assignment demonstrating individual public speaking ability
(Suggested assignments might include video recordings, audio recordings, manuscripts or outlines. Speech evaluations do not belong in this area.)
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. Sample individual public-speaking evaluation
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.

***2. Relationships*:** Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the manner in which communication creates, maintains and transforms relationships, and the ability to engage in effective and productive relational communication. Assignments must be from different courses in communication studies.

A. 1st. Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. 2nd Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.

***3. Contexts*:** Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the crucial role communication plays in community, professional and civic contexts, and the ability to use communication behaviors ethically and effectively in various contexts. Assignments must be from different courses in communication studies.

A. 1st. Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. 2nd Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.

***4. Diversity*:** Assignments demonstrating knowledge of the role of culture and diversity in communication, and the ability to effectively communicate within and across cultures.Assignments must be from different courses in communication studies.

A. 1st. Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. 2nd Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.

***5. Influence*:** Assignments demonstrating competency in reflective construction and analysis of arguments and discourse intended to influence beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices. Assignments must be from different courses in communication studies.

A. 1st. Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. 2nd Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.

***6. Technology*:** Assignments demonstrating ability to effectively use communication technology and/or to critically evaluate how technology affects communication.Assignments must be from different courses in communication studies.

A. 1st. Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

B. 2nd Assignment
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

I cannot find appropriate assignments. What do I do? [Write a 1,500-word essay per assignment addressing your competency with the standard. Link the essay to this standard.]

***7. Research*:** Assignment demonstrating competency in systematic inquiry, including the process of asking questions, systematically attempting to answer them, and understanding the limitations of the conclusions reached.

A. Senior Seminar Final Research Project
REFLECTION STATEMENT*

***REFLECTION STATEMENTS:** Student must include with the assignments statements (minimum 100 words each) reflecting on how the assignments demonstrate growth or competency in each component.

One factor to consider when requiring senior portfolios is distinguishing between professional portfolios for career purposes and learning portfolios for assessment purposes. For professional portfolios, students showcase their best work for presentation to a potential employer and assessments usually are completed by practitioner review teams—sometimes exclusively and sometimes in concert with faculty. For learning portfolios, students must show a comprehensive collection of evidence that demonstrates what they have learned in relation to what the program expects them to learn and assessments are completed by faculty review teams. As mentioned earlier, in this chapter and in previous chapters, at least two calibrated reviewers and standardized rubrics are needed for all subjective measures. Both types of portfolios can allow students to make good impressions in applying for a job or graduate school.

When designing the portfolio assignment, consider logistical questions. Will the senior portfolio be assembled within one course or accomplished through a sequence of courses in the major? What kinds of student work need to be collected? How will students remember to save their work throughout the major? Are transfer students limited to including work from their current institution only? If artifacts are lost or damaged, how will students replace them for the portfolio? Will the portfolio be in hard copy or digital form? If electronic portfolios are required, are faculty instructors or campus support services prepared to train students in designing Web pages or creating digital files? What rubrics will faculty use to evaluate the portfolios? Will course instructors evaluate portfolios that range across concentrations or will faculty be assigned to evaluate portfolios within each concentration (i.e., communication studies, journalism, broadcasting, public relations)? Will portfolios be copied and archived for departmental records? Should portfolios be available to the public?

The Department of Communication Studies at Monmouth College in Illinois has a well-established system of using electronic student portfolios. Students begin working on portfolios in their junior year through COMM 321–Junior Colloquium. They complete portfolios in COMM 421–Senior Colloquium. Both courses have portfolio resources and evaluation procedures available to faculty and students. Each portfolio is organized to present evidence that

demonstrates competency for each learning objective in the major. Two faculty mentors evaluate and provide feedback for each senior portfolio. The evaluation rubric and student portfolios are available publicly on the department's Web site at http://department.monm.edu/cata/portfolios.htm.

Having students create a binder with paper documentation is a simple way to start portfolios. Students should organize their portfolios with a table of contents, an introductory statement or overall reflection page, cover sheet and individual reflection for each artifact, artifact items (i.e., term papers, projects, videotapes or audiotapes of speeches, products specialized to their concentrations). Assessors can add to the portfolio an assessment summary and/or a completed rubric. It is helpful if the documentation of artifacts and the self-assessment of reflections are organized according to the SLOs of the program, helping reviewers assess individual learning and also compare student learning within and across majors or concentrations within the department.

Faculty need to consider two major issues with portfolios: (a) the need to remind students constantly to save their work and (b) the extensive time needed to create, manage, and evaluate student portfolios. Digital portfolios add another layer of complication for faculty and students in terms of training. Faculty need to introduce the portfolio requirement when students enter the major. Course syllabi for required courses each should contain a paragraph reinforcing that students need to keep course materials for portfolios and should make suggestions regarding which items from each course are most appropriate for portfolios.

Regular student reviews and updates of their portfolios need to be assured. In early core courses within a major, faculty can help students understand the purpose and structure of the portfolio and help them select initial items for inclusion. The complexity of portfolio contents can be increased gradually in the following years. It takes several years to embed the concept of portfolio development into student and departmental culture. In terms of time, the program might require two semesters for students to create portfolios. Portfolio development is more effective with a small number of students, allowing sufficient supervision of portfolio creation and easier management of portfolio assessment processes. Programs with many majors can make the portfolio review process manageable by (a) reviewing only a random/representative sample of portfolios each year, (b) keeping portfolios short by limiting the number of items included, and/or (c) examining excerpts from longer artifacts.

Data Use. Learning-portfolio artifacts include research papers, term projects, essay exams, electronic copies of broadcasting work, public-relations campaign materials, media releases, speech videos, speech evaluations, speech outlines, internship evaluations and journals, screenwriting scripts, and other examples of student work. Portfolio assessors can control the content of portfolios by requiring particular pieces of evidence from required courses.

Rubrics are necessary to judge portfolios efficiently, so a common rubric should be developed for consistency in portfolio review. Faculty time is necessary to discuss a common evaluation form, perhaps developed holistically from rubrics for various prerequisite courses in the major. By examining evaluation forms already used by faculty in their courses, the portfolio evaluators can focus on overarching criteria**.**

Two review processes, equally acceptable, should be considered and discussed: (a) Portfolios may be evaluated by teams of faculty (or outside assessors) in which two reviewers independently complete rubric forms for each portfolio, and a third reviewer reconciles any disagreements, or (b) portfolios may be evaluated by teams of two faculty (or outside assessors) in which the two reviewers reach consensus on rubric ratings and complete one form between them. Both approaches prevent overly subjective judgments and help reviewers better evaluate portfolios outside of their own areas of expertise. Following is an example of assessment instructions for review of seniors' professional portfolios, adapted from Monmouth College's Communication Studies department (2009).

Example: Portfolio Assessment Procedures

2010 COMM Professional Portfolio Evaluation Procedures

1. By the end of November 2009 (or earlier as determined), each student CATA major will be expected to obtain a review of his/her portfolio with his/her CATA/COMM faculty mentor. Take his/her advice!!
2. By **Monday, January 29, 2010**, each senior portfolio must be ready for evaluation by two CATA faculty members. The evaluation will be guided by the CATA/COMM portfolio Evaluation Rubrics for the appropriate concentration and will use a 5 point scale. Links to the evaluation rubrics are found here and below. ***Use those evaluation criteria*** as you write and edit your reflection statements.
3. Evaluation will NOT involve "re-grading" artifacts but will, rather, focus primarily on the students' understanding of how goals have been met and ***demonstrated in the artifacts*** as revealed in **reflection statements**.
4. Once each faculty evaluator has scored each goal (i.e. I.A, II.C, etc.) for a portfolio, the two evaluators will meet to discuss their scores and reach a "consensus" score for each goal. These scores will determine the portfolio grade and will be recorded for assessment purposes. The evaluators will also prepare comments to accompany the scores as feedback to the student.
5. An acceptable portfolio will achieve a 3.0 or better average score and no more than one score less than 3.0 on any specific goal (e.g. I., II., III., IV.) in each category.
6. Results of portfolio evaluations will be available to students by March 3 or before. Should a student's portfolio receive less than a passing score, that ***students will have until*** **March 22** to make revisions and correct deficiencies at which time the evaluators will review the portfolio for a second time. **Normally the department will not review a portfolio more than twice in a single semester.** Students who do not pass the portfolio on the second attempt can expect to register for and repeat COMM 421 at a later time.

Monmouth (2009) has separate rubrics for evaluating four goals: (a) messages, (b) knowledge, (c) application and (d) skills. Specific learning objectives and portfolio requirements are listed in the following examle. The rubrics are on a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high).

Minnesota State University–Mankato also uses rubrics on a scale of 1 to 4 or 1 to 3 (low to high) depending on each of their five learning objectives. To avoid the overload of comparing assessment data from portfolios with five learning objectives every year, the Department of Communication Studies focuses on one learning objective in detail for each annual assessment report.

No matter what process is used, assessment data are pointless if faculty fail to use the information to increase their understanding and improve student learning. Both Monmouth College and Minnesota State University–Mankato use portfolios scores to evaluate the success of the major during program review every five years. Based on several years of using portfolios, both departments have made significant revisions in major requirements and in the structure of portfolios themselves.

Example: Student Portfolio Guidelines and Rubric

COMMUNICATION MAJOR LEARNING OBJECTIVES (effective Class of 2011)

I. MESSAGES:

Communication Majors should be able to construct effective written, oral and mediated messages.

Meeting Portfolio Requirements for this objective

- For this section of the portfolio, students should include **at least five artifacts** each of which is a message.
  - At least one of the messages should be in the form of a research paper that involved library research or other significant information acquisition.
  - At least one of the messages should be in a mediated form (involving the use of some technology beyond writing or speaking, e.g. web page, PowerPoint, video, etc.).
  - At least one of the messages should be reflective of oral communication.
  - At least two of the messages should be ones reflective of the kinds of messages the student expects to create in his/her life after college (ideally "best work").
- Students should write a reflection statement that discusses each included artifact, describing how these works represent good quality messages. For each artifact message the reflection should include an identification of the origin of the artifact and which requirement above it represents: Reflections that explain why the artifact represents a good quality message generally discuss the following:
  - Identification of the thesis or central concept of the message and the purpose of the message.
  - Identification of the intended audience of the message and how audience influenced message design
  - Explanation of how the message represents good quality in terms of such features as:
    - use of appropriate organizational schemes,
    - effective acquisition and use of supporting material,
    - good reasoning
    - use of professional forms, language and standards
    - adaptation of the message to the medium and audience

Artifacts used in this section of the portfolio may be used in other sections as well!

Evaluation Rubric

1 = fewer than five artifacts or not all required types of artifacts are present.

2 = reflection does not discuss each artifact or does not identify central concepts, purpose and audience for each.

3 = reflection offers some explanation of why these artifacts as a group demonstrate good quality, but with limited support or little use of professional vocabulary and standards.

4 = reflection offers extended explanations of why these artifacts as a group reflect good quality with adequate support and use of professional vocabulary and standards.

5 = a polished reflection that meets the standards of 4 above with artifacts of excellent quality.

II. Knowledge:

Communication Majors should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the field.

Meeting Portfolio Requirements for this objective

- For this section of the portfolio, students should include **at least four artifacts** that demonstrate they have substantial knowledge of four or more different areas of communication study.

  Such areas might involve:
  - interpersonal communication,
  - group communication,
  - social effects of media,
  - history of communication,
  - theories of communication
  - persuasion, argumentation,
  - organizational communication,
  - communication criticism.

- Students should write a reflection statement that discusses how their major (and possibly other experiences) has given them substantial professional knowledge of various areas of the field of Communication Studies. The reflection should make reference to the artifacts as examples and evidence of the communication knowledge the student has mastered.

Artifacts used in this section of the portfolio may be used in other sections as well!

Evaluation Rubric

1 = fewer than four artifacts are present and/or the reflection does not discuss each artifact.

2 = reflection does not identify which of the areas of knowledge the artifacts illustrate and/or provides little or no explanation of the substance of the knowledge that the student has obtained.

3 = reflection offers some explanation of what the student knows and gives some indication of how these artifacts illustrate knowledge of the field – but with limited support or little use of professional vocabulary and standards.

4 = reflection offers extended explanations of what the student knows and why these artifacts as a group illustrate knowledge of the field with adequate support and use of professional vocabulary and standards.

5 = a polished reflection that meets the standards of 4 above with discussions and artifacts of excellent quality.

III. Application:

Communication Majors should demonstrate how they can apply their knowledge to realistic issues.	
Meeting Portfolio Requirements for this objective	**Evaluation Rubric**
• For this section of the portfolio, students should include **at least five artifacts** that demonstrate they have the ability to apply their knowledge of communication in practical ways to five different kinds of problems or issues of personal or professional concern. Such applications could include: ○ persuasive campaigns, ○ policy cases, ○ conflict, ○ relationship management, ○ training programs, ○ web-site development, ○ audience analysis, ○ communication/media criticism and evaluation, ○ news or entertainment programming, ○ video or audio production, ○ news reporting/writing, ○ effective layout and design. • Students should write a reflection statement that discusses how the included artifacts reflect the student's ability to apply professional communication knowledge and critical skills. *Artifacts used in this section of the portfolio may be used in other sections as well!*	**1** = fewer than five artifacts are present and/or the reflection does not discuss each artifact. **2** = reflection does not identify which of the areas of application the artifacts illustrate and/or provides little or no explanation of the what the student can do as a communication professional. **3** = reflection offers some explanation of what the student can do in applying his or her knowledge to problems and issues in communication studies and gives some indication of how these artifacts illustrate those abilities – but with limited support and little explanation of why these artifacts are of good quality and meet professional standards. **4** = reflection offers extended explanations of what the student can do as a communication professional and why these artifacts as a group illustrate good work in the field with adequate support and use of professional vocabulary and standards. **5** = a polished reflection that meets the standards of 4 above with discussions and artifacts of excellent quality.

IV. Skills:

Communication Majors should demonstrate their ability to "deliver" messages with skill.	
Meeting Portfolio Requirements for this objective	**Evaluation Rubric**
• For this section of the portfolio, students should include **at least four artifacts** that demonstrate they are competent oral and written communicators in professional contexts. ○ At least **two** artifacts must reflect student skill in differing forms of oral communication. ○ At least one artifact must demonstrate skill in written communication. ○ At least one artifact must demonstrate skillful, professional level creation of a message using media technology. ○ At least one (or two) artifact must demonstrate skillful communication in interactions with others. • Students should write a reflection statement that discusses how the included artifacts reflect competent and skillful communication performance. *Artifacts used in this section of the portfolio may be used in other sections as well!*	**1** = fewer than four artifacts or not all required types of artifacts are present. **2** = reflection does not discuss each artifact or does not identify which of the type of communication skill the artifact illustrates. **3** = reflection offers some explanation of how these artifacts illustrate skillful oral, written, mediated or interpersonal communication but with limited support or little use of professional vocabulary and standards. **4** = reflection offers extended explanations of why these artifacts illustrate skillful oral, written, mediated or interpersonal communication with adequate support and use of professional vocabulary and standards. **5** = a polished reflection that meets the standards of 4 above with artifacts of excellent quality.

Assessment and Faculty-Created Exit Exams

As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5, exit exams locally created by communication program faculty offer another direct measure of student-learning outcomes. However, this procedure is not as commonly used as capstone courses or senior portfolios. In fact, according to a 1992 national survey of institutional members of the Broadcast Education Association, 94% of media departments (212 out of 226 responses) did not use exit exams (Eastman, 1994). Content-intensive exit examinations can be defined as:

> comprehensive tests given just before graduation that must be passed to obtain the degree. At their best, exit examinations mix factual and conceptual knowledge with application questions and allow for imaginative and creative responses; such exit tests are essay style and open ended. In practice, most such tests employ machine-scored multiple-choice questions. (Eastman, 1994, p. 365)

This definition is not definitive. Faculty in each communication program should decide what works best for their program in terms of exam use, format, and policies for administration. One advantage for using a locally developed exam is the ability to tailor the test to a specific curriculum.

Value and Role. For years, faculty have resisted the idea of using exit exams because of the time and resources it takes to create and administer an exit exam, the challenge of covering the great diversity and specialization of communication curricula, and the fear of professors "teaching to the test." However Suskie (2004) points out three advantages in using exit exams, centering around efficiency: (a) a program can collect a large of amount of information in a short amount of time; (b) creating an objective exit exam takes time, but scoring is fast and easy; and (c) exam results can be summarized into a single score that easily can be consumed by busy stakeholders (esp., administrators, board members, and legislators).

Application. State and national legislative mandates, higher-education accreditation associations, and boards of trustees/regents pressure departments to account for student performance (and sometimes faculty performance). However, each department should decide if it needs to implement exit exams for assessment. What is the goal of using an exit exam? Is it to measure the quality of student learning or the quality of faculty instruction? If the goal is to measure student learning, a multiple-choice exit exam can only measure the most basic knowledge, in the form of factual material, since it has to be standardized, quantifiable, and legally defensible if required for graduation.

Senior theses, capstone projects, or portfolios can serve as alternatives or supplements for measuring comprehensive student learning. What areas of student learning should be measured? Will the test be standardized on common course work in the core curriculum, individualized to a program specialization, or designed with a combination of questions covering both core and specialized courses?

What resources are available to create, administer, and grade the exit exams? Exit exams that are customized individually to students are easily managed with small programs having fewer than 50 graduating seniors. However, large programs with over 100 graduating seniors should consider time and resources when deciding to use exit exams. Will students take the exam voluntarily, in which case incentives need strong consideration, or will it be mandatory? Will students be required to pass the exit exam for graduation? If so, what happens when a student fails? Will the exam be a part of the capstone course? Will the exit exam be administered annually or each semester? A program does not have to assess every student every semester. Random samples can be used within a semester and exit exams can be administered every few years.

What will be the format of the exam? Will it be written or oral? Will the questions be multiple-choice, essay, or a combination? Most programs using exit exams have opted for multiple-choice exams because of the ease of scoring and summarizing data. How many questions will be on the exam? How much time will students have to complete the exam? When will students actually take the exam?

Some programs use exit exams as both pre-test, when students become communication majors, and as post-test for graduating seniors. Other programs test rising juniors and graduating seniors for pre-test and post-test results. Will the grade be pass/fail or a numerical score? How will the exam questions be evaluated for validity and reliability? Testing experts should review the exit exam to avoid poorly constructed questions, and both reliability and validity must be assured.

Eastman (1994) summarizes a variety of exit exam applications among media departments. Some examples are University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Grambling State University in Louisiana, Bethany College in West Virginia,

Murray State University in Kentucky, Black Hills State College in South Dakota, and the University of La Verne in California. Of the fourteen schools that reported giving exit exams, ten departments said that they did not require students to pass the exit exam in order to graduate. Exit exams were more often used for curriculum assessment or to respond to state-mandated requirements than to assess individual student learning. The format of these exit exams varied among multiple-choice tests, half-objective/half-essay, written essay, and oral exams.

According to its student-learning assessment report for 2000-2001, the Department of Communication at University of Colorado at Boulder administers an exit exam in all sections of its senior-seminar class. The 50-item test assesses general knowledge of communication principles distributed among four content areas: (a) communication theory and method, (b) organizational communication, (c) argument and rhetorical theory, and (d) interpersonal interaction. Each content area has about thirteen questions. The exam was created in 1992 and evaluated each year for revisions. In 1995, the department started administering the same exam annually to students entering the major and non-majors enrolled in sections of the public speaking class. This allowed the department to perform later longitudinal studies to compare the scores of graduating seniors to the scores of first-year students three years earlier.

The University of Colorado-Colorado Springs' Communication Department has three computerized graduation exit exams created for each of its programmatic tracks: (a) Applied Communication, (b) Organizational Communication, and (c) Media Management/Recording Arts. All exams contain common questions that address content of department core courses, as well as track-specific questions. Entry-level students registered in Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication take the exam, as do graduating seniors during the last four weeks of their last semester. The scores of graduating seniors are combined and compared to scores of entry-level students to determine thresholds of improvement.

The Department of Communication Studies at Texas Christian University uses a 30-item exit exam that traditionally has been administered as a paper and pencil test, but is moving to online evaluation. In 2004, the department set a criterion cut-score of 70%, or 21 correct questions out of 30, after comparing scores between two groups (non-majors enrolled in the Basic Speech Communication course and graduating seniors). A copy of the 2002-2004 TCU Communication Studies exit exam follows.

At Augusta State University, students in the Communication Studies senior capstone course have three options for graduation mentioned earlier in this chapter. Two of the three options involve a comprehensive exam. Its design is similar to graduate comprehensive exams. It is a take-home exam with two general questions written by a faculty committee of three. The completion time is 48 hours after receipt of the questions. Students combine course- and discipline-based theoretical content (citing sources of information where appropriate) with specific, well-developed examples in their answers.

The exam is graded on a 100-point scale. The comprehensive-exam committee evaluates answers based on technical competency (worth up to 20 points), completeness and quality of answer (worth up to 40 points), and demonstration of knowledge to be assessed (worth up to 40 points). A student can fail the comprehensive exam (20% of each option) and still pass the senior capstone course with a weighted average grade of the other optional elements (internship or project worth 60% and public presentation worth 20%). However if the student has an overall failing grade, then the student must remediate any unsatisfactory elements within 72 hours.

Example: Locally Developed Exit Exam

TCU Communication Studies Questions

1. If, for the students in a class this semester, the correlation between the midterm and final exam scores is r= ___, the results are most likely statistically significant.
   a) .01
   b) .02
   c) .05
   d) .06
   e) .95
2. Twenty-first century studies about learning and communication will be best characterized by _____.
   a) single variable studies
   b) theory-based studies
   c) interdisciplinary studies
   d) theory-based and interdisciplinary studies
   e) rhetorical studies
3. WHICH students get an item right is a primary concern in computing a test's _____.
   a) validity index
   b) reliability index
   c) difficulty index
   d) comprehensibility index
   e) discrimination index
4. Of the following, which is NOT a standard test of the validity of research evidence?
   a) Recency
   b) Competence
   c) Reliability
   d) Emotional appeal
   e) All of the above are standard tests for the validity of evidence
5. Active listening, developed by Carl Rogers, is a theoretical approach used in _____.
   a) comprehensive listening
   b) appreciative listening
   c) critical listening
   d) discriminatory listening
   e) therapeutic listening
6. Freedom of expression is _____.
   a) guaranteed by the first amendment to the constitution.
   b) important to the health of political systems which involve self-governance
   c) significant in creating a marketplace of ideas which permits improved decisions and practices
   d) a natural right of human beings as discussed by Locke in the concept of natural law
   e) all of the above
7. Which of the following is closest to a universalist, absolutist view of communication ethics?
   a) Kant's categorical imperative
   b) Bebee's rational capacity model
   c) Equestrianism
   d) Joseph Fletcher's Christian Situation Ethics
   e) The dialogical model of ethics
8. Petty and Cacioppo's Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion postulates that there are two routes to persuasion:
   a) a pure route and a borderline route
   b) an ethical route and an unethical route
   c) self-persuasion and other-persuasion
   d) a central route and a peripheral route
   e) an effective route and an ineffective route

9. Persuasion research often produces "counter-intuitive" findings; results that are contrary to what common sense would dictate. Such findings highlight the _____ function performed by the study of persuasion.
    a) Awareness
    b) Knowledge
    c) Defensive
    d) Debunking
    e) Ethical
10. Which two dimensions emerge as primary factors of source credibility?
    a) Trustworthiness and expertise
    b) Expertise and composure
    c) Sociability and inspiring
    d) Trustworthiness and inspiring
    e) None of the above
11. What does nonverbal expectancy violations theory suggest about the relationship between persuasion and proxemics?
    a) Violations of personal space increase persuasiveness in all situations.
    b) Violations of personal space decrease persuasiveness in all situations.
    c) Violations of personal space increase persuasiveness when the source of the violation is perceived as having high reward value.
    d) Violations of personal space increase persuasiveness when the source of the violation is perceived as having low reward value.
    e) Violations of personal space that are so extreme so as to be perceived as threatening will increase compliance.
12. Politeness theory suggest that we maintain _____ when others like, respect, and approve of us, and _____ when we do not feel constrained or impeded by others.
    a) positive face; negative face
    b) negative face; positive face
    c) referent power; coercive power
    d) coercive power; expert power
    e) legitimate power; coercive power
13. According to research findings, which type of cue is the most unreliable for assessing truthfulness?
    a) verbal cues
    b) visual cues
    c) vocal cues
    d) all of the above are unreliable
    e) none of the above are unreliable
14. Of the five types of power, which one is related to "role model" power?
    a) Referential power
    b) Reward power
    c) Legitimate power
    d) Coercive power
    e) Expert power
15. Which type of leadership (or parenting) style is high on discipline AND high on encouragement (or supportiveness)?
    a) Authoritarian
    b) Authoritative
    c) Laissez-faire
    d) Permissive
    e) Expert
16. According to research concerning relational coding schemes, which type of message is related to "an attempt to control the behavior of the other person"?
    a) one-up message
    b) symmetrical message
    c) one-down message
    d) one-across message
    e) neutralized message

17. Which category of nonverbal behavior is concerned with the study of the use and perceptions of social and personal space?
    a) kinesics
    b) proxemics
    c) illustrators
    d) emblems
    e) chronemics
18. "I will give you a level three disclosure if you give me a level three disclosure" is _____
    a) Agreement of disclosure
    b) Reciprocity of disclosure
    c) Parallel disclosure
    d) Copy cat disclosure
    e) Full disclosure
19. Donn Berne's Law of Attraction states that:
    a) A high number of similarities and high number of dissimilarities will result in high level of interpersonal attraction.
    b) A low number of similarities and low number of dissimilarities will result in low interpersonal attraction.
    c) A high number of similarities and high number of dissimilarities will result in low interpersonal attraction.
    d) A low number of similarities and high number of dissimilarities will result in high interpersonal attraction.
    e) A high number of similarities and low number of dissimilarities will result in high interpersonal attraction.
20. Meanings are in _____, not in _____.
    a) Words—-People
    b) Listeners—Speakers
    c) Speakers—Listeners
    d) Audiences—Presenters
    e) People—Words
21. All of the following are an example of kinesics EXCEPT:
    a) fidgeting
    b) an eyebrow raise
    c) eye contact
    d) how you walk
    e) crossing your legs
22. A leader who is content to let the group go in whatever direction it wishes and is not engaged in the problem-solving task displays what kind of leadership?
    a) Democratic Leadership
    b) Laissez Faire Leadership
    c) Empowering Leadership
    d) Disengaged Leadership
    e) Status Quo Leadership
23. Facts, practices, vocabulary, metaphors and stories are which of the following:
    a) Indicators that uncover an organization's culture
    b) Evidence of organizational "free speech"
    c) Representative of Theory X
    d) Representative of Theory Z
    e) Representative of Theory Y
24. The Hawthorne Effect refers to:
    a) the group interviews
    b) the social relations among workers
    c) the attention paid to workers
    d) the morale of the workers
    e) the morale of the managers

25. Once a theory becomes established, it frequently gives scholars new ideas about how other phenomena operate. This characteristic of theory is called:
    a) Falsifiability
    b) Power
    c) Parsimony
    d) Intersubjectivity of Meaning
    e) Heuristic Quality
26. Discovering the limitations of a theory is related to the idea of:
    a) Heuristic Quality
    b) Verifiability
    c) Falsifiability
    d) Power
    e) Parsimony
27. According to research on turn-taking behavior, an acceptable reason for interrupting another person may be:
    a) To stop a person from using profanity
    b) To clarify a point
    c) To let a person know that he or she may be making a controversial statement.
    d) To point out that a person is wrong about facts.
    e) To start a new conversation topic.
28. According to recent studies on gender differences and interpersonal communication, women are:
    a) Totally unpredictable in their level of self disclosure.
    b) Likely to disclose less information about themselves than men.
    c) Likely to disclose more information about themselves than men.
    d) No different than men in terms of the amount of self-disclosure they give during conversations.
    e) Less competent at self disclosure than men.
29. Burgoon's nonverbal communication theory that attempts to explain personal space violations and predicts when nonverbal behaviors will produce positive outcomes and when nonverbal behaviors will produce negative outcomes is _____
    a) Social Information Processing Theory
    b) Expectancy Violations Theory
    c) Interpersonal Deception Theory
    d) Information Management Theory
    e) Critical Interaction Theory
30. The theory that explains why people in conversation may choose to converge or diverge their speech patterns to another's different speech communication pattern is _____
    a) Social Information Processing Theory
    b) Expectancy Violations Theory
    c) Communication Accommodation Theory
    d) Information Management Theory
    e) Intercultural Communication Theory

Data Use. What can be done with the results of exit exams? For small programs, individual scores represent individual student achievement and could be compared within the same graduating class and/or correlated to entry-test scores. For larger programs, scores usually are reported as a single collective score and can be compared to different groups (e.g., graduating communication majors compared with non-majors). If exit exams are used over many years, longitudinal comparisons can be done (graduating majors compared with first-year majors three years previously).

Empirical data also can be used to show annual improvement of the quality of instruction, to help keep required courses focused on a standardized body of knowledge, and to help improve testing within each course. However, departments should be careful not to tie exit exam results closely to individual faculty evaluations. If faculty believe that poor scores will have a negative affect on their annual human-resources evaluations, then they might start "teaching to the test" to ensure the success of students—and their careers. By keeping the focus on student learning, faculty are encouraged to work together to improve the curriculum holistically and not simply protect their own self-interests. Nationally standardized tests can help prevent faculty or departmental bias, since they are designed outside the institution.

Formative Variation. An easy way to modify summative-exam assessment for formative exam data is to use a pre-test/post-test design. Faculty can embed questions from the faculty-created exit exam into required courses final exams throughout the program. These scores can determine how much students are learning as they progress through the major. Another option is to administer exam questions on the first day of classes and then incorporate them into the final exams without telling students that they will be tested again on these particular questions. If student scores are low at the beginning of the semester, faculty can adjust their instruction to emphasize certain areas.

Assessment and Standardized Tests

Standardized instruments are those published instruments administered and scored under comparable ("standardized") conditions to ensure that scores are comparable across institutions and across time. All students receive exactly the same instructions on how to complete the instrument. If there is a time limit for completing the instrument, it is enforced at all administration sites. If there are writing samples that are scored using rubrics, the scorers are trained so that scoring is consistent (Suskie, 2004, pp. 245-246).

For summative assessment, standardized tests are used even less frequently than faculty-created exams. Many communication departments offer programs so diverse that nationally standardized tests are not applicable. Even within a specialization, facts and concepts of the field change frequently. Similar to faculty-created exit exams, standardized tests mostly measure objective knowledge; but standardized tests have the advantage of comparing scores on a larger scale and providing nationally normed data.

Value and Role. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and other companies offer major-field standardized tests for measuring various student-learning outcomes. The benefits of using standardized tests are the reliability and validity of commercially developed assessment instruments. Departments can save time by purchasing a national field test. Administering and scoring test results are simplified since most standardized tests are multiple-choice and machine scored. The biggest advantage for using standardized tests is that scores can be compared across institutions. Standardized tests also have a greater perceived legitimacy to external stakeholders than do department-created exit exams.

Application. Just like using capstone courses, portfolios, and exit exams, department faculty should first determine what are clear, measurable, expected objectives for student learning and consider how they systematically will gather, analyze, and interpret this type of assessment data. Then, instead of creating a test from scratch, they can shop around for the most appropriate and affordable standardized testing instrument available.

If the department has a goal to prepare students for graduate school, then it is appropriate to use the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) as an assessment measure. For example, at Truman State University in Missouri, all students were required to take their major's senior test prior to graduation; seniors in Communication could take either the GRE or GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test). However, starting in 2007, faculty were expected to find or write a replacement test more appropriate for their major.

James Madison University offered a standardized test called Test of Oral Communication Skills (TOCS). Its design is based on the communication competencies identified by the National Communication Association. The format is 60 multiple-choice items that assess knowledge, comprehension, application, and evaluation of oral communication competency. In the spring of 2002, the speech communication faculty set the proficiency standard for students in all majors.

To assess communication performance, students at Minnesota State University– Mankato are required to take the PRCA-24 (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension), Willingness to Communicate, and the Basic Course Competency assessment instruments as part of their capstone-course experience. Instead of taking a traditional standardized test with correct/incorrect answers, students complete a self-report evaluation of their own communication competencies. The PRCA is a 24-item instrument developed by James C. McCroskey that indexes communication apprehension in four categories: (a) public speaking, (b) small group communication, (c) speaking in meetings, and (d) interpersonal communication. Respondents rate on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements. Scores can be summed for measuring trait communication apprehension. It has been tested for validity and reliability across numerous studies. The PRCA items are standardized, but testing conditions are not standardized across institutions. This lack of consistency might make comparisons difficult.

For more information about various oral communication assessment instruments, consult the reference guide published by the National Communication Association, as discussed in the preceding chapter. For information about other potential published instruments, refer to the *Mental Measurements Yearbook* or *Tests in Print* or the *NPEC Sourcebook on Assessment, Definitions and Assessment Methods for Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Writing*.

Data Use. Standardized test scores are used frequently for institutional assessment regarding departmental student-learning objectives. Benchmarking helps departments determine if their students are learning as much as their peers at cohort schools. Standardized tests also can be used within courses to provide more information about the strengths and weaknesses of the collective graduating class.

Formative Variation. Just like faculty-created exams, standardized tests can be modified as formative assessment tools using pre-test/post-test scores. Identifying pre-test levels of public-speaking anxiety, self-esteem, general communication apprehension, and willingness to communicate with various types of people can be effective icebreakers for discussion at the beginning of entry-level courses such as Introduction to Communication, Interpersonal Communication, and Public Speaking. Faculty can adjust their instruction based on these pre-test levels. An added bonus is increase in students' perception that they are receiving quality education, when they see how their post-test scores improved over the semester in each course. As seniors, students can reflect how they have become more competent communicators based on their improved scores.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to detail the four most common procedures that communication departments use to assess the outcomes of student learning at the end of the major. Capstone courses, senior portfolios, faculty-created exit exams, and standardized tests provide direct evidence of student learning. Each of these procedures has its value and role in a complete assessment program. Faculty need to determine how to appropriately use each method, and its data, for their communication fields of study. Each method can be modified for formative assessment if desired.

It is important to remember that assessment is an ongoing cycle. Faculty within a communication department should start with discussing and developing clear, measurable learning outcomes for students graduating in the major. Then they should decide what types of course assignments throughout the major provide opportunities for students to achieve those SLOs. Next they should set up a system that will gather, analyze, and interpret evidence from those courses and determine whether students are meeting expectations of program faculty. Finally faculty need to use that information to improve student learning, instead of just gathering piles of data and writing up reports that never are applied. When communication faculty follow the complete assessment cycle, they are more likely to see progress, value the assessment process, and feel a satisfying sense of momentum and accomplishment.

References

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. Murphy, L. L., Plake, B. S., & Spies, R. A. (Eds.). (2006). *Tests in print*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. Spies, R. A., Plake, B. S., Geisinger, K. F., & Carlson, J. F. (Eds.). (2007). *Mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Eastman, S. T. (1994). Exit examinations for the media major. In Christ, W. G. (Ed.). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech, and theatre educators* (pp. 351-382). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Erwin, T. D. (2000). *NPEC sourcebook on assessment, definitions and assessment methods for critical thinking, problem solving, and writing*. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/2000195.pdf.

Hessler, A. C. & Kuntz, S. (2003). Student portfolios—Effective academic advising tools. In Banta, T. W. (Ed.). *Portfolio assessment: Uses, cases, scoring, and impact* (pp. 30-34). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Johnson-Curiskis, N., Cronn-Mills, D., & Sandmann, W. (2007). Developing a senior capstone and portfolio course. *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal*, *34*, 78-87. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/ctam/ctamj/ctamj2007.pdf.

Minnesota State University–Mankato Communication Studies Department. (2009). Senior portfolio requirements. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/assmnts/dept-assess-template.html.

Monmouth College Department of Communication Studies. (2009). COMM professional portfolio evaluation procedures. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://department.monm.edu/cata/portfolios/evaluation-procedure10.htm

Monmouth College Department of Communication Studies. (2009). Communication major learning objectives. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://department.monm.edu/cata/dept/comm-major-portfolio-eval09.pdf

Moore, R. C. (1994). The capstone course. In Christ, T. W. (Ed.). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech, and theatre educators* (pp. 155-179). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Orlik, P. B. (1994). Student portfolios. In Christ, W. G. (Ed.). *Assessing communication education: A handbook for media, speech, and theatre educators* (pp. 131-154). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Suskie, L. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide.* Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Texas Christian University. (2004). Department of Communication Studies locally created exit exam. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://www.assessment.tcu.edu/ documents/CommunicationStudiesAssess.pdf.

Ulmer, R. R., Thombre, A., Driskill, G., & Mirivel, J. (2008). BA Speech Communication 2009. Assessment implementation progress report. Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://ualr.edu/cps/index.php/home/assessment/speech-communication/.

CHAPTER 7

LINKING ASSESSMENT RESULTS WITH FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Scott A. Chadwick, Canisius College

Purpose and Preview

As discussed throughout the preceding chapters, assessment focuses on student-learning outcomes and on determining better ways to help students learn. Naturally, helping students learn more effectively links assessment results directly to faculty development at the individual, program, department, college, or university levels. The purpose of this chapter is to help individual teachers use assessment results to make clear which teaching tactics they need to improve or learn, and to understand how their institutions can more fully support them in using assessment to improve their students' learning by improving their own teaching.

The information presented in this chapter can be used collectively by faculty in a department in an attempt to improve their programs' learning outcomes, but the primary focus in this chapter is to help individual teachers improve their own teaching. The basic purpose of assessment is to improve learning and enhance teaching—not to evaluate faculty performance for purposes of annual reviews, salary increases, or promotion and tenure decisions.

This chapter begins with a discussion of difference in the uses of accidental and intentional sources of assessment data. Next, it describes five obstacles to learning and how they relate to the assessment process. Then, it describes how to engage the assessment cycle to enhance teaching and learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion about integrating departmental and institutional growth with individual teachers' growth.

Value and Role

The process of assessing student learning provides teachers with evidence they can use to determine what is working well for the student-learning process, and what is not working well. This allows teachers to celebrate successes and enact changes to mitigate or eliminate those tactics that are not working well. Keeping students in the assessment loop through such means as gathering evidence, making sense of the evidence, and enacting changes in the classroom helps engender a teaching-learning partnership between the teacher and the students. When students knowingly are part of the process of improving their learning, they tend to be more open about what does and does not work for them.

It is natural for teachers to seek ways to improve their teaching, and thus their students' learning. One helpful starting point is the POD Network (Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education). This organization provides documents, grants, and conferences designed to advance learning through faculty, instructional, and organizational development. Access to this information, as well as their listserv, is available through their Website (http://www.podnetwork.org).

McKeachie (2002) encourages teachers to read, hear, and see alternative teaching strategies and ways of handling teaching problems. He provides a variety of newsletters and journals widely available for teachers' perusal, including the *National Teaching and Learning Forum*, *The Teaching Professor*, *College Teaching*, *Change*, *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, and *Innovative Higher Education*. As a strong advocate for discussing teaching and learning issues with peers, he recommends extending the observation of teaching beyond faculty-development workshops, suggesting that teachers watch other teachers and learn from what they see and the discussions that follow.

Such advice is very helpful, particularly for new teachers and those desiring to build their repertoire of teaching tactics. In addition to the "read, hear, and see" approach, there is value in specifically connecting teaching-improvement efforts with desired learning goals for students. Basing teaching-improvement attempts on assessment data automatically creates that connection. One difference between faculty-specific development based on assessment data and general faculty development programming is that using assessment data as the basis for faculty development creates a targeted approach for improving what currently is happening in the classroom, while general programming can be a

hit-or-miss endeavor based on the faculty who attend the programming. It also ties teaching improvement directly to the students with whom the teacher is interacting.

For example, a pharmacy professor designed a formative assessment to better understand how well her students were interacting with standardized patients (i.e., persons trained by the department to role play patients). Her assessment data showed that the students had a good grasp of technical content but lacked skill in interacting with the patients. This led her to the university's office for faculty development. After talking with her about her course's learning goals and her assessment data, the director of the office was able to design individualized faculty development to improve her ability to teach her students audience analysis, perspective-taking, and other-centered communication (Chadwick, 2006).

Application

The first decision point in the process of linking assessment results to faculty development is determining whether to make use of existing assessment data or create a process to gather assessment data normally not collected. Think of the former as the accidental approach and the latter as the intentional approach. Both can be useful, but they are enacted in different ways.

Accidental Sources of Assessment Data. The accidental approach is formative in nature, making use of assessment data regularly collected as part of the class. These data might come from the assessment of term papers, exams, class projects, oral presentations, etc. Comparing these data to what has happened in the class over the academic term and relating that information to what is found via the formal assessment process provides strong benefits.

Imagine the case in which the instructor has a difficult time connecting with students and wonders if that lack of connection affects the quality and quantity of student learning. Without constructing a specific assessment tool to measure that hypothesis, the instructor is dependent upon whatever data can be gleaned from the end-of-course evaluation tools normally used.

If students address the lack of connection and link it to their learning, or lack thereof, then the instructor has uncovered useful accidental information that can be used in subsequent classes. If the students do not address the lack of connection, or if they do not link it to their learning, then the instructor has not gained an understanding of how that class dynamic may affect student learning. Thus, any findings related to the connection factor will be accidental, given the actual purpose of the information-gathering tool.

A similar situation can occur in multi-program departments. If assessment findings in one program point to teaching and/or learning issues across an entire department, learning in the other programs likely will improve when those issues are resolved in the assessed program—either because that program's faculty teach in more than one departmental program, or because faculty among the programs talk about resulting student-learning success.

Intentional Sources of Assessment Data. The intentional approach to collecting and using assessment data is a more robust approach. Using the example provided above, it would be fairly simple—at any time in the academic term—to ask students to write a one-minute paper discussing the level of connection they perceive with the course instructor, the extent to which they believe it affects their learning, and how they suggest the instructor develop a better connection with the class. Doing this during the term as formative in-class assessment, rather than at the end of the term, provides valuable information for mid-course corrections.

An instructor also may request a trained observer to attend a class, observe the teaching and learning dynamic, interview the students (with the instructor absent), and draw conclusions about what is not working particularly well. The information the observer gathers is then shared with the instructor. This technique is known as Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) (Clark and Bekey, 1979). The SGID technique has shown remarkable success in identifying teaching behaviors that can be modified to improve learning, and has the added benefit of including students in the formative-assessment process. Coffman (1998) demonstrated that compiling SGID results across a university's colleges also can provide useful college and discipline-related information.

This intentional approach provides better understanding of any teaching technique. Combining students' perceptions of a teaching technique with evaluation of their performance related to that technique provides insight into two aspects of the students' learning process: (a) the extent to which they learned what they were expected to learn (student learning outcome (SLO) → teaching technique) and (b) the extent to which students recognize the connection between teaching

approach and how they learn (teaching technique → SLO). Presumably, greater awareness of that effect allows them to provide additional feedback about what does and does not help them learn.

Intentional approaches can be structured in two directions: (a) focusing on a student-learning outcome and seeking teaching techniques that work well to help students achieve that SLO and (b) starting with a teaching technique and determining if it is effective in helping students learn particular knowledge, skills, or attitudes. Focusing on a student-learning outcome allows a teacher, over time, to develop a repertoire of teaching techniques known to be effective for that SLO.

For example, while using the same textbook over a two-year period, an instructor attempting to help students learn systems theory in an organizational communication class presented a standard lecture with time for questions and answers in each of three classes. In one class, he presented a movie about organizational systems, followed with reflection questions. In another class, he constructed an in-class systems-theory-based organizational simulation. In the third class, he developed an in-class group exercise in which the students extracted the components of the course when viewed as a system.

The instructor compared assessment data extracted from essay exams containing different but qualitatively equivalent, systems-theory questions across the three classes. Findings proved that, as a cohort, the students who engaged in the systems-theory-based simulation performed best, the students who engaged in the group exercise performed adequately, but the students who watched and reflected upon the movie had the greatest difficulty with the theory.

From these findings, the instructor drew three conclusions: (a) either the movie was not relevant to the students or the instructor needed to redesign the reflection exercises, (b) the group exercise seemed to work adequately, but likely would benefit from the instructor learning more about constructing and facilitating group exercises, and (c) he did not need additional help in designing and implementing simulations as a learning device (Chadwick, 2000.).

Another way to enact the intentional approach is focusing on a specific teaching technique and assessing its effectiveness with respect to a specific student-learning outcome, or across a set of SLOs. This approach can be used for continuous or discrete teaching techniques.

Continuous Teaching Technique. A continuous teaching technique is one that pervades the entire course. An example is the introduction of a Web-based course management system such as Blackboard (http://www.blackboard.com), or Moodle (http://moodle.com). Ending every class period with a five-minute, student-led review of the key concepts presented in that day's class is another example of a continuous teaching technique. In both cases, the teaching technique becomes an ongoing part of the course structure.

Web-based course management software sets the parameters for information distribution, online collaboration, and timely addition of new materials for the course. End-of-class reviews provide a consistent structure of idea presentation, review, and reflection, and allow behavior modeling until the technique becomes customary to students. Because these continuous teaching techniques operate across the entire course, they are not effective for determining their effects on learning goals for a specific day of class—but their effects on related course-level SLOs can be determined by comparing student performance for the same course the same way, but with the course-management system as an independent variable.

Discrete Teaching Technique. A discrete teaching technique is used intentionally, because the teacher believes it is the best way to facilitate student learning of a particular course or unit SLO. Assume the teacher, by tradition, is a lecturer. Having read about the positive effects of nonverbal immediacy (e.g., Witt & Wheeless, 2001), this instructor wants to supplement lecturing with nonverbal immediacy behaviors.

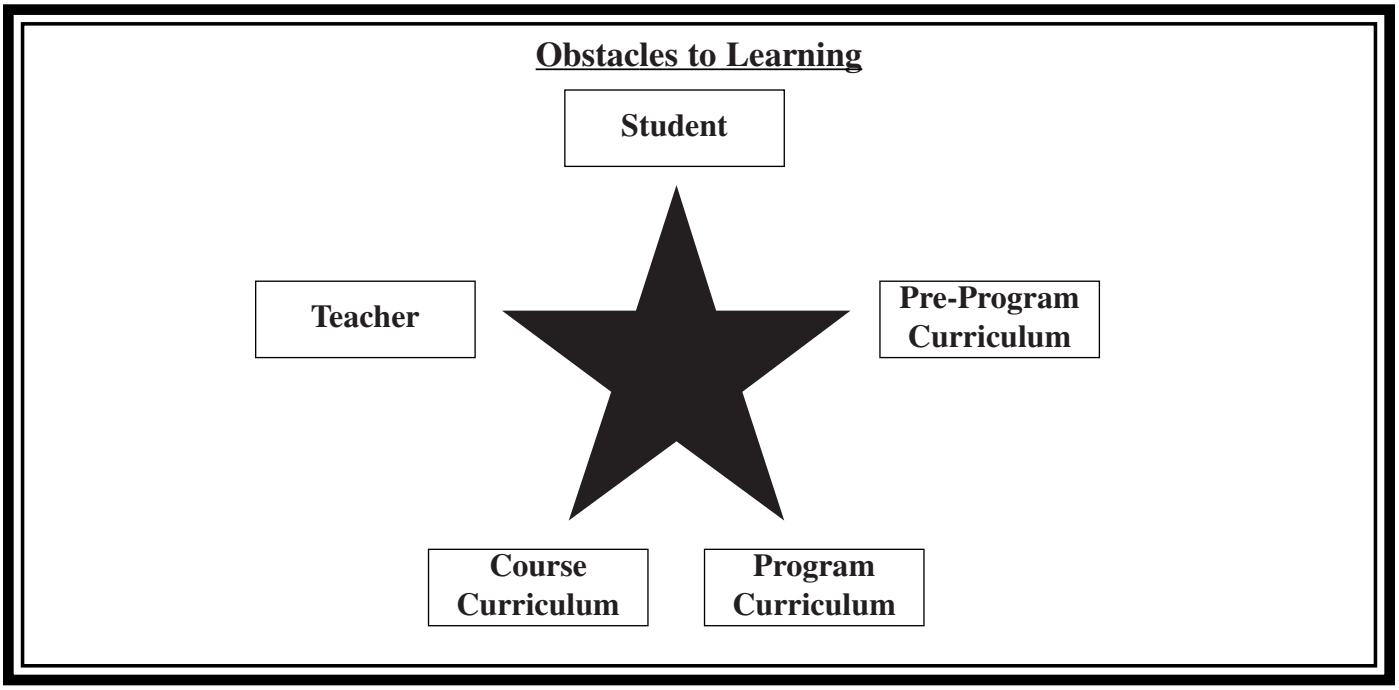
Assessing changes in student learning as a result of that technique should show either (a) that the relative percentage of students meeting or exceeding a learning goal increased, implying the instructor does not need to learn more about or develop more nonverbal immediacy skills, or (b) that relatively fewer students achieved the student-learning outcome, implying the instructor does need to learn more about enacting nonverbal immediacy in ways that positively affect students' cognitive learning.

Neither the accidental or the intentional approach, nor the continuous or discrete teaching technique, is better; each can work well in a given course. Pick the techniques that best fit your teaching style and your students' preferred learning styles, assess the efficacy of the techniques, learn more about the techniques as necessary, and modify the techniques to the dynamics of specific classes.

When academic departments are in the beginning stages of establishing programmatic assessment, they may find that using the accidental approach is a good way to jump-start the process. For individual faculty members, choosing the intentional approach in their own courses will result in information they can apply directly to the teaching and learning occurring in that classroom at that point in time. This is a powerful way to improve learning quickly, rather than waiting for a program to change in response to action plans implemented from one assessment cycle to the next.

Identify Obstacles to Learning

When interpreting assessment data, you may be tempted to look only at students or teachers as the significant variables in the learning process. But when you consider assessment data, other factors may offer better explanations. The chart that follows addresses several obstacles to learning.



Students unable to achieve a learning goal may be hindered by the course content and/or the sequencing of that content. When content and sequencing are under the instructor's control, the instructor bears responsibility for this obstacle; when the content and sequencing are prescribed by the program or department, the problem lies with the course curriculum and the faculty group controlling that curriculum. The good news is that when assessment data point to a need for course curriculum change, evidence exists to prove that need to a curriculum committee. Discussing the evidence provided by assessment commonly makes needed course and program corrections more evident, and also makes program faculty more willing to make the needed changes.

At other times, even though students, teachers, and the course curriculum may be working just fine, student-learning outcomes are not being achieved. In these cases, the problem comes from outside of those entities—usually residing in a deficiency either in the program of study or in the college curriculum (e.g., general education and major-core requirements).

Nationwide, teachers bemoan college students' writing abilities, expecting those abilities to be developed and honed somewhere earlier in a major or within a general-education course. Similarly, teachers' expectations for student knowledge of social theories come into play in upper-division communication classes. Whether those theories "should" have been covered in prerequisite courses or in general-education courses, teachers often presume students have the background necessary to succeed at a higher level.

When this proves untrue, course faculty members are faced with modifying their courses, lowering their expectations and SLO performance criteria, or doing nothing and expecting students to pick up the requisite material

on their own. Regardless of the option chosen, faculty should share with departmental and college-level curriculum committees any assessment results pointing to knowledge gaps so that those groups recognize the problem and have the opportunity to design solutions.

If student inability to achieve a learning goal is not a curricular issue, the problem may rest with the student or with the teaching technique employed. When evidence from prior assessments indicates that the applied teaching techniques work to help students achieve a learning goal, then assume the problem rests with the student and take action as necessary. Many times, it is a combination of factors that are responsible for the outcome. If the problem does not rest solely with the student, then it is time to focus attention on how to improve teaching techniques.

Engage the Assessment Cycle

In a manner similar to sources cited earlier in this book, Maki (2004) describes the assessment cycle as a four-stage process: (a) identify learning outcomes, (b) gather evidence of student performance, (c) interpret that evidence, and (d) implement change. However, expanding the cycle slightly provides the granularity necessary to move easily from stage to stage:

1. *Identify* learning goals (i.e., the expected student states of being: students will be critical thinkers; students will be effective communicators).
2. *Isolate* the underlying student-learning objectives for each SLO (i.e., what the students will do to show they are achieving the student-learning outcome: students will apply critical-thinking skills to solve a complex problem; students will communicate effectively in dyadic and small-group role plays).
3. *Determine* what evidence can be measured to determine whether the student-learning objectives are achieved (i.e., the results of student doing, knowing, and attitudinal behaviors: students will develop written arguments articulating the pro and con positions on a complex social issue; students will present those arguments orally in a group presentation).
4. *Measure and analyze* student-learning-outcome evidence (i.e., identify, measure, and make sense of the observable student behaviors, or products of those behaviors, that comprise the basis of the objectives: See the example below for a sample rubric for doing so).
5. *Discuss* the results of the analysis with others in the program (i.e., share and discuss assessment results on a regular basis, at least annually; instructors within a program or department use their collective assessment results to determine how to modify course content, course sequencing, teaching tactics, and student learning experiences; document those action plans, providing the basis for future assessment and preventing the need to "recreate the wheel" in the case of instructor turn-over).
6. *Enact change* as necessary (i.e., systematically follow through on action plans in order to implement the changes agreed upon by a program's or department's instructors—remembering to plan and manage subsequent assessment accordingly; ensure that the curriculum designed as a result of the action plan actually becomes the curriculum that is taught and the curriculum that is learned).
7. *Make needed adjustments* to stages 1-4 and repeat the cycle to assess efficacy of changes made.

Such assessment cycles work very well for programmatic assessment; they can work equally well to determine faculty-development needs. If a group of instructors is new to this process, or has had limited success employing it, keep in mind these guiding principles and the example Debate Rubric that follows:

1. Construct program learning goals, student-learning objectives, and related curriculum maps before required courses are offered (see Chapters 3 through 6 for more information in this area).
2. Before a required class begins, intentionally determine what evidence exists (or can exist) in the class. If it is unclear what evidence might be there, teach the class with an eye toward identifying useful assessment evidence during the duration of the semester.

3. Measurement and analysis are dependent on the type(s) of data collected. Let the question to be answered drive which data are collected and how they are analyzed. Never constrain the search for assessment data because of limits in individual faculty members' analytical abilities. Very few people have mastered all forms of data analysis, so seek assistance from others in the institution or within the discipline at large. Using others as a sounding board for ideas about what changes to make helps provide fresh perspectives.
4. Cross-department communication helps to build a culture of assessment across the college or university, expanding trust and collaboration in the process. But stay within the department for final decisions about changes to be framed within the context of departmental programs.

Integrating Assessment for Individual Growth With Assessment for Departmental and Institutional Growth

Whether at the individual, program, college, or university level, assessment done properly provides data for improving student learning. At the individual faculty-member level, assessment practices can tie directly to new teaching techniques based on sound pedagogical theory.

Once assessment moves to the program level or beyond, it becomes a publicly conducted phenomenon. Results feed into departmental meetings and reports, into college-level meetings and reports, and into institutional-level meetings and reports. When considering how to connect individual assessment practices to broader efforts, think in terms of practices that encourage assessment at both the individual and institutional levels. In the following table, "assessment" refers to measuring student learning and "evaluation" refers to measuring anything else.

An institution can encourage and reward assessment by linking assessment with strategic planning and budgeting. By setting support for student learning as a strategic priority, the institution creates a process that uses evidence of student learning, or the lack thereof, as an indicator of organizational effectiveness. For example, all schools have a student-learning objective related to critical thinking. If a faculty member, alone or as part of a group, demonstrated success in students thinking critically, that evidence could be provided to the strategic planning director to show that the organization was being effective. But more than that, the faculty member ought to be given the opportunity to request funds through which to help other faculty and academic programs achieve similar results. In this way, evidence of student learning is linked to both the planning and budgeting processes, a requirement made by most accrediting organizations.

Example: Debate Rubric

OBJECTIVE

Students will develop written arguments articulating pro and con positions on a complex social issue.

	STUDENT PERFORMANCE ADEQUACY		
Objective Component	**More Than Adequate**	**Adequate**	**Not Adequate**
Positions articulated are factually accurate			
The complexity of the issue is fully addressed			
Pro position is fully explicated			
Con position is fully explicated			
Arguments are presented in proper form			
The text is appropriately inventive			

Example: Practices that Encourage Individual and Collective Assessment*

Practices Encouraging Individual Assessment	Practices Encouraging Collective Assessment
Teachers should focus on the informative value of assessment data. Administrators should not use that data for evaluative purposes.	Administrators should seek multiple sources of assessment and multiple kinds of assessment data through which to triangulate an understanding of student learning across campus.
Teachers should design assessment for their needs in their classrooms.	Administrators should interpret assessment data in light of its source and as a way to support and further the institution's goals.
Teachers should seek feedback from peers as they work through the assessment cycle.	Institutions should expect its assessment professionals to seek feedback from their peers in other institutions and national organizations.
Administrators should make development opportunities (e.g., workshops) and structures (e.g., mentoring) available to faculty.	Administrators should analyze assessment reports to determine what kinds of faculty development are needed, and then develop programming to fulfill those needs.

*Adapted from Braskamp & Ory (1994, pp. 129-164).

When faculty find gaps in student learning, they sometimes determine that a change in teaching or a modification to the curriculum will correct the problem. But they could find that additional resources would make a big difference in student learning. Consider student success in giving oral presentations when students use recording technology to capture, replay, and study their presentation skills. Suppose faculty who do not have access to such classroom equipment have evidence that students with access to that technology learn more or retain their skills longer than do students without access to that technology. That faculty should use such evidence as a potential solution to gaps in student presentation skill, requesting funds to correct the learning problem.

Linking assessment to planning and budgeting brings faculty members back to the center of the institution's planning and budgeting enterprises and reorients planning and budgeting to focus on the work of faculty as the core driver of institutional effectiveness. Whether assessment shows students are learning or not, the system should be set up to target money toward student learning based on assessment results–but keeping assessment and faculty-performance evaluation separate.

At the college or institutional level, a person (such as the institution's assessment director) or committee (such as a university assessment committee) needs to work in conjunction with the faculty-development office to link assessment results to faculty-development programming. Assuming the institution has an assessment committee, that committee first must build a process through which program-level assessment reports are collected from across the institution.

Once the reports have been collected, the assessment committee can do two things: (a) review each report individually and provide feedback to faculty members to improve their practice of assessment, and (b) analyze them collectively to determine if teaching problems exist across the institution. Discussing this analysis with the institution's faculty-development officer allows that person to know what kinds of faculty-development programming is needed, at what level, and for what types of learning. As a word of caution, this discussion should focus on teaching issues and solutions, not on teachers. Protecting the anonymity of individual faculty members is essential to ensuring faculty openly share and discuss their programs' assessment reports.

The simplest way to start building the assessment review and analysis process is to request that each program's assessment report include a "Faculty Development Needs" section. This portion of the report identifies needed faculty-development opportunities, based on review of programmatic assessment results. In the absence of this information, assessment-report reviewers need to identify learning issues that (a) occur in multiple places across the institution and (b) are correctable through faculty development.

For example, if a significant number of programs report their graduating seniors are deficient in giving presentations, there could be a need for a faculty-development workshop on teaching presentation skills in the major—or, if presentation skills are included in university-level general-education requirements, the problem needs to be referred accordingly. If assessment reports show that students are having difficulty connecting course content to their life experiences, then faculty development in methods for designing and teaching reflection exercises may be in order. If the review team finds a learning issue shared across the institution, but is unsure what remedy is needed, consultation with the institution's faculty-development office would be a logical next step.

Whichever path is taken, a clear focus on improving teaching, as a means to improving learning, must be maintained. Cross and Steadman point out that "a major hurdle for any faculty development program to overcome is the faculty perception that there is something wrong with the teaching of those who participate in faculty development . . . " (1996, p. 19). This is a particular concern when assessment data is the impetus for creating the program. It is imperative that a focus on improving student learning is at the forefront of all discussions and program designs.

Another way to link assessment to faculty development at the program or institution level is to have the university-level assessment committee and the campus faculty-development specialist jointly host a public forum to discuss their review of assessment reports. This serves to make the assessment reports public and also allows those in attendance to offer suggestions for what programming may be most useful and appreciated.

Such open discussion serves to build a sense of community around learning and teaching, as faculty and administrators work together to improve student outcomes. Driscoll and Wood describe how this occurred on their campus as faculty members' review of assessment data showed that students had difficulty with "complex capacities such as analysis, synthesis, reflection, and interpretation" (2004, p. 15). In their discussions, some faculty spoke of discomfort in teaching skills such as synthesis. This exchange led to faculty-development sessions aimed at helping students learn synthesis by increasing faculty members' ability and comfort in teaching that skill. This is important from an institutional perspective as it helped change faculty members' conversations from teaching-centered to learning-centered issues.

Conclusion

Using assessment data as a means of determining needed faculty development is powerful in two ways. First, it allows faculty to spend focused development time on workshops, books, and discussions that fit exactly with their needs—no more attending faculty-development workshops with snazzy titles hoping that individualized questions will be covered in depth, only to find a well-designed workshop that does not satisfactorily fit the faculty member's need. Instead, this approach provides evidence with which the faculty-development office can tailor assistance.

From an institutional point of view, such faculty-driven professional development is a very good thing. Just as we tell students, "If you have a question, most likely someone else has the same question," so we could say to faculty members, "If you would like a workshop on something specific, most likely other faculty members want the same workshop." That leads to the second way in which it is powerful to link assessment results with faculty development.

Once faculty members use assessment data to determine what they need in terms of faculty development, and then ask for that assistance, a culture of collective ownership develops for improving teaching in order to improve student learning. Think of it this way: Typically, faculty-development workshops are created based on what has been popular in the past, new ideas in faculty-development journals and newsletters, and requests by department chairs and deans that often seek to alleviate teaching and learning issues associated with faculty members who cause problems—and who often fail to attend the training when offered. The workshops may be designed and executed flawlessly, but they will be hit-or-miss relative to what the majority of teachers actually need and want.

Now, consider an institution in which teachers use assessment practices to determine needed improvement areas, not for annual evaluation purposes but because they desire to better facilitate student learning. These teachers collect assessment data in their classes, discuss the findings with colleagues and friends, and do so without fear of administrative intrusion. Imagine how empowering it is for the faculty-development office to be engulfed with information and workshop requests from teachers.

Further, imagine how empowering this situation is to deans and other administrators as they feel the grass-roots support for a focus on improved teaching and learning. From a small two- or four-year college, the most complex

doctorate-granting institution, or anything in between, evidence-based, faculty-driven requests for teaching and learning support create an unstoppable, positive influence on the tenor and direction of the institution.

Lest we get too far ahead of ourselves for "what could be" at the institutional level, let us review the steps each of us can take to help our institutions move in that direction. First, look for accidental or intentional sources of assessment data in order to identify helpful areas for faculty development.

Second, determine whether to start with goals and develop teaching techniques to achieve them, or start from current teaching techniques and adapt them to fit the desired learning goals. As part of this determination, consider whether to focus on a discrete or a continuous teaching technique.

Third, engage the cycle of assessment. Make sure to close the loop by making whatever teaching changes are warranted based on analysis of assessment data, taking advantage of faculty-development, teaching-grant, and other support offered on campus.

When you are comfortable with these steps, take the bigger step to become a change agent in your institution. You may be surprised by the supportive reception you get from other teachers and administrators. Better yet, imagine the gratitude of students as they come to realize that you really are there for them—and are working to make sure the same is true of their institution, as well.

References

Braskamp, L. A., & Ory, J. C. (1994). *Assessing faculty work: Enhancing individual and institutional performance*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chadwick, S. A. (2006). Designing faculty development based on formative assessment data at Creighton University, Omaha, NE.

Chadwick, S. A. (1999-2000). Teaching-technique research conducted in three sections of the same organizational communication course at Iowa State University, Ames, IA.

Clark, D. J., & Bekey, J. (1979). Use of small groups in instructional evaluation. *POD Quarterly*, *1*(2), 87-95.

Coffman, S. J. (1998). Small group instructional evaluation across disciplines. *College Teaching, 46*(3), 106-111.

Driscoll, A., & Wood, S. (2004). Creating learner-centered assessment: A faculty-driven process. *Peer Review, 7*(4), 12-15.

Maki, P. L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

McKeachie, W. J. (2002). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers (11th ed.)*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Witt, P. L., & Wheeless, L. R. (2001). An experimental study of teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy and students' affective and cognitive learning. *Communication Education, 50*(4), 327-342.

CHAPTER 8

DEMYSTIFYING THE PROGRAMMATIC REVIEW PROCESS: ENSURING QUALITY CONTROL, FOSTERING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, AND MOTIVATING FACULTY

Dacia Charlesworth, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

Purpose and Preview

Previous chapters have outlined the student-learning assessment process and its importance. This chapter focuses on the assessment process in a larger context: Programmatic review. The connection between student-learning assessment and programmatic review should be significant; in fact, as early as 1988, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges acknowledged that, "within an institution, assessment programs should be linked to strategic planning or program review, or to some comprehensive strategy intended to encourage change and improvement" (p. 2).

As a larger part of the assessment process, programmatic reviews should be of utmost importance to faculty members since, as Angelo (1995) observes, assessment helps us create a shared academic culture committed to improving the quality of higher education. Programmatic review is defined as the "… assessment of a program using specific and systematic procedures which result in findings that are useful to decision makers for the purpose of helping them better shape and achieve their goals" (Hendricks, 1992-93, p. 66).

Programmatic reviews can be useful in calling attention to departments' strengths; they also can be intimidating because they highlight departmental weaknesses. The positive side of this is that highlighting weaknesses provides opportunities to discuss departmental needs, and related budget issues, with decision makers. For most faculty, the task of reviewing our departments and/or programs seems daunting. Programmatic review, while a demanding process, has many benefits that ultimately improve the department and its faculty. Some of the many benefits of these reviews include the possibility of adding to existing faculty lines, adapting departmental curricula, being awarded additional office and classroom space, and planning strategically for the next few years.

For purposes of clarification, a student-learning assessment plan measures students' knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes in a course of study. A programmatic review, however, evaluates an entire department and its related programs as it relates to the university as a whole (e.g., if a department produces the campus newspaper but has no journalism degree, then the newspaper would be included in the programmatic review). While student-learning assessment plans are a major component of programmatic reviews, other areas of the review include the department's centrality to the institution's mission; faculty qualifications and productivity; assessment of the department's curriculum; analysis of departmental facilities; synthesis of a department's access and use of technology; description of departmental library holdings; explanation of faculty member, staff, and student involvement in the community; and the like.

I use the term "programmatic review" because this type of review extends beyond student-learning assessment plans, or even the department itself, to highlight the "big-picture" type of review being conducted. Something that is programmatic follows a set schedule or an overall plan of action. By referring to this type of review as programmatic, all involved are reminded that an overarching departmental plan exists that may make the process less daunting.

Programmatic review serves an important purpose in the overall process of demonstrating a department's effectiveness and is required by institutions and accrediting associations alike. Some of the most challenging aspects of programmatic review are communicating the need for such a review, determining which measures to use for the self-

study, formulating programmatic-review templates, and composing the self-study. When creating templates and determining which measures will be used, it is vital to note that a programmatic review must consist of more than a collection of data: Data must be contextualized and used to support a department's argument that it requires more resources.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to provide meaningful information about the process of programmatic review so that communication departments can avoid replicating efforts and conduct successful programmatic reviews. First, the value and role of programmatic reviews within higher education are discussed. Second, recommendations for and limitations of conducting programmatic reviews are presented. Next, the types of data that can be obtained from programmatic reviews are examined. Finally, some challenges and benefits of the programmatic review process are explored.

Value and Role of Programmatic reviews

Programmatic reviews allow departments to "gain added insight into such matters as the nature of its faculty's workload, its scholarly productivity and the nature of and basis for its program demand" (Cole, 1996, p. 7). As such, programmatic review plays an integral role in the institutional effectiveness process, with data and results derived from such reviews often forming the basis of institution-wide effectiveness reports as well as budgetary and staffing decisions.

At its best, a successful programmatic review "assesses learning and academic achievement of students, identifies methods of instruction to enhance student learning, and provides a comprehensive tool for review of appropriate program information from alumni, employers, graduate schools, and students" (Hugenberg, 1997, pp. 3-4). In discussing the value and role of programmatic review, two areas of interest emerge: the primary functions of programmatic review and the benefits of such reviews.

Primary Functions of Programmatic Review. Sergiovanni (1987) identifies three primary roles and subsequent values of conducting programmatic review. The first role is *ensuring quality control*. Programmatic review ensures that the goals of the department are consistent with both departmental and institutional mission and values. The second important function of programmatic review is *aiding in faculty members' professional development*. Programmatic review allows individuals involved in the process to grow personally and professionally by continually expanding and enhancing their own knowledge, especially within their discipline. The last role Sergiovanni notes programmatic review performs is *motivating individuals involved in developing and implementing the assessment plan*. In addition to contributing to faculty members' professional development, conducting programmatic review builds and nurtures faculty motivation and commitment to the department's mission and goals.

Moreover, by addressing the success of a department (and its potential weaknesses), programmatic review affects future planning decisions. Essentially, "a well constructed and conducted evaluation is a service to the organization, its stakeholders and its clients. Evaluation serves the needs of a program by providing information that is useful for making practical choices regarding quality and effectiveness" (Hendricks, 1992-1993, p. 65). Faculty involved in this process need to be aware of these three functions and how this type of review benefits them, in addition to benefitting the department and institution.

Benefits of Conducting Programmatic Review. Understandably, the process of conducting programmatic review might seem intimidating: The department opens itself up to internal and external criticism and must identify its inadequacies; some faculty might even worry that the process will single out their individual performances in the classroom and as scholars. It is important to note, however, that the many benefits accompanying programmatic review outweigh such self-centered concerns.

As Hugenberg notes, a programmatic review ". . . will lead to the ongoing development of excellence in communication departments in pursuit of the college or university's mission" (1997, p. 3). Moreover, comprehensive programmatic reviews alert departments to the parameters within which the departments must work and, subsequently, enable departments to reap rewards, secure more institutional resources, and (when they involve external reviewers' input) inform departments about how they are perceived on campus (Haley & Jackson, 1994, p. 5).

The National Communication Association (n.d.) explores how assessment benefits students, institutions, and faculty. Upon completion of successful programmatic reviews, students likely receive a more dynamic and enhanced education. In addition, receiving feedback concerning students' thoughts regarding the department affirms to students

that they provide an important voice in the department. Institutions obviously benefit by ensuring a unified mission, and all members of the institution gain a better understanding of what students are expected to learn from the department reviewed. Finally, programmatic review can lead to positive reform that, in turn, can lead to a more committed and enthusiastic faculty.

Combining these benefits with possibilities for enhancing professional-development for faculty and increasing faculty motivation, department members should view programmatic review as an opportunity to (a) highlight the strengths of their department and (b) strongly influence the future of their department, while simultaneously (c) enhancing student learning, and (d) improving their institution in general.

Application

If conducted properly, programmatic review has the potential to benefit departments and their faculty. This section offers guidelines for conducting programmatic review, steps for conducting this review, suggestions for motivating faculty, and templates for conducting the review.

Guidelines for Conducting Programmatic Review. In addition to the importance of framing the task itself, communication scholars realize it is vital that members of an organization understand the purpose of a task before it is undertaken. Certainly, this is true for programmatic review. As Hendricks notes, "Because of widely disparate and sometimes conflicting intentions within an organization[,] it is imperative for all stakeholders concerned to be clear regarding the actual purpose of the program review process" (1992-93, p. 67).

When introducing the concept of programmatic review, leaders of the process should begin by conducting a departmental meeting to inform participants what the review entails; why it is necessary; and, most importantly, how the review can benefit the department (e.g., most colleges and universities link programmatic review results with the budget process). Questions that departmental members should answer before conducting programmatic review may be used as the basis for the first departmental meeting on the topic, including the following:

1. What is the purpose of programmatic review?
   a. What do we want to accomplish or find out?
   b. How will the results of our programmatic review help us in this regard?

2. What information must be contained in the review?
   a. What are we responsible for investigating?
   b. What institutional guidelines are already in place?

3. Who will conduct the programmatic review?
   a. Who can accomplish the stated purpose in an efficient and persuasive manner?
   b. How will this person's time be compensated (e.g., release time, overload payment)?

4. What form will the finished report take and who will see it?
   a. What resulting action will be taken and who will be responsible for implementation and follow up?
   b. How can we ensure that the administration will use the results of the review?

Even though the institution may provide answers to the first and third questions, to frame the programmatic review process effectively, it is imperative that the department chairperson or another individual overseeing the programmatic review process lead the entire departmental faculty in developing answers to these questions.

One of the most important decisions regarding programmatic review is determining who will lead the review process, as suggested by Diers and Vendrely (2002):

> The key to the implementation of the program assessment process is to have all data collection clearly assigned to responsible faculty members, with one person in charge of assimilating all of the data. This allows everyone to be involved, responsible, and accountable for program assessment while having it organized so that everything is done in a timely, systematic manner (p. 258).

Since numerous individuals play important roles in programmatic review, it is important to stipulate everyone's role before beginning the process. Usually, the dean, department chairperson, department faculty, internal reviewers,

external reviewers, and directors of Institutional Research participate in programmatic reviews. With so many participants, the process operates more smoothly if all involved parties clearly understand their roles.

To clarify each member's role, one department found it helpful to list the names of all involved and their role just as a playwright would for the *Dramatis Personae*. This exercise helped all involved gain a better understanding of the process—and their parts in the process—from the outset. By possessing a clear understanding of the review process, including institutional timelines and the roles of others involved, departments are able to conduct successful programmatic reviews yielding useful information for continuous quality improvement.

Steps for Conducting Programmatic Review. Most institutions provide departments with the necessary steps and a timeline for conducting programmatic review; if this is not the case, then note that most programmatic reviews contain four parts: (a) a *self-study*, (b) an *internal review* involving faculty from the department being reviewed and faculty from similar departments, (c) an *external review* involving experts in the discipline from other institutions, and (d) an *action plan* identifying steps the department will take based on the self-study and recommendations made by the reviewers (for other overviews of programmatic review, see Nichols & Nichols, 1995 and 2005).

One of the most important elements of a successful programmatic review is a comprehensive, agreed-upon timeline. Be sure your department accesses the institution's timeline well in advance and then presents this timeline in a visually appealing way to department members at the first informational meeting. Sharing the timeline is a significant step that should not be ignored since timelines inform faculty that (a) there are clear deadlines for the project, (b) everyone is to be involved, and (c) there is an end date to the process.

Below is a sample of a timeline used for programmatic review by the Department of Communication at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. The use of the Gantt chart makes it simple for departmental faculty to observe where they are in the process at any given time. Though the outcomes of programmatic review vary institution by institution, the ways in which programmatic reviews are conducted are fairly standardized. The following information corresponds to the four parts of the programmatic review discussed above.

Self-Study. The department's self-study is undoubtedly the most important and time-consuming component of programmatic review. Knowing what the institution requires in the self-study is critical and framing the required information in the simplest and most persuasive way possible is essential to presenting the department in the best possible light. Since budgetary items and space allocation often are linked to programmatic review, the information and arguments contained within the self-study must be succinct and compelling. All institutions have a list of information required for the self-study (see Tables below for examples); however, departments may further their cause by providing additional information that justifies an additional faculty line, more office space, another staff member, and the like.

Throughout the self-study process it also is vital to ensure that the review committee's efforts are transparent. Ideally, all departmental members will be contributing to the self-study, but these individuals will not be involved in the entire process (e.g., an individual may be participating on the sub-committee that examines departmental facilities and would not be involved with the sub-committee focusing on departmental curriculum). Therefore, the programmatic review committee must take great effort to solicit feedback from all departmental members and circulate drafts from each sub-committee to the group as a whole prior to compiling the final version of the self-study.

Internal Review. Some campuses request that faculty members outside the department also conduct an evaluation of the department. The Internal Review Committee (IRC) at the University of Colorado at Boulder, for example, is comprised of three faculty members from similar/allied disciplines plus one graduate and one undergraduate student. The main functions of the IRC are to offer "a check of the thoroughness and usefulness of the self-study," present broad findings, and "should not attempt to solve problems or mediate; it is primarily a fact-finding group" (University of Colorado, n.d.).

If an institution requires internal reviews, then the institution will provide a protocol for reviewers. Internal reviews are helpful in determining others' perceptions of a department and the feedback they offer serves to strengthen the self-study before it is presented to external reviewers. Given this particular benefit, if an institution does not require an IRC, it might be helpful for a department to request the formation of such a committee.

Example: Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Review Timeline

	2010					2011											2012		Ongoing
Tasks	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**1**	**2**	
Program Review Committee (PRC) Meets	■																			
Host Departmental Informational Session		■																		
Develop Institutional Profile		■	■																	
Complete Self-Study			■	■	■															
Share Self-Study results with Department & Revise Self-Study						■	■													
Edit & Submit Final Draft of Self-Study to OAA & Dean								■												
Dean/OAA review Self-Study & forward comments to PRC									■	■										
Host Departmental Meeting to share Dean/OAA comments about Self-Study										■										
Contact & Confirm Internal & External Reviewers										■										
Conduct Reviews														■						
Reviewer feedback submitted to PRC															■					
Host departmental meeting to present reviewer results															■					
Develop, Review, & Finalize Action Plan																■	■			
Discuss results of Programmatic Review																		■		
Integrate department plan into annual planning/budget allocation																			■	
Monitor plan implementation																				■

As noted previously, the self-study is a rhetorical document and must be acknowledged as such. Remember, the goal of the review is to showcase the department and its importance to the students, the institution, and the community. Before the self-study is ready for distribution, all departmental members should remind themselves of the purposes of the review and audiences who will receive the results.

Suskie (2004) suggests that faculty consider: (a) how much information the audience needs (e.g., Is the audience already familiar with the department? Is the audience able to interpret empirical research, or is an explanation needed?), (b) how the audience prefers to receive assessment information (e.g., Is the audience more likely to process information in the form of text, numbers, or graphs? Is the audience more likely to favor a report that is detailed, or brief?), (c) how the audience will interpret the report (e.g., Is the audience likely to feel threatened by the report and/or criticize it?), and (d) how the audience is expected to respond once they have read the report (e.g., Is this audience responsible for reporting to another audience? If so, does the primary audience have enough information to answer others' questions?) (pp. 281-282). Based on the answers to these questions, creating multiple reports for various audiences may advisable (e.g., administrators, internal reviewers, external reviewers, accreditation review teams, advisory boards, alumni, students, parents).

External Review. Again, most institutions already have rules and guidelines in place for selecting and reimbursing external reviewers; if none exist, Central Michigan University's (CMU) (n.d.) policy serves as an excellent model and appears here in its entirety:

> **Responsibilities of the External Reviewer**
>
> The external reviewer will receive a copy of the self study at least two weeks prior to a campus visit. It will be most useful if that self study includes a draft SWOT [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats] section, to focus the reviewer's attention on those aspects of the program. The external reviewer should also be given general background information on the institution (e.g., key Web sites), the link to the Guidelines for Program Review, which includes the program review criteria, and other material relevant to the review that is not included in the self study and supporting documentation.
>
> The reviewer will conduct an in-depth review of the self study and then will visit the campus in order to conduct interviews with the program faculty, students, dean and other stakeholders, and to review evidence of student learning as well as other evidence with respect to program quality. The reviewer will then prepare a final report that summarizes his or her observations relative to program quality and future potential, as well as other specific reactions to the self study or findings from the campus interviews. The report should also include a rating with the scale below and be submitted to the responsible dean[,] who will immediately provide a copy to the department chair or program director for interdisciplinary programs.

Table 1. Summary Rating of Quality	
1 = Exceptional Quality	Program quality is truly exceptional, constituting one of the top programs among comparator programs
2 = High Quality	Program is of high quality and needs few, if any, improvements
3 = Needs Improvement	Program is a solid program, but needs significant improvement in one or more areas
4 = Low Quality Program	Program is of marginal or low quality

> **Procedure for Selecting Reviewer**
>
> An external reviewer will be selected by the dean from a list of three or more individuals provided by the department chair or interdisciplinary program director. Typically, there will be just one reviewer. In some instances, given the complexity of the department (e.g., multiple programs with important distinctions), challenges facing the program(s) (e.g., seeking major reorientation), or other unusual instances, more than one external reviewer may be used. Potential reviewers should be recognized leaders in their disciplines, with recent experience in higher education institutions, preferably from CMU's benchmarking institutions or—if more appropriate—strong programs at other institutions. Typically, individuals with CMU degrees, a real or potential

conflict of interest, or who have close professional or personal relationships with CMU personnel or students would not be appropriate external reviewers.

A list of potential reviewers and a brief rationale for nomination and a statement regarding any potential conflicts of interest or CMU connections for each of the candidates should be forwarded by the department chair to the dean no later than October 30 in the academic year during which the program review is being conducted. Along with the list should be biographical information about the proposed reviewer, including documentation of each of the potential reviewers' national reputation and scholarly accomplishments. A recent curriculum vitae would typically be sufficient documentation of reputation and scholarship.

A plan for the substance and timing of the visit should be developed jointly by the program faculty and the responsible dean. Except in unusual circumstances, the visits should occur between November 1 and March 30 in the year of the review. Since the dean is the one with contracting authority, the dean's office should be the one to make the final arrangements with the selected reviewer[,] outlining the agreement surrounding dates, times, activities, dates for report submission, other expectations, and documentation of expenses and payments.

Expenses Surrounding External Review

The provost will cover the reasonable expenses and honoraria of external reviewers. The dean will be responsible for negotiating a reasonable rate. When it is anticipated that more than one external reviewer is needed, a special request for such should come from the department chair or program director, be endorsed by the dean, and [be] sent to the provost by October 15 in the academic year in which the review is being conducted.

This information is extremely helpful to departmental members who are conducting a review of their department and who are unsure of how to handle the topic of external reviewers. Two advantages of this policy include (a) the timeline submitted with the external reviewers' qualifications, and (b) the submission of three possible reviewers by the faculty members. By having the dean select a reviewer offered by departmental members, the institution demonstrates its trust in the department and makes this part of the process more pleasant for both the department and the administration.

Action Plan. After examining the internal and external reviewers' comments, one should decide which changes (if any) the department should make in the future. As with all steps in the process, be sure to communicate the results of the self-study to all faculty in the department so that everyone has the opportunity to study the results and suggest additional resources and curricular changes that may be needed.

Be sure the final report includes steps to be taken in the future so the administration is assured that the department takes the review process seriously and is willing to engage in continuous improvement. The action plan is the department's opportunity to make requests (and justify those requests) for future faculty lines, additional space, reduced class sizes, and the like.

Programmatic-Review Templates. While each institution likely has its own template for programmatic review, the three tables presented below illustrate various approaches to the process. These approaches were selected because of the breadth of information they include. Additionally, committee members might want to include information required by these universities represented in these examples, even if their home institution does not require it, as this supplemental information further establishes the importance of the department.

The first example features Appalachian State University's programmatic review template. An interesting feature of Appalachian State's review features the question involving critical mass and impact on the university if the department is eliminated. While this feature may frighten faculty and staff, this area allows departments to establish the absolute importance of a department within a particular institution. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville's self-study template provides the second example. The model's focus on teaching, and whether or not mentoring takes place for ineffective teaching, is especially telling since it indicates the institution's emphasis on the importance of pedagogy. Illinois State University's self-study review guidelines are listed in the third example. A salient feature of these guidelines is the inclusion of and focus on the "Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan." Illinois State University's plan correctly highlights the importance of the departmental student-learning assessment plan by including it in its entirety as an appendix.

Data Used in Programmatic reviews. Programmatic review data collected are entirely dependent on institutional requirements. Measures included in programmatic reviews typically include (a) the number and profile of majors; (b) the number and profile of faculty (tenure-track and adjunct); (c) the department's curriculum and enrollment profile; (d) the department's use of facilities; and (e) the department's student-learning assessment plan, including direct measures such as comprehensive tests administered to incoming students and/or graduating seniors, internship evaluations completed by sponsoring organizations, capstone course projects, portfolios, and indirect measures such as results from student focus groups, senior surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and student preparation for and success in graduate school.

Most required data regarding majors and enrollment can be gathered by Institutional Research professionals; it is best to request such information early on in the process, preferably right after the programmatic review committee's first meeting. Whatever data are used for programmatic review, the needs and knowledge of the audiences must be considered and information should be presented in a manner most appropriate for the audience. After all, analyzing one's audience is paramount in this process.

Motivating Faculty

Although programmatic review serves as a mechanism to improve the department and secure resources and recognition, limitations exist. One issue concerning most chairpersons is motivating faculty to participate in the review process. To aid departmental heads in this quest, explanations of faculty resistance and suggestions for motivating faculty are offered.

Faculty resistance to participation in programmatic review stems from various concerns. Departmental faculty members may be unaccustomed to the amount of teamwork and time necessary to design and implement a successful review of the department (Peitus & Smith, 1991). Faculty and staff may feel that they do not have time to conduct a programmatic review, may resent the disruption in their everyday lives, may fear the review process, may not understand the payoff, and may not understand who will benefit and how (Hendricks, 1992-93, p. 69).

Fortunately, an articulate and optimistic chairperson can assuage these fears by hosting an informational departmental meeting; a chairperson who does not happen to be articulate or optimistic needs to find someone who has those qualities to lead the first discussion of the programmatic-review process. As noted previously, it is extremely important for faculty to understand the value and process of the review, as well as how it will benefit them directly. In terms of introducing programmatic review, some chairpersons have had success by recasting the meeting as a retreat and discussing the upcoming review process off campus; another hosted a kick-off event at his home.

No matter where the initial discussion about the review process is held, it is essential that a departmental meeting of some sort occur well in advance of the self-study due date—at least 10 months in advance is advised. In terms of motivation, this meeting serves an important function by allowing faculty members to voice their concerns, grumble, and then recognize that programmatic review is something that has to be done and adjust to the idea. The person leading the meeting must anticipate and skillfully navigate the negative comments that some faculty and staff members are likely to make.

When members complain that this is just another bit of busy work that administrators are making them complete, the leader needs to counter with a response like, "It's understandable that you might feel that way, but this is our chance to demonstrate the importance of our program and the quality of our faculty," and so on. By casting programmatic review in the most positive light possible, departmental faculty might even come to appreciate the process.

Example: Appalachian State University's Programmatic Review Template

Centrality to Institutional Mission Considers the department's importance to the institution as well as the possibilities of program consolidation or elimination. Developing this section can be challenging since all responses to this seem self-serving; however, a claim of centrality based upon student load, class sizes, or courses required across the curriculum might be helpful (but also readily verifiable).	**Facilities/Equipment** Evaluates available classroom space and equipment as well as its appropriateness for the program. Lists necessary facilities changes/ improvements that need to be made and equipment purchases or upgrades.
Department Overview Describes department's degree offerings, courses required for other degree programs across the institution, co-curricular/honor society/and or professional involvement, and special faculty or student accomplishments. This section is important since it sets the tone for how the report should be read (gives the necessary information about the program)	**Program Demand** Focuses upon a program's viability largely from the perspective of its student cohort. Offers demographic information such as number of majors, number of graduates, over or under-enrolled courses, information about job prospects for graduates, and how courses are essential for other programs. This section helps explain why service or scholarly productivity might be low; that is, if a department has such high demand, then the faculty can't manage to do all three. Overcrowded courses or over demanded courses and high scholarly reassignment time might also indicate a need for change whereas low productivity and low demand may put a program at risk.
Faculty Workload/Reassigned Time/Scholarly Activity Seeks to discover how faculty are being utilized and to provide some basis for recommendations regarding the need for additional faculty resources. Teaching load shows a precise headcount in each course offered by the department each semester; faculty Full-time equivalent and student credit hour statistics might also be included here.	**Costs** Examines the number of hours graduates have (is the number of credit hours substantially higher than the requirement?). Also focuses on the program's number of under-enrolled courses and the department's cost-saving measures, if any.
Library Holdings Highlights the degree to which the library is able to support the program. Investigates library current and retrospective resources.	**Duplication** Considers a program's utilization of resources but from an efficiency perspective: How does a program compliment or duplicate other departments in the institution? Course duplication is the largest offender here.
Critical Mass Examines the impact on primary department, secondary departments, and institution if program was eliminated.	

Example: University of Tennessee, Knoxville Programmatic Review Template

Goals • Are the department's goals clearly stated, followed, measured, and in compliance with the goals of the university?	**Teaching** • Is teaching quality rigorously evaluated? • Is mentoring provided to new faculty? • Is good teaching valued and rewarded? • Is an ineffective teacher given assistance? • Is faculty development assisted by the department?
Curriculum • Is the curriculum well planned? • Is it complementary of general education courses? • Is it balanced? • Does it expose students to contested issues as well as develop critical thinking and research skills?	**Connecting with Students** • Is effective curricular and career advising provided? • Do students have the opportunity for interaction with one another, with faculty, with professionals? **Connections** • Does faculty research reflect broad range of scholarly
inquiry and encourage interdisciplinary activity with the larger university community? • Do the faculty participate in university service and contribute to community service? • Do students have professional opportunities to apply knowledge beyond the classroom? **Inclusiveness** • Are faculty diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity and	academic background? • Does the department provide opportunities for students to be exposed to diversity across the discipline and seek to include perspective and experiences underrepresented groups through curricular and extra-curricular activities? **Support** • Does the department regularly evaluate its equipment,
facilities and library holdings and encourage necessary improvements within the context of overall university resources?	

If, however, the majority of the department does not buy-in to the important opportunity of programmatic review, then chairpersons might have to rely on reward power. Reward power occurs when one is able to offer incentives for task completion (French & Raven, 1960). One of the most difficult issues surrounding programmatic review is how to compensate faculty for investing the extra work associated with the review.

In some fortunate cases, faculty members substantially involved in programmatic review are rewarded with release time; however, this demands careful planning on behalf of the department chairperson to (a) identify the faculty members eligible for release time well in advance and (b) secure that release time from the dean. If an institution does not grant release time for programmatic review, it might consider rewarding faculty in the form of an overload payment for their work. In other institutions, participating in programmatic review counts as a significant contribution in the category of service and faculty are rewarded through merit pay.

Not all institutions can offer rewards, so it falls on the shoulders of chairpersons to think creatively. Department chairpersons may feel they already have too many tasks to complete and the programmatic review process may seem like another hoop through which to jump. Yet, successful department heads recognize the review as a link to gaining staff, space, budget, etc., and the correlating need for strong leadership of the process.

One department chairperson, who requested anonymity, confessed that the best strategy for motivating faculty when he had no access to monetary rewards was simply assigning the task of chairing the review committee to the most vocal opponent of programmatic review. The chairperson admitted that this move caused him extra time initially since he had to repeatedly deal with the "troublemaker"; but once that faculty member realized that he had a job to do, he bought in to the process and became an advocate.

Example: Illinois State University's Programmatic Review Self-Study Guidelines

1. Description of Self-Study Process: Provide a description of the process used to conduct the self-study including: • Faculty and student involvement, and • Timeframe for the self analysis and review.	**2. Description and Analyses of Program:** Offer an overview of the following: • Academic unit, • Degree program being reviewed, • Curriculum of degree program being reviewed, • Faculty of degree program or unit, and • Goals and quality measures for the program.
3. Response to Previous Program Review Recommendations: Provide a narrative summary addressing the previous program review recommendations.	**4. Program Goals and Planning Processes:** Provide the following: • A summary of initiatives and plans for the program for the next three years, • How these goals integrate with the university's strategic plan, (include the unit plan as Appendix 2)
5. Executive Summary: Include: • An introduction summarizing the distinctive features of the program, • A summary of each component reviewed in the program review document, • A description and assessment of any major changes in the program since the last program review, • A summary of the department Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan, • A description of major findings and recommendations as a result of the program review, and • A description of actions taken as a result of the previous program review.	**6. Appendices:** • Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan, • Strategic Plan for unit and/or program, • List of national programs or national standards used for goal setting and quality comparisons, and • Current faculty vitae.

Of course, the opposite strategy works as well: Select the most respected person in the department to lead the process and trust that individual to convert the rest of the department through referent power (French & Raven, 1960). Unfortunately, and all too often, new and untenured faculty are called upon to conduct these reviews, which really is an untenable position for vulnerable faculty. If this is unavoidable, it is the task of the department chairperson to make sure every member in the department is involved with the review process to avoid overburdening junior faculty members—and provide departmental perspective necessary for effective planning.

While most departments may not have access to monetary rewards for faculty who participate significantly in the programmatic review process, never underestimate the power of a framed certificate presented to each participant at the end of the year or personal thank-you letters recognizing important individual contributions, which faculty members can add to their dossiers. As Lucas notes (1994), faculty need honest recognition of their accomplishments and small rewards that may seem inconsequential, such as those mentioned here, most likely will be very much appreciated.

Conclusion

As part of the institutional-effectiveness process, programmatic review allows faculty to continually improve curricula, department resources, and professional development. Programmatic reviews also are excellent vehicles for departments to receive institutional rewards and recognition. Keys to successful programmatic reviews are (a) selecting highly-organized individuals to administer the process; (b) making sure the entire department understands the need for,

process involved with, and benefits of the review; (c) conducting a transparent review process; and (d) involving all departmental members in the review so that each feels that he or she has the opportunity to contribute to the process.

Communication scholars are especially well prepared to conduct successful programmatic reviews given our understanding of audience analysis and rhetorical principles. Considering the constraints placed on faculty members' time, it is essential for chairpersons and other institutional leaders to communicate that programmatic reviews are one valid way for us to create a shared academic culture committed to improving the quality of higher education and departmental circumstances.

References

Angelo, T. A. (1995). Reassessing (and redefining) assessment. *AAHE Bulletin, 48,* 7-9.

Central Michigan University. (n.d.). Program review: External reviewer. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/ APC/PDF/ExternalConsultantResponsibilities050605.pdf.

Cole, T. W. (1996, March). Evaluating effectiveness through program assessment. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern States Communication Association, Memphis.

Diers, D., & Vendrely, A. (2002). Designing, implementing and maintaining a program assessment plan in an allied health professions program. Collection of papers on self-study and institutional improvement. Chicago: North Central Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.

French, J. P. R., Jr., & Raven, B. (1960). The bases of social power. In Cartwright, D., & Zander, A. (Eds.). *Group dynamics* (pp. 607-623). New York: Harper and Row.

Haley, E., & Jackson, D. (1994). Responding to the crisis of accountability: A review of program assessment methods. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Media, Atlanta.

Hendricks, B. (1992-1993). Moving ahead: Program review and evaluation as tools for growth. *Proceedings of the 1992 and 1993 Conferences on Outdoor Recreation*, 65-72.

Higgerson, M. L. (1993). Important components of an effective assessment program. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration, 2,* 1-9.

Hugenberg, L. W. (1997). Assessment of student learning and program review: Data for continuous improvement. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago.

Lucas, A. (1994). *Strengthening departmental leadership: A team-building guide for chairs in colleges and universities.* San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. (1988). Statement of principles on student outcomes assessment. Washington, D.C.: NASULGC.

National Communication Association. (n.d.). *Departmental guidelines*. Retrieved March 17, 2006, from http://www.natcom.org/Instruction/assessment/Assessment/guidelines.htm

Nichols, J. O., & Nichols, K. W. (2005). *A road map for improvement of student learning and support services through assessment*. New York: Agathon Press.

Nichols, J. O., & Nichols, K. W. (1995). *The departmental guide for student outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness.* New York: Agathon Press.

Pietus, A. M., & Smith, W. D. (1991). Program assessment for a teacher education program. *Education, 112,* 288-295.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1987). *The principalship: A relative practice perspective*. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Suskie, L. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

University of Colorado at Boulder. (n.d.). Internal review committee. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from http://www.colorado.edu/facultyaffairs/IRC.htm.

CHAPTER 9

ASSESSING COMMUNICATION AS PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Ellen A. Hay, Augustana College
Michelle Epstein Garland, University of Tennessee

> ***Communication skills are life skills. Communication is the common denominator in human experience. As such, educational institutions should foster a mature understanding of the complexity of communication and teach students the communication skills fundamental to achieving a meaningful and successful life in the 21st century.***
>
> *~ National Communication Association Educational Policies Board Task Force Committee (2003, p. 6)*

Purpose and Preview

"To speak and write effectively." This phrase appears in just about every college and university catalog in the country. It is one of the goals that most general education core programs seek to address. It assumes that college graduates should be able to communicate their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and emotions in an appropriate manner and that they should competently interact with others in various contexts. As Morreale and Pearson (2008) noted in their study on the importance of communication:

> While many factors affect the course of any life, competent communication plays a critical role in how students react to and manage life's challenges[,] so all academic institutions ought to insure that all of their students graduate with the communication competencies necessary to succeed personally and professionally in their lives. (p. 236)

Members of the National Communication Association (NCA) have long recognized the need to include oral communication requirements in the general education curriculum and have developed a number of resources to promote its inclusion. In 1996, NCA released its policy statement, "The Role of Communication Courses in General Education" and the accompanying resolution supported individual communication departments in their efforts to include communication courses as a part of general education. More recently, the NCA Educational Policies Board (EPB) Task Force Committee on Communication in the General Education Curriculum (2003) published its report outlining rationales, strategies, and advice for requiring college students to complete study in oral communication.

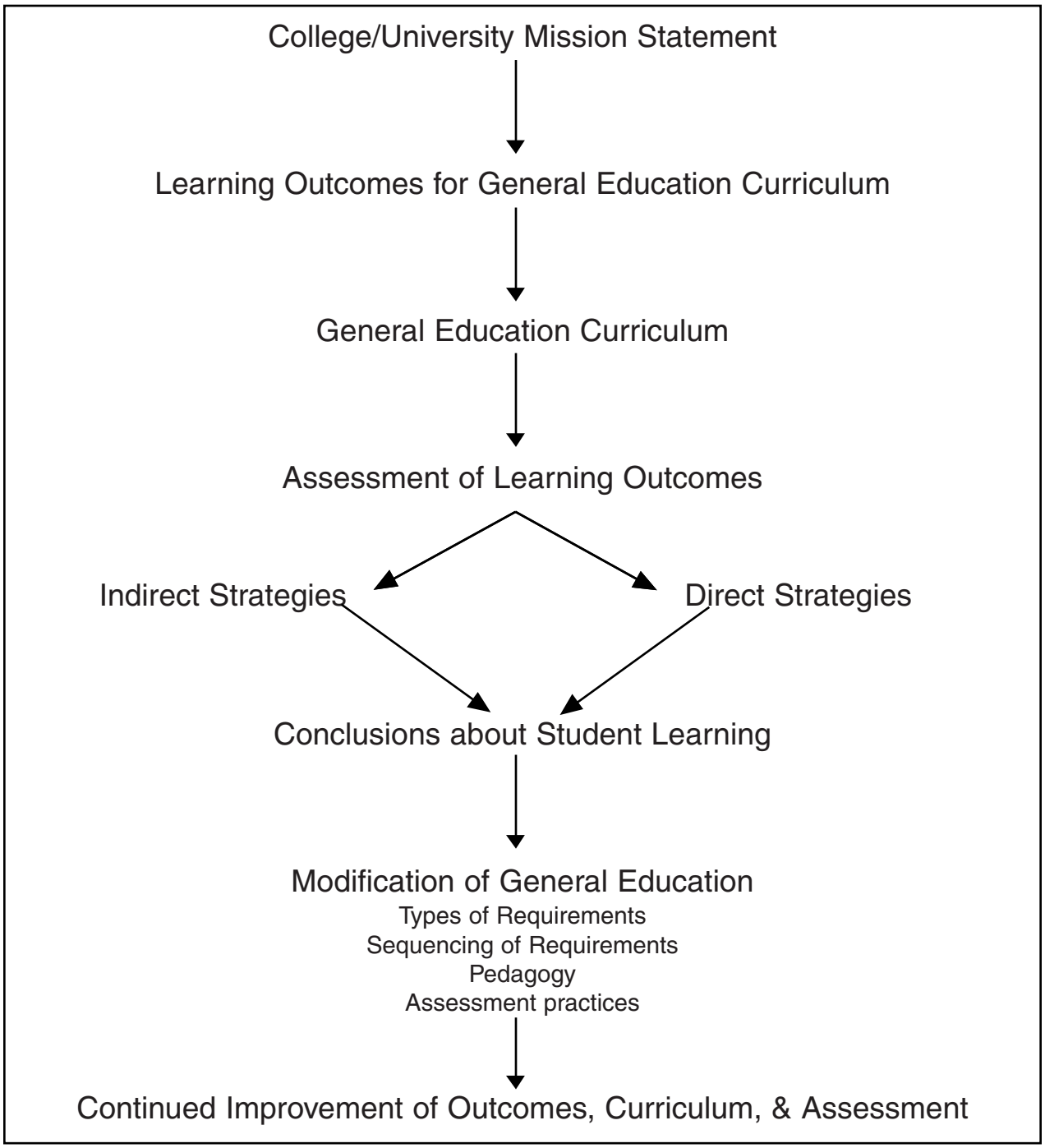
With an increasing number of institutions indicating that oral communication is an important goal of undergraduate education, the question then becomes: "How do colleges and universities demonstrate that students are competent oral communicators?" For decades, educators assumed that knowledge and skill acquisition "just happened" as a result of completing the prescribed curriculum. In the last twenty years, however, colleges and universities have been challenged by accreditation agencies, legislators, and other policy makers to prove they are meeting their stated general education goals. As Ralph Wolff, the president and director of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, noted, "The transition has been nothing less than a complete transformation—from a regulatory, once-a-decade compliance-oriented process to a reflective evidence-driven, and learning-outcomes-based one that is adapted to the plans, needs, and priorities of each institution" (Smith & Finney, 2008, p.7).

So how should communication educators respond? Certainly, we have a well-developed understanding of the importance of communication expertise, but how do we insure that communication studies are integrated effectively into the general education experiences of students? What evidence can be gathered to demonstrate the impact of various

strategies used to develop communication competence? To answer such questions, colleges and universities have adopted a number of approaches for monitoring student achievement. Below is a graphic representation of commonly accepted points in the process.

This chapter outlines several of these approaches. After discussing some of the issues relevant to the general education context, we will apply the model below specifically to oral communication, first by examining stated student learning objectives (SLOs), and then considering some of the direct and indirect measures that can be used to monitor student achievement related to those SLOs.

Assessing Oral Communication in General Education Programs



The General Education Context

A number of unique challenges confront educators as they assess the impact of the general education curriculum. First, general education typically is not "owned" by a specific department. While some general education courses may be housed in a particular department, usually the general education curriculum is considered institutional in its orientation.

In a 2006 survey of the basic communication course, over half of the respondents indicated that the basic course was required for general education, and 11% of the respondents reported that their institutions used a communication-across-the-curriculum approach (Morreale et al., 2006). While communication departments may be very involved in offering instruction, they may be less involved in assessing the impact of such instruction.

Most colleges and universities have general education curriculum committees that oversee the program, and often, assessment is one of the duties of this committee. Assessing general education may also be assigned to a designated assessment committee or to an office of institutional research. Sometimes, it is even assessed by faculty in a student's major department as a part of a capstone experience. Communication educators may be seen more as consultants in this process, so they need to be fully conversant in available options and approaches in order to respond readily when asked how best to assess oral communication.

Another significant issue in the general education context is the amorphous nature of the requirements. It is difficult to separate out the way that students acquire knowledge, abilities and dispositions. Most institutions use a distribution system that provides students with many options for completing general education requirements. Thus, students do not have a common experience, and there is little sequencing of requirements. The basic course survey indicated, for example, that at about 90% of the institutions, students took the basic course in the first two years of college, but that there were many variations in enrollment (Morreale et al., 2006).

For communication educators who are involved in assessing general education, it is important to remember that many different kinds of experiences, both within and outside the classroom, may be influencing students as they become competent communicators. Given issues such as these, how then can communication educators provide leadership and guidance when an institution is assessing oral communication in the general education program? What should they recommend?

General Education Goals: What Are We Assessing?

A beginning point is clearly defined student learning objectives. Good assessment starts with well-developed program goal statements, so the key to assessing oral communication abilities is to focus on SLOs. What should students know and be able to do when they complete their general education curriculum? What abilities, values, attitudes, and dispositions should the general education curriculum foster?

As noted at the outset, college mission and goal statements often include general phrases such as, "The student will demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication." Most college graduates are expected to be competent communicators. These general statements are not helpful in formulating learning opportunities or assessing outcomes. As higher education increasingly focuses on assessment, colleges and universities now must define communication competence in much more specific ways.

Communication educators can point to a number of resources that can be helpful in carefully defining student learning objectives. The 1998 NCA document *Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students* (Morreale et al., 1998) lists SLO statements focused on oral communication in the general education context. In its monograph, the EPB Task Force Committee (2003) provided SLO statements from the Maryland Communication Association, the 2000 Hope College Conference, and the University of North Carolina, as samples for other colleges and universities interested in refining their general education goals and objectives. These provide strong models for further refining general goals. Another tactic may be to examine the history, mission and strategic plan of the college or university. What do these sources have to say about communication competence? How can the general statements be operationalized?

For example, "A Samford student will have demonstrated his/her ability to speak and listen competently in public, group and interpersonal contexts by developing, adapting and sending messages that are seen as appropriate by the audience for the specified purpose." The Samford University (n.d.) statement continues by outlining expectations for each context, noting, for example, that, "The Samford student will be able to transmit messages suitable for various interpersonal situations and will be able to select from a repertoire of communication skills appropriate strategies for

relationship management." Communication is one of the "Transformational Learning Abilities" that are a cornerstone of a Samford education, and therefore, what is meant by "communication" is clearly and fully explained.

At George Mason University (2006), oral communication competence is "the ability to use oral communication as a way of thinking and learning as well as sharing ideas with others." The six learning goals that accompany this statement relate to the role of free speech in a democratic society, the principles of ethical communication, the influence of culture, critical thinking and listening, elements of effective verbal and nonverbal communication, and multiple message types (George Mason Oral Communication Assessment Proposal, 2006).

At the University of South Carolina (n.d.), the general goal of becoming an effective communicator is delineated by five specific student learning objectives that outline expectations for message content, audience adaptation, organization and delivery. Each SLO is further refined to include performance standards applicable to that objective.

Faculty at the University of California Long Beach articulated eight student learning objectives as a basis for the communication requirement considered foundational in general education. In addition to reducing apprehension and enhancing confidence, students are required to "develop and demonstrate an understanding of how to . . . :

1. Structure and organize, appropriately and strategically, for different audiences.
2. Distinguish among cognitive, affective and aesthetic content of the messages.
3. Analyze and adapt messages to specific audiences or persons and for specific contexts and occasions.
4. Solicit audience or receiver feedback to check the accuracy and interpretation of messages.
5. Listen effectively and analytically.
6. Utilize visual, aural and media aids appropriately. (Allen, 2002, p. 34)

Clearly, we have become more sophisticated in articulating expectations for oral communication that college graduates must possess. The student learning objectives that many institutions now specify are detailed and comprehensive. They encompass not only public speaking abilities, but also extend to other communication contexts. In order to assess whether or not students have acquired the necessary communication knowledge, abilities and dispositions, communication educators should argue for carefully defined, measurable SLOs.

Once an institution has considered what it intends to accomplish, attention can then turn to how best to monitor its success in achieving these student learning objectives. Are current learning opportunities sufficient? Are the intended outcomes currently being realized? The remainder of this chapter will discuss some alternatives that colleges and universities use to monitor how well all students satisfy their stated learning objectives.

Our review is based upon the assessment principle of triangulation, as defined in Chapter 1 and discussed in Chapters 3 through 6, because multiple measures are required to form an accurate picture of student achievement—a firm foundation for programmatic change. Successful measurement of student learning begins by collecting data from various sources and synthesizing conclusions based upon this information.

Assessment of student oral communication competence also must be multi-dimensional, measuring knowledge, skills, and attitudes with multiple measures. What should a communication educator recommend as possible sources of data? We will start our consideration by discussing some of the indirect methods that are possible, and then move to an examination of the more direct strategies that examine evidence of student achievement.

Indirect Assessment of Communication Competence

Many colleges and universities begin to monitor learning outcomes by focusing on the perceptions of students, alumni, faculty and employers. These opinions and experiences most commonly are gathered through surveys and other self-report measures, but sometimes interviews and focus groups also are used to collect information.

While such instruments can offer insights into impressions and experiences, they only provide opinions about learning, so should be used only as supplementary support for direct measurement of student learning (which we will address in the next section). **Solid assessment plans *must* employ direct measures of students; they also *may* employ indirect measures**.

This section of the chapter describes general education impact resulting from locally developed surveys and nationally norm-referenced instruments monitoring students' appraisal of their learning. It also discusses some other approaches to data collection.

To start, faculty might investigate what instruments are already being administered at the institution and examine items on these measures for information that might be gleaned about development of communication competence. Then they can determine what supplementary data points are needed and choose, or design, additional measures accordingly.

Standardized Measures. Colleges and universities regularly administer a variety of standardized instruments to ascertain impressions from various constituencies. Most of these surveys contain communication-related items. A place to start thinking about what data might be helpful is through examining what might already be available at the institution.

For instance, many institutions administer Indiana University Bloomington's (2008c) *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) to first-year and graduating students. The NSSE addresses a variety of good educational practices and specifically asks students how often they participated in presentations and small-group work. Pertaining to general education uses for NSSE results, Kuh (n.d.) notes:

> Emphasizing good educational practice helps focus faculty, staff, students, and others on the tasks and activities that are associated with higher yields in terms of desired student outcomes. Toward these ends, faculty and administrators would do well to arrange the curriculum and other aspects of the college experience in accord with these good practices, thereby encouraging students to put forth more effort (e.g., write more papers, read more books, meet more frequently with faculty and peers, use information technology appropriately) which will result in greater gains in such areas as critical thinking, problem solving, **effective communication** [emphasis added], and responsible citizenship. (p. 1)

The *College Student Experiences Questionnaire* (Indiana University Bloomington, 2007), in addition to asking students to estimate their growth in presenting ideas, getting along with others and functioning in a team, contains an entire section titled "Conversations" that queries the topics and information students regularly discuss. *Your First College Year Survey* (Policy Center on the First Year of College, 2008-09) asks incoming students about their participation in discussion, both in and out of class.

If an institution uses these types of instruments, it already possesses some data about students' oral communication experiences and their perceptions regarding those experiences. Other standardized instruments can provide information from various non-student constituents regarding the status of communication instruction.

For instance, The *Faculty Survey* (Higher Education Research Institute, n.d.) asks faculty to indicate how often they assign student presentations and conduct class discussions. Some institutions utilizing the NSSE also administer Indiana University Bloomington's (2008b) *Faculty Survey of Student Engagement* (FSSE), an online survey that complements the NSSE. The FSSE ". . . is designed to measure faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. . . ." (Indiana University Bloomington, 2009). Several items measure percentage of class time devoted to small group work and presentations in addition to faculty expectations for how often students participate in presentations and groups (Indiana University Bloomington, 2008b).

Alumni constitute another important constituent group whose perspectives many universities seek. The *Alumni Outcomes Survey* (American College Testing Service, n.d.) asks graduates about the importance of verbal and team skills in their current life situations, and how much the institution contributed to the development of those skills.

Standardized surveys such as these can be very effective in tracking key-publics' perceptions of their experiences in and out of the classroom. Since they are nationally norm-referenced instruments, they also provide relative data of how campus results compare to those of similar institutions. For example, thousands of students at hundreds of different colleges and universities take the NSSE annually (Indiana University Bloomington, 2009). Standardized surveys can highlight whether the curriculum and pedagogy of an institution adequately support the development of oral communication abilities.

If students are not participating in discussions or making presentations, or if the university's alumni do not feel adequately prepared to meet the communication challenges they encounter after graduation, it should signal a need for faculty to examine carefully how oral communication is addressed in required general education and major core courses.

Locally Developed Instruments. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, some colleges and universities develop their own instruments for soliciting student, faculty, and alumni responses, rather than purchasing available standardized measures. These instruments ask questions similar to those posed on standardized instruments and, while national comparisons are not possible, local surveys can be tailored to the specific student learning objectives and curricula of the institution and offer data to track trends and patterns. Local measures also can be designed to tap the nuances of a campus's general education requirements, providing communication educators insights on that area of their endeavors.

Tailoring surveys to their own SLOs has allowed several institutions to develop unique strategies for monitoring success. Where speaking-across-the-curriculum programs are used to develop oral communication abilities, often non-communication faculty members involved in the program complete surveys about the communication progress their students are making. For example, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Willse & Ferguson, 2003), the eight competencies of the *Competent Speaker* (Morreale et al., 1993, 2007) are the basis for the faculty survey. Using this survey, faculty across campus were able to identify specific areas of communication strength and weakness evident in student presentations.

Dixie College (n.d.) uses a survey of faculty who teach general education courses. That survey is followed by focus groups to probe for deeper impressions of faculty teaching in the program. At the University of North Dakota (n.d.), a sample of students is interviewed about general education experiences. One of the questions asks them to describe specific examples of experiences that helped them become better speakers. Surveys of employers who hire graduates of particular institutions also provide useful information. At Nicholls State University (2004), for instance, employers of the university's graduates are asked whether graduates write and speak effectively.

Locally developed measures can assess perceptions about particular attributes of an institution's stated student learning outcomes. In cases where the college or university has well-articulated communication expectations, communication educators might recommend surveys, focus groups, and interviews that can delve into the specific areas highlighted in the program, offering a perspective on how well those expectations are being addressed.

Direct Measures of Communication Competence

While indirect measures provide some information on constituent perception regarding progress that is being made in reaching particular expectations, *assessment must evaluate actual student behaviors*. Colleges and universities must demonstrate that students actually are becoming competent communicators. Though assessment of oral communication in general education at first appeared daunting to many institutions, most now have found ways to measure improvement directly.

Communication educators might encourage direct assessment of oral communication through a number of different strategies. When communication courses are required in the general education program, communication behaviors can be assessed at completion of a required course. Instructors of required communication courses often report outcomes on a pre-post basis. For instance, at Edison Community College (n.d.), students enrolled in the fundamentals course evaluate each others' interpersonal skills using the *Conversational Skills Rating Scale* (Spitzberg, 1995, 2007) at the beginning of the term and again at the end.

When an institution offers speaking-intensive (SI) courses across the curriculum, communication educators can provide methods for assessing presentations from SI courses. All faculty teaching an SI course should be trained and calibrated in the use of a common rubric, so that data across course sections can be analyzed. Frostburg State University is currently piloting a speaking-intensive program that includes a common scoring rubric. "The University's assessment liaison will periodically collect the scoring rubrics from all speaking-intensive courses in order to determine what percentage of students have attained the 'meets standards' level of proficiency" (Limbaugh et al., 2005, p. 6).

Communication educators also might explore how senior projects or upper-level course presentations can be evaluated to ascertain student achievement. Again, common criteria are applied in determining whether students demonstrate the stated student learning outcomes. For example, at Winthrop University (2002), student speeches are embedded in first-year and senior-level courses. These two sets of speaking samples provide a basis for examining

whether students become competent public speakers. Similarly at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (Friedman, 2005), students are assessed in their initial required speech course and again in a required junior-level course.

A special assessment day or week has been designated at some institutions. At Winona State University (n.d.), classes are cancelled for an entire day in February to allow time for college-wide assessment. During Maricopa Community College's (n.d.) assessment week, beginning and ending students respond to a series of oral communication questions developed by a faculty group from various disciplines.

Some institutions are also using or experimenting with video portfolios. Alverno College (n.d.), for example, has a long-standing program that tapes student presentations and group interactions throughout each student's time at the college. These tapes are then reviewed for assessment purposes by faculty and experts from the community, using well-established rubrics. Johnson County Community College (n.d.) has developed an institutional portfolio program. A scoring team using a holistic rubric evaluates videotaped presentations from selected classes.

As noted, a common rubric is best so that faculty conducting assessments can be trained and calibrated in a uniform manner and results can be posted in a more generalizable form. Communication educators can guide the selection of an appropriate rubric, as well as training and calibration sessions. *The Competent Speaker* (Morreale et al., 1993, 2007), available from the National Communication Association, identifies eight different competencies and specifies three levels of achievement for each. Students must demonstrate their ability to (a) select and narrow a topic, (b) communicate a thesis, (c) support their position, and (d) organize their message, in addition to using (e) appropriate language, (f) vocal qualities, (g) pronunciation, and (h) physical abilities.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (1998) assessment templates focus on appropriateness, responsiveness, and effectiveness and describes advanced, developing and emerging levels of performance. In addition to assessing oral presentation, the NWREL framework has been adapted to group communication, and their *Customer Service* rubric applied the framework to the interpersonal dimension.

The *Public Speaking Competency Instrument* (Thomson & Rucker, 2002) provides more atomistic assessment for specific elements of a presentation. The specific prompts on this instrument are well-suited for assessors who do not have an in-depth background in communication. The *Conversational Skills Rating Scale: An Instructional Assessment for Interpersonal Competence* (Spitzberg, 1995, 2007) offers a variety of formats for evaluating interpersonal communication abilities. In addition to providing a general impression, the 30-item instrument asks the rater to evaluate the alter-centrism, composure, expressiveness, and interaction management of the conversational partner. The *Competent Group Communicator* (Beebe, Barge, & McCormick, 1998) rates student problem-oriented, solution-oriented, discussion-management, and relational competencies in group communication.

Many colleges and universities also have developed their own rubrics for use across different courses. Of course, doing so requires instrument-development expertise among campus communication educators. At Eastern Kentucky University (n.d.), the general education scoring guide for presentations not only considers the content, organization and delivery of the message, but also assesses adherence to ethical standards and adaptation to cultural differences.

As noted previously, assessment should not focus solely on student skills. Cognitive and affective achievement also should be assessed. Do students demonstrate an understanding of communication concepts? Are students more comfortable and confident when communicating with others? While more limited, measures of communication knowledge have also been developed. For example, at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, a 100-item multiple-choice WebCT test is completed as a pre-test and post-test in the required speech course (Huglen, 2005).

At George Mason University (n.d.), five questions are used across different courses to measure student understanding of communication concepts. Neer and Aitken (1997) reported the development of the *Pre-Communication Assessment Measure* and, while this particular instrument is intended for use with beginning communication majors at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, it provides a good model for developing a test appropriate to general education communication assessment.

The assessment of attitudes and dispositions toward communication also should receive attention in assessment planning. At Samford (n.d.), students complete the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (McCroskey, 1985), while Winthrop University (2002) uses the *PRCA-24* and *Willingness to Communicate* (McCroskey, 1991) to compare first-year students to seniors. These instruments can be used as summative assessments or as formative instruments to help monitor whether students are developing a greater comfort level and confidence through their study of communication.

Conclusion

Clearly, based upon institutional mission, numerous colleges and universities around the country have defined expected student learning outcomes related to oral communication and have designed general education requirements intended to address those expectations. Many also have devised assessment programs that consider whether students are achieving stated student learning objectives. Over the last decade, communication educators have made significant contributions to insure all students who graduate from college are competent communicators. However, challenges remain.

First, communication in general education curricula is still focused largely on public speaking. Other dimensions of communication (interpersonal, team, gender, intercultural, etc.) have not been fully addressed. While there are institutions that have identified these competencies as important, and some even have developed strategies for assessing them, significantly more attention is needed. It is far more likely that a college graduate will be expected to function with a team in a business setting than to give a formal public speech. Communication educators can provide leadership in assisting students to attain the "real world" competencies Clark (2002) noted:

> We want our students to do more than give good classroom speeches and display appropriate knowledge on our examinations. We want them to succeed in communication activities that are part of their careers and civic lives, and we want them to use their knowledge of mass media techniques to draw conclusions concerning the validity of what they are exposed to in the media, for instance. For the most part, we have done little of this kind of assessment, in part, because we have not incorporated such a "real world" focus into our instruction. (p. 401)

Second, the balance between skills assessed and the underlying knowledge and attitudes is uneven. Many institutions have developed mechanisms to monitor whether students are speaking or interacting effectively, but few consider the understanding that must accompany such performance or the apprehension that might result from it.

Focusing on communication only as a skill negates the importance of study in our field. It is important for students to comprehend the ethical choices that communicators regularly make. It is important that faculty outside the field of communication who teach speech-intensive courses appreciate communication apprehension as a very real phenomenon for many students, not to be ignored. General education experiences and resulting assessment programs that focus exclusively on students' presentation performance do not provide a complete or adequate approach to the development of oral communication competence.

Finally, it would be helpful to have a more ready source of information about the assessment of oral communication. While the National Communication Association has provided excellent general recommendations about assessment practices, descriptions of what specific institutions are doing are not readily available. For those wrestling with assessment mandates or seeking to expand upon existing assessment programs, a ready online bank of detailed practices would be beneficial.

Despite the challenges mentioned, it is evident that we have made considerable progress in addressing assessment of oral communication in general education curricula. Colleges and universities have articulated specific student learning objectives and devised strategies for measuring success toward these SLOs. There are a variety of strategies and instruments that provide data for drawing conclusions about how well students communicate upon completion of their general education requirements. Based upon those conclusions, we continue to improve assessment requirements. Communication educators have made strides in insuring that oral communication has a place in the education of all students, regardless of major. As assessment continues to evolve, we can expect that communication knowledge, skills, and attitudes of college graduates will continue to strengthen.

References

Allen, T. H. (2002). Charting a communication pathway: Using assessment to guide curriculum development in a revitalized general education plan. *Communication Education, 51,* 26-39.

Alverno College. (n.d.). Diagnostic digital portfolio. Retrieved from http:// www.alverno.edu/academics/ddp.html.

American College Testing Service. (n.d.). *Alumni outcomes survey*. Retrieved from http://www.act.org/ess/fouryear.html.

Beebe, S., Barge, J. K., & McCormick, C. (1998). Competent group communicator. In Hirokawa, R. Y., Cathcart, R. S., Smovar, L. A., & Henman, L. D. (Eds.) *Small Group Communication: Theory & Practice*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury, 2004.

Clark, R. A. (2002). Learning outcomes: The bottom line. *Communication Education, 51,* 396-404.

Dixie College. (n.d.). General education assessment plan. Retrieved from http:// www.dixie.edu/effective/ge_phil.htm.

Eastern Kentucky University. (n.d.). General education scoring guide for oral communication. Retrieved from www.ir.eku.edu/Assessment/docs/OralComm Rubric2pdf.pdf.

Edison Community College. (n.d.). Conversation skills assessment. Retrieved from http://www.edison.cc.oh.us/CommunicationDepartment/conversation_ skills_assessment.htm.

Friedman, S. (2005). General education-Speech 110 assessment. Retrieved from http://www.uww.edu/Learn/Speech Assessment_05.pdf.

George Mason University. (n.d.). Oral communication assessment proposal. Retrieved from http://www/assessment.gmu.edu/StudentLearningCompetencies /Oral/AssessProposal.htm.

Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). (n.d.). *Faculty survey*. Retrieved from http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/faculty.html.

Huglen, M. E. (2005). *Speech 1101: Public Speaking Assessment Update, 2002-2004*. Retrieved from http://hlc.umcrookston.edu/ documents/criterion3/ DRAFTSpeechAssessmentUpdate.pdf.

Indiana University Bloomington. (n.d.). *What is FSSE?* Retrieved from http://fsse.iub.edu/html/about.cfm.

Indiana University Bloomington. (2008a). *FSSE 2009 invitation to participate*. Retrieved from http://fsse.iub.edu/pdf/2009_FSSE_Invitation.pdf.

Indiana University Bloomington. (2008b). *Faculty survey of student engagement*. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/2008_Institutional_Report/ FSSE% 202008_TS.pdf.

Indiana University Bloomington. (2008c). *National survey of student engagement*. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/NSSE2008_US_English_Web. pdf.

Indiana University Bloomington. (2009). NSSE quick facts. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/html/quick_facts.cfm.

Indiana University Bloomington. (2007). *College student experiences questionnaire*. Retrieved from http://cseq.iub.edu/.

Johnson County Community College. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www. jccc. net/home/depts/S00015/site/process.

Kuh, G. D. (n.d.) *The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual framework and overview of psychometric properties*. Retrieved from http://nsse.iub. edu/pdf/conceptual_framework_2003.pdf.

Limbaugh, J., Ammer, F., Pack, S., Routhier, M., & Wallinger, M. (2005). *Recommendations basic proficiencies in oral communication and criteria for speaking-intensive courses.* Frostburg State University. Retrieved from http://www.frostburg.edu/projects/uei/pdf/final%20recommendation%20ORAL%20COMMUNI-CATION.pdf.

Maricopa Community College District. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www. maricopa.edu/academic/curric/cphb/genedguide.php.

McCroskey, J. C., Beatty, M. J., Kearney, P., & Plax, T.G. (1985). The content validity of the PRCA-24 as a measure of communication apprehension across communication contexts. *Communication Quarterly, 33,* 165-73.

McCroskey, J. C. (1991). Reliability and validity of the *Willingness to Communicate Scale*. *Communication Quarterly, 40,* 16-25.

Morreale, S. P., Hugenberg, L. & Worley, D. (2006). The basic communication course at U.S. colleges and universities in the 21st century: Study VII. *Communication Education, 55,* 415-437.

Morreale, S. P., Moore, M. R., Taylor K. P., Surges-Tatum, D. & Hulbert-Johnson, R. (Eds.). (1993, 2007). *The competent speaker speech evaluation form and manual*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Morreale, S. P., & Pearson, J. C. (2008). Why communication education is important: The centrality of the discipline in the 21st century. *Communication Education, 57*, 224-240.

Morrele, S. P., Rubin, R. B., & Jones, E. (1998). *Speaking and listening competencies for college students.* Retrieved from http://natcom.org/nca/files/ ccLibraryFiles/FILENAME/000000000085/College%20competencies.pdf.

NCA Educational Policies Board Task Force Committee on Communication in the General Education Curriculum. (2003). *Communication in the general education curriculum: A critical necessity for the 21st century.* Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

National Communication Association. (1996). *Policy platform statement on the role of communication courses in general education.* Retrieved from http:// www. natcom.org.

Neer, M. R., & Aitken, J. E. (1997). Using cognitive assessment testing to evaluate and improve a university program in communication studies. *JACA, 2,* 95-109.

Nicholls State University. (2004) Employer survey. Retrieved from http:// nicholls.edu/ir/assessment-employer-surveu-result-2004.pdf.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (1998). *Oral communication assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/pdfRubrics/ oral assess.PDF.

Winthrop University Office of Assessment. (2002). *Oral communication assessment may 2002: A general education report.* Results presented at AAHE Assessment Conference June 2002, Boston, MA. Retrieved from http://www.winthrop.edu/assessment/oral%20communication%20reports.htm.

Policy Center on the First Year of College. (2008-09). *Your first college year survey*. Retrieved from http://www.firstyear.org/fycy/index.html.

Smith, V. B. & Finney, J. E. (2008). Redesigning regional accreditation: An interview with Ralph A. Wolff. *Change, 40*(3), 18-25.

Spitzberg, B. (1995, 2007). *Conversational skills rating scale: An instructional assessment of interpersonal competence*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Thomson, S., & Rucker, M. L. (2002). The development of a specialized public speaking competency scale: Test of reliability. *Communication Research Reports, 19,* 18-28.

Samford University. (n.d.) Transformational learning abilities project. Retrieved from http://www.samford.edu/ctls/archives_abilities.html.

University of North Dakota. (n.d.) Assessment plan. Retrieved from http://www.und.nodak/dept/datacol/assessment/UNDAsmtPlan.pdf.

University of South Carolina. (n.d.) Institutional planning and assessment. Retrieved from http://ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/assessment/criteria/oral.htm.

Willse, J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Summary of speaking across the curriculum faculty survey responses, Fall 2003. Retrieved from http://www.uncg.edu/ cac/SAC/assesSurvey.pdf.

CHAPTER 10

STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM: A NEED TO LIMIT AND FOCUS

Toni S. Whitfield, James Madison University
Donald Martin, DePaul University

Purpose and Preview

This chapter explores student-learning outcomes (SLOs) that commonly are associated with service-learning. Emphasis is placed on SLOs linked to community service in the small-group communication classroom. Assessment strategies used in conjunction with such community service activities are explored and discussed.

Background. Although the term "service-learning" is relatively new, the concept is not. Educators have long sought methods for instruction and curriculum development that increase understanding, heighten learning interest, and build relationships between "real-world" experiences and the classroom. These efforts, when combined with improved learning strategies, build civic responsibility through collaboration and lead to new forms of experiential learning (Kendall, 1990).

Whether connecting course concepts and learning to life experience, or instilling a sense of civic-mindedness in students, communication faculty members have incorporated service-learning opportunities in their courses for more than a decade. Service-learning, if done correctly, is an accepted pedagogical practice that is both theoretically grounded and rigorous. This necessitates exploring how assessment practices might be used to fully realize the educational value of service-learning.

Formal acknowledgment of the educational potential of service originated in the 1900s with Dewey's perspective on learning (Dewey, 1983). Dewey argued that education should incorporate community service—connecting such activity to curricular objectives. By doing so, students are given opportunities to make meaningful contributions to the communities in which they live, while simultaneously reflecting upon the value of their own experience and education. Service-learning is distinguished from student volunteerism; service-learning is grounded in educational objectives requiring student reflection on their service, while volunteerism is non-reflective student involvement in the community (Whitfield, 2000).

Overview. This chapter provides several assessment techniques that may be used in conjunction with service-learning opportunities in the communication classroom. First, current examples of service-learning assessment research and relevant findings are described. Second, workable methodologies for collecting classroom assessment data related to service-learning are presented and discussed. These include writing assignments, participant observation strategies, pretest/posttest surveys, and one-on-one interviews. This is by no means an exhaustive listing of methodologies but rather a model to be used by instructors new to the process of assessing service-learning in the communication classroom. Finally, this chapter highlights potential benefits of routinely collecting assessment data in community-based service-learning courses in the communication curriculum.

Assessment and Service-learning

Current Applications. A review of literature revealed considerable academic assessment of service-learning in general but more limited course-specific applications in the field of communication. Cram's (1998) study of the impact of service-learning on the ethical practices of community-college students demonstrated that self-esteem and moral development were significantly affected by service-learning experiences.

Research links student involvement in the community to students' (a) sense of social responsibility (Fitzgerald, 1997); (b) civic responsibility, (c) academic development, (d) faculty interaction, and development of life skills including; (e) self-confidence, (f) leadership, (g) diversity awareness, and (h) sensitivity to community issues (Sax and Astin, 1997). Additionally, Batchelder and Root (1994) argued that students develop an enriched capacity for problem solving in uncertain situations, while Bringle and Hatcher (1996) suggested that service-learning strengthens the relationship between students and their colleges or universities.

Other scholars have focused, even more specifically, on affective outcomes including (a) maturation, (b) self-worth, (c) confidence, (d) self-directedness, (e) altruism, and (f) reflection (Kuh, 1994); (g) willingness to serve others (Fitch, 1990); (h) acceptance of diversity (Deh, 1991); (i) sensitivity to social problems; (j) perceptions of social justice; and (k) student willingness to embrace community values (Eyler, Giles, and Braxton,1998); and Osborne and Hammerich (1998) examined (l) how students respond to complex situations and how their (m) perceptions of social competence change as a result of service-learning. These research efforts demonstrate the value of service-learning as a vehicle for influencing students' intellectual transformation.

Applications in Communication. In the field of communication studies, research reveals substantial effort to integrate service-learning opportunities across the communication curriculum, but minimal effort to conduct course-specific assessment applications. Selnow and Ostser (1997) surveyed more than 300 university communication departments and found that many courses in the discipline utilize service-learning. In a similar survey sponsored by the National Communication Association (Whitfield, 2000), researchers identified service-learning programs integrated primarily in radio, TV, film, public relations, print journalism, communication conflict, gender communication, and organizational communication concentrations.

In addition to examining prevalence of service-learning programs in the discipline and particular curricular areas where community-service components are integrated, scholars have identified the kinds of assignments generally used for that purpose. Droge and Murphy's (1999) American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) "Voices of Strong Democracy" publication is one example used by faculty to elicit student reflection on the service-learning experience itself. Such assignments include: (a) journaling, (b) guided e-mail journal entries, (c) poster sessions, (d) student-led discussions, (e) teacher-led discussions, (f) mini-briefings, and (g) topic-specific essays. Reflection methods also include reflective papers, speeches and presentations, and focus groups.

Other researchers examined how community needs are assessed. Responses indicated that agencies and community partners received the largest number of responses, followed by service/volunteer offices, and students. And again, some respondents reported that no assessment efforts were undertaken. Finally, respondents reported that student-learning was assessed in a number of ways, such as (a) formal grading procedures, (b) journal analysis, (c) existing service-learning instruments, (d) teacher-created survey instruments, (e) focus groups, and (f) "other" forms of assessment (pre-test/post-test instrument adapted by Martin from Driscoll et al., 1999).

Although service-learning effects on the institution were said to be assessed in a number of ways, by far the greatest percentage of respondents reported using annual reports for assessment purposes. Effects of service-learning on faculty were assessed primarily by qualitative measures and annual reports. Finally, impact on community partners was assessed through the use of annual reports, focus groups, quantitative instruments, and qualitative methods.

In course-specific applications, Soukup (1999) discussed assessment of a communication program in service-learning at Santa Clara University. The assessment focused on value of the experience to the student, impact of the experience on future behavior, connection to students' academic curriculum, value of working in groups, and on having contact with clients.

Glaser and Radliff (2000) conducted an assessment of service-learning in a communication capstone course. Students answered questions exploring possible benefits of participating in a service-learning course as well as the value of integrating theory and practice to the exercise. While such course-specific efforts are useful, we need assessments examining the reciprocal relationship between knowledge gained by students in the communication classroom and utilization of that knowledge in a community-service setting. Analytical tools for probing that relationship exist (Driscoll et al., 1999; Holland, 2001), but practical applications of such resources are needed.

Assessment scholars argue that complete assessment efforts should include multiple measures and take all four constituencies into consideration: (a) the student, (b) the individual faculty member, (c) the institution, and (d) the community (Driscoll et al., 1999).

For example, Driscoll *et al* (1999) assumed a team approach by conducting an assessment of service-learning in ten courses with multiple measurement techniques for each of the four constituencies. Certainly, without being granted the benefit of release time, participating in such a team effort would be difficult for the average faculty member. By focusing primarily on the student constituency, the following discussion offers a manageable approach to beginning the process of service-learning assessment in an undergraduate communication course.

Practical Applications in Communication

A Framework for Assessment. For the purpose of providing an assessment model, four assessment mechanisms are described with a discussion of how each might be embedded into the structure of a community-based service-learning course in communication. We use a small group communication course to demonstrate how several assessment mechanisms might be incorporated into a course design, and other course examples also are provided. These include written documentation, pretest/posttests, surveys, participant observation, and one-on-one interviewing. The number of measurement techniques chosen depends on time available, course structure, and magnitude of the community-service involvement.

Holland (2001, pg.15.) provides a very straightforward assessment framework:

1. Goal: What do we want to know?
2. Variable: What will we look for?
3. Indicator: What will be measured?
4. Method: How will it be measured?

These four assessment questions, along with a fifth describing how assessment results will be used, are useful in any undergraduate service-learning course. Because the questions are straightforward, they demystify the assessment process; hence faculty should begin with this or a similar planning framework. For team-taught courses or multiple-section courses, such frameworks provide a basis for assessment-planning discussions among course faculty members prior to beginning service-learning activities.

Consider, for example, how Holland's recommendations might unfold within a small-group communication course:

1. Goal: What do we want to know?
   Our first goal might be to determine the extent to which students critically apply course concepts both by performing and by reflecting upon their community-service roles. Keep in mind that other goals might be approached using the same analytical framework. These could include such traditional community-service objectives as developing a sense of civic mindedness, recognizing the importance of community service in relation to students' career objectives, or enhancing self-awareness of personal attributes conducive to enactment of community-service roles.
2. Variable: What will we look for?
   Having established that our goal is to determine the extent to which students critically apply course concepts both by performing and by reflecting upon their community-service roles, the next step is to determine what evidence would suggest that students are able to critically apply course concepts within the milieu of their community-service roles. Such variables could include applications of key course concepts like identification of a particular leadership style and its impact, acknowledgement and contextualization of potential sources of conflict, recognition of relationships between types of power and group effectiveness, evaluation of problem-solving processes, approaches to decision making, or identification of group norms and key role functions.
3. Indicator: What will be measured?
   In terms of *indicators,* a faculty member might consider the number of communication concepts students acknowledge in describing their community-service experiences; the students' capacity to provide applied and accurate examples of communication constructs within the context of their community-service experience; or students' ability to use communication concepts in offering analytical assessments of strengths, of weaknesses, or of other aspects of their experience which may have changed or improved over the course of the term.
4. Method: How will it be measured?
   Determining a method for measuring such indicators is not a difficult process if an embedded approach is applied.

Embedded Methods. The initial process of eliciting assessment data in an undergraduate communication course works well in tandem with writing requirements in the course itself. Kinnick and Walleri (1995) recommend that faculty consider using the means that are immediately available. The assessment mechanism thus becomes embedded in the course structure. Such mechanisms include journals, response papers, reflection essays, or other types of writing. Speeches or other types of oral presentations also might be considered. To elicit data in relation to any one of the small-group variables listed above, faculty could include assessment questions in the course's midterm and final examinations.

Open-ended questions probing established indicators could provide written data pertaining to the number of small-group communication concepts students acknowledge in discussing effective vs. ineffective communication at their community-service sites, as well as data reflecting their capacity to provide accurate and contextualized examples of small-group concepts taught in the classroom. Questions should be phrased in ways that allow students considerable latitude in reflecting upon their experience from a course-content driven perspective. Written documentation can be used to substantiate student attainment of the first goal described above.

Participant observation also could be used as an embedded assessment mechanism. Most communication faculty members provide students with opportunities to present their work, individually or in groups, before student audiences. By definition, participant observation refers to research involving interaction between the researcher and the subject. Hence, while conducting participant observation, the researcher/instructor interacts with students over a period of time and systematically and unobtrusively collects data (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975).

As faculty, we naturally fall into the role of participant-observer, and oral presentations—whether individually delivered or presented as a group or panel—constitute potentially rich sources of assessment data. In the small-group communication classroom, for example, such observations naturally occur in conjunction with group-presentation assignments.

In an organizational-communication course where we required service-learning, presentation assignments included description of the community service provided and student perspectives on the consequences of that service. In addition, students were required to provide an analytical assessment of the experience from the viewpoint of specific organizational-communication theories and concepts.

Here students discussed (via e-mail, online discussion and classroom discussion) various aspects of organizational-communication theory, including critical theory and power in their organizations, as well as human-relations theories. Specific questions were posed to students, similar to the following: "How did Elton Mayo's beliefs (a) 'that cooperation among people working together in groups under visionary leadership produces excellence' and (b) that 'organizational teams are critical to task accomplishment' relate to this project?"

In a business-and-professional communication course presentation, students discussed these very issues when they talked about receiving unclear directions upon arriving at their community-service sites. In addition, the site supervisor was not accessible during their work hours, and they often found themselves determining ways of staying busy. Other students made reference to the ineffectiveness of particular leadership styles in light of situational demands. Finally, students discussed how orientation and training would have enriched their involvement and could have allowed them to make more substantive service contributions.

As a participant-observer, the faculty member has an opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the relationship between community-service experiences and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes conveyed in the classroom. In the preceding discussion, students were asked to think about leadership styles that might have worked more effectively at the community-service site; to assess the impact of receiving insufficient information prior to performing a task; and to examine the potential for conflict influenced by the frustration they experienced.

Such opportunities provide abundant insights into the relationship between course content and enactment of community-service roles. Similar assignments geared toward providing assessment data can be incorporated easily into the structure of upper-division undergraduate courses and also into graduate courses.

In-class presentations provide opportunities for guests and expert-observers to receive meaningful insights into the quality of our students' community-service experiences. Site supervisors, representatives of university administration, and guest faculty can be invited to observe the final group presentations. Having these individuals complete assessment rubrics for the presentations they observe provides two added benefits: (a) the process quickly and easily fulfills the

assessment requirement of multiple raters for subjective outcomes measures and, if shared, (b) students can receive feedback from multiple points of view.

When issuing such invitations, faculty members should keep in mind the amount of time that such participation entails; caution should be used as not to ask too much of community partners. Hence attending such presentations could be encouraged but should be voluntary. Letting service-learning partners know that service-team presentations provide feedback pertaining to the value and quality of their service experience itself and ways to improve future volunteer satisfaction—enhancing volunteer retention—provides strong incentive to participate in future assignments. The presentations themselves then serve the dual purpose of demonstrating how well students describe their community-service experiences from a perspective informed by course content and of providing community partners with feedback pertaining to the value and quality of the experience itself.

External-Assessment Mechanisms. External-assessment methods can be used to complement embedded course assessment. For example, a pretest/posttest instrument could be used at the beginning and end of the academic term to explore student-learning objectives established at the beginning of the assessment process. The pretest/posttest is thought to be one of the simplest of experimental designs (Singleton and Straits, 1999). Driscoll *et al*. (1999) provide an instrument tested in a broad cross-section of community-based serving-learning courses (see example below).

This instrument and others available in the literature (Shumer, 2000) can be modified to meet needs of a particular course. Clusters of questions paralleling the traditional community-service themes of civic-mindedness, career influences, and future intentions pertaining to community service can be incorporated in the survey. But, perhaps, even more important is the opportunity to examine the relationship between community-service experiences and knowledge acquired in the communication classroom—the very foundation of effective service-learning.

It is critical that assessment goals unique to a particular course underscore and inform the use of a pretest/posttest survey. Consider, for instance, those small-group indicators described earlier in relation to the small-group communication course: To determine the extent to which students critically apply course concepts both by performing and by reflecting upon their community-service roles. The goal informs development of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions seek narrative responses and provide an opportunity to elicit examples connecting the community-service experience to course objectives.

In our organizational-communication course, the pretest/posttest contained quantitative data, including tolerance of ambiguity and other measures but also included interviews with individual students about their expectations and perceptions about the service experience and their communities. A key advantage of the pretest/posttest approach is the opportunity to make informed statistical comparisons between student scores prior to and following the service-learning experience. T-test comparisons of pretest/posttest scores can provide insight to areas of student development influenced by participation in community service.

Questions also are suggested to elicit narrative responses, provide qualitative insight, and prompt reflectivity. Frequently, information gleaned from student responses lead faculty to course-development/adjustment approaches that enrich connections between course content and students' analytical observations rooted in the experience itself—enhancing both the community-service experience and resultant learning.

Example: Community-Partner Evaluation Form

Using the following five-point scale to assess the contributions of your work team's overall performance this semester, please rank the variables listed in column #1.

In order for this evaluation to be an accurate index of your experiences with the team thus far, please be honest and candid.

Please use the space provided for comments if you would like to qualify your numerical scores in any way or add additional information not covered by the form.

As always, your comments, suggestions, and recommendations are desired and appreciated!

Client: _____

Scale: 5=very strong, 4=strong, 3= neither weak nor strong, 2= weak, 1= very weak	
Item to be Evaluated	**Client's Score**
Quality of performance	
Commitment to project	
Cohesiveness of team	
Accessibility	
Initiative and drive	
Creativity/quality of ideas	
Flexibility/ adaptability	
Consistency of work effort	
Positive attitude	
Extent to which team members seem to "play well together."	
Responsiveness to your needs	
Punctuality	
Follow-through	
Overall professionalism	
Perception of progress made so far on project	
Extent to which you would be interested in working with this team on future projects.	
Extent to which the group is currently meeting your needs.	
The quality of communication with your group	
The quantity of communication with your group	
Sense of understanding what your organization does	

Client Comments:

Adapted from a form created by Toni S. Whitfield and Deborah R. Gaut for use in an organizational communication course at James Madison University in 2002.

Supplementary Interviews. Finally, the one-on-one research interview is a worthwhile complement to any one of the assessment methods heretofore described. A research interview is conducted for a particular purpose and focuses on specific content areas (Mishler, 1986). For purposes of assessment in service-learning, the goals established at the onset of the assessment process create the construction of an interview protocol. Kvale (1996) recommends "thematizing" a research interview—a process that clusters groups of questions around specific themes.

Once again, consider the four assessment goals described earlier: (a) student capacity to describe the community-service experience from the perspective of course content, (b) student sense of civic mindedness, (c) relationship between community service and career expectations; and (d) enhanced awareness of personal attributes conducive to enacting community-service roles. Thematizing a related research interview involves faculty's design of questions reflective of each of these goals.

The one-on-one interview is a meaningful counterpart to pretest/ posttest methodology. Questions posed reflect goals of the assessment process, as well as any salient issues students raise in their narrative responses on the pretest/posttest instrument. Responses to questions such as these yield rich sources of assessment data:

1. What impact did the community-service experience have on your own career goals?
2. What aspects of this course were most helpful to you in performing your community service?
3. What aspects of this course were least helpful?
4. How could this course be changed to better prepare students for community service?
5. What did you discover about yourself while performing your community-service role?
6. What does it mean to be civic-minded?
7. How will the knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values gained in this course inform your civic mindedness?

Logistics of interviewing need not be complex, but course instructors should not serve in the role of interviewer in their own class sections; doing so potentially influences the candor of responses received. After a faculty member designs appropriate questions and the protocol for interviews, graduate or undergraduate students can serve as interviewers—perhaps providing interviewers service-learning experience supporting research or public-relations courses. If multiple sections of the same service-learning course are offered, faculty could serve as interviewers in courses other than their own.

The interview process does not require a great deal of class time. In our own small-group communication class, five work groups performed community service at different sites. A focus-group approach was used for interviews. One student interviewer, drawn from a different work group in the class, conducted each session. Each interviewer used the same interview protocol, asking identical questions paralleling the goals of the assessment process. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed, then standard qualitative coding techniques were employed to identify areas of student development, concern, and pedagogical insights for course development and change (Berg, 1998; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lindlof and Taylor, 2002; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The research interview process can be adapted for use in any community-based service-learning course.

Conclusion

The significance of service-learning as an experiential process directly supports student-learning outcomes assessment across the entire communication curriculum—if service-learning is adopted by the department as an essential component of core and/or capstone courses.

Research clearly demonstrates the high number of communication programs integrating service-learning activities into their curricula. Despite the presence of assessment applications in the literature concerning community-based service-learning courses in communication, further research documenting such efforts is needed. Communication educators need to answer such questions as:

1. Is community-based service-learning working in the communication curriculum and is it accomplishing student-learning objectives established by educators?
2. What do we know about service-learning and its effects in the myriad of communication courses locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally?

3. Are assessment results from service-learning courses identifying aspects of communication skill and practice that warrant further study?

Implementing an assessment process for service-learning allows educators heightened insight into whether or not the community-service experience accomplishes traditional program goals and student-learning objectives. More importantly, communication faculty gain insights concerning whether, and how, communication students utilize learned knowledge, skills, and attitudes in applied situations. In addition, faculty members who participate in—and assess—service-learning activities have at their fingertips ready documentation of legitimate impacts this experiential process has on student learning, providing useful data for publication purposes.

This chapter focused on student-learning as a logical starting point for student-learning assessment for several reasons. First, the assessment process provides instructors important insights on successful course structure and content. Second, the process helps inform selection of community-service opportunities aligned with the unique SLOs of a particular course. Third, and most important, the service-learning process illustrates the value community-service experiences bring to student learning of essential communication knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Faculty who routinely and systematically conduct academic assessment quickly learn that assessment—rather than being a daunting process—is a manageable means for incorporating valuable feedback into the ongoing development and enhancement of service-learning courses.

References

Batchelder, T., & Root, S. (1994). Effects of an undergraduate program to integrate academic learning and service: cognitive, prosocial cognitive, and identity outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence, 17,* 341-355.

Berg, B. (1998). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences.* Needham Heights, MA: A Viacom Company.

Bogdan, R. & Taylor, S. (1975). *Introduction to qualitative research methods.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Braun, M. (2001). Using self-directed teams to integrate service-learning into an organizational communication course. *Southern Communication Journal, 66*(3, Spring), 226-238.

Bringle, R., & Hatcher, J. (1996). Implementing service-learning in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education, 67*(March/April), 221-239.

Cram, S. (1998). *The impact of service-learning on moral development and self-esteem of community college ethics students.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, Ames.

Deh, E. (1991). *College impact and student liberalism revisited: The effect of the freshman fear experience.* Unpublished manuscript, University of California, Los Angeles. Graduate School of Education, Higher Education Research Institute.

Dewey, J. (1983). The influence of high school on educational methods. *American Journal of Education, 91*(4), p. 407-18.

Driscoll, A., Gelmon, S., Holland, B., Kerrigan, S., Spring, A., & Grosvold, K. (1999). *Assessing the impact of service-learning: A workbook of strategies and methods.* Portland State University: Center for Academic Excellence.

Droge, D & Murphy, B (Eds.)(1999). *Voices of strong democracy: Concepts and models for service-learning in communication studies.* Washington D.C.: AHEE.

Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Braxton, J. (1998). The impact of service-learning on college students. *Michigan Journal of Service-learning. 4*, 5-15.

Fitch, R. T. (1990). Serve others: Characteristics of motivations of college students volunteering for community service. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 28,* 424-431.

Fitzgerald, P. (1997). Service-learning and the socially responsible ethics class. *Teaching Philosophy, 20*(3), 251-267.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *Discovery of grounded theory.* Chicago: Aldine.

Glaser, H., & Radliff, A. (2000). Integrating service-learning into the communication capstone course. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 444199)

Holland, B. (2001). A comprehensive model of assessing service-learning and community university partnerships. *New Directions in Higher Education,* 114, 51-60.

Kendall, J. C. (1990). Combining service and learning: An introduction. In J. C. Kendall (Ed.). *Combining service and learning: A resource book for community and public service, (1).* Raleigh, National Society for Experiential Education.

Kinnick, M. K., & Walleri, R. D. (1995). Assessment of behavioral change and Performance. In J. O. Nichols (Ed.). *A practitioner's handbook for institutional effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation.* New York: Agathon Press.

Kuh, G. D. (1994). Student learning outside the classroom: Transcending artificial boundaries. (Report ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report Series 94-8). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 394 443).

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Lindloff, T. & Taylor, B. (2002). *Qualitative communication research, 2nd ed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, D. (2005). *Assessment and service-learning in the small group communication classroom: A pilot study.* Paper presented at the 91st annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Boston, MA.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Osborne, R., & Hammerich, S. (1998). Student effects of service-learning: Tracking change across a semester. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning 3,* 5-13.

Sax, L., & Astin, A. (1997, Summer/Fall). The benefits of service: Evidence from undergraduates. *Education Record,* 25-32.

Selnow, T., & Oster, L. (1997, September). The frequency, form, and perceived benefits of service-learning in speech communication departments. *Journal of the Association of Communication Administration*. *3,* 190-197.

Shumer, R. (2000). *Shumer's self-assessment for service-learning.* Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-learning Clearinghouse.

Singleton, R. A., & Straits, B. C. (1999). *Approaches to social research.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Soukup, P. (1999). Assessing service-learning in a communication curriculum. Paper presented at the 85th Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Whitfield, T. (2000). *The state of service-learning in United States communication departments.* Paper presented at 84th Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association. New Orleans, LA.

CHAPTER 11

ASSESSING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: MODELS AND METHODS

Gerald W. Driskill, University of Arkansas, Little Rock
Sasha Arjannikova, University of New Mexico
Tifany Schneider, University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Preview and Purpose

As America's colleges and universities become more diverse, attention must be paid to the role of culture in instruction and assessment and the need for increased intercultural competence. However, companion reports released by the American Council on Education (ACE) note that most U.S. colleges and universities show a decline in foreign language enrollment and low levels of student global awareness; at the same time, public interest in international education appears to be growing (McDonough & Hayward, November 13, 2000).

The topics of international education (Morey, 2000; Verlot & Pinxten, 2000), global education (Fantini, 1991; Hendrix, 1998), and providing education that is responsive to cultures of the students (Phuntson, 2001; McCroskey, 2002) continue to gain the attention of educators (Garrett & Macdonald, 1997; Greene, 2002). The ACE "report card" indicates that universities are lagging in their responses to the need for international or intercultural education. This report echoes the opinion held by intercultural communication educators and researchers for decades—developing intercultural communication competence (ICC) is a necessity, not an option.

Given the increased call for intercultural education, the need to ensure effective ICC assessment practices merits attention. This chapter will focus on ICC assessment at the course level, first reviewing major student-learning objectives found in course texts and syllabi in relation to an ICC model, highlighting example instruments, and then providing additional suggestions to enhance student learning in the assessment process.[1]

ICC Learning Objectives and Models

An examination of sample intercultural course syllabi, texts, and workbooks revealed various ways authors of communication texts and educators are wording definitions and instructional and student-learning objectives (SLOs). SLOs found in texts (e.g., Cardot & Dodd, 1995; Jandt, 1995; Lustig & Koester, 2005; Samovar & Porter, 2001) and in the literature (e.g., Collier, 1989; Spitzberg, 1989; Taylor, 1994) are reflected in the course syllabi reviews below. We captured this mix of course instruction and student-learning objectives in light of broad categories of knowledge, skills/behaviors, awareness, and attitudes/motivation.

[1]Assessment provides an opportunity to explore with students the influence of cultural assumptions on criteria used in the process. The methods reviewed in this chapter are typical of a western, social scientific approach. We encourage instructors to discuss how other cultures differ on approaches to the particular student learning outcome, acknowledge those differences, and then present the rationale for the particular assessment rubric (e.g., "These criteria represent the dominant or common approach in culture x or y"). Thus, assessment can be used as another way to explore multiple epistemologies to reinforce core intercultural communication concepts.

Course Learning Objectives by Major Competencies

Categories	Course Objectives
Awareness	• To encourage students to explore their individual cultural identity and heritage (Allen, 1998) • To develop an awareness of contemporary events that illustrates the need for improved cross-cultural and intercultural communication skills (Allen, 1998) • Help students "[r]ecognize the influence of their own cultural groups on intercultural communication interactions" (Bradford & Drzewiecka, 1997, p. 2) • Introduce "culture as communication climate through which messages, information relationships, and communication effects unfold" (Cardot & Dodd, 1995, p. vi) • Describe "how your own culture affects you as an intercultural communicator" (Campbell, 2003) • Identify how culture influences communication (Dodd, n.d.) • Learn how culture, your own and other people's, shapes visions of the world and ways of speaking (Fitch, 2000) • Explore how culture is reflected in, and how it shapes, newspapers and other mass media (Fitch, 2000) • To become more aware of one's own culture and communication styles and how they differ from that of other cultures (Gaston, 2001) • "[H]elp students realize how their national culture affects 'how they view themselves'" (Jandt, 1995) • Explain how the cultural, microcultural, environmental, perceptual, and socio-relational contexts affect intercultural communication in organizations (Leslie, 2006) • Identify and describe the factors that affect the development of relationships across cultures (Leslie, 2006) • Help students understand "the relationship between culture and multi-level communication" (Lustig & Koester, 2005, p. 4) • Enable students to describe and understand "communication between culturally heterogeneous individuals" (Lustig & Koester, 2005, p. 4) • "Explain the role of cultural patterns, verbal codes, and nonverbal codes in the development of intercultural interpersonal relationships" (Lustig & Koester 2005, p. 4) • To understand the connection between communication and culture (Markham, 2004) • To understand the way communication functions in intercultural settings (Millette, Steinfatt, & Hericks, 2000, p.5) • To understand how culture affects the communication process (Millette, Steinfatt, & Hericks, 2000, p. 5) • "Develop understanding of the intercultural communication process" (Pierson, 1996) • "Increase understanding of cultural issues that influence communication effectiveness" (Pierson, 1996, p. 1) • To explore cultural self-awareness, other-culture awareness and the dynamics that arise in interactions between people from different cultures (Sorrels, 2001) • To understand how communication processes differ among cultures (Sorrels, 2001)
Knowledge	• To provide an understanding of the dynamics of cross-cultural and intercultural communication (Allen, 1998) • To gain a Biblical understanding on issues of culture, difference, communication, and reconciliation (Allen, 1998) • Introduce the "traditional social-psychological perspective, the interpretive perspective, and …the critical perspective" (Bradford & Drzewiecka, 1997, p. 2) • Emphasize "the roles of context and power in studying intercultural communication" (Bradford & Drzewiecka, 1997, p. 2) • Demonstrate "knowledge of the strategies and skills integral to crossing cultures" (Campbell, 2003, pp. 1-2) • Articulate an understanding of elements that are necessary for effective intercultural communication, including world view, individualism and collectivism, power distance, gender roles, locus of control, contextualizing, time as culture, interpersonal relationships, intercultural competence and adaptation, and responding to conflict (Campbell, 2003) • Exhibit knowledge of intercultural skills applied to adaptation, relationship formation, ambiguity reduction, adjusting to differing communication styles, and reducing conflict (Dodd, n.d.)

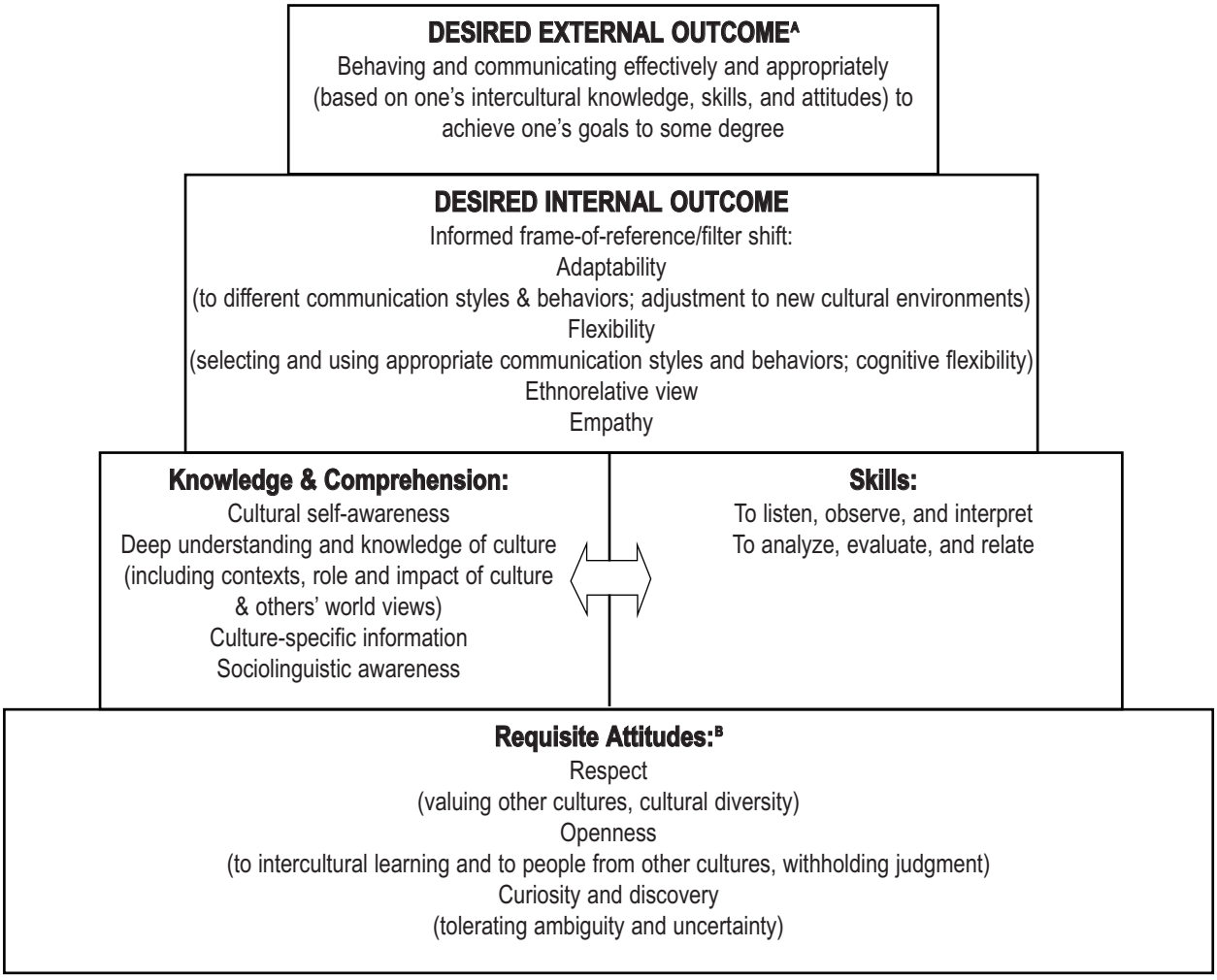
Knowledge (continued)	• "[D]evelop categories to teach cultural profiles in training" (Dodd, 2005) • "[C]ategorize cultural and human communication systems" (Dodd, 2006) • "[A]pply knowledge of culture and communication to life in a multicultural society" (Fitch, 2000) • To gain an understanding of major concepts and issues pertaining to intercultural communication (Gaston, 2001) • Help students understand their audiences through "know[ing] other cultures" (Jandt, 1995, p. XL) • Define communication, especially intercultural communication (Leslie, n.d.) • Identify, describe, and explain the cultural context and its impact on intercultural communication, the microcultural context and its impact on intercultural communication, the environmental context and its impact on intercultural communication, the perceptual context and its impact on intercultural communication, the socio-relational context and its impact on intercultural communication (Leslie, n.d.) • Compare and contrast verbal communication styles and patterns of various cultures, nonverbal communication styles and patterns of various cultures (Leslie, n.d.) • Describe the types of and process of acculturation, define and identify the stages of culture shock (Leslie, n.d.) • "Describe obstacles to competent intercultural communication" (Lustig & Koester, 2005, p. 4) • To understand the reciprocal effects of intercultural perceptions on policy and of policy on intercultural perceptions in the history of Eastern-Western relations (Millette, Steinfatt, & Hericks, 2000) • To understand the role of historical, political, and religious factors in creating cultural stereotypes, perceptions, fears, desires, and misunderstandings (Millette, Steinfatt & Hericks, 2000, p.5) • To explore language, culture, and communication from a scholarly vantage point in order to get a basic understanding of the kinds of variation that exist among languages, cultures, and messages (Pulliam, 2006) • To take a broader and more utilitarian approach, studying means and methods of communicating cross-culturally, and to identify potential problems encountered in doing so, and possible solutions to those problems (Pulliam, 2006) • Introduce "the basic concepts and understandings of intercultural communication, defined as the exchange of information between individuals who are unalike culturally" (Rogers, 1998) • The course describes two types of intercultural communication: international communication and multicultural (Rogers, 1998, p.1) • Acquire knowledge to increase intercultural competence (Sorrels, 2001) • To gain a critical perspective on local/global issues by examining the historical and political dimensions of intercultural relations (Sorrels, 2001)
Skills/ Behaviors	• To identify barriers to effective cross-cultural and intercultural communication and develop strategies for dealing with these barriers • To equip students with the basic skills and information needed to communicate with people from other cultures (Allen, 1998) • Apply "the principles of intercultural communication to your context" (Campbell, 2003) • Develop strategies to facilitate intercultural relationships (Dodd, n.d.) • Develop and conduct a training program for at least 10 people on relevant intercultural issues for that audience (Dodd, n.d.) • "[D]evelop and train others for interaction, negotiation, and adaptation in expatriate situations" (Dodd, 2005) • "[A]pply selection to choosing effective expatriates, measured by in-class selection experience" (Dodd, 2005) • "[D]evelop assessment categories to identify features of organizational culture and its influence on intercultural effectiveness,… develop a model and instrument applied to intercultural preparation and to apply the IRA instrument to expatriates offering analysis and explanation regarding a person's expatriate readiness,…[and] develop a training outline to present to organizations considering intercultural training" (Dodd, 2005) • "[D]iagnose intercultural problems and apply appropriate solutions to cultural systems, …build team cultures, …reduce culture shock, …develop models for intercultural training, …develop intercultural negotiation skills, …develop change models, and …know how to interact in specific global cultures" (Dodd, 2006)

Skills/ Behaviors (continued)	• "[A]nalyze cases of intercultural contact in order to understand what happened (happens) and why" (Fitch, 2000) • Expand students' communication skills (Jandt, 1995) • Help students handle new environments (Jandt, 1995) • "Develop communication skills that improve competence in intercultural communication" (Lustig & Koester, 2005, p. 4) • "Write critical thinking responses to textbook materials, …critically analyze actual communication contexts in terms of intercultural communication theories,…conduct original ethnographic research in the field, [and] present original research findings to colleagues" (Markham, 2004) • "Write critical thinking responses to textbook materials, …critically analyze actual communication contexts in terms of intercultural communication theories,…conduct original ethnographic research in the field, [and] present original research findings to colleagues" (Markham, 2004) • "Develop analytical skills in examining intercultural interactions" (Pierson, 1996) • "[H]elp students improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills" (Pulliam, 2006) • Acquire skills that increase intercultural competence (Sorrels, 2001) • Identity barriers--racism, sexism, and systems of privilege--that arise from histories of colonization, exploitation, and discrimination, and learn ways to creatively address these inequities (Sorrels, 2001) • Facilitate behavioral changes (Trujillo-Dalbey & Harper, 2001)
Motivation/ Attitudes	• Increase sensitivity to "the complexity of intercultural interactions" (Bradford & Drzewiecka, 1997, p. 2) • Help students "[b]ecome more willing, self-reflective, flexible, and open communicators in intercultural communication interactions" (Bradford & Drzewiecka, 1997, p. 2) • To develop a higher sensitivity to cultural differences (Gaston, 2001) • "Describe and practice the components of intercultural competence" (Leslie, 2006) • "Enhance appreciation of the diverse ways of communicating in different cultures" (Pierson, 1996) • Facilitate cognitive and affective changes (Trujillo-Dalbey & Harper, 2001)

Given these general and multiple components, one challenge in assessing ICC is determining what to assess. In an effort to determine what, if any, agreement existed in the field, Deardorff (2004) surveyed intercultural experts and higher-education administrators involved in intercultural assessment. Administrators accepted a wider array of components of intercultural competence than did experts, with experts rejecting such items as "accomplished language and cultural learner, gaining trust and confidence of others, comparative thinking skills, operating within the rules of the host culture, and cross-cultural scholarship" (p. 191). However, a consensus existed on 80% or more of 44 essential elements.

Deardorff (2004) integrated these elements into a building-blocks model to aid assessment efforts (see model below). Her model places ICC components in a multi-level framework emphasizing the importance of (a) being self aware, (b) learning at each level, and (c) viewing "attitude as a fundamental starting point" (Deardorff, 2004, p. 194). For instance, while gaining knowledge and skills is critical, attitudes such as valuing other cultures and a willingness to learn are foundational.

Building Blocks Model



A. Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements
B. Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)

This model, consistent with findings that administrators and intercultural experts value both general and specific approaches to defining ICC, allows those involved in assessment to select general student-learning objectives (e.g., empathy or openness) and specific SLOs (e.g., culture-specific knowledge), depending on the assessment context or situation (e.g., individual-level attributes versus interactive skill-level outcomes). Finally, this model depicts both internal SLOs (e.g., internal shift in frame of reference) and external student-learning outcomes (e.g., effective and appropriate communication).

Assessing ICC

Given the wide array of competencies that may be assessed, it is not surprising that a variety of options exist for ICC assessment. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review and critique each available assessment instrument. Based on Deardorff's (2004) survey research with college administrators and intercultural experts, a mix of methods is the primary assessment principle encouraged. Available options include case studies, narratives/diaries, intercultural interviews, portfolios, self-report inventories, interviews of students, and observations by others.

The following section features three more commonly used ICC assessment methods: (a) critical incidents/case studies, (b) self-report inventories, and (c) intercultural interviews. These methods may be adapted to the specific student-learning outcomes of a given course. Regardless of the method used, we recommend that assessment practices go beyond course-level assessment to include assessment as a form of student learning. Thus, suggestions for encouraging student reflection are included with each method. Finally, after discussing this multi-method approach, additional suggestions are provided for using academic assessment as a way to enhance intercultural learning.

Critical Incidents/Case Studies

Intercultural scholars use the terms "case study" and "critical incident" interchangeably, referring to intercultural situations influenced by the challenges faced when differing assumptions about appropriate and effective communication practices are present. Critical incidents (case studies) provide one option for assessing intercultural awareness and knowledge of cultural differences. This method, like the others we will discuss, should be considered in the context of a multi-method approach to academic assessment.

Various sources offer intercultural communication case studies that provide options for classroom assessment (Cushner & Brislin, 1996; Dant, 1995; Storti, 1994; Wight, 1995). For example, Cushner and Brislin (1996) provide over 100 incidents organized by context and involving a variety of cultural backgrounds. Storti (1994) provides specific, brief dialogues that challenge the student to decipher underlying cultural issues. Beyond these recommended sources students can generate critical incidents from their own experiences, as suggested by the example in the following paragraph.

Case Study Application. As mentioned above, various sources can be used to identify case studies. The case study below is generated by a graduate student working with international students. This example features elements that should be considered when deciding on the selection of a case study: (a) sufficient background regarding national identity without giving away possible normative or value differences, (b) the inclusion of an actual dialogue that captures both verbal and nonverbal elements (i.e., describes tone of voice, nonverbals, etc), and (c) an ending that leaves open the option for one or both parties to re-engage setting the stage for students to generate response messages.

Example: Case Study

An Asian college student named Rachinee is participating in a U.S.A. intensive-English home-stay program and has been in the U.S. for about two months. Rachinee calls the U.S. family coordinator for assistance. Rachinee asks the coordinator, Mr. Jerry, if he thinks it would be alright to call the host parent "Mom". Mr. Jerry says he is sure it is fine but that he will find out more for her. Mr. Jerry calls the host parent to make sure he was correct about the advice he gave Rachinee. The parent said it was alright to be called, "Mom". The next day Rachinee phones Mr. Jerry:

Rachinee: Why did you tell her that I wanted to call her "Mom"?
Mr. Jerry: Didn't you ask me to call and ask her if it was alright for you to call her "Mom"?
Rachinee: No, (pauses, sounds confused) I mean, yes, but not like that.
Mr. Jerry: I asked her and she said it was alright, what is the problem?
Rachinee: But I didn't want you to just say it. (stresses the phrase "say it")
Mr. Jerry: Then how was she supposed to know? (speaking with some dismay in his voice)
Rachinee: (speaking quickly and a rising tone) You just did not have to embarrass me (hangs up the phone)

Assessment Directions:

Choose one of the options below and use the prompt to help you begin a letter.
You should write as if you are responding to the person asking the question.

Letter Option 1: The coordinator, Mr. Jerry, sends you an e-mail asking: "What happened? What could I have said and done differently?"
Letter Option 2: The student, Rachinee, asks you: "What happened? What could I have said and done differently?"

Be thorough in your response by including examples of messages and behaviors you would encourage either Mr. Jerry or Rachinee to share with one another. Include your own understanding of the cultural dynamics of this interaction.

Critical incidents are based on the assumption that national cultural identity and values are evident in the interaction. Assessment typically focuses on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge of differences in order to discuss the case adequately and provide competent responses. One option, as seen in the example case study above, is to end with a prompt for the student to generate a letter or message in response to the situation. The intent is to simulate a situation that students might face and ask them to explain what happened, why it happened, and what they suggest should have been said and done differently. The evaluation of a case study response can focus on two major criteria:

1. To what extent does the response contain implicit or explicit understanding of cultural value differences? (e.g., individualism or collectivism; high- or low-context, etc.).
2. To what extent does the response include actual message options indicating an effort to manage differences competently (e.g., adopting a host-culture norm, finding a way to compromise, and/or offering creative efforts at synergy)?

The limitations of this approach are twofold. First, similar to grading essay responses in traditional exams, reliability issues in assessing these responses surface. However, the use of a rubric with clear criteria, and sample effective and ineffective responses for use in rater-calibration can reduce this concern. Second, the case study approach, because of its focus on knowledge of cultural communication norms, may or may not tap into specific components of ICC such as cultural self-awareness and ambiguity tolerance. However, other measures covered in this chapter assess those objectives.

Case Study Data Analysis. The limitations discussed above can be ameliorated somewhat by using the following grid and adapting it to specific student-learning outcomes being explored:

Assessment Rubric for Case Studies

Outcome Assessment Criteria	High Competence	Moderate Competence	Minimal Competence
Knowledge of cultural differences	Made two or more direct or indirect references to possible cultural differences between the participants	Made at least one direct or indirect reference to possible cultural differences between the participants	Lacked a clear reference to possible cultural differences between the participants
Skill in message production	Provided verbal and nonverbal messages suggestive of two or more ways to manage differences	Provided verbal and nonverbal messages suggestive of at least one way to manage differences	Tended to provide what should be done, but generally failed to provide verbal and nonverbal messages suggestive of ways to manage differences

In all, the case study or critical incident method can provide rich data for assessment. As the assessment rubric above indicates, students can be encouraged not only to reflect on their knowledge of a given culture, but also on the types of messages they might generate during an interaction. Beyond the value of assessing knowledge and skill in message production, a debriefing process after this assignment can help students engage in understanding various interpretations they had of the case study and their resulting attitudes. The case study also is useful as a foundation for follow-up role-playing exercises that can serve as another source of assessment data for students' abilities in "handling problematic cross-cultural situations" (Wight, 1995, p. 129).

Self-Report Inventories

A variety of self-report measures are available in texts and workbooks. The majority of intercultural communication assessment options fall into the self-report category. Instruments have been designed for use organizationally, personally, and/or for course assessment and development. Paige's (2004) review of 35 different instruments provides a thorough discussion of options, including guides for selection, issues of usage, validity, reliability, and availability.

Rather than replicate Paige's work or review additional instruments here, three different types or categories of instruments are presented along with example instruments for each. These categories were selected based on their connection to common ICC student-learning outcomes. The example instruments were selected based on their utility, but are not represented here as the only assessment options, given the wide range of instruments available, or as the best for measuring SLOs in every intercultural communication course.

Awareness of Intercultural Value Orientations. Intercultural courses often seek to develop students' understanding and awareness of cultural identity and/or values, as a way to improve their ICC. The *Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory* (ISI) (Brislin, n.d.) can be self-scored and measures the value- or cultural-identity orientation of individualism–collectivism, as well as two competence constructs: flexibility and open mindedness. This instrument can be used in a pre- and post-test format, to explore the impact of a given course or training on cultural self-awareness, and also on the two ICC constructs. Furthermore, students can engage in reflection about their scores on this inventory in order to assess their own personal development throughout the semester.

The instrument has high reliability (.82 and .84) with evidence of external validity (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). One other review of the instrument, while affirming the overall reliability of the scale, found mixed results on individualistic–collectivistic indices. The researchers point to the need to ensure that students do not view individualism and collectivism as a dichotomy (Comadena, Kapoor, Donsky, & Blue, 1998-1999). Instead, discussion of this value dimension should explore how this dimension can co-exist in a given culture, depending on the situation.

Another instrument, the *Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism* (HVIC) instrument, created by Gelfand and Holcombe, provides a more differentiated typology and serves as another option for developing student understanding of this important construct related to their own culture and differences within a culture (Paige, 2004). The HVIC can be obtained in Singelis' (1998) volume with guides for scoring and interpretation.

An additional instrument for assessing value orientation is the *Four-Value Orientation Self Awareness Inventory* (F-VOSAI) (Casse, 1999). The constructs explored include: (a) action (the extent of preference for doing, achieving, etc.), (b) process (the extent of preference for organizing, structuring, etc.), (c) people (the extent of preference for human interaction, communication, etc.), and (d) idea (the extent of preference for concepts, innovation, etc.). Based on Jung (1921, 1971), the F-VOSAI has yet to receive psychometric testing; however, this instrument has been in use since 1979 and was designed to motivate learners and encourage both awareness and development (Paige, 1999). Casse (1999) provides a guide for use of the instrument, including a copy of the instrument found in the example below.

Example: Casse's Dimensions

Develop questions or items to illustrate the various points or elements of the model. Here are examples from the four-value questionnaire:

Action Orientation	1.	I like action.
	8.	Deadlines are important for me.
	9.	I cannot stand procrastination.
Process Orientation	2.	I deal with problems in a systematic way.
	7.	I like to attend well-organized meetings.
	10.	I believe that new ideas have to be tested before being used.
People Orientation	3.	I believe that teams are more effective than individuals.
	6.	I enjoy working with people.
	11.	I enjoy the situation of interaction with others.
Idea Orientation	4.	I enjoy innovation very much.
	5.	I am more interested in the future than in the past.
	12.	I am always looking for new possibilities.

The Questionnaire (Instrument)

Use the number system provided to ensure items for each of the four values do not appear in order. Provide rating options such as: never – sometimes – always.

Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Readiness. Assessing the extent to which students have requisite intercultural competence for international travel, as well as sufficient competence in intercultural settings, is another area commonly covered by self-report instruments. Example instruments in this area include the *Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory* (CCAI) (Kelley & Meyers, 1999; Vangent Human Capital Management Solutions) and the *Intercultural Readiness Assessment* (IRA) (Dodd, 2006; Esprit de Corps Communications International, n.d.).

Both of these options have strong psychometric support and are useful for helping students develop awareness about their readiness for intercultural exchanges and living abroad. The CCAI was reported by Paige (1999) as the instrument most commonly used among participants in his study. The CCAI focuses on four personal characteristics:

(a) emotional resilience (ability to handle stress and ambiguity), (b) personal autonomy (confidence in one's own identity, ability to make decisions, and respect for self and others), (c) perceptual acuity (attentiveness of verbal and nonverbal cues (enjoy novelty, interactions with those different from themselves) (Kelley & Meyers, 1999).

The IRA addresses predictive factors of expatriate success. In the classroom, it can be used to evaluate current intercultural skills. One feature of this web-based instrument is that an immediate interpretation is provided across 16 factors, broken down into four domains: (a) interpersonal relationship effectiveness (relationship motivation effectiveness, interpersonal trust and patience, communication initiation and empathy, openness in communication and relationships, ethnic inclusion, interpersonal comfort with strangers, personal communication worldview, and self-esteem), (b) cultural adaptation effectiveness (flexibility, transition ease, acculturation motivation, adaptability, innovativeness and risk-taking), (c) family relationships (family adaptability and support and spouse/partner openness and communication), and (d) previous experience domain (previous travel experience).[2]

Increased Intercultural Sensitivity/Reduced Ethnocentricism. The topic of enhancing student sensitivity to other cultures is dominant across ICC courses. The *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI) has established reliability and validity (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) and is based on an ethnocentric to ethnorelative model developed by Bennett (1993). The scale identifies an individual's or group's predominant stage of intercultural development through four major dimensions: (a) denial defense dimension (a worldview that emphasizes cultural differences), (b) minimization dimension (a tendency to focus on commonality and de-emphasize cultural differences), (c) acceptance/adaptation dimension (an ability to adapt to cultural complexities and differences), and (d) encapsulated marginality dimension (a worldview that includes a multicultural identity and confused cultural perspectives).

The dimensions and the model that form the basis of the IDI (see model below) can be introduced in the classroom as a way of understanding a continuum of individual differences, from ethnocentric to ethnorelative approaches to intercultural interactions. With the IDI, students can conduct a general self-assessment of where they fall on the continuum. The IDI requires a three-day qualifying seminar and information is available from the Intercultural Communication Institute.

Example: Bennett and Hammer Model

Ethnocentric Orientation—3 levels

1. Denial—assumes no real differences between people
2. Defensive—differences are viewed as a threat to one's self esteem and identity
3. Minimization—differences are trivialized and/or viewed as harmless

Ethnorelative Orientation—3 levels

1. Acceptance—differences are acknowledged and counted as important
2. Adaptation—differences are accepted with empathy and a willingness to understand different view points
3. Integration—differences are incorporated by the individual expanding their own way of communicating and interacting without giving up his or her own values, beliefs, or practices.

In all, a variety of ICC learning outcomes can be explored with survey instruments. Self-report instruments also can be effective in developing self-awareness. Students should be encouraged not only to complete the instrument for course-assessment purposes, but to reflect on their own ICC. They also should be cautioned not to make a definitive interpretation of their intercultural capacity based on one score (Brown & Knight, 1999). However, used in combination with other assessment techniques, such instruments provide important assessment data for course and student-learning assessment.

[2]Although the IRA instrument is copyrighted, reduced fees are provided for educational purposes and a password can be obtained by contacting Dr. Carley Dodd at doddc@acu.edu with the subject line "IRA Password Needed."

Intercultural Interviews

A common ICC course assignment is to engage students in an intercultural interview. Students might be required to interview someone from a culture that they are not familiar with, to gain more source variety for a paper or presentation or just to learn about another culture. This sort of assignment can be adapted for assessment purposes by requiring pre-interview preparation, in which students demonstrate knowledge of ways they might adapt during the interview, and post-interview reflection on the actual interview. These assessment data can be used at the course level to assess student application of intercultural concepts and their ability to reflect on an intercultural interaction.

To improve the quality of the experience and the validity of the assessment data, a few guidelines should be followed when giving this assignment. First, encourage students to interview someone they do not know or do not know well rather than someone in their regular network of friends. Students thereby are challenged to assess their interaction skills in a new or novel situation.

Second, require a preparation phase (see sample below) in which students learn more about communication norms and values in the culture to be addressed in the interview. This preparation phase requires that students create an interview guide including a background section detailing ways to adjust the interview structure or adapt questions to the culture of the interviewee. For instance, a student from a western culture might read about the culture of a recent Thai immigrant whom he/she plans to interview. In the background section, the student might indicate a possible need to begin the interview with more open casual conversation and avoid direct questions in deference to a Thai cultural norm that values less direct communication. In the assessment process, the instructor then can gain a sense of a student's ability to state accurate knowledge about an assigned culture and also his/her ability to generate appropriate strategies for adapting to that culture.

Third, stress the need to take notes about the actual interview process, not just the content of what was discussed. For instance, students might ask about the generalizability of information they have read about the interviewee's culture. However, regardless of the major topic discussed, notes should be taken regarding interaction strategies or patterns experienced during the interview. For example, the student might reflect on the effectiveness of the type of questions he/she used.

Interview Data Analysis. This assessment tool, like the critical incident and other qualitative measures, provides a coding challenge. Development of a coding grid similar to that presented for the critical incident is helpful. A grid, such as the one found under the interview example, contains options in terms of student-learning outcome criteria (e.g., cultural knowledge, interaction skills, attitudes) as well as descriptions of high-, moderate-, and minimal-competence levels.

Example: ICC Interviews for Assessment

Purpose: To gain intercultural interview experience and assess your ability to apply knowledge of other cultures to a planned interaction.

Step A: Complete Background Preparation and Interview Guide

1. Determine the culture that interests you.
2. Find and examine at least five credible academic sources to gain general cultural background information on this culture.
3. Identify a representative of this culture.
4. Summarize the background material to prepare for the interview.
   a. Whom you will interview, the culture your interviewee represents
   b. Where your interviewee fits on cultural dimensions (Hall and/or Hofstede, etc.)
   c. How you will adapt the guide to the interviewee based on your differences and similarities on the dimensions
5. Create an interview guide that is culturally sensitive and focused on the information you need for your project (see review of main components below).
6. After you receive instructor's comments on the background and guide, set up the interview.
   a. Set up a time for an interview and conduct a 30- to 60-minute interview.
   b. Use your interview guide to "guide" you but not to restrict you.
   c. Take notes since, as a rule, taping the interview is not appropriate. You do not need a word-for-word transcription, but depending on the comfort level of the interviewee, as a general rule, note taking during the interview is acceptable. At the minimum, allow time immediately after the interview to take notes.

Step B: Complete Intercultural Interview

Step C: Intercultural Interview Paper—Write a paper in which you include:

1. Background material from Step A.
2. Cultural differences on dimensions from Step A.
   a. Examples of what you thought before the interview: What did you anticipate based on your research?
   b. Discuss what you heard in the interview that confirmed your views or prompted adjustments to your views on cultural differences.
      i. For example, you may have learned that your Asian interviewee was likely to be from a high-context culture, but as you talked, you found that she was less high-context.
      ii. State additional insights about intercultural communication either from what was said or from the process itself.
3. Critique of your interview management:
   a. What went well?
   b. What would you do differently?

Assessing Student Interview Papers

Outcome Assessment Criteria	High Competence	Moderate Competence	Minimal Competence
Knowledge of national cultural differences	Two or more direct or indirect references to possible cultural differences between the participants	At least one direct or indirect reference to possible cultural differences between the participants	Lacked a clear reference to possible cultural differences between the participants
Interaction skills	Provided verbal and nonverbal messages suggestive of two or more ways differences were managed	Provided verbal and nonverbal messages suggestive of at least one way differences were managed	Provided what should be done, but did not discuss verbal and nonverbal ways to manage differences
Requisite attitudes: *Respect*—valuing other cultures, cultural diversity *Openness*—to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment	Stated or implied valuing differences (in two or more ways) Stated or implied two or more ideas learned and/or instances/ways culturally biased evaluations were withheld	Stated or implied valuing differences (in at least one way) Stated or implied at least one idea learned and/or instance/ way culturally biased evaluations were withheld	Lacked explicit or implicit discussion on valuing differences Lacked explicit or implicit discussion of ideas learned and/or instances/ways culturally biased evaluations were withheld

In the analysis process, attention can be paid to multiple SLOs and competence levels. For instance, it is possible that a student may be highly competent in knowledge of cultural differences, yet fall in a lower level of competence related to valuing differences. While this grid can improve rater-calibration training, as well as validity and reliability of the coding process, it poses an additional challenge related to students who may over- or under-report. To counter this issue, students should be assured that their grades depend on how thoroughly they describe and analyze their actual interviews, not on having had successful interactions.

Assessment as Learning

Beyond opportunities for student reflection and learning already discussed in connection with each of the methods above, several other suggestions merit mention. First, electronic portfolios can be a source of data for program-wide and university-wide learning assessment. Portfolios have the added advantage of encouraging students to reflect on their work throughout their academic career. Siemens (2004) argues that "e-portfolios" have additional advantages, such as aiding learners in goal setting, making connections across learning experiences, and providing personal control over their learning history. Thus, beyond the instruments suggested in this chapter, including ICC sections in communication portfolios is strongly encouraged.

Second, students can be encouraged to reflect on their self-assessments in light of communication theory. For instance, responses to critical incidents might be explored within a constructivist framework. O'Keefe (1988) posits three general types of message-design logic based in varied conceptions of communication: (a) expressive design logic, in which successful communication is characterized by clarity and full and open disclosure of current thoughts and feelings (such as students finding that their responses to critical incidents tended to focus on the need to "talk more" or to "get my ideas across."); (b) conventional design logic, wherein successful communication involves the use of cooperativeness and appropriateness to reach desired outcomes (such as students responding "I just need to adapt more," or "We just need to learn to compromise to reach our goals."); or (c) rhetorical design logic, which holds that successful communication presumes an understanding of the message creation and interpretation process to enact a

desired social reality (such as student statements like "I can see the other person did not mean what I think they meant" or "I had better use a different message if I am going to be heard.").

Encourage students engaged in such reflection to notice limitations of expressive and conventional design logics. In particular, other research has found that rhetorical-message producers were more likely than "expressives" or "conventionals" to believe in the possibility of being able to understand others (Edwards & Shepherd, 2004). Thus, students engaged in making such theoretic connections may be able to enhance awareness of their assumptions about the communication process.

Third, in promoting self-reflection it is important to be sensitive to the reality that not all students, or representatives of each culture, are accustomed to personal reflection—and some may fear exposure of weaknesses. Thus, debriefing about self-assessment reports should limit the requirement for personal disclosure (Brown & Knight, 1999).

Finally, faculty teaching intercultural concepts might explore ways to make their courses and/or models for creative integration of intercultural experiences that can enhance student learning and assessment activities campus-wide. For example, on one campus, students from an intercultural class presented their final papers in poster format during a campus-wide international awareness event, giving them an opportunity to exchange and share their ideas with a larger and more diverse audience (Driskill, 2007).

Faculty also might tap into their campuses' English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to create additional opportunities for intercultural interactions and diversity enriching experiences. ESL and intercultural communication students might be brought together for discussion on a topic (e.g., communication and culture shock, managing conflict, etc.). Such an assignment could serve as an opportunity for international students and U.S. American students to connect with each other and learn about one another's cultures. The intercultural communication students would be given an opportunity to enhance their knowledge levels and also experience interactions within a multicultural environment. Assessment in this context would ensure that courses lacking cultural diversity still provide students with opportunities to self-assess and reflect on their progress toward higher levels of communication competence in diverse settings.

Conclusion

Globalization continually places demands on educators to make student development of intercultural communication competence a priority. Thus, the effective assessment of ICC merits attention. Faculty teaching courses on intercultural communication and/or with ICC student-learning objectives have the opportunity to select from a variety of assessment resources. While there is not overwhelming consensus on student-learning objectives for ICC, there is congruence on major knowledge, skill, and attitudinal dimensions. While implementing the methods suggested in this chapter, keep several major guidelines in mind:

1. Consider learning objectives that reflect comprehensive models and dimensions of ICC. Limiting a course to knowledge or awareness SLOs might be appropriate in a freshman course but, as a rule, inclusion of other outcomes tied to skill development and reflection on ICC attitudes provides better student preparation.
2. Find ways to adapt existing course assignments as an embedded mix of qualitative and quantitative assessment measures. The combination of self-reports, case studies, and interviews provides one way to meet this goal.
3. Encourage assessment as a form of learning. The use of early semester assessment, in addition to end-of-semester assessment, can encourage insight and application as well as allow students to assess their own progress. The use of assessment for self-reflection should, of course, keep in mind cultural differences in comfort levels with self-disclosure of personal experiences.
4. Consider other creative or integrative assessment practices (e.g., reflection on communication theory, electronic portfolios, and engaging ESL students in lab settings with students in the intercultural course).

Assessment based on these guidelines is more than a response to calls for checking the adequacy of a given pedagogy or course content. Beyond utilizing a mix of assessment methods, effective intercultural assessment entails students' engagement and reflection on their own progress. Modeling these sorts of integrations may spark more effective campus-wide intercultural learning opportunities and provide additional avenues for student learning through assessment.

References

Allen, T. (1998). A syllabus for intercultural communication. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98allen.htm.

Bradford, L & Drzewiecka, J. A. (1997). *Instructor's resource manual* to accompany the textbook *Intercultural communication in contexts* by Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Brislin, R. (n.d.) *Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI)*. Retrieved March 29, 2009, from http://www.intercultural.org/resources.php.

Bhawuk, D. P. S., & Brislin, R. W. (1992). "The measurement of intercultural sensitivity using the concepts of individualism and collectivism." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 16*(4), 413-436.

Brown, C., & Knight, K. (1999). Introduction to self-awareness inventories. In Fowler, S. M., & Mumford, M. (Eds.). *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods, Vol. 2*, (pp. 19-30). Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.

Campbell, E. (2003). Intercultural communication course syllabus. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www.wheaton.edu/intr/courses/561Camp/561syl.PDF.

Cardot, J., & Dodd, C. (1995). *Instructor's manual with test item file* to accompany the textbook *Dynamics of intercultural communication (4th ed.)* by Dodd, C. H. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

Casse, P. (1999). The four-value orientation exercise using a self-awareness inventory. In Fowler, S. M., & Mumford, M. (Eds.). *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods, Vol. 2,* (pp. 31-44). Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.

Collier, M. (1989). Cultural and intercultural communication competence: Current approaches and directions for future research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 13*, 287-302.

Comadena, M., Kapoor, S., Donsky, C., & Blue, J. (1998-1999) Validation of intercultural sensitivity measure individualism-collectivism, *Intercultural communication studies, 8*(2), 1-20.

Cushner, K., & Brislin, R. (1996). *Intercultural interactions: A practical guide (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dant, W. (1995). Using critical incidents as a tool for reflection. In Fowler, S. M., & Mumford, M. (Eds.). *Intercultural sourcebook: Cross-cultural training methods, Vol. 1,* (pp. 141-146). Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.

Deardorff, D. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States. Unpublished doctorial dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina. Retrieved from April 25, 2006, from http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/theses/available/ etd-06162004-000223/.

Dodd, C. (2006). The intercultural readiness assessment: A paradigm for candidate development. A paper presented to the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies, August 4, 2006, San Antonio, Texas.

Dodd, C. (2006). COMS 383/583–Communication in multinational organizations. (Unpublished syllabus). Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas.

Dodd, C. (2005). COMS 683–Cultural case studies. (Unpublished syllabus). Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas.

Dodd, C. (n.d.). COMS 400–Intercultural communication. (Unpublished syllabus). Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas.

Driskill, G. (2007). Using the intercultural class to internationalize the campus, *Communication Teacher, 21*(1), 6-11.

Esprit de Corps (EDC) Communications International (n.d.). *Intercultural readiness assessment* (IRA). Retrieved March 29, 2009, from http://www.irainstrument.com/default.asp?tje=jv

Edwards, A., & Shepherd, G. J. (2004). Theories of communication, human nature, and the world: Associations and implications. *Communication Studies, 55*, 197-208.

Fantini, A. E. (1991). Becoming better global citizens: The promise of intercultural competence. *Adult Learning, 2*(5), 15-16.

Fitch, K. (2000). 36C:093 Intercultural communication. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www.uiowa.edu/commstud/syllabus/36042/36042syllabus_KF.html

Garrett, R., & Macdonald, D. (1997). A technical colleges response to the need for internationalizing educational programs and services. *Community college journal of research and practice, 21*(7), 627-628.

Gaston, B. (2001). COM 340: Intercultural communication. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www2.hawaii.edu/ ~bgaston/com340.htm

Green, M. (2002). Joining the world: The challenge of internationalizing undergraduate education. *Change,* (May/June), 13-21.

Hammer, M. R. (n.d.). *Intercultural development inventory (IDI)*. Retrieved March 29, 2009, from http://www.intercultural.org/resources.php

Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 27*(4), 421-443.

Hendrix, J. (1998). Globalizing the curriculum. *Clearing House, 71*(5), 305-309.

Jandt, F. E. (1995). *Intercultural communication.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jung, C. (1971). *Psychological types: Collected works (Vol. 6)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (Original work published 1921).

Kelley, C., & Meyers, J. (1999). The cross-cultural adaptability inventory. In: Fowler, S., Mumford, M. (Eds.). *Intercultural sourcebook: Cross-cultural training methods, Vol. 2*, Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press.

Leslie, M. Intercultural communication, Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://grove.ufl.edu/ ~mleslie/intercultural.htm

Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2005). *Instructor's manual and test bank* to accompany the textbook *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures (5th ed.)* by Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Markham, A. (2004). Intercultural communication syllabus. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://courses.uvi.edu/ spe/225/225syllabusF04.htm

McCroskey, L. (2002). Domestic and international college instructors: An examination of perceived differences and their correlates. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 31*(2), 63-83.

McDonough, T., & Hayward, F. (November 13, 2000). ACE reports suggest a decline in U.S. college and university international education despite new public interest. Retrieved December 18, 2002 from http://www.acenet.edu/news/ press_release/2000/11November/ ford_intl_rept.html.

Millette, D. M., Steinfatt, T. M., & Hericks, E. (2000). *Instructor's manual and test items* to accompany the textbook *Intercultural communication* by Rogers, E. M., & Steinfatt, T. M. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Morey, A. (2000). Changing higher education curricula for a global and multicultural world. *Higher Education in Europe, 25*(1), 25-40.

O'Keefe, B. J. (1988). The logic of message design: Individual differences in reasoning about communication. *Communication Monographs, 55,* 80-103.

Paige, R. (2004). Instrumentation in intercultural training. In Landis, D., Bennett, J., & Bennett, M. (Eds.). *Handbook of intercultural Training (3rd ed)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pierson, J. (1996). COMM 324–Intercultural Communication. (1996). Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~jilliank/324syll.html.

Phuntson, N. (2001). Culturally responsive teaching: What do selected elementary school teachers think? *Intercultural Education, 12*(1), 51-64.

Pulliam, G. (2006). COM 435–Intercultural communication. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www.iit.edu/ ~gpulliam/com435.

Rogers, E. M. (1998). A syllabus for intercultural communication (1998). Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i2Spring1998/sp98rogers3.htm

Samovar, L, & Porter, R. (Eds.). (2001). *Communication between cultures (4th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Siemens, G. (2004). ePortfolios. Retrieved August 26, 2008 from http://www.elearnspace.org/ Articles/eportfolios.htm

Singelis, T. M. (Ed.). (1998). *Teaching about culture, ethnicity and diversity: Exercises and planned activities*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Spitzberg, B. (1989). *Issues in the development of a theory of interpersonal competence in the intercultural context. International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 13, 241-268.

Sorrels, K. (2001). Intercultural communication. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from http://www.csun.edu/CommunicationStudies/grant/syllabus_1.htm

Storti, C. (1994). *Cross cultural dialogues: 74 brief encounters with cultural difference.* Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press.

Taylor, E. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education Quarterly, 44*(3), 154-174.

Trujillo-Dalbey, F., & Harper, A. (2001). *Instructor's manual and test bank to accompany* the textbook *Experiencing intercultural communication: An introduction* by Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Vangent Human Capital Management Solutions. (n.d.) *Cross-cultural adaptability inventory (CCAI)*. Retrieved March 29, 2009, from http://www.vangent-hcm.com/Solutions/Performance Management/OrganizationalSurveys/CCAI/

Verlot, M., & Pinxten, R. (2000). Intercultural education and complex instruction: Some remarks and questions from an anthropological perspective on learning. *Intercultural education, 11*(supplement), (S7- S14).

Wight, A. R. (1995). The critical incident as a training tool. In S. M. Fowler & M. Mumford, (Eds.). *Intercultural Sourcebook Cross-Cultural Training Methods, Vol. 1,* (pp. 127-140). Yarmouth, MA: Intercultural Press.

CHAPTER 12

ASSESSING COMMUNICATION IN P-12 CLASSROOMS

Douglas K. Jennings, Illinois State University

Purpose and Preview

A commonly claimed purpose of elementary and secondary education is to prepare students to become productive and contributing members of society. Many parents might define that as getting their children out of the house and into college or, better yet, meaningful careers. Success in those endeavors often is attributed to communication ability—how well we listen, process, and articulate our thoughts. Every state board of education in the United States appears to agree, as each has established student-learning standards that universally include speaking and listening expectations.

Recent events, however, suggest a contradiction that challenges the teaching and assessment of communication in P-12 education. On the one hand, recent trends demonstrate that most P-12 faculty assigned to teach communication skills are not prepared to do so. On the other hand, national educational reforms such as *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* (U.S. Public Law 107-110, 2002), commonly known as NCLB, mandates that teachers must be highly qualified and that proof of instructional quality must be directly linked to academic assessment.

Gone are the days when the communication discipline can rely on the defense of the importance and value of P-12 speaking and listening instruction on the oft-stated claim that employers "rank communication skills as number one." Rather, P-12 institutions have been pressured by federal funding guidelines to demonstrate their value via quantifiable assessments. Employers may still commonly rank communication skills as most important, but to satisfy state and national legislators, this evidence must be reinforced with demonstrable student-learning and program outcome data.

Finding means to address this challenge requires a collaborative effort between P-12 and higher education. Research of P-12 communication instructional trends and their relationship to higher-education communication instruction potentially leads to development of consistent and accurate student-performance measures that can assist all communication faculty, regardless of grade level taught.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore that challenge and to provide a structured oral-performance assessment system that can be incorporated into existing curricula. First, this chapter reviews the current role and status of P-12 communication assessment. Second, it explores the communication instruction and assessment constructs appropriate for elementary and secondary classrooms. Finally, a model of an integrated system of formal and informal assessments that allows for flexibility and adaptability within instructional needs is presented.

Current Views of P-12 Communication Assessment

Elementary and secondary expenditures and curricula have shifted to meet national concerns related to school performance. School funding now is tied to how well schools demonstrate student performance within certain core disciplines. While oral-communication traits such as listening, working in groups, public speaking, and media literacy are touted life skills, the current high-stakes subjects cited by NCLB are reading, math, and the sciences.

A variety of events contribute to this disciplinary shift. First, speech communication has never had a high presence in elementary and secondary schools. Many curricula include speech, but teaching staff often come from other disciplines, especially English. As states and teacher-preparation institutions moved to meet the requirements of *No Child Left Behind,* the number of certification areas in many states was reduced via combining similar programs. For example, speech and English now are certified under English Language Arts. The theory suggests that if disciplines are generally constructed, faculty more easily can be defined as highly qualified.

Likewise, most P-8 teachers who complete early childhood education or elementary programs do not take communication courses beyond those required for general education. In an informal survey at a recent meeting of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, less than 50% of the nationally-certified attendees, commonly

identified as the top P-12 teachers in America, completed a singe college communication course. Formal communication study has not been a high priority for teacher candidates. Two of the three historically largest teacher producing institutions in the U.S., Illinois State University and California State, require one general education speech course; the other, Michigan State, does not require even a single speech course for teacher candidates.

Another series of events is occurring simultaneously. Instruction is primarily standards-based with an expectation of performance-based assessment (PBA). The communication discipline naturally meets these expectations. The National Communication Association developed a clear set of standards for K-12 speaking, listening and media literacy in 1998. Additionally, those standards were often modeled throughout the United States as individual states created their own standards. Likewise, communication teachers long have utilized performance-based assessments to provide formative and summative assessment. Students can demonstrate their speaking or listening ability and teachers can demonstrate how well their students meet national or state standards.

Problems developed as national and state leaders began to adapt a business model for education. States demanded evidence of student outcomes in order to verify that tax dollars were being well spent. This cost/benefit expectation mandated that academia develop a statistically verifiable assessment system. As discussed earlier, communication was well suited to performance-based assessment but has rejected the standardization that a statistically verifiable system requires. Communication scholars often have held that numerous public-speaking situational variables of context and content preclude standardization of assessment.

Another difficulty is that those who are trained in communication instruction do not use a system of uniform assessment. A national review of speaking and listening assessments researched for this chapter discovered a wide range of tools that have been published in texts, speech manuals and on-line. An internet search of "speech grading form" yielded 3 million hits. As such, there is no shortage of speech grading resources available for P-12 teachers.

As expected, the discovered grade forms varied significantly in scope, content, and format. The main theme discovered in the research was the need for individuality and ownership of the grade form. The highest degree of shared use of a published form appears to be only district-wide within limited school systems. In fact, few speaking or listening evaluation forms have been suggested, and none adopted, as national or statewide standardized assessment tools.

Communication Assessment Constructs

The review of assessment practices yielded seven principles of evaluation as adapted from the Criteria for Assessing Oral Communication established by the National Communication Association (NCA) (National Communication Association, 1996), plus two types of evaluation formats:

Principles of Communication Assessment

1. The first principle suggests that student assessment should view competence in oral communication as a gestalt of several interrelated dimensions. While the review indicated P-12 teachers most commonly utilized oral-performance grade sheets, other assessments also were mentioned. In particular, peer reviews, group-interaction assessments, outline and bibliography evaluation, and various paper-and-pencil quizzes and exams were cited. In general, P-12 faculty utilize a range of assessment devices.
2. Assessment of oral communication clearly should distinguish speaking and listening from reading and writing. P-12 faculty often combine writing and speaking assignments so that students construct a written message and then are asked to present it orally. This is especially prevalent at grades 2 to 6, but also occurs in the upper grades, including high school. Instruction may or may not be provided to clarify message-design differences between written and oral messages.
3. Assessment of oral communication should be based in part on atomistic/analytic data collected, and on a holistic impression. High-school evaluation instruments often listed individual criteria for specific aspects of a presentation and provided a category for overall impression.
4. Assessment of oral communication should include assessment of both verbal and nonverbal messages. Most forms utilized components that separated verbal and nonverbal message systems. Verbal message assessment tended to focus on content issues such as organization, word choice, language use, and strategies. Nonverbal evaluation usually centered on delivery components of use of voice, gestures, and other movement. Some forms

also included other physical attributes, such as attire. Lower grades mostly focused on delivery aspects, while upper grades added content concerns.

5. Assessment should differentiate between degrees of competence and appropriate ranges to describe the extent of student competence. Most forms utilized a four- to ten-item numerical scale where the evaluator is asked to mark a number denoting relative strength of use for various communication skills. Rarely did the form indicate what behaviors would earn a specific score on each continuum.
6. Assessment instruments should have an acceptable level of reliability. Since P-12 evaluation is to be standards- and performance-based, the criteria need to be directly linked to local standards. Clear linkage assists in reliability (data match what is to be measured), yet it was impossible to ascertain how much linkage was made on individual forms. System-wide evaluation instruments often were clearly linked. Thus, the more standardized the instrument was, the more likely it was to be linked to the standards. Reliability also relates to specificity and concreteness of the evaluation. Most P-12 forms were found to be general in nature and often leave definition of concepts and performance standards up to the evaluator. Reliability was considered generally low.
7. Assessment instruments should be suitable for the developmental level of the individual being assessed. This guideline can be extended in the P-12 system to include the concept that, as students matriculate, assessment should be continuous and developmental. There was no evidence of progressive evaluation and performance behaviors were not defined sufficiently to determine that they were grade-level appropriate.

An emerging theme from the seven constructs is that assessment instruments should be accurate measures of commonly accepted criteria. Those criteria then should be utilized on the assessment making it standards-based. The next two segments of this chapter establish the differences between grade forms and rubrics and how they may utilize standards-based criteria.

Formats in Practice—Grade Forms. The most commonly found evaluation form is a combination opened- and closed-ended grade sheet that allows raters to indicate their perceptions of students' performances within specific categories and allows raters room to make written comments. Most variations of this form denote a numerical scale where raters mark the earned score in each category and then determine a total or composite score. Below is an example of a traditional grade form. Speech grade forms such as this one typically list two major components – content and delivery. The form often sub-divides major components and provides a rating scale for each segment.

Example: Persuasive Speech—Numerical Scale Rating Form

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5
- Gained attention & stimulated interest
- Established audience relevance
- Established credibility
- Stated topic and thesis clearly
- Provided a preview of the body

Body 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Well organized, easy to follow
- Major arguments were clearly stated
- Persuasive devices provided reasons to accept the ideas

Research 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- A variety of sources helped to establish credibility
- Sources were cited appropriately so that they were known
- Sources supported the arguments

Conclusion 1 2 3 4 5
- Speaker signaled the conclusion was beginning
- Purpose and main points were reviewed
- Ended with a clear call to action

Outline and Bibliography 1 2 3 4 5
- Outline is formatted correctly
- Bibliography provides appropriate information

Oral Delivery 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Vocal variety is evident
- Used good diction and rate

Visual Delivery 1 2 3 4 5
- Has good eye contact with entire audience
- Utilizes gestures and other meaningful movement

Similar good examples of grade forms can be found in Pamela Cooper and Sherwyn Morreale's *Creating Competent Communicators* (2002a, 2002b). The resource comes in two editions, K-6 and 7-12, and both editions provide scaled grading and self-evaluation forms for a variety of communication assignments. Another excellent resource is *Large Scale Assessment in Oral Communication: K-12 and Higher Education* (Morreale & Backlund, 2007).

Numerical scales frequently can be adjusted to weight certain concepts that the teacher wants to reinforce. For example, oral delivery might be a special focus in a certain assignment and could be weighted accordingly. In like manner, desired components should be specified, as shown in the example above.

Space for opened-ended comments is usually available on such grade forms. Opened-ended comments are encouraged because they provide the rater opportunity to justify scoring and provide formative evaluation for the student. Formative responses are important to improving student performance, since they provide specific recommendations and strategies the student could employ. Formative comments should be constructive in nature and should list actions the student can take to improve.

To meet the seven criteria listed earlier, grade forms should (a) be academic-level appropriate, (b) describe specific behaviors being evaluated, (c) clearly distinguish between verbal and nonverbal behaviors, (d) have raters evaluate items individually, rather than in groups, (e) create an adequate range of numerical responses, and (f) provide ample space for formative, written comments.

Formats in Practice—Rubrics. Rubrics were less evident in the review, but dominant in more recent listings. Standards-based instruction encourages identification of specific behaviors that students should demonstrate. The main concept that separates rubrics from grading forms is that the desired behavior is specifically pre-described in terms of what it takes to meet the minimally acceptable level of performance. If students meet that description, they meet the criteria. As a result, rubrics seem to reflect standards-based instruction better than do traditional grade forms.

Simple rubrics specify whether the behavior was accomplished on a bi-polar scale such as *yes*/*no* or *meets*/*does not meet*. More elaborate rubrics extend the ratings to multiple levels. Rating systems on extended rubrics often increase in size, complexity and sophistication as grade level increases. Common ratings for early elementary rubrics might be *beginning* for students who have not yet begun using the concept, *approaching* for those who have started, but not quite meeting the expectation and *secure* for students who have met the criteria.

Later elementary ratings are typically *beginning* or *developing* for students who do not come close to meeting the behavioral criteria, *approaching* for students who almost meet the criteria, *meeting* if they match the minimal expectation of acceptable performance, and *exceeding* if they go beyond the expectation. Since the indicators are criterion-based, each level of performance (beginning, approaching, meeting, exceeding) needs to be defined within the rubric. A sample listening-assessment rubric that utilizes a four-point scale is supplied below.

Attending and responding are the two key concepts identified in this listening rubric. Each of those key components is sub-divided into specific behaviors or descriptors. Student performance is compared to each descriptor, charted on the rubric, and converted to a numeric scale.

Rubrics have numerous advantages and disadvantages. They can be written directly to the standard, as long as standards and indicators are specifically identified. One key to successful rubrics is that each descriptor needs to concretely define observable behaviors that match the appropriate standard. Another key is keeping descriptors singular. Combining two or more behaviors within a descriptor, even if they relate to each other, creates difficulty with response reliability. Also, rubric length becomes an issue since higher academic levels may demand that a wide range of items be evaluated.

Example: Listening Assessment Rubric

	4 Excelling	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Tracking	Consistently tracks the speaker and focuses on being a listener	Tracks speaker and focuses on listening most of the time	Tracks speaker part of the time	Rarely tracks the speaker
Note Taking	Consistently takes quality notes	Usually takes effective notes	Takes basic notes occasionally	Seldom or never takes notes
Ignoring Distractions	Consistently listens without causing or allowing distractions	Usually listens without allowing or causing distractions	Often allows distractions while listening	Consistently distracted or distracts others
Turn-Taking	Consistently aware of cues as to when to speak and when to listen	Usually aware of cues as to when to speak and when to listen	Misses occasional cues to take turns while speaking	Seems to be unaware of when others need to speak or listen
Question Asking	Thinks through and asks quality questions	Asks appropriate questions	Often asks non-topical or previously answered	questions
Does not ask questions	**Understanding Information** Responds correctly and provides	confirmation feedback Voluntarily responds correctly	to requests	Recalls information when prompted
Does not appear to recall or understand	provided information **Processing Information** Regularly uses,	synthesizes, and challenges information Applies and can	make use of information	Recalls information

Length and complexity issues can be alleviated during formative evaluation by dropping criteria items when they are not an issue. The entire summative rubric does not need to be used for all formative assignments. Rather, the full rubric can be manipulated by adding and deleting components as appropriate for the situation. The full rubric then can be used as a summative or comparative tool for the individual classroom or for an entire school district.

If designed well, rubrics can be used for pre- and post-testing to provide value-added numerical data tracking student progress or to compare different sets of students for summative assessment. Data can be collected for longitudinal or latitudinal comparison.

Due to formality and because they have pre-established criteria, rubrics often are seen as less flexible and adaptable than grading forms. Likewise, a large number of coordinated rubrics need to be created since student development and skill-acquisition are highly pronounced through the lower grades. Finally, teachers need to view rubrics creatively and feel free to adapt them according to situation.

Rubric System Model

The concepts for the rubric system described here are based on material developed by more than 120 P-12 and higher-education teachers involved in the Speaking and Listening Assessment Project (SLAP) initiated in 2000. Initially created with a grant from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the project is housed at Illinois State University. SLAP continues developing and testing rubrics for P-12 education in coordination with the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association and selected Illinois school districts.

Additional concepts and materials are referenced from the Northwest Regional Laboratory (NWRL) (Northwest Regional Laboratory, 1998) and the National Communication Association. Both NWRL and NCA remain valuable resources for P-12 speech teachers.

The rubric model was designed as a P-12 integrated system. It was envisioned as cumulative in nature, so that what students learned in one grade would carry on to more advanced skills in the next grade. Students remain responsible for practicing earlier skills as they acquire new skills. As such, it was important to maintain a large number of various grade level teachers involved in the project since they are the ones who best knew student performance and learning capabilities.

The integrated system was established through a series of interrelated steps. Sequencing of the steps is not necessarily chronological, since each contains interdependent components. Rather, it is important to understand the entire process as a system with various inputs and outputs to accomplish successful adoption. The following segment reviews those steps.

Step 1: **Compare unit expectations to student knowledge and behavioral abilities.** It is important to discover students' current knowledge and skill levels. Communication scholars often hypothesize what communication skills early elementary students may or may not have, but knowing capabilities of an average first grader, for example, helps determine what skills can be fostered in that classroom.

Multiple sources were utilized to achieve this understanding. Most states have established learning goals for preschool and school-aged students. Additionally, the National Communication Association and the National Council of Teachers of English have standards for oral communication and the English Language Arts.

Oral-communication skills were commonly found in P-12 standards. Scott-Little, Kagan and Frelow (2005) recently studied the inclusion of various dimensions included in early childhood state standards. One of their five dimensions is Language and Communication. Their research found that communication skills were listed routinely in the 40 states they studied. Speaking, for example, was mentioned approximately 90% of the time. However, they also found wide variation as to breadth and depth of other communication expectations.

> Data … reveal that a number of states did not address various indicators within the Language and Communication dimension. For instance, within the communication sub-area eight states did not address listening, 16 states did not address questioning, 10 states did not address creative expression, and 26 states did not address non-verbal communication. (Scott-Little, 2005)

Step 2: **Differentiate and target unit standards/indicators by grade level.** Most state and national standards are written within groupings such as pre-school, early elementary, late elementary, early high school and late high school. Those classifications often were made due to time and space considerations. The project felt it was especially important to differentiate within those grade levels. Elementary teachers, for example, see clear ability differences from one grade level to the next. Therefore, the standards and indicators were separated and targeted by age appropriateness.

Targeting, in this context, refers to choosing performance indicators for specific grade levels. Coordination of the division is important in order to ensure attainment of all standards and indicators for the grouped levels. Classroom teachers representing each grouped level were utilized to determine targeted skills for individual grades.

Below is an example of targeted behaviors for first-grade students. The first column lists a standard for early elementary students (grades 1-3). The second column identifies what early elementary students should be able to do by the end of third grade. The third column relates the specific targeted concepts that first graders should be able to meet by the end of the academic year. Similar work sheets for second and third graders incorporate grade-one behaviors and introduce additional behaviors—eventually leading to an expectation that students master the entire standard by the end of grade three.

Example: Early Elementary—Grade 1 Oral Communication Expectations

Standard	Early Elementary Objectives	Early Elementary Indicators	Grade 1 Expectations with Connecting Activities
4.B. Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.	Appreciate the ethical responsibilities of speaking	Understand and utilize turn taking	Show and tell Demonstration presentation
	Understand the relationship between constructing messages for written versus oral communication	Write a short presentation and then present it orally with minimum notes	Not appropriate
5.A. Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.	Understand how to choose topics and approaches	Identify questions and gather information	Africa project
		Use print, non-print, human and technological resources to acquire and use information	Farm project
		Cite sources used	Not appropriate
		Ask a series of relevant questions in order to gain new information	Demonstration project
5.C. Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.	Utilize appropriate organizational patterns	Identify and be able to use a simple introduction, middle and closing for an oral presentation	Not appropriate
	Sufficiently develop and explain ideas	Present brief (1-2 minute) oral reports that clearly tell a story	Not appropriate
	Use effective physical elements of delivery	Look at the audience while reading or speaking out-loud	Daily practice through modeling
		Stand still while presenting orally	Daily practice through modeling
	Use effective vocal elements of delivery	Use vocal expression	Model and exposure through read aloud
	Control aspects of communication apprehension		Shared reading and guided reading

Step 3: **Connect target concepts to known classroom activities**. The project revealed that many pre-school and early childhood teachers already incorporate numerous speaking experiences into their classrooms. Likewise, middle and high schools encourage speaking and listening activities for their students. In fact, while few schools identify that they have communication across the curriculum, teachers from all disciplines regularly utilize group and individual oral presentations.

The project surveyed teachers to determine commonly used oral activities. Pre-school and elementary teachers identified show-and-tell presentations, turn-taking, listening lessons, and other oral behaviors. Middle- and high-school teachers listed group and individual student oral reports and formal presentations in a wide variety of subject areas.

The project discovered that, while there were considerable oral communication expectations for students, there was little (if any) instruction on effective communicator skills. Previous research verifies that speaking and listening training is largely absent in schools, so most students receive little formal training in the oral-communication skills they are expected to perform (O'Keefe, 1995). Additionally, teachers were found to lack knowledge or tools to evaluate oral performances. Many teacher-education programs do not require communication course work and students rarely are evaluated on communication concepts or performance (McCaleb, 1989). Grade sheets often were content- or subject-oriented with limited attention to oral and nonverbal delivery beyond eye contact and posture.

Step 4: **Establish common terminology for basic communication theory and practice.** A standardized learning and assessment system needs to set a consistent, clear vocabulary. Standardized terminology provides faculty with common terms and concepts, enabling them to share ideas and build upon previously established student knowledge. P-12 faculty created the following vocabulary set in coordination with known communication concepts.

Example: Communication Vocabulary

Communication—a transactional process of two or more people engaged in sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages to achieve understanding

Transactional Process—an on-going sharing of messages that may not have a definite starting or stopping point

Source—sender of a message

Receiver—person accepting a message

Message—verbal symbols (the use of words of a shared language) and nonverbal symbols (actions or other meaningful non-language codes such as body position, movement, time, space, and vocal characteristics such as pitch, volume, rate) that share meaning between people

Symbols—commonly known and utilized units of meaning; building blocks of a language (e.g., a wave of the hand, words)

Encode—the mental process of putting ideas into verbal and nonverbal symbols to share messages with others

Decode—the mental process used to translate received verbal and nonverbal symbols into meaning

Feedback—the verbal or non-verbal reactions of the receiver to the message of the source

Noise—any physical, psychological or neurological event that distracts or interferes with the conveyance of a message

Speech Stance—presenter stands straight and tall facing the audience, feet at shoulder length apart, with at least one hand available for gestures. Motivated movement is encouraged

Motivated Movement—controlled movement such as gestures and walking that enhance or contribute to the message

Turn-taking—allowing each person a chance to speak; being attentive to appropriate times to start and stop talking so that communication time is shared

Inform—presentations designed primarily to give an audience new and interesting information through evidence and explanation

Entertain—presentations to provide appropriate amusement

Persuade—presentations to change or reinforce an audience's actions, perceptions or beliefs through logical, emotional and ethical means

Example: First-Grade General Presentation Rubric

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project Grade 1 Speaking Assessment Rubric				
Criteria	**Secure 3**	**Developing 2**	**Beginning 1**	**Total**
Presentation				
Speech Stance 	Stands up straight and still	Stands still	Fidgets	
Eye Contact 	Looks at audience often	Sometimes looks at audience	Does not look at audience	
Volume 	Speaks so everyone can hear	Some of audience cannot hear	Talk cannot be heard	
Content				
Beginning the talk 	The talk smoothly begins with a planned opening	The student is able to begin the talk	The student has difficulty getting the talk started	
Closing 	The end of the talk is clearly and smoothly signaled to the audience	The end of the talk is indicated	The student has difficulty finding a way to end their talk	
Focus 	Student talk time is consistently on topic and generally stays on track through the allotted time	Most of student talk is on topic and track and close to the allotted time	Focus is often distracted or topic talk time is too short	
PRESENTATION TOTAL				

Common vocabulary, as suggested in the first-grade rubric below the vocabulary list, can be viewed as an important first step of formalized communication instruction. The terms and definitions assist teachers less familiar with communication concepts and reinforces student learning with consistent labels and explanations of desired concepts.

Instructional aids and training time with P-12 faculty are crucial to achieving acceptance. While the project has developed content material, activities, and assessments, the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with the teachers who incorporate the material is essential.

The system provides a method for teachers to use existing assignments with the addition of content, structure, and evaluation. Thus, the goal is not to add class time to the curriculum, but to apply a conceptual framework to what is already there. Once the system is implemented, the teacher gains a better understanding of the communication process, has a clear vocabulary, and can save planning and grading time by utilizing established assessments.

Create a coordinated, incremental series of assessments measuring previously and newly acquired skills. Rubrics measuring desired outcomes were relatively easy to construct once the grade-specific indicators were known. The first-grade example identified targeted concepts and was designed directly from first-grade teacher expectations. Rubric descriptors were created from expectations provided in the state standard. Teachers can and add or subtract segments of the rubric based on where students are in the curriculum. Teachers also can employ the rubric as a pre- and post-test measure of instructional effect.

Additional rubrics are provided to demonstrate the incremental nature of good rubrics. The rubric below is for third grade. The visual images match those introduced in earlier grades.

Example: Third Grade General Presentation Rubric

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project Grade 3 Speaking Assessment Rubric					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
Presentation					
Speech Stance 	Uses speech stance throughout the presentation	Uses speech stance most of the time	Uses speech stance occasionally	Does not use speech stance	
Eye Contact 	Consistently looks at entire audience	Looks at the audience most of the time	Looks at the audience some of the time	Rarely or never looks at audience	
Volume 	Speaks so everyone can hear	Speaks so most can hear	Speaks so few can hear	Talk cannot be heard	
Expression & Clarity 	Consistently speaks clearly and uses vocal expression.	Often speaks clearly and uses vocal expression	Sometimes speaks clearly and uses vocal expression	Seldom speaks clearly or uses little vocal expression	
Rate 	Consistently speaks at a rate that can be understood	Often speaks at a rate that can be understood	Sometimes speaks at a rate that can be understood	Seldom speaks at a rate that can be understood	

Content					
Attention-getter 	Talk has an interesting opening attention statement that relates to the topic	Talk has an opening statement that relates to the topic	Talk has either an opening statement or relates to the topic (but not both)	Talk is missing both the opening statement and topic	
Elaboration 	Clearly explains ideas throughout the talk (is specific and uses depth)	Often explains ideas clearly	Seldom explains ideas clearly	Does not explain ideas	
Focus 	The talk stays on topic and on track throughout	Most of the talk is on topic and stays on track	Focus sometimes wanders from the topic	Focus is often distracted or off topics	
Closing 	The end of the talk is clearly and smoothly signaled to the audience	The end of the talk is indicated	The student has difficulty finding a way to end their talk	The talk ends abruptly without any planning	
Time 	Talk meets time expectation			Talk does not meet teacher time expectation	
PRESENTATION TOTAL					

Rubric terminology reflects three issues: (a) a desire for consistency, (b) sophistication of the student, and (c) meeting the standards. The rubrics are designed to be given to students prior to the task so that they are fully aware of teacher expectations. Terminology is important to achieve understanding and consistency of message. As a result, while the concepts and basic terms are standardized, the rubrics adapt to the sophistication level of the student. Rubrics for early grades include visual cues to assist student memory and understanding of concepts. Visual cues, as utilized in the first- and second-grade rubrics, are dropped in later grades to provide more room for description and instructor response.

Example: Fifth Grade General Presentation Rubric

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project Grade 5 Speaking Assessment Rubric					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
Presentation					
Eye Contact	Consistently looks at entire audience	Looks at audience most of the time	Looks at audience some of the time	Rarely or never looks at audience	
Facial Expression	Consistently uses meaningful facial expressions	Sometimes uses meaningful facial expressions	Seldom uses meaningful facial expressions	Does not use facial expressions	
Volume/ Vocal Expression	Speaks with expression so everyone can hear	Speaks with some expression so most can hear	Speaks with little expression or few can hear	Talk is missing expression or cannot be heard	
Rate	Consistently speaks at a rate that can be understood	Often speaks at a rate that can be understood	Sometimes speaks at a rate that can be understood	Seldom speaks at a rate that can be understood	
Clarity	Consistently speaks clearly & uses vocal expression	Often speaks clearly & uses vocal expression	Sometimes speaks clearly & uses vocal expression	Seldom speaks clearly or uses little vocal expression	
Fluency	Consistently uses complete sentences & no vocal fillers	Talk has few incomplete sentences or vocal fillers	Talk has several incomplete sentences/ vocal fillers Talk has	many incomplete sentences/vocal fillers	
Movement	Consistently uses purposeful movement with speech stance	Often uses purposeful movement with speech stance	Seldom uses purposeful movement with speech stance	Does not use purposeful movement with speech stance	

Content					
Attention-getter	Talk had an interesting & topical opening attention statement	Talk had an opening statement	Talk did not have an opening statement	Talk began before audience was ready to listen	
Introduction/ Main Idea	Clearly states the main idea	Has a main idea	Main idea sentence is unclear.	There is no main idea sentence.	
Body	Labels & uses lo-gical organization	Logical organization is used	Organization is not clear	No organization	
Strategies	Uses variety of devices to accomplish goals of the talk	Accomplishes the goal of the talk	The goal of the talk is understood, but not developed	Audience is uncertain of the goal of the talk	
Elaboration	Consistently & clearly explains ideas	Often explains ideas clearly	Seldom explains ideas clearly	Does not explain ideas	
Closing	Closing well developed with main idea/summary	States the main idea in closing	Does not refer to main idea in closing	There is no closing	
Time	Talk fully meets time expectation	Close to meeting time expectation		Does not meet time expectation	
PRESENTATION TOTAL					

Example: High School Rubric

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project High School Persuasion Speech Rubric					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
DELIVERY ITEMS					
Speech Stance Movement	Uses purposeful movements & posture to smoothly reinforce message	Uses the speech stance with some meaningful movements; does not shift or lean	Uses no meaningful movements & leans or shifts weight	Posture or movement distracts from the message	
Eye Contact	Maintains consistent eye contact with entire audience. Uses notes sparingly	Maintains eye contact with most of audience; most of the time. Note usage is smooth	Only occasionally looks at audience; often refers to notes	Has no eye contact with audience; speech is being read	
Volume Projection & Rate	Volume & rate are varied & comfortable for entire audience; pauses used to help clarify ideas	Volume & rate are varied & comfortable for entire audience.	Speaks too quickly /slowly or softly/ loudly causing some audience discomfort	Presentation was difficult to understand due to volume or rate	
Fluency	Speaks fluently & uses no vocal fillers (um, uh)	Speaks fluently with only occasional vocal fillers that do not create distractions	Vocal fillers are noticeable & may interfere with fluency	Vocal fillers create distractions	
Vocal Expression & Enthusiasm	Speaks in natural & conversational manner with vocal expression & enthusiasm.	Seems very credible Speaks in conversational & expressive manner.	Seems credible Speaks with some vocal expression or enthusiasm	Speaks with little or no expression or enthusiasm	

ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE					
Introduction & Attention-getter	Unique attention-getter, gains audience interest, is time appropriate, & directly relates to the topic	Attention-getter gains audience interest, is time appropriate, & relates to the topic	The attention – getter needs to be more interesting—&/or length appropriate	The attention – getter is not topic or audience appropriate	
Introduction Thesis	Product or main idea is smoothly established in a credible & fluid manner—seems to naturally flow	Product or main idea is clearly stated in a credible manner	The speaker names the product or main idea	The thesis is not stated	
Introduction Justification	Importance of product/service is clearly & naturally identified & demonstrated to the entire audience	The speaker takes time to relate importance of product to the entire audience	Product may be relevant to the entire audience, but is not stated	Importance of product is only relevant to some of the audience	
Introduction Preview	Main points are clearly identified & smoothly established as advantages or problems/solutions	Main points to be covered are listed in the introduction	Main points are partially listed	Main points are missing or unclear	
Body & Organizational Pattern	The speaker signals (sign-posts) & follows a clear & logical organizational pattern specified in the assignment	The speaker uses a clear organizational pattern specified in the assignment	The speaker attempts to use a pattern	The speaker appears to use no organizational pattern	
Body & Transitions	Oral & physical transitions used to signal moving from one idea to the next & provide relationships of ideas	Oral transitions clearly signal movement from one idea to the next	Few transitions used so it is difficult to tell when the speaker is changing ideas	Transitions are not used.	
Conclusion Restatement Review	Closure signaled by reviewing & establishing the points of the body as to clear justification for the requested action	Closure signaled by restating the thesis & main points	Either the thesis or main points are not clearly restated	No restatement or review is made	
Conclusion—Ending	Final appeal is made that unifies speech & reminds us of the importance of product & how to obtain it	Clear final appeal used to conclude presentation & ask for audience to make the action	The close of the presentation is signaled or contains a final appeal	The presentation ends abruptly or incompletely	

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES & SUPPORT					
Organizational Strategies	The main points are well constructed (see items on right) & operate as independent yet interdependent justifications for accepting the thesis	Two to four main points are clearly constructed, labeled & signposted as justifications for accepting the speaker's thesis	Major points are listed but not clearly as justifications for adopting the thesis	The organizational format does not provide justification for accepting the thesis	
Elaboration Explanation	Explanations are clear, interesting, well developed, balanced, & provide motivation for requested action	Explanations elaborate the & motivate us to act	Explanations were not developed or extended enough to make the point(s) clear	There were no details or explanations	
Appeals	Logical, ethical, & emotional appeals creatively interwoven to compel us to the action	Logical, ethical & emotional appeals are combined to compel us to act	Some appeals utilized, but we're not really compelled to act	Appeals need to be included—need to make audience want to act	
Citation of Sources	Authorship & source sufficiently & clearly attributed & demonstrate relevance to the arguments	Authorship & source clearly & sufficiently referenced	Sources are only partially referenced causing some credibility loss	Authorship is not orally referenced	
Quantity & Variety of Support	Variety of types & sources of resources used that clearly support the arguments	Resources utilized that support the speaker's ideas	An insufficient number of resources used	No sources used	
MEETING THE PURPOSE					
Assignment Expectations—Time	Speaker is exactly within the time expectations	Speaker meets time expectations within the allowable limits	Presentation near time expectations, but did not meet the time limits	Speaker does not meet time expectations	
Audience Analysis	Speaker identifies relationship of audience to content & creatively adapts that relationship throughout the speech	Speaker identifies audience & adapts content to them	The relationship of content to audience is not clear or is incomplete	The speaker does not identify & adapt to audience	
PRESENTATION TOTAL					

The first component of the above rubrics, speech stance, provides a good example of how vocabulary has been standardized over grade levels. Speech stance is defined as: Presenter stands straight and tall, faces the audience, feet at shoulder length apart, with at least one hand available for gestures. The grade-five rubric provided above not only drops the visual cues for speech stance, but adds a second descriptor, movement, as a student expectation.

The expected concepts are incremental, with the goal of measuring student maintenance of previously earned concepts and acquisition of newly targeted components. Ultimately, the student is provided the full range of expectations. The final rubric in the P-12 sequence is for a pervasive speech in a problem-solution format. Previously introduced expectations of verbal and nonverbal delivery should be automatic by this time. Therefore, the focus of the high-school public-speaking rubric tends toward content. Content expectations are subdivided into numerous categories that may be utilized as they are introduced.

Grading

The integrated system of rubrics utilizes a standards-based approach with *meeting* (rubric rating=3) defined as students who meet the minimally acceptable level of performance for that standard. On a grade conversion, these are students who are at "B/C" level. Students who exceed the minimal standard and meet the *exceed* (rubric rating=4) category description are typically at "A/B" level. Students who come close to meeting the standard but fall somewhat short are in the *approaching* (rubric rating=2) category and typically rated as "C/D". Students who do not come close to meeting the criteria are in the *initiating* (rubric rating=1) category and are often rated as "D/F."

While individual categories blend grades as noted above, combining the categories in the summed *presentation total* typically indicates a clear grade for the student. Grades follow typical distribution with standard delineation of letter grades of "A" through "F."

Additional Applications

Grading forms and rubrics can be used in a combined method to provide formative and summative feedback to students. Additionally, with limited revision, both can be used for peer and self-review. Having presenters and listeners complete an assessment instrument helps ensure that everyone is critically participating in the communication process. Multiple, consistent responses also can reinforce student improvement, since feedback comes from various sources, including the presenters themselves. Quality feedback can be enhanced by introducing students to the forms and training them on appropriate use, resulting in consistent responses, inter-rater reliability, and justifiable grading once the process is established.

Grade forms and rubrics can be adopted for other forms of communication assessment. Using the student-listening rubric provided previously in this chapter, students could be assigned to provide peers feedback about their presentations via the form. The classroom teacher achieves at least two advantages from this system. First, listening ability can be measured more accurately with the assessment occurring in a structured, real-life situation. Second, peer feedback can be used to reinforce suggestions for improvement.

Finding additional applications of grading forms and rubrics is only limited by the teacher's imagination. Storytelling, group work, media presentations, and a host of other communication situations can be assessed by starting with a fundamental rubric and adding appropriate content elements derived from established standards.

Conclusion

Students who listen well, conceptualize, and articulate ideas effectively can reap positive rewards in learning and school performance. Research and development on authentic assessment needs to be a cooperative effort between P-12 and higher education. Partnerships can lead to improved understanding of what makes communication instruction effective and can increase profitability for students in their future endeavors. Communication provides the tools for students and teachers to be able to share ideas with others, express their understanding, and grow in their knowledge. Improving those communication skills is well worth the effort, since the dividends have far-reaching financial impacts for schools and for students themselves.

This chapter advocates more formalized instruction and assessment of speaking and listening skills through integrated use of grading forms and rubrics. Instruction needs to incorporate (a) fundamental concepts of definition, (b)

value and use of effective communication techniques, (c) appropriate communication styles, and (d) formats for interpersonal, group, and public modes. Additionally, instruction needs to connect expectations of relevant others (key publics, constituents, state boards, etc.) via standards for what happens in the classroom with assessment of those events.

Accountability is real. *No Child Left Behind* not only expanded federal-government expectations on school performance within the standards, but additionally linked funding to student and teacher outcomes. P-12 schools identify NCLB as being one of the most significant pressures on their curricular and expenditure decisions. Unfortunately, the Act does not connect communication performance to school outcomes, so there is reduced motivation to devote resources to communication instruction.

NCLB may even be a disincentive for teachers to focus on speaking and listening, since the communication discipline currently is unable to provide statistical verification of student improvement. Until the communication discipline embraces formalized assessment that demonstrates outcomes or establishes a direct correlation between communication skills and student performance on high stakes tests, the instruction of speaking and listening will be considered secondary to the core subjects of reading, math, and science.

If, however, the discipline is able to demonstrate effectively that how well one communicates has impact on quality of reading, math, and science outcomes, then more attention will be drawn to the study of speaking and listening. Until then, the downward trend will continue. That trend can be avoided by using the communication standards to continue developing communication content and assessments of the content

Two widely varied schools provide notable examples. The Lake Forest School District, in a well-to-do north-side Chicago suburb, and Waterloo Schools, a lower income southern Illinois district, are implementing a model of standardized communication instruction and assessments. In those schools, P-12 faculty came together, discovered and adopted a common vocabulary, provided professional development in communication training and began using a series of incremental rubrics to assess a variety of communication situations. They employed an integrated rubric system, as shown previously in this chapter's examples.

Teachers in these two model districts report high satisfaction, with clear expectations and assessment. While impact on standardized testing mandated by NCLB is not known, yet, classroom performance indicates a positive impact. At minimal cost, both school systems are helping their P-12 teachers and students understand the role and importance of communication in a democratic society.

The communication discipline will be watching these schools and their outcomes to see how well a system-wide approach may succeed.

References

Barton, P. (2005). *Unfinished business: More measured approaches in standards-based reform.* Retrieved April 1, 2009, from http://www.ets.org/ Media/Education_Topics/pdf/ unfinbusiness.pdf.

Cooper, P., & Morreale, S. (2002a). *Creating competent communicators: Activities for teaching speaking, listening, and media literacy in K-6 classrooms*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.

Cooper, P., & Morreale, S. (2002b). *Creating competent communicators: Activities for teaching, speaking, listening, and media literacy in 7-12 classrooms*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.

McCaleb, J. (1989). Escape from trivial pursuits: Evaluating teachers' communication. In Cooper, P., & Galvin, K. (Eds.). *The future of speech communication education*. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 50-53.

Morreale, S., & Backlund, P. (2007). *Large scale assessment in oral communication: K-12 and higher education*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Morreale, S., & Pearson, J. (2008). Why communication education is important: The centrality of the discipline in the 21st Century. *Communication Education*, 57, 224-240.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (2006). *Where we stand on early learning standards*. Retrieved April 1, 2009, from http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/ pdf/elstandardsstand.pdf.

National Communication Association (a.k.a., Speech Communication Association). (1996). *Speaking, listening, and media literacy standards for K though 12 education*. Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

National Council of Teachers of English. (1996). *Standards for the English language arts.* Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.reading.org/downloads/publications/books/ bk889.pdf.

National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. (2005). *NPEC sourcebook on assessment: Definitions and assessment methods for communication, leadership, information literacy, quantitative reasons, and quantitative skills*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://nces. ed.gov/ pubs2005/2005832.pdf

U.S. Public Law 107-110. (2002). *No child left behind act of 2001*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/ 107-110.pdf.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (1998*). Bibliography of assessment alternatives: Oral communication*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/ pdfLibrary/oral.pdf.

O'Keefe, V. (2001). *Speaking to think, thinking to speak: The importance of talk in the learning process*. Westport, CT: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Rubin, D. L., & Mean, N.A. (1984*). Large scale assessment of oral communication skills: Kindergarten through grade 12*. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

Rubin, R. B., Welch, S. A., & Buerkel, R. (1995). Performance-based assessment of high school speech instruction. *Communication Education, 44*, 30-39.

Scott-Little, C., Kagan, S., & Frelow, V. (2005). *Inside the content: The breadth and depth of early learning standards*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.serve.org/_ downloads/publications/insidecontentfr.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *Facts and terms every parent should know about the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001.* Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.ed.gov/parents/ academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.pdf .

CHAPTER 13

ASSESSMENT RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Tatyana Dumova, Point Park University
Ann Rosenthal, American Communication Association

Purpose and Preview

The role of assessment in education cannot be overstated. As demonstrated by previous chapters of this book, assessment is central to successful teaching and learning practices at all levels— from individual classrooms to programs to departments to institutions. Locating information on communication assessment within the vast universe of institutional Websites, digital libraries, portals, intranets, electronic databases, blogs, and podcasts can be a daunting task.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: (a) to help those looking for assessment-related materials on the Web and (b) to give an overview of what is available.[1] We first outline several successful strategies for locating online resources on communication assessment; then review the state of assessment information along four broad categories that include Websites developed by educational institutions, government, commercial services, and nonprofit organizations.

Basic Search Strategies

With the ability of major search engines to index billions of pages, it is not surprising that a single-term search can identify several million Websites. A Google query for "assessment" returned 161,000,000 results (Google Search Engine, 2009); Yahoo! reported 584,000,000 sites (Yahoo! Search Engine, 2009), while MSN search yielded 79,100,000 pages (MSN Search Engine, 2009) (see example below for Google-specific search tips).

Several approaches can make online searching more "to the point." First, it is critical from the very beginning to determine the overall goal and choose the proper strategy accordingly. If the purpose is to obtain general information on assessment, then start with a *directory* search using Yahoo! Directory (2009), Google Directory (2009), MSN Directory (2009), or the Open Directory (2009) (see examples of subject directories below).

A subject directory is different from a search engine in that its primary function is gathering links to other Websites and categorizing them. For example, in Google Directory assessment-related information can be found under several categories:

1. Reference > Education > Educational Testing > Testing Research
2. Reference > Education > Instructional Technology > Course Website Software
3. Computers > Software > Online Training

Many directories now offer internal search services based on a set of unique terms or descriptors developed by their creators; therefore, it is important to consult with each search the help pages provided by each particular directory. Using unique keywords, multiple search terms, and exact-phrase search also can produce better results. Thus, a directory search for ["assessment rubric" "speech communication"] in Google produced only 243 Web pages.

Such indispensable general resources as full-text electronic databases, periodical indexes, abstracting services, and other access tools available online through various vendors (e.g., ProQuest, EBSCO Host, ComIndex, and ComAbstracts), have already been evaluated by communication scholars. For example, an excellent review of Internet resources for communication research can be found in Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., Haridakis, P., & Piele, L. J. (2010). *Communication research: Strategies and sources* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

Example: Google Search Tips

Google Search Tips	*Suggested Use*	*Examples*
Boolean Operators OR (capitalized) - (to exclude)	Equivalent or synonymous terms; AND is implied as default	• classroom assessment • assessment OR evaluation • testing OR evaluation OR ranking • testing -ranking
Forced Phrase Search “ ”	Requires all pages to contain your terms together in a phrase	• “assessment tools” • “Googling to the max”
Similar Pages Similar pages related:	Locates pages based on links to and from a page and ranking of similar pages	• Click Similar pages link at the end of most results • related:searcheric.org
Limiting by Domain site:	Requires terms to be in these types of documents (.doc, .pdf, .xls, .ppt, etc.)	• communication assessment site:edu • “oral communication rubric” site:edu OR site:org
Limiting by File Type filetype:	Requires terms to be in these types of documents (.doc, .pdf, .xls, .ppt, etc.)	• scoring rubric filetype:doc • RSS feeds filetype:ppt
Field Searching (in title) intitle:	Requires terms to occur in the <Title> field or part of the HTML <Head>	• intitle:“communication association” • intitle:testing standards OR evaluation site:gov

Adapted from *Googling to the max*: *Getting the most out of Google.* (2004-2005). Teaching Library Internet Workshops, University of California Berkeley. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Google.html

Example: Subject Directories

Subject Directories	*Web Address*
Google Directory	http://www.google.com/dirhp
Yahoo! Directory	http://dir.yahoo.com
MSN Directory	http://specials.msn.com
The Open Directory	http://www.dmoz.org

To obtain a better understanding of the body of knowledge related to assessment in the communication discipline, the use of a cluster search is most practical. Clustering refers to a search engine's ability to organize results into related groups, or clusters. A new generation of online search engines like Gigablast (2009) can narrow down a large set of search results and organize them into categorized folders (see examples below). Vivisimo, Inc. has developed Clusty (2009), a meta-search engine that was started in Pittsburgh in 2004 and queries through Ask (2009), MSN, the Open Directory, and several other top engines to provide clustered results.

Although the query [classroom assessment OR evaluation] produced 20,600,000 pages, only 217 clustered results were displayed by Clusty in the results' left frame under such categories as "Techniques" (55 items), "Rubrics" (17), "Program" (15), "Performance" (15), etc. The cluster "Curriculum" contains nine documents. Still in its early phases, clustering technology seems very promising—though, at this stage, subcategories often overlap.

Examples: Cluster Search Engines

Cluster Search Engines	*Web Address*
Clusty	http://clusty.com
Gigablast	http://www.gigablast.com
Vivisimo	http:// vivisimo.com

In order to locate a specific item, such as an article or book, it is best to consult several prime engines, a meta-search engine, a cluster search engine, or a specialized search (see examples of each type below). For instance, Google Scholar (2009) is a good a search tool specifically dedicated to academic content. Besides, Google offers a number of search enhancements ranging from a spelling checker and custom search preferences to "Cached" links that load a page the way it looked when an automatic Web crawler last indexed it.

Examples: Prime Search Engines

Major Search Engines	*Web Address*
AlltheWeb	http://www.alltheweb.com
Ask/Teoma	http://www.ask.com
Google	http://www.google.com
MSN	http://www.msn.com
Yahoo!	http://www.yahoo.com

One of the most useful features is the "Search within results" link at the bottom of every page of search results, which allows users to apply more specific search criteria to a set of initially located items. Clicking on the "Similar" link for a particular result delivers related information based on Google's page-ranking algorithm and usually is very effective. Advanced search options also are useful for performing an exhaustive search. For instance, entering ["communication assessment" site:edu] into Google produced 6,320 items, all of which occurred within the education domain.

Examples: Meta-Search Engines

Meta-Search Engines	*Web Address*
Dogpile	http://www.dogpile.com
Ixquick	http://www.us.ixquick.com
MetaCrawler	http://www.metacrawler.com
SurfWax	http://www.surfwax.com

Examples: Specialized Search Tools and Resources

Specialized Search	*Web Address*
Academic Index	http://www.academicindex.net
Google Scholar	http://scholar.google.com
InfoMine	http://infomine.ucr.edu
Librarians' Internet Index	http://www.lii.org
Questia Online Library	http://www.questia.com
Blog Search	*Web Address*
Google Blog Search	http://blogsearch.google.com
IceRocket	http://www.icerocket.com
Technorati	http://technorati.com
Feed Readers	*Web Address*
FeedReader	http://www.feedreader.com
Newsgator	http://www.newsgator.com
RSSReader	http://www.rssreader.com
Archived Web	*Web Address*
Wayback Machine	http://www.archive.org
Deep Web	*Web Address*
CompletePlanet	http://www.completeplanet.com
Direct Search	http://www.freepint.com/gary/direct.htm
Intute (former Resource Discovery Network)	http://www.intute.ac.uk

Search technology evolves, and Web researchers can stay current by checking SearchEngineWatch (2009), self reported as an e-marketing tool. SearchEngineWatch also provides continuously updated, free-access articles and links for search engine users, including search engine lists, search engine reviews, and search tools.

Educational Websites

Educational Websites provide an array of online resources related to academic assessment, including meta-lists of links to collections of assessment tools, individual sites of educational institutions, assessment guidelines, e-journals, and handbooks. In addition, the educational domain includes dynamic content, such as assessment-related electronic discussion lists, blogs, RSS feeds, and podcasts.

General Assessment Resources. Advanced search options offered by major search engines allow results limitation by specific criteria, including domain type, file type, language, and date the site was last updated. The first item generated by an advanced query for ["assessment resources" site:.edu], by both Google and Yahoo! Search engines, was a meta-list of Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment maintained by North Carolina State University (2009).

The Website was organized into seven broad categories: (a) general resources; (b) assessment handbooks; (c) assessment of specific skills or content; (d) individual institutions' assessment pages; (e) state boards and commissions; (f) accrediting bodies; and (g) student assessment of courses & faculty. The first group encompassed links to other collections of assessment links, archives of articles, discussion groups, and other resources. The Website had a site map, an A-to-Z glossary, and an internal search capability (although rather limited).

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst (2009), site offered "how-to" handbooks on a variety of assessment topics, guidelines for curricula, program and institutional assessments, an assessment bulletin and a newsletter, specific survey examples, and final reports.

Assessment Manual, posted on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Website (2009), focused on developing assessment plans at the departmental level. The Central Queensland University in Australia (2009) maintains an online review of the world's best practices in higher-education assessment. Features of this site include an extensive list of online journals covering issues related to assessment, and a directory of electronic discussion forums of interest to higher-education assessment practitioners.

Listservs, Blogs, RSS, and Podcasts. The EDTECH (2009) electronic discussion list, sponsored by the H-Net international consortium of educators, focused on the advancement of teaching in social sciences and the humanities through the use of educational technology. The listserv has approximately 3,500 subscribers and is viewed by thousands more through various online news groups in 50 countries. Another listserv, Assessment in Higher Education (ASSESS) (2009), unites U.S. higher-education administrators and faculty members of similar scholarly, pedagogical, and professional interests and focuses exclusively on assessment. It is hosted by the University of Kentucky at Louisville's College of Education. The GENED-ASSESS (2009) offers a listserv focused on issues related to general-education assessment.

Many previously active listservs devoted to assessment have given way to blogs—online journals written and read by people of similar interests. A number of specialized search engines developed by commercial providers index blog contents. Among them are Google Blog Search (2009), IceRocket (2009), and Technorati (2009) (refer to Examples: Specialized Search Tools and Resources). Most of these tools can refine the search by date (e.g., limit it to past month, week, day, or search for blog postings only within the past hour). In addition to keyword and exact phrase search options, Google's advanced blog search can filter the results by author, URL, date, and language.

Another growing trend relates to the proliferation of syndicated content through Really Simple Syndication (RSS). RSS is a special XML-based content syndication format that helps searchers avoid the conventional methods of looking for information on the Web. RSS feed readers (also known as aggregators) allow users to keep track of frequently updated content by subscribing to specific feeds and retrieving information from a large number of Websites, blogs, and podcasts all in one place.

While institutions of higher learning have been relatively slow to adopt RSS feeds, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2009) has been offering news feeds and information updates on higher-education issues, including assessment. EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (2009) podcasts interviews with e-learning and IT professionals, higher-

education administrators, and instructional technology practitioners. In order to receive these updates, subscribe to a Web-based service like Bloglines.com or Newsgator.com, or download a desktop version of an aggregator such as FeedReader (2009) (refer to Examples: Specialized Search Tools and Resources).

On the Web, content is updated constantly and changes very quickly. Quite often users run into an error message such as, "Sorry … The URL you requested is not available." When this happens, the Internet Archive Wayback Machine (2009) offers a simple solution: Entering into the search field a URL for the missing Web page prompts the engine to retrieve an archived version of the site. Archiving the Internet started in 1996 as a project of California-based Alexa Internet, purchased by Amazon.com in 1999. The Wayback button first appeared as part of Alexa Toolbar in 2001, and later as the Wayback Machine search engine.

Government Websites

Government-sponsored collections of electronic documents on the Web provide valuable resources for classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and researchers. Along with hundreds of public and private Web databases that are "invisible" to search robots, they compose what is known as the "deep Web." The deep Web has been estimated to be 500 times larger than the "fixed" Web (University Libraries, 2006). The term "deep Web" relates to information stored in remote databases that produce results "on the fly" and are accessible only by query. These pages are not indexed by regular search engines and directories. To search the deep Web requires identifying portals linked to databases that contain relevant information.

General Resources. The U.S. government's official Web portals, including USA.gov (former FirstGov.gov) (United States Government, 2009a), USASearch.gov (United States Government, 2009b), and Ed.gov (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a), among others, offer a good starting point for searching the deep Web. FedStats.gov (United States Government, 2006c) is a gateway to statistical information from more than one hundred federal agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission, United States Census Bureau, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Federal Aviation Administration. Visitors to the site can search for assessment information by topic, agency, and geographic region. Choosing "education" in the A-to-Z topics index yields a list of subcategories including "assessments." Within "assessments" is a link to the National Assessment of Educational Progress Website (NAEP) (2009). NAEP represents the only enduring assessment of student knowledge in various subject disciplines in the nation and is known as "the Nation's Report Card." Statistical agencies are organized by subject and can be searched using access tools specific to that agency. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2009) is one of the primary Federal agencies for collecting and analyzing data on educational assessment. The center publishes *Digest of Educational Statistics*, which contains compilations of statistical information, and *Education Statistics Quarterly*, featuring full text of reports and trend analyses on an array of issues from early childhood to postsecondary education. In addition to high-quality reports, digests, and data analyses, the site provides access to RSS-enabled feeds of NCES headlines and the latest news.

Online resources offered at the state level help with comparisons of educational standards across schools in the state, and also ensure existing practices in curriculum design and assessment systems are aligned with statewide educational goals. For instance, the home page of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2009) serves as a gateway to data and electronic documents relevant to education in the State of Texas. TEA's site includes links to school district profiles published annually since 1987-88, statewide information on graduation requirements, and results of College Admissions Testing. The full text of the *Texas Education Code*, as well as other statutes, can be retrieved from the site.

Guidelines for Assessment. The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) is a voluntary partnership of government agencies and postsecondary institutions funded by the Department of Education. The NPEC's two-volume *Sourcebook on Assessment* (2005) offers extensive guidelines for selecting, developing, and implementing specific types of higher-education assessments.

The first volume reviews academic measures of learning outcomes, as well as several commercially written tests and assessment instruments developed at the local level. The sourcebook includes templates for evaluating student writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The second volume presents results of eight case studies, conducted at various institutions across the U.S., providing insights into a number of issues central to higher-education assessment: (a) the scope of assessments, (b) availability and costs, (c) levels of assessment, (d) reliability and validity of measurements, and (e) challenges in creating new measures.

According to Pew Internet and American Life Project (Horrigan, 2004), the volume of traffic on government-sponsored Websites grew 50 percent just in two years; two out of five users who visited the domain looked for specific government documents or statistics. Although navigating through government sites and finding obscure information has been difficult for many people, that situation is improved with the introduction of portals.

Commercial Services

There is no shortage of commercial e-testing and evaluation tools and services. With a quick Google search for "online testing" or "online assessment" one can find a number of electronic test drivers, rubrics, and survey generators. Among them are Formsite (2009), MindFlash™ (2009), ProExams.com™ (2009), Rubric Builder (2009), QuestionMark.com™ (2009), and MyGradeBook (2009). Test Central, a division of Test.com, Inc. (2009), offers a system for distance-learning exams, quizzes, and surveys that can be administered interactively through the Web. In addition to survey-construction tools, SurveyMonkey.com (2009), QuestionPro (2009), SuperSurvey™ (2009), and ZapSurvey (2009) offer Web-based survey-hosting services.

Course Management Systems. During the last decade, course management systems (CMS) increasingly have been adopted by institutions of higher learning (Meerts, 2003). According to the Campus Computing Survey, by 2002 CMS was used in 30% of all courses in four-year institutions (Green, 2002). Among the most widely adopted commercial products are Blackboard™ (2009), WebCT (2006), eCollege (2009), Angel (2009), Desire2Learn (2009), PageOut® (2009), and Scholar360 (2009).

By 2004, the Blackboard platform was used in 2,600 institutions, mostly within the U.S., while WebCT was adopted by 2,200 institutions in 80 countries. In October 2005, these two top-rated, competing companies merged, expanding nationally and globally to include the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Canada, South Africa, Australia, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong (Blackboard Media Center, 2005).

Web-based in-course assessments, administered via CMS, support formal and informal measurements like traditional multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank, matching, short-answer, and essay instruments. They can be utilized successfully for formal or semi-formal exams, online tutorials and practice exercises, instructor feedback, and student self-evaluation. Overall, Web-based classroom assessment tools embedded in CMS provide opportunities to integrate interactivity, asynchronicity and non-linearity, customize instruction—and to adapt the teaching process to students' individual learning styles.

Publisher-Provided Test Tools. Many publishers develop assessment tools accompanying textbooks, making them accessible via companion Websites. Harcourt Assessment Center has developed an e-testing model allowing customers to order and administer Web-based tests and view the results online. Instructors' test banks provided by Thomson Learning, through ExamView® Pro desktop software, also can be formatted to work in online environments. Thomson's self-assessment quizzes allow students to test their knowledge and skills within the comfort of their homes.

Prior to 2007, McGraw-Hill Higher Education (2006) textbook publisher distributed GradeSummit, a diagnostic self-assessment and exam preparation tool that students could purchase with a McGraw-Hill text for a small additional fee. McGraw-Hill has worked directly with leading content-management companies to develop course cartridges for Blackboard™, WebCT, eCollege, and PageOut® e-learning systems. One of the recent offerings is Homework Manager (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009), a Web-based homework management system available for both students and instructors using McGraw-Hill textbooks. Homework Manager enables self-graded practice of chapter material through unlimited customized tests and quizzes and immediate feedback. Homework Manager Plus adds a level of interactivity by adding instant access to an online version of the textbook.

Thomson Learning (2006) began offering three levels of WebTutor™, a customizable Web-savvy interactive tutoring application: (a) basic WebTutor™, (b) WebTutor™Advantage, and (c) WebTutor™ Advantage Plus. The basic WebTutor™ application provides textbook-specific online tutoring with auto-graded quizzes, discussion topics, and related Web links. WebTutor™ Advantage integrates interactive content such as animations, simulations, and video clips that allow students to study at their own pace, and WebTutor™ Advantage Plus adds access to an online version of the textbook. WebTutor™ is available on Blackboard™, WebCT, eCollege, Educator!, Angel, and Desire2Learn platforms. The current Web Tutor is distributed by Cengage Learning (2009) as a course cartridge for Blackboard Learning System 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Electronic Assessment. Among the first companies to develop computer-based assessments was Assessment Systems Corporation (ASC) (2009). This firm has specialized in computerized testing since 1979 and has developed, published, and distributed a variety of software packages through a wide network of partners. One of its products, FastTest, is a test-development utility for Windows that integrates an item banker and an assembly system. FastTest Pro supports online testing and can be administered over an environment with a client-server application. ASC products include Internet-based applications for delivery, administration, and analysis of tests, surveys, and feedback forms.

Compared to CMS-enabled in-course assessments, stand-alone commercial testing products provide much greater functionality, going far beyond the standard set of measurement techniques and features available through a typical CMS system like Blackboard™. ASC-distributed tools can support up to twenty multiple-choice responses, utilize flexible question types, user-formatable outputs, item histories, and real-time randomization and results monitoring. However, the price range for these tools is also beyond the reach of many educational institutions, and many schools prefer an all-embracing course-creation and management system to a fully customizable test-development and delivery package.

Electronic Portfolios. Following a trend set forth by electronic course-management systems, the adoption of e-portfolios in education shows consistent and steady growth. An e-portfolio is an electronic collection of documents and artifacts that demonstrate accomplishments of students, teachers, administrators, institutions, or communities. The most common formats in use are Web-based, CD-ROM, and DVD.

A comprehensive review of Web-based electronic portfolios conducted by ePortConsortium (2003) pointed to an increasing number of commercial e-portfolio applications such as ePortaro (2009), Epsilen (2009), and iWebfolio (2009), frequently employed by institutions of higher learning. An online electronic-portfolio system can be installed by an institution or hosted remotely. Typically, a portfolio can import an assortment of text, graphics, and multimedia file formats, support export of data in ASCII text, as well as integrate with CMS, PeopleSoft, and other Enterprise Resource Planning systems.

According to the EDUCAUSE (2009) Website, e-portfolios are used for teaching evaluation, student advisement, career preparation, program assessment, self-studies, and accreditation purposes. Electronic portfolios are viewed as a major development in educational technology since the introduction of CMS (Cambridge, Cambridge, & Yancey, 2009; Jafari & Kaufman, 2006; Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005).

Careful selection of electronic-portfolio software is essential since most of the systems are student controlled, making them inappropriate for academic-assessment purposes. Because they allow students to change objectives and artifacts at will, such products do not assure valid results. At Tarleton State University (2009), several years of searching for an electronic-portfolio system providing valid student-learning assessment culminated with only one product meeting that criterion: ePortfolio2 by Chalk & Wire Learning Assessment, Inc. (2008). Another important aspect of this system is that it provides fast, easy data-analysis reports.

Overall, it is evident that commercial software developers and vendors such as Blackboard, Inc., eCollege, and Nuventive (2009), collaborate with educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to enhance the value of Web-based assessment tools, and to design a common set of technical standards across platforms and institutions.

Nonprofit Organizations

All search strategies produce significant findings for nonprofit organizations having assessment information or services online. Multiple professional associations—American Psychological Association (2009), Association of Test Publishers (2009), National Association of Test Directors (2009), etc.—have addressed various issues related to the use of assessment in education: ethical guidelines, standards for test development, access to tests, and information about testing.

Assessment and Ethics. Established in 1985, the Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP) (2009) provides guidelines for both test developers and test users in the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* (2004). The code offers a broad understanding of the underlying ethics related to educational assessment.

The goal of fairness to all test takers should guide standardized-test developers and those who use the tests for assessment. Code authors also encourage classroom teachers to use the code when developing classroom tests. Links from the main page direct site visitors to subcategories related to developing and selecting appropriate tests, administering and scoring tests, reporting and interpreting test results, and informing test takers about the outcomes.

The Association of Test Publishers (ATP) (2009a) approaches ethics and assessment from the perspective of access to testing. A division of ATP specifically relates to educational testing (Association of Test Publishers, 2009b).

The National Association of Test Directors' Website hosts a *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*, developed by the National Council on Measurement in Education (1995). This code contains specific language related to multiple aspects of educational-measurement conduct, ranging from student cheating on tests to ensuring the development of appropriate assessment instruments and services.

Testing and Evaluation. Educational Testing Service (ETS) (2009a) and American College Testing (ACT) (2009a) have Websites providing information about testing and evaluation services. Both nonprofit organizations maintain extensive product information about available tests.

Specifically related to communication assessment, is *Criterion*℠, a Web-based writing-evaluation service (Educational Testing Service, 2009). *Criterion*℠ is based on the application of *e-rater*® (an automated essay-scoring engine) and *Critique*℠ *Writing Analysis Tools* (a diagnostic feedback technology). *Criterion*℠ can be accessed through the products directory tab at the ETS Website. ACT® also has a writing-evaluation test (American College Testing, 2009b), designed as an admissions instrument but additionally suggested as a course-level placement tool.

While Educational Testing Service and American College Testing Websites contain information about online testing services, ETS and accreditation services of communication associations offer guidelines for—and information about—program assessment. In addition, some nonprofits have produced institutional evaluation information online, information on transformative assessment, as well as program and competencies assessment. Finally, nonprofit organizations provide access to a variety of digital resources, including specialized libraries of assessment-related materials.

Educational Associations. While professional testing associations provide useful guidelines for assessment in general, educational associations inherently furnish more specific criteria for both program and individual competency assessments. Regional higher-education accreditation associations set guidelines for overall competencies, and these bodies generally require communication competency as a criterion for institutional accreditation (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2009).

Academic associations such as the National Communication Association (2009a) define more specific competencies for college graduates. A detailed list of competencies in table format can be viewed and downloaded at the NCA Website (2009b). Communication-technology and information-literacy criteria for higher education have been established by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2009). This document was approved by the ACRL Board of Directors in 2000.

Assessing communication programs within higher education is the focus of significant discussion by numerous communication associations serving higher education, and the National Communication Association (NCA) has provided a significant Web presence related to some of these discussions. The NCA Educational Policies Board statement from 2005 answers questions regarding NCA external program-review resources (2005).

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication has accreditation criteria and a formal process for external program evaluation (2009). The American Communication Association also offers accreditation services and criteria for program evaluation (2009).

American college presidents founded the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) (2009a) in 1915. The AACU currently provides an alternative to the regional view of institutional assessment. The organizational Website does not hold original information on communication assessment, but it does have a page of links to oral-communication assessment tools and writing-assessment resources (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2009b).

Specialized Digital Libraries. The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a digital library initially sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education (2009b). The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation has become one of the prime resources for assessment-related information. In 1966-2003, the ERIC database consisted of several individual clearinghouses of bibliographic information for education practitioners, scholars, and the general public.

After passage of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, which includes the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (U.S. Public Law H. R. 3801, 2002), the Federal government re-conceptualized the ERIC database with a number of organizational and structural changes allowing access to full-text materials and accommodating online submissions. All documents published after 1993, as well as materials previously sold by the ERIC Document Reproduction Center, now can be downloaded in portable document format (.pdf) free of charge. Although the ERIC Clearinghouse (also known as Ericae.net) is discontinued, its existing holdings can be accessed through Edresearch.org.

The new ERIC information system is accessible online at http://www.eric.ed.gov, and the list of indexed items continues to grow. According to the ERIC User Group, more than 20,000 new records were added since June 2005, and more than 560 journal titles and 380 non-journal sources were under agreement in January 2006 (Corby, 2006). Some of the resources available in the earlier version of ERIC migrated to nonprofit sites; others are still accessible through various vendor interfaces. Thus, the Test Review Locator including the *Tests in Print* and *Mental Measurements Yearbook* moved to the Website of the Buros Institutes of Mental Measurements (n.d.).

The most effective way to conduct an ERIC search is by using "descriptors" or specific terms from a controlled vocabulary maintained in the ERIC Thesaurus. A Thesaurus search for "assessment" identifies a list of 25 assessment-specific descriptors such as "authentic assessment," "curriculum-based assessment," "institutional assessment," or "large-scale assessment." The ERIC search supports Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT), truncation using the asterisk as a "wildcard", and forced phrase search (" ").

Additionally, the MyERIC service (registration required) allows users to perform personalized searches, save search criteria and results in a temporary online Clipboard, and organize items in folders—but MyERIC capacity is limited; only ten searches, five folders, and 50 records can be kept at a time.

Conclusion

The Internet offers a wealth of valuable information on assessment to the widest possible audience. Many educational institutions host Websites that contain useful resources ranging from annotated meta-lists of Web links and assessment handbooks to dynamic content such as assessment-focused listservs, blogs, and Web feeds.

Government-sponsored sites enable access to large-scale online databases, specialized libraries, and rich collections of documents focused on various aspects of assessment. Educational Websites often include guidelines for assessments developed by individual departments, colleges, and universities, while governmental Websites provide guidelines establishing learning standards and maintain those standards across institutions, states, and regions.

Program assessment and accreditation services and criteria, as well as ethical guidelines for educational evaluation and testing, have been the center of attention for higher-education associations and other nonprofit organizations, as reflected in their online presence. Meanwhile, available commercial services vary widely in their offerings of elaborate e-assessment tools, Web-based course management utilities, publisher-provided quizzes, online test and rubric builders, and electronic portfolio systems.

Equipped with the knowledge of different online search strategies and major gateways to assessment resources, on the Web communication educators find ample opportunities to conduct effective academic assessments and engage in related research. Of course, online resources are tremendously dynamic, changing constantly, which makes it impossible to provide an exhaustive, current review. Hence, it is wise to employ the information in this chapter as a foundation on which to build, adding new electronic tools as they become available.

References

American College Testing. (2009a). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.act.org.

American College Testing. (2009b). *The ACT writing test*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.act.org/aap/writing.

American Communication Association. (2009). *Accreditation services and program-evaluation criteria*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.americancomm.org.

American Psychological Association. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.apa.org.

Angel. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.angellearning.com.

Ask. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.ask.com.

Assessment in Higher Education (ASSESS). (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://lsv.uky.edu/archives/assess.html.

Assessment Systems Corporation. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.assess.com.

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. (2009). *Accreditation focus on assessment*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.aejmc.org/_officers/officer_resources/teaching/accreditation_focus.php.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009a). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.aacu.org.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009b). Link to: Oral communication assessment tools and resources. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/oral_communication.cfm.

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2000). *Communication-technology and information-literacy criteria for higher education.* Retrieved April 2, 2006, from http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standards.pdf.

Association of Test Publishers. (2009a). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.testpublishers.org.

Association of Test Publishers. (2009b). Educational testing division. Retrieved September 10, 2000, from http://www.testpublishers.org/education.htm.

Blackboard Media Center. (2005). *Blackboard and WebCT announce agreement to merge.* Retrieved April 23, 2006, from http://www.blackboard.com/company/press.

Blackboard™. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.blackboard. com.

Buros Institutes of Mental Measurements. (n.d.). *Test reviews online*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://buros.unl.edu/buros/jsp/search.jsp.

Cambridge, D., Cambridge, B. L., & Yancey, K. B. (2009). *Electronic portfolios 2.0: Emergent research on implementation and impact*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Cengage Learning. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.cengage.com/tlc/webtutor.

Central Queensland University in Australia. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://ahe.cqu.edu.au.

Chalk & Wire Learning Assessment, Inc. (2008). Retrieved April 2, 2009, from http://www.chalkandwire.com.

Chronicle of Higher Education. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://chronicle.com/help/rss.htm.

Clusty. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://clusty.com.

Code of fair testing practices in education. (2004). Washington, DC: Joint Committee on Testing Practices. (Mailing Address: Joint Committee on Testing Practices, Science Directorate, American Psychological Association, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002-4242).

Corby, K. (2006, March 8). *ERIC users group meeting.* ERIC Users Information Exchange. Retrieved April 26, 2006, from http://blog.lib.msu.edu/ericusers.

Council for Higher Education Accreditation. (2009). *Directory of regional accreditation associations for U.S. colleges and universities*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp.

Desire2Learn. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.desire2learn.com.

eCollege. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.ecollege.com/index.learn.

EDTECH. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.h-net.org/~edweb.

Educational Testing Service. (2009a). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.ets.org.

Educational Testing Service. (2009b). *Criterion*℠. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.435c0b5cc7bd0ae7015d9510c3921509/?vgnextoid=b47d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD

EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.educause.edu/eli.

EDUCAUSE Website. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.educause.edu/Resources/ePortfolios/153800.

ePortaro. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.eportaro.com.

ePortConsortium. (2003). *Electronic portfolio white paper: Version 1.0*. Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://ePortConsortium.org.

Epsilen. (2009). Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.epsilen.com.

FeedReader. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.feedreader.com.

Formsite. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.formsite.com.

GENED-ASSESS. (2009). Listserv for general-education assessment. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://listserv.cuny.edu/archives/gened-assess.html.

Gigablast. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.gigablast.com.

Google Directory. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.google.com/dirhp.

Google Scholar. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://scholar.google.com.

Google Search Engine. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.google.com.

Green, K. C. (2002). *Campus portals make progress: Technology budgets suffer significant cuts*. Retrieved November 8, 2004, from http://www.campuscomputing.net.

Horrigan, J. B. (2004, May 24). *How Americans get in touch with governmen*t. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_E-Gov_Report_0504.pdf.

IceRocket. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.icerocket.com.

Internet Archive Wayback Machine. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.archive.org.

iWebfolio. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.iwebfolio.com.

Jafari, A., & Kaufman, C. (2006). *Handbook of research on ePortfolios*. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Reference.

Joint Committee on Testing Practices. (2009). Retrieved Septemebr 24, 2009, from http://www.apa. org/science/jctpweb.html.

Lorenzo, G., & Ittelson, J. (2005, July). An overview of e-portfolios. *EDUCAUSE Review*, *40* (ELI Paper 1, D. Oblinger, Ed.), 1-27. Retrieved April 30, 2006, from http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3001.pdf.

McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2006). GradeSummit. Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.gradesummit.com.

McGraw-Hill Higher Education. (2009). Homework Manager. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.mhhe.com/business/homework.

Meerts, J. C. (2003, October 10). Course management systems (CMS). *EDUCAUSE*. Retrieved November 8, 2004, from http://www.educause.edu.

MindFlash™. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.mindflash.com.

MSN Directory. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://specials.msn.com.

MSN Search Engine. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.msn.com.

MyGradeBook. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.mygradebook.com.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard.

National Association of Test Directors. (2009). Retrieved September 24, from http://www.natd.org.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://nces.ed.gov.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2005). *NPEC sourcebook on assessment: Definitions and assessment methods for communication, leadership, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and quantitative skills*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005832.pdf.

National Communication Association. (2005). NCA Educational Policies Board statement regarding external program-review sources. http://www.natcom.org/nca/files/ccLibrary Files/FILENAME/000000000381/FEA%20Document.doc.

National Communication Association. (2009a). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.natcom.org.

National Communication Association. (2009b). *Speaking and listening competencies for college students*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.natcom.org/nca/files/ccLibraryFiles/FILENAME/000000000085/College%20Competencies.pdf.

National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995). *Code of professional responsibilities in educational measurement*. Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.natd.org/ Code_of_Professional_Responsibilities.html.

North Carolina State University. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm.

Nuventive. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.nuventive.com.

The Open Directory. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.dmoz.org.

PageOut®. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.pageout.net.

ProExams.com™. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.protraining.com.

QuestionMark.com™. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.questionmark.com.

QuestionPro. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.questionpro.com.

Rubric Builder. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://landmark-project.com/rubric_builder/index.php.

Scholar360. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.scholar360.com.

SearchEngineWatch. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://searchenginewatch.com.

SuperSurvey™. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.supersurvey.com.

SurveyMonkey.com. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.surveymonkey.com.

Tarleton State University. (2009). Information provided by the campus assessment director on April 2, 2009.

Technorati. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.technorati.com.

Test.com, Inc. (2009). Test Central. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.test.com.

Texas Education Agency. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.tea.state.tx.us.

Thomson Learning. (2006). *WebTutor™ advantage plus*. Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://e.thomsonlearning.com.

U.S. Public Law H. R. 3801. (2002). *Education sciences reform act of 2002*. Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.ed.gov/policy/rschstat/leg/PL107-279.pdf.

United States Department of Education. (2009a). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.ed.gov.

United States Department of Education. (2009b). ERIC: Education Resources Information Center. (Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.eric.ed.gov.

United States Government. (2009a). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.usa.gov.

United States Government. (2009b). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://usasearch.gov.

United States Government. (2009c). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.fedstats.gov.

University Libraries, University at Albany, SUNY. (2006). *The deep Web.* Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://library.albany.edu/internet/deepweb.html.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/tools.

University of Wisconsin-Madison. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.provost.wisc.edu/assessment/manual.

WebCT. (2006). Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.webct.com.

Yahoo! Directory. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://dir.yahoo.com.

Yahoo! Search Engine. (2009). Retrieved September 10, 2009, from http://www.yahoo.com.

ZapSurvey. (2009). Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.zapsurvey.com.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Sasha Arjannikova is a Ph.D. student at the University of New Mexico working on increasing intercultural communication competence and developing diversity training in religious environments. She is a 2007 graduate of the M.A. program in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. Sasha's research interests include organizational communication, environmental communication, and the study of ecumenical formations.

Pat Arneson is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA where she serves as a Director of the M.A. Program. Her research interests include philosophy of communication, free and responsible speech, interpersonal communication ethics, and educational assessment. She has published over 25 book chapters, journal articles, or research reports.

Philip M Backlund, Ph.D. (University of Denver), is a Professor of Communication Studies at Central Washington University. He teaches courses such as public speaking, intercultural communication, gender communication, relationship development, and persuasion. At CWU, he held a number of administrative positions in addition to teaching and is currently directly the university's regional accreditation self study. He has written extensively about assessment and communication education. Over the past decade, he has taught communication in China, Pakistan, and Tanzania.

Scott A. Chadwick, Ph.D. is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. Dr. Chadwick has been trained as an accreditation evaluator by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. In faculty and administrative roles, he has participated in accreditation reviews by those two commissions and reaccreditation processes by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Dacia Charlesworth (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2001) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Charlesworth's administrative positions have included founding Director of the Oral Communication Across the Curriculum Program at Southeast Missouri State University and Director of the University Honors Program at Robert Morris University. As both an administrator and faculty member, she has participated in accreditation reviews by both the North Central Association of Higher Learning and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Charlesworth's research interests encompass the rhetorical and performative intersections of gender/ethnicity/class, communication across the curriculum, and outcomes assessment. She has published over seventy articles, book chapters, conference papers, and performances.

Mary Ann Danielson, Ph.D. is the Associate Vice President for Academic Excellence and Assessment and Professor of Communication Studies at Creighton University. Danielson has been trained as an accreditation evaluator by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and she currently chairs her University's Assessment Committee. Her areas of disciplinary expertise include organizational communication, leadership, training and development, assessment of student learning, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. Active in a variety of professional organizations, Danielson publishes, serves on editorial boards, and consults with local, regional, and national groups.

Tim Detwiler earned his Ph.D. from the Pennsylvania State University in Speech Communication. He currently serves as Associate Provost at Cornerstone University of Grand Rapids, MI. His most recent assessment scholarship includes presentations at the IUPUI Assessment Institute (2008), the National Communication Association Annual Meeting (2010), the Comprehensive Assessment Program of the CCCU (2010) and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (2010). He also serves as an AQIP Peer Evaluator for the North Central Association.

Gerald W. Driskill, Ph.D. is a professor of communication at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he has taught intercultural communication since 1992. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Kansas after previously teaching at Assumption Business College in Bangkok, Thailand. He has published a workbook, "Organizational Culture in Action," as well as articles on intercultural communication. He has conducted intercultural trainings for U.S.A.I.D. and Heifer International and worked campus-wide to assess the core in the area of international and intercultural awareness.

Tatyana Dumova (Ph.D., Bowling Green State University) is an Associate Professor of Digital Media at Point Park University. Her research focuses on the social implications of established and emerging electronic media, and the role of technology in teaching and learning. She has presented and published her research findings nationally and internationally.

Michelle Epstein Garland is a Lecturer at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she specializes in Business and Professional Communication. She received her Bachelor's degree from the College of Charleston in Communications and Master's degree from the University of Tennessee in Communication Studies. While pursuing her Master's degree, she worked in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and has continued research in the assessment field. Her research in the field has been presented at regional, national, and international conventions.

Ellen A. Hay, Ph.D.(Iowa State, 1982), is a professor and chair in the Department of Communication Studies at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. She also directs the Institute for Leadership and Service. She has been active in assessment work and publications for many years and has served as the Chair of NCA's Communication Assessment Division.

Douglas K. Jennings is Director of Communication Education and the Associate Director of the School of Communication at Illinois State University. Jennings chairs the National Communication Association teacher education program standards committee which created the institutional standards for P-12 communication teacher candidates. Jennings also serves on various English Language Arts committees for the Illinois State Board of Education and as a consultant to Lake Forest Schools, Chicago, IL

Diane S. Krider is an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts at Central Michigan University. She has published and presented papers on assessment, chaired and served on numerous program and university assessment committees, coordinated all assessment activities for the college and is actively involved in interdisciplinary program assessment.

Donald Martin Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at DePaul University. Martin recently completed an outcomes assessment investigation of student community-service activity in a small group communication course. Martin founded the communication internship program at DePaul and served as its director for eight years. He is also a past Chair of the Experiential Learning Commission of the National Communication Association.

Ann Rosenthal is a retired United States Air Force reserve lieutenant colonel and President of the American Communication Association. Her research deals with the rhetorical capacity of electronic networks to form identities, create human social space, and serve as a forward edge of battle area (FEBA) in information wars.

Tifany Schneider is a 2006 graduate of the Speech Communication Department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She served as president of the Kappa Upsilon chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, a national honor society, during 2005-2006 and has worked extensively with International Friendship Outreach, an organization focused on supporting international students in their adjustments to the U.S.A. She is currently employed by an international organization helping teams serve the needs of owners in more than 70 countries and is pursuing an Executive MBA at Baylor University.

Toni Whitfield, Ed.D., is an Assistant Professor at James Madison University. She has utilized service-learning practices in all of her courses for the past 10 years. She is also a participant in the National Communication Association Service-learning Task Force and served as the Special Interest Group—Service-learning Chairperson for the National Society for Experiential Education for 5 years.

Sherry Wien, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Communication at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey. She is the Program Director for Applied Communication and the Assessment Coordinator for the School of Communication, serving over 500 majors. She applies her interests in organizational communication and process improvement to her teaching, scholarship, and service.

Gay Wakefield. Ed.D., is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, where she also is Director of Assessment in the university's Office of Academic Affairs. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Wakefield was director of the Center for Professional Communication in TCU's Neeley School of Business, where she also was assessment director.

Rebecca Wolfe, is the former Director of Institutional Research and Assessment at Cornerstone University. She holds a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis in assessment and evaluation. In addition to her role in IR and Assessment, she serves as an adjunct faculty member teaching writing, research, and rhetoric courses.