Course Assessment Summary Report, 2017-2018
COMM 1023: Communication in a Diverse World

COMM 1023 is an option in the social sciences core. The department implemented its assessment plan for COMM 1023 during the 2017-2018 academic year. During the year, four on-campus sections of the course were offered, all taught by the same full-time instructor. A total of 490 students enrolled in the course during this time period (with 75 – 150 students per section). This is a summary of the section assessment reports, which are available upon request.

Goals for the Assessment

Based on the results of the 2016-2017 assessment, we set four procedural goals:
1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. Implement a report template for the reporting of results and conclusions of each assessment.

Assessment Procedures

Based on the previous year's assessment, three faculty members (a tenured associate professor and two full-time instructors who have all previously taught the course) met in August of 2017 to address the first goal of standardizing course objectives across sections. Nine course-specific objectives emerged from that discussion and are reported in the assessment results below.

Instructors revised some of the items in last year's assessment instrument to specifically address these objectives. Ultimately, ten items were chosen for the pretest and posttest instruments. These revisions are a start at the goal of developing a pool of assessment items, but continued progress will be needed. Pretests were administered during the first week of classes. The posttest items were included in both midterm and final exams.

The last two assessment goals were achieved by developing a template for section assessment reports. Each section now reports class averages on the overall assessment and for items targeted at each course objective. In addition, the purchase of test scoring software now permits to calculate difficulty and discrimination scores for test items.

Assessment Results

The average scores (out of a 10 points) showed positive gains in student achievement from pretest to posttest:

	Pretest (N)	Posttest (N)
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	6.20 (83)	7.10 (79)
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	6.31 (139)	7.13 (140)
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	6.5 (74)	7.3 (67)
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	6.30 (145)	7.40 (133)

Course Objective 1: Match the best method of inquiry for varied types of communication research (1 item)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	0.36	0.54
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	0.40	0.48
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	0.56	0.63
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	0.45	0.62

Course Objective 2: Recognize milestones in the history of the communication discipline (1 item)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	0.36	0.54
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	0.40	0.48
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	0.56	0.63
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	0.45	0.62

Course Objective 3: Compare multiple communication models and theoretical perspectives (5 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.80	3.18
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.84	3.16
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.81	3.38
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	2.68	3.40

Course Objective 4: Identify how context changes communication dynamics (5 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.80	3.18
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.84	3.16
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.81	3.38
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	2.68	3.40

Course Objective 5: Identify perception's role in interpersonal interactions (5 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.80	3.18
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.84	3.16
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.81	3.38
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	2.68	3.40

Course Objective 6: Discuss how intrapersonal communication influences the perception of others (5 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.80	3.18
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.84	3.16
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.81	3.38
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	2.68	3.40

Course Objective 7: Recognize how differences and similarities influence the way we relate to others (1 item)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	0.65	0.67
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	0.82	0.83
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	0.72	0.78
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	0.77	0.76

Course Objective 8: Identify the effects of interconnectedness on today's world (3 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.39	2.65
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.27	2.67
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.38	2.57
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	1.29	2.61

Course Objective 9: Recognize strategies for intercultural communication (3 items)

	Pretest	Posttest
Fall, Sec 1 (85 students)	2.39	2.65
Fall, Sec 2 (149 students)	2.27	2.67
Spring, Sec 1 (74 students)	2.38	2.57
Spring, Sec 2 (150 students)	1.29	2.61

Summary of Instructors' Comments & Feedback

The instructional staff from the Fall 2017 semester commented that satisfactory overall gains in student achievement were observed. This was not consistent across course objectives, however, as some objectives showed very minimal gains in learning outcomes.

That staff also reported some concerns about the assessment instrument itself. Several items showed negative point biserial scores, indicating reliability issues with those items. In addition, two items showed very high pretest scores, indicating that they tapped pre-existing student knowledge rather than learning outcomes of the class.

In addition, those reports observed that items testing at least two of the course objectives appear to have serious concerns regarding face validity. They recommended reviewing and revising the course objectives (possibly reducing the number of objectives to only those that are addressed throughout the semester rather than just in a particular unit of the course).

No comments were provided after the spring semester assessment.

Conclusions

Based on these results, the following goals will be set for the 2018-2019 course assessment of COMM 1023:

- Previous and current instructors will meet to review and revise course objectives.
- That staff will also review potential assessment items from course exams, identifying a pool of at least 10 items targeted at each course objective.
- Course objectives will be paired with learning outcomes in the social science core.
- The instructional staff will take steps to address any potential reliability and validity issues with the assessment instruments.
- The section report template will be revised to present results for both course and core learning outcomes.

Submitted on June 1, 2018

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