

**Communication, Media, and Theatre Arts
Communication Program - Undergraduate
Assessment Methodology**

Method:

The Communication Area will assess the Undergraduate Program in Communication using facilitated, faculty focus groups and outcome portfolios.

Rationale:

Learning outcomes for the Communication program are reflected in multiple courses in the curriculum. For example, the ability to construct and present a message to public audiences is an outcome associated (at differing cognitive levels) with no less than five courses.

We believe that classroom instructors naturally participate in foundational assessment practices. Instructional staff create assignments intended to reflect student learning. They subsequently collect data from those assignments (assessments) and reflect upon what students have learned. That understanding leads to adjustments in instructional strategy and/or the learning outcomes for the assignment (or course) and/or the method of the assignment itself. These practices are the foundations for program assessment as well. We are committed to using naturally occurring, pedagogically embedded assessments rather than assessments administered independent of regular course instructional plans.

Basic Method:

- Focus groups will consist of instructors (faculty, lecturer, adjunct. GTA as appropriate) teaching key courses in the program at multiple levels (200-400).
- Focus groups will work on a single outcome each.
- Focus group membership will represent different courses in which the designated outcome is indicated on the program curriculum map
- Focus groups will, using a series of guided conversations and reflections, design an instrument to assess an outcome portfolio reflecting different student work across multiple courses.

General Procedure:

Each member of the focus group will bring an assignment and exemplar of student work from his/her class which reflects student learning for that outcome

Focus groups will discuss:

- common/differing understanding of the outcome
- common/differing values in the student work exemplar
- common/differing challenges presented in the student work sample

Additionally, focus groups will:

- identify common values/understanding/language associated with the outcome
- identify indicators of student learning based on common themes above
- suggest levels of performance associated with the indicators

Finally, focus groups will:

- create a common rubric for application to an outcome portfolio of representative student work (appropriate assignments from various courses addressing the designated outcome)
- provide analysis of the data to answer questions (including but not limited to):
 - what are students learning in program courses related to the selected outcome?
 - how does student work, in different courses associated with a single outcome, reflect learning at different cognitive levels?
 - what does the assessment data suggest about teaching and learning in the program?
 - what does the data suggest about the program's learning outcomes?
 - what do assessment results suggest about the assessment methodology?