

# Bergen Community College

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## ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

**Assessment Period:** 2016 - 2018

**Department/Program:** Communication

**Department Chair:** Elin Schikler

**Department Assessment Liaison:** Gina Costa

**Date Submitted:** 12/15/16

❖ **Program Description or mission/goal statement of the Department/Program:**

The Communication Option degree program prepares students to transfer into the junior year of a liberal arts baccalaureate program for advanced undergraduate and graduate studies in the field of Communication or other liberal arts major. The program includes courses that teach theories, principles and practices of effective and ethical communication in a range of personal, public, visual and mediated contexts. The option in Communication is appropriate for students focusing on many areas of study as well as professional careers. A concentration in Communication is often selected by students going into education, business, marketing, public relations, law, social work, criminal justice and political science.

❖ **Program Learning Goals/Outcomes:**

- Demonstrate the ability to speak effectively in personal, social, academic, and business situations.
  - Learn and apply methods in researching, organizing, delivering, and evaluating formal and informal speeches.
  - Understand the body of research in related content areas
  - Demonstrate knowledge of theories of communication, analysis of effective speaking, interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.
  - Develop effective listening skills.
  - Demonstrate the ability to participate effectively in discussion groups.
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of messages in our society.
  - Develop awareness of and understanding of culture and diversity as well as demonstrate effective communication skills in cross cultural situations.
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## SEMESTER 1: CREATING PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLAN

### 1. Program Learning Goal(s) or Outcome(s) to be assessed (from the above section):

Faculty members in the Communication Department discussed courses in the discipline that would be useful to assess. Speech Communication (COM 100) was assessed in 2010 – 2012 and 2012 – 2014. Intercultural Communication (COM 114) was assessed in 2014 – 2016. The department determined that it would look at Public Speaking, COM 102 to assess program learning outcomes this assessment cycle.

We decided to assess the key learning outcomes that are linked to the essential gen ed goals and to the critical thinking skills that are required in order to demonstrate competence in those areas. We picked the most important intellectual skills to assess and selected assignments that require competence in those areas. The assignment used will be the persuasive speech, which is the last major speech of the semester.

The two Program Learning Goals that will be assessed are:

- Demonstrate the ability to speak effectively in personal, social, academic and business situations.
- Learn and apply methods in researching, organizing, delivering, and evaluating formal and informal speeches.

### 2. Means of Assessment:

In order to assess the two program learning goals listed above, the Public Speaking (COM 102) course will be used. This course is one of the two Communication courses (the other is COM 100, Speech Communication) that fulfill the General Education requirement for a communication course. It also is taken by students who choose the A.A. Liberal Arts - Communication Option. The means of assessment will be the final major speech of the semester which is the persuasive speech.

Students will be graded on their competence in researching, organizing, and delivering a formal speech at the end of the semester. The following rubric which contains 10 areas of competence will be evaluated using a 5-point scale:

- Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion
- Communicates the thesis/specific purpose in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion
- Develops logical main points and sub-points that support the thesis
- Provides appropriate supporting material based on the audience and occasion
- Cites credible sources when research is necessary and appropriate to elaborate on thesis
- Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion, and purpose
- Uses language that is appropriate to the audience, occasion, and purpose
- Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity to heighten and maintain interest
- Uses pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate to the designated audience
- Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message

The rubric that will be used is “The Competent Speaker Final Speech Evaluation Form,” developed by Professor Jane Phelps in 2012 to evaluate the 10 areas of competence (revised in 2016). It is based on the Speech Communication Association(SCA) rubric that was designed in 1993 and was validated by the National Communication Association as a means to assess public speaking skills. Professor Phelps revised the SCA rubric to expand the grading scale from three to five to reflect the expanded areas of competence being assessed in COM 102. This was discussed with the CIE Institutional Research group. It was necessary to make this revision to get more useful data since we will be assessing a smaller population than the NCA had used to validate this instrument. The rubric and the rubric explanation are attached. The rubric is made available to students prior to completing the speech assignment.

▪ **Feedback from Dean:**

What is the research basis for these two goals? i.e. how does the research support the conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of these two goals? (Answer is above)

Will the rubric be available to students? Yes

How was the rubric validated? Were psychometric studies done? It was validated by the National Communication Association and is based on the SCA rubric designed in 1993. The rubric was and revised by Professor Jane Phelps by exploding the grading scale from three to five areas of competence.

## **SEMESTER 2: DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT TOOL (s) and TIMELINE**

### **3A. Describe or attach assessment tool (s), including sources of data, timeline for data collection and how data will be analyzed.**

It is projected that there will be 11 sections of Com 102 offered in the Fall 2017 semester; 9 sections will be taught by full-time faculty; 2 will be taught by adjuncts. There are no hybrid or evenings classes offered. One class will be taught at the Meadowlands campus.

Data will be collected from 8 sections of COM 102. All classes are daytime face to face classes; one is taught by an adjunct. Four full-time faculty members will be grading and assessing the data collected from the 8 sections. The assignment used will be the Persuasive Speech which is a required presentation in all public speaking classes.

The rubric that will be used is “The Competent Speaker Final Speech Evaluation Form,” developed by Professor Jane Phelps in 2012 to evaluate the 10 areas of competence (revised in 2016). It is based on the Speech Communication Association(SCA) rubric that was designed in 1993 and was validated as a means to assess public speaking skills. Professor Phelps revised the SCA rubric explanation to reflect the expanded areas of competence being assessed in COM 102. The rubric and the rubric explanation are attached.

### **3B. Desired results faculty would like to see.**

The desired outcome is for 80% of students to demonstrate “Satisfactory” or above levels of competence on all 10 areas that will be evaluated.

#### **Feedback from CIE:**

GF 2/7/17: This is a good project!

## **SEMESTER 3: COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA**

### **4. Summary of Results (aggregated data table, survey tool, etc., are attached)**

As predicted, data was collected from 8 sections of COM 102.

- 7 courses were taught by full time faculty; 1 by a part time adjunct.
- 6 sections were traditional face to face classes; 2 were hybrid classes.
- A total of 152 students were assessed.
- Four full-time faculty members gathered and calculated the findings.

***The Results Tally Sheet including numbers and percentages is attached.***

#### **Specific Findings:**

Our desired outcome was for 80% of students to demonstrate “Satisfactory” or above levels of competence on all 10 areas that will be evaluated. This desired outcome was achieved in 9 out of 10 areas.

The only area which fell below the desired outcome was criteria #3 “Cites credible sources when research is necessary” in which 75% of students achieved satisfactory or above rating.

In 8 out 10 areas, more than 91% of students displayed a satisfactory or above rating, which shows that students demonstrate competency in almost all areas of presenting a major speech.

The areas that scored the highest were:

- Using appropriate language at 99%
- Choosing an appropriate topic at 98%
- Using proper pronunciation, grammar and articulation at 98%
- Communicates thesis or purpose at 87%
- Uses appropriate physical behaviors at 95%

The areas that scored lowest were:

- Cites credible sources at 75%
- Provides appropriate supporting material at 85%

These results indicate that students are very competent at choosing speech topics and communicating the thesis and purpose of their speech, both important qualities for persuasive speeches. In addition, students have displayed competency with the verbal and physical components of their speech delivery, which often is a source of fear for students when standing in front of an audience and presenting a speech. However, based on these staggering numbers, it seems students are effective at delivery a persuasive speech regardless of their public speaking anxiety levels.

## 5. Recommendations for Improvement:

Faculty need to create more lessons on conducting research, specifically citing research orally during speeches. Although each faculty member teaches those concepts, new strategies or lessons need to be developed in order for students to reach competency in that criteria. Although many students conduct research and understand citations in written assignments, it seems that oral citations are still difficult for them to grasp. There is a disconnect with plagiarism and citing when it comes to speeches and student often fail to cite their sources aloud in speeches.

Perhaps trips to the library, lessons on citing sources and showing examples of good research in speech speeches would help students with this issue.

Although this sample was diverse in that we used part-time and full-time faculty as well as face to face and hybrid courses, it might be helpful to assess an online COM 102 course if that is offered in the future. We can also expand the sample by assessing an Honors COM 102 class and a class from the Meadowlands campus.

### ▪ Feedback from Dean:

## SEMESTER 4: CLOSING THE LOOP AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

## 6. Use of Results:

The assessment liaison will ensure that knowledge gained in this assessment cycle in COM-102 will be shared with other communication faculty teaching the same public speaking course. The findings will be discussed at a department meeting and faculty will brainstorm ways to improve the one criteria of “citing credible sources when necessary” to ensure that future students display 80% competency, which was the desired result.

Communication faculty can also collaborate with English faculty and Library faculty to create ways to for students to understand the importance of plagiarism, citations and credible sources.

### Feedback from CIE:

**This assessment project confirms some other assessment projects, including the library, that show students have difficulty with citations. It might be worthwhile to see if the Speech program can**

work more closely with the library, English program and social science programs to see how we can all help students with citations and plagiarism.

It will be good if Communication faculty create assignments on citations that can be shared with all faculty.

## COM 102 ASSESSMENT FINAL RESULTS

|  | DESIRED OUTCOME |               |              |               |                | Percentage of desired outcome |
|--|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
|  | Excellent       | Above Average | Satisfactory | Below Average | Unsatisfactory |                               |
| 1. Chooses & narrows a topic appropriately for the audience & occasion.                  | 96              | 36            | 18           | 2             | 0              | 98%                           |
| 2. Communicates thesis/specific purpose.   | 89              | 35            | 24           | 4             | 0              | 97%                           |
| Develops logical main points & sub-points that support thesis.                           | 59              | 56            | 29           | 7             | 1              | 94%                           |
| 3. Provides appropriate supporting material based on audience & occasion.                | 45              | 52            | 33           | 17            | 5              | 85%                           |
| Cites credible sources when research is necessary & appropriate to elaborate on thesis . | 40              | 42            | 33           | 29            | 8              | 75%                           |
| 4. Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to topic, audience...                      | 44              | 50            | 45           | 13            | 0              | 91%                           |
| 5. Uses language that is appropriate...  | 82              | 46            | 23           | 1             | 0              | 82%                           |
| 6. Use vocal variety in rate, pitch and intensity to heighten & maintain interest.       | 58              | 54            | 32           | 8             | 0              | 95%                           |
| 7. Uses pronunciation, grammar & articulation to the designated audience.                | 95              | 35            | 19           | 3             | 0              | 98%                           |
| 8. Use physical behaviors that support verbal message.                                   | 58              | 54            | 33           | 7             | 0              | 95%                           |

**(TOTAL OF 152 STUDENTS ASSESSED)**