***STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM***

***SUMMARY FORM AY 2017-2018***

Please complete a separate worksheet for each academic program (major, minor) at each level (undergraduate, graduate) in your department. Worksheets are due to CASA this year by **June 15, 2018**. Worksheets should be sent electronically to [kjsanders@eiu.edu](mailto:kjsanders@eiu.edu) and should also be submitted to your college dean. For information about assessment or help with your assessment plans, visit the Assessment webpage at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/> or contact Karla Sanders in CASA at 581-6056.

B. A. in Communication Studies

**Degree and**

**Program Name:**

# Submitted By:

Marita Gronnvoll

**PART ONE**

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| What are the learning objectives? | How, where, and when are they assessed? | What are the expectations? | What are the results? | Committee/ person responsible? How are results shared? |
| 1. Students will acquire disciplinary knowledge for their content area | Students will acquire disciplinary knowledge within their chosen communication content area/option (e.g., Corporate Communication, Broadcast News & Electronic Media Production, Interpersonal Communication). Disciplinary knowledge includes a basic definition of communication, as well as the major theoretical perspectives and principles related to the area of the discipline which are addressed in multiple classes throughout an option.  In order to assess and measure disciplinary knowledge, students in each content area/option complete a pretest/post-test exam to determine disciplinary knowledge acquisition. The questions for each exam were created by faculty of the specific content area/option, in order to appropriately and adequately measure an understanding of the general knowledge specific to each.  The pretest is taken at the start of the first major content class of an area/option and the post-test is taken at the end of the capstone content class of an area/option.  The pretest/post-test is administered by the instructor and the analysis is completed by the Associate Chair.  Classes distributing the pretest are as follows:  Corporate Communication: CMN 2650  Broadcast News and Electronic Media Production: CMN 2525  Interpersonal Communication: CMN 2630  Classes distributing the post-test are as follows:  Corporate Communication: CMN 4650  Interpersonal Communication: CMN 4765  Broadcast News and Electronic Media Production: **No report** | Since the pretests are taken by students before they have received any disciplinary knowledge we expect those scores to be very low. However, they set a baseline for analysis as students move through their option/area. They also allow us to determine which theoretical perspectives and principles demonstrated adequate levels of student learning and which areas need to be addressed more in classes, potentially in different ways.  We expect that our students would reach the level of competence (an average of 70%) on the post-test. | For the **Corporate Communication option**, the pretest resulted in a student average of 52.08%. The post-test resulted in a **64.58%.**  For the **Broadcast News and Electronic Media Production option**, the pretest resulted in a student average of 26.61%, but the post-test was not returned so there is no data to report.  For the **Interpersonal Communication option**, the pretest resulted in 47.62% and the posttest a **61.25%.**  Although the knowledge tests continue to fall below the desired goal, we are encouraged by the improvement in Corporate Communication and Interpersonal, which **improved** in the posttest from AY 2016-2017 by 6.25% and 3.19% respectively.  Academic year will see the elimination of the Broadcast News & Electronic Media Production Option area as the production components will be included in the recently approved major, Television & Video Production. The department leadership is committed to ensuring that only fulltime faculty will be assigned to introductory and capstone courses with the goal of improving participation in assessment measurements. | Tests are distributed by individual faculty in their classes.  Data is reviewed by the Assessment Coordinator.  The assessment report will be posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August 2018. The posttest results have already been shared with the senior faculty members of each option area. |
| 2. Students will develop effective critical thinking skills | Classes to be assessed are selected on a yearly rotating schedule.  Assessment is done with a Critical Thinking Assessment rubric. Assessment is done by instructor for specific courses. Summary of data is done by the Associate Chair. This year the rubrics returned were CMN 2010, CMN 2650, CMN 2990, CMN 3000, CMN 3660, CMN 3740, CMN 3903, CMN 4820. This is part of the continued effort to involve the entire faculty in the assessment process. | Expectations are that students are able to identify problems, apply and synthesize relevant evidence, express ideas clearly, and are aware of their own assumptions.  Across all of the classes we expect students to be at least “competent” in their critical thinking (consistent with a score 2.5 or above).  An additional expectation is that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric). | The Critical Thinking Rubric had an overall student average of 2.99%, exceeding expectations. According to the data, 93.48%% of the students were at least minimally competent. Of our students, 6.52% were rated as not competent, 32.61% were rated as minimally competent, 34.78% were rated as competent and 25.09% were rated as highly competent.  The average rubric score in our 2000 level classes (3.53) exceeded the level of competent. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes (3.10) was rated as competent. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes (2.33) rated as minimally competent. We would like to note here that only one 4000-level course returned critical thinking rubrics, with only five students assessed, making this a very small data set upon which to base 4000-level competencies. | Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.  Data is reviewed by Associate Chair.  The assessment report will be posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August 2018. |
| 3. Students will cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility. | The entire department is assessed in a 64-question survey which includes demographic items, a social responsibility and professional ethics measure, and a multicultural sensibility measure.  The survey was launched online in April 2018. | Expectations are that students will be able to understand the role of the individual in society, evaluate and develop constructive communication approaches to addressing social and ethical issues, demonstrate a more sophisticated sense of responsibility and be more engaged in community activities. We expect that students will be above average on each scale (a score above of 3.0 on the Social Responsibility and Ethics scales, a score below 3.0 on the Multicultural Sensitivity scale). | Students completed a survey containing the scales, plus additional demographic items.  **Social Responsibility**: The mean score of all students was **3.49**. **Ethics**: The mean score of all students was **4.05**; **Multicultural Sensitivity**: The mean score of all students was **2.62**.  There were no significant differences across gender, race, and class. Results indicate that students scored above average on two of the three scales. | The survey was administered online and was provided to all communication classes.  Data is reviewed by Associate Chair.  The assessment report will be posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August 2018. |
| 4. Students will create and implement message strategies in diverse contexts with emphasis on multimedia, writing and speaking. | **Communication Flexibility:** The entire departmentwas assessed in a 64-question survey which includes a communication flexibility scale which demonstrates students’ abilities to adapt messages in diverse contexts. The survey was launched online in April 2018.  **Multimedia** projects assessed can include web pages, audio production, single camera video productions, and studio TV productions. Student performance in different projects is assessed using departmental rubrics. Classes to be assessed are selected on a yearly basis. Assessment is done by instructor and is completed when the assigned is graded. Summary of data is done by Associate Chair.  **Speaking** projects assessed can include debates, interviews, speeches and presentations. Student performance in different projects is assessed using departmental rubrics. Classes to be assessed are selected on a yearly basis. Assessment is done by instructor and is completed when the assigned is graded. Summary of data is done by the Associate Chair.  **Writing** projects assessed can include research papers, reaction papers, synthesis papers, case studies or research proposals. Student performance in different projects is assessed using departmental rubrics. Classes to be assessed are selected on a yearly basis. Assessment is done by instructor and is completed when the assigned is graded. Summary of data is done by the Associate Chair. | The general expectation is that students will demonstrate competence in the creation and implementation of message strategies in diverse contexts.  Expectations are that students will be able to create a variety of messages in various contexts. We expect that students will score above average on the Communication Flexibility scale (a score of 3.0).  **Multimedia, Speaking and Writing:**  Given that messages strategies are critical skills, we would expect our students to be at least competent in these skills (a score of at least 2.5 on the rubric).  We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5).    The definition of competence varies by assignment and rubric. However, specific expectations for individual student projects are outlined in departmental rubrics for writing, speaking and media productions which instructors follow when filling out the rubrics. | Students completed a survey containing the **Communication Flexibility** scale, plus additional demographic items. The mean score on the Communication Flexibility scale was **3.49**. There were no significant differences across gender, class level, time spent at EIU or GPA.  **Multimedia**: To assess multimedia message creation the assessment committee asked for rubrics to be completed for video, audio and web production.  The **Video Production** rubric, completed in CMN 2525, CMN 2575, and CMN 3500, had an overall student average of 3.02 exceeding expectations. According to the data, 95% of the students were at least minimally competent. 5% were rated as not competent, 35% were rated as minimally competent, 55% were rated as competent and 5% were rated as highly competent.  Of the 2000 level courses, the rubrics resulted in a 3.20 average, exceeding the level of competent. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes (2.84) was rated as minimally competent. With only one 3000-level course assessed, and only eight students, this represents a very small data set. No 4000 levels courses were assessed.  **Audio Production** was not assessed. With no faculty available to teach audio production courses, none were offered in the 2017-18 AY.  The **Web Design** rubric was administered to only one course, CMN 3750. The course had an overall student average of a 3.00, exceeding expectations. According to the data, 100% of the students were competent and highly competent. 80% of the students were rated competent, and 20% of the students were rated highly competent.  **Writing**: To assess written message creation the assessment committee asked for Writing Assessment rubrics to be completed.  The **Writing Assessment** rubric had an overall student average of 3.04, exceeding expectations. The writing rubric was administered in CMN 2630, CMN 3000, CMN 3300, CMN 3560, and CMN 4820. According to the data, 92.86% of the students were at least minimally competent. 7.14% of the students were rated as not competent, 26.19% of the students were rated as minimally competent, 38.10% of the students were rated competent, and 28.57% of the students were rated highly competent.  The average rubric score in our 2000 level class, 3.17, was well above expectations. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes was 3.31, also exceeding expectations. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes was 2.66, which was rated as minimally competent. With only one course returning writing rubrics, and only five students rated, this produced a very small data set upon which to rate 4000-level competencies.  **Speaking:** To assess the creation and delivery of oral messages the Associate Chair asked for **Speech Evaluation** rubrics to be completed.    Data was received from CMN 2040, CMN 3470, and CMN 4820. The rubric had an overall student average of 3.09 exceeding expectations. According to the data, 87.50% of the students were ranked as at least minimally competent. 12.50% were rated as not competent, 18.75% rated as minimally competent, 50.00% were rated as competent and 18.75% were rated as highly competent.  The average rubric score in our 2000 level class, 2.77, was below expectations, but at least minimally competent. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes was 3.39, exceeded expectations. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes was 3.12, which exceeded the level of competent but fell short of highly competent. | Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.  Data is reviewed by the Associate Chair.  The assessment report will be posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August 2018. |

**PART TWO**

Describe what your program’s assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the CASA Director’s comments on last year’s report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

In the two years since our last assessment report, we formed two new major (PR and Health Communication, assessed separately), and have had two more recently approved (Communication in Organizations [online] and Television & Video Production). The Communication Studies is in the process of being reorganized to more closely reflect disciplinary trends. For this year’s report, we assess our existing option areas of **Corporate Communication, Interpersonal Communication, and Broadcast News & Electronic Media** **Production**. Beginning fall of 2018, the production courses of the latter option area will be folded into the new major of Television & Video Production. The remaining courses will be part of a Broadcasting option (renamed for fall 2018). We anticipate folding these courses into a revised option area tentatively entitled Mass Communication (anticipating start date of spring 2019).

**Learning objectives:** The CASA director indicated that our learning objectives presented a “solid blend of program objectives for the major and undergraduate goals.” Therefore, we continued on this path for the 2017-18 academic year. Students continue to be challenged with retaining knowledge across courses to the degree we would like. Therefore, the measures continue to help us identify which areas we are doing well with and which areas need more reinforcement, both in class and in our curriculum. The CASA director advised us to look into how quantitative reasoning (QR) could be incorporated into our program. Currently, QR is explicitly taught in a number of our production courses, and we anticipate assessing that goal when we assess the new Television & Video Production major in the next few years. We also explicitly teach QR in one of our core required courses, CMN 2040: Argumentation and Critical Thinking. We plan to standardize instruction of QR in this course in the upcoming year with the goal of assessing it for the first time at the end of AY 2018-19.

We continued assessing all of our objectives this past academic year. Our objectives address student skills, such as critical thinking and message creation, while also supporting Eastern’s goals of developing social, ethical, and cultural responsibility. Our goals also reflect knowledge and content acquisition in the form of assessing disciplinary knowledge. As we have refined these goals over the last eight years they have become points of emphasis in our curriculum and our faculty members have embraced them in the classroom.

**How, where, and when assessed:** This year’s assessment ran fairly smoothly regarding the dissemination of pre and post tests as well as the rubrics for assessing critical thinking, message creation, writing, etc. Furthermore, there were several reminder e-mails that were sent out to faculty and students about the importance of students participating in the overall department survey. We continue to spread out the assessment load across the faculty and ask for random samples from classes rather than entire class data in an effort to increase compliance.

**Expectations:** Our expectations are specific and can be tracked over time. Accompanying our rubrics are evaluation descriptions that define desired outcomes across each score and measure and we’ve spent ample time as a faculty discussing student expectations over the past few years. This year there is some concern that our rubric averages are low because of a lack of data. Quite a few rubrics that were handed out to faculty at the end of the academic year were not returned, potentially artificially lowering our average scores. The Associate Chair will address this issue with faculty at the August 2018 retreat. The goal is to revise the procedure for distributing the rubrics so that they are distributed, and faculty are reminded via email and face-to-face conversations to return completed forms.

Given that we are still falling short on disciplinary knowledge goals, the Associate Chair will address this issue with faculty during the August 2018 retreat to determine what can be done differently this coming academic year. Already, senior faculty who teach in the individual option areas have been contacted and informed of the posttest results. Faculty in the Broadcast News and Electronic Media Production option have expressed concern over the failure to distribute and return the posttest for the third year in a row. This is especially a concern with the launching of the Television & Video Production major this fall. As we begin this new major, it is crucial that we have accurate data to assess its progress. A discussion will take place at the faculty retreat this fall, and it is the recommendation of the Associate Chair that the faculty who teach the introductory and capstone courses for all option areas should be fulltime faculty who are not only invested in assessment outcomes for the department, but are also a part of the conversations regarding the importance of assessment. The difficulty the past year has been the necessity of using many adjunct faculty as our fulltime faculty numbers were severely depleted through resignations, retirements, and a year-long sabbatical. We have been fortunate to find qualified adjunct faculty to teach courses for us, but they have been understandably disconnected from departmental goals. The revision of the Broadcast News and Electronic Media Production option area, and the launching of a new major, both with clear introductory and capstone courses, should eliminate the problems we’ve had with faculty participation in assessment as these will only be taught by fulltime faculty. Finally, we are very pleased with the improvement of the Corporate Communication and Interpersonal Communication option areas. For the past several years the posttest averages in both have been disappointing. But with revision of the measurement instruments, and reassessing which courses should more reasonably serve as capstones, we are seeing improvement. The averages are still below where we’d like them to be, but the improvement is encouraging.

**How results will be used:** In the past, reporting on assessment has been given a permanent time slot in our fall faculty retreat in August. This year, the assessment duties were folded into the Associate Chair position. The Associate Chair will continue to share the data at the faculty retreat and discuss how and where we can implement the knowledge we have gained. Assessment has become part of our departmental culture and the expectation is that this information will be used by faculty to improve student learning. We believe this year’s data demonstrates a number of areas for classroom emphasis and that will be the focus of our presentation in the fall. It is clear that the methods used over the last few years have increased awareness of assessment and the role it can play in the future of the department. Over the past year, the different option areas have engaged in discussions about how courses can be revised to provide more focused instruction of the learning goals, and to more conscientiously transfer knowledge from course to course. We will see significant changes in our curriculum in the upcoming academic year with introduction of two new majors (Communication & Organizations, and Television & Video Production), two new minors (Radio Minor, and Television & Video Production Minor), and revising the Communication Studies major to replace the Broadcast News & Electronic Media Production option area with a Mass Communication option area. We also anticipate revising our core course list and standardizing all option areas with a goal of recruiting students, simplifying advising, and improving assessment. These changes have given us added incentive to scrutinize the content of our courses and our teaching methods to provide intentional instruction of university and departmental learning goals.

**PART THREE**

Summarize changes and improvements in **curriculum, instruction, and learning** that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

We have now gathered enough data to learn about our students’ learning. The most important way we’ve used the data has been to define and guide faculty focus for student improvement. As our assessment continues to define what our students are struggling with, we can continue to find ways to refine our teaching and class content to their needs—in particular, within the areas of disciplinary knowledge. There have been discussions among faculty in the different option areas to address key concepts that should be reinforced to assist students in transfer of knowledge across courses.

Overall, while our students seem to be competent in areas such as critical thinking, writing, etc. the assessment data also demonstrate that our students are not making the progress we desire as they move from 2000 to 4000 level classes. For example, while our seniors are competent in their writing and critical thinking, they are not meeting our overall expectations. It is particularly concerning that our seniors score lower in critical thinking than do those students in our 2000 level courses. With only one 4000-level course returning rubrics, we believe that we do not have enough data to accurate assess student progress, the data we do have is of concern. This will be a major area of discussion during the fall retreat.