Course Assessment Summary Report
COMM 1233: Media, Community, & Citizenship

The department completed pilot testing the assessment plan for COMM 1233 during the 2016-2017 academic year. This included eight sections of the course offered during the spring, summer, and fall of 2016. The assessment plan called for all sections of the course to be assessed in Spring 2017, but problems with the course's Blackboard site prevented us from collecting pretest data. So the plan will not be fully implemented until Fall 2017.

Spring 2016

Three sections of the course were assessed in Spring 2016. Pretest and posttest average scores appear below. Aside from instructor review, the test items were not statistically analyzed. The test averages, though, show relatively flat growth patterns in all three sections. As both instructors of these classes were Visiting Professors in their last semester at UA, decisions about revisions in the course were postponed until new instructors took over the following fall.

Section	Pretest avg	# of students	Posttest avg	# of students
001	3.49	67	4.11	53
002	3.41	64	4.17	63
004	3.53	57	4.33	68

NOTE: all sections used a 10-item instrument drawn from the final exam

Summer 2016

Two sections were assessed in Summer 2016. In addition to class averages on the pretest and posttest, the instructor conducted a statistical analysis of the ten items on the assessment instrument. The Summer 1 section showed positive gains in student achievement from pretest ($\bar{x} = 4.70$, N = 42) to posttest ($\bar{x} = 6.81$, N = 33). The Summer 2 section showed positive gains in student achievement from pretest ($\bar{x} = 4.87$, N = 42) to posttest ($\bar{x} = 7.90$, N = 31).

The item analyses indicated that, overall, the assessment instrument is an adequate test of student outcomes in the course. Item difficulty scores varied widely in Summer 1 (.12 - .98), but not as much in Summer 2 (.61 - .94). Together, though, these results suggest that the assessment is showing course-related gains rather than knowledge students brought with them into the course. One item showed negative discrimination index scores (-.02) in both classes, suggesting that the item is not adequately distinguishing between students who show higher vs. lower achievement levels. The item should either be revised or excluded from future assessments. The remaining items showed discrimination scores between .29 and .71. When compared with their difficulty scores, it was determined that these items will be retained for future use.

Fall 2016

Three sections were assessed in Fall 2016, and the students enrolled were all COMM majors or minors. (The seats were dedicated during enrollment so that majors could maintain degree progress.) The same 10-item instrument was administered in both pretests and the course's exams. The instructor's data included only the percent of students answering each item correctly. No item analyses were conducted.

Section 004 (N = 32) showed positive gains in nine of the items. The percentage of correct answers on the pretest items ranged from 18.8% to 81.3% on the pretest and from 43.8% to 100% on the posttest. The

instructor noted that the tenth item showed negative learning gains, which might have been explained by the timing of the pretest. Problems with the Blackboard site delayed administration of the pretest until just after the content in that item had been presented in class.

Section 005 (N = 30) showed positive gains on all items. The percentage of correct answers on the pretest items ranged from 33.3% to 73.3% on the pretest and from 36.7% to 96.7% on the posttest.

Section 006 (N = 29) showed positive gains on all items. The percentage of correct answers on the pretest items ranged from 31.0% to 79.3% on the pretest and from 44.8% to 96.6% on the posttest.

Based on these results, we will conduct a statistical analysis of all assessment items in the Fall 2017 sections. High rates of correct responses on pretest items might indicate previously acquired knowledge, not course-related gains. If that is the case, course content and assessment procedures will be reviewed for possible revisions.

Conclusions

Based on these data and feedback from the instructors, the goals listed below have been set for course assessment in COMM 1003 during the 2017 – 2018 academic year. Implementation should ensure a more meaningful comparison of student outcomes across sections of the course.

- Assess only those learning objectives common to all sections of the course. Course instructors wishing to measure section-specific outcomes should do this by adding to the instrument, not by substituting items.
- Develop a larger pool of assessment questions for each objective. Instructors will approve these items for use, then choose a common set for each semester's assessment instruments.
- Analyze data on the same units of analysis to permit comparisons across sections/semesters. This should include overall scores, scores for item-sets in each course objective, and item analyses (both difficulty and discrimination index scores).
- Implement a report template for the reporting of results and conclusions of each assessment.

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