Professional Writing Program Assessment Report
2019-2020

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I. Communication Studies Program Mission and Educational Objectives

A. Program Mission

The Communication Studies Program prepares students for the challenges of a society that is shaped by communication. As participants in the program, students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visual communication and practice skills in group and intercultural communication.

B. Mission Alignment

The Communication Studies degree typically culminates in an externship, offering students a chance to practice their target career with a current professional. Prior to that hands-on experience, Communication courses offer a variety of open-ended projects and opportunities to engage with professional or public communities as objects of study for research (e.g. COM 326: Communication Research) or practice (e.g. COM 425/426: Mediation and Mediation Practicum).

As every student's 36-credit focused sequence (see below) creates a unique degree program, innovation is a regular feature of the curriculum – students' programs of study vary as much as the students themselves. AY 2018 saw the development of a new introductory-level Communication technologies course (COM 135) meant to support other Communication Studies courses and Business/Marketing courses many students take in their focused sequence. This course will be piloted in AY 2019, with initial artifacts collected for a longitudinal assessment across technology-oriented courses addressing COM PSLO 5.

C. Additional Information

The Communication Studies program fills a niche in the Human and Professional Communication world by offering students the opportunity to design a major particular to their career goals. All students are required to complete 36 credit hours in courses of their choosing, forming a Focused Sequence tailored to their individual professional goals. These courses may come from within the Communication department, but many students enroll in courses from Business, CSET, and Psychology to gain specific technical expertises in addition to the interpersonal communication knowledge and skill they gain in a Communication Studies program.

The diversity of our students' career goals results in a graduate body that does not conform to a single mold. Graduates have pursued careers in law enforcement, education, management and marketing, while others have moved on to Communication-focused graduate programs. Each student is guided by their advisor to craft their focused sequence. The student to faculty ratio in our

program (69:13 across AY 2018, 48:13 in Fall 2018, Week 4) allows students to work with an advisor with some expertise in their career goal.

Focused Sequence information can be found in II. F. Learning Experiences.

II. Program Description and History

The Communication Studies program fills a niche in Communication programs nationally. Rather than focus on content production within a specific medium (e.g. television or radio broadcast) or on the dynamics of interpersonal communication, the Communication Studies B. S. gives students the flexibility to craft their own program of study. Students do gain experience in content production through courses like COM 248: Digital Media Production and COM 309: Communication Technology in Use, and they do gain experience in interpersonal communication through OIT's general education requirements and courses like COM 205: Intercultural Communication and COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution. However, these experiences are the foundations for students to develop their specific professional interests.

III. Program History: AY 2014 to Present

The Communication Studies program was revised and approved by the CPC in Winter 2014. All new courses within the major have been rolled out, but many courses in the major are offered once per year or once per two years. As a result, limited PSLO data has been collected in many of these courses. Within the same department, the Professional Writing program was approved in Winter of 2017 and its first courses launched in Winter 2018. While it is a distinct program from Communication Studies, the two share many faculty and some courses. As this report discusses in section V: Assessment Cycle of Student Learning Outcomes, the PSLO assessment cycle is undergoing active revision to more efficiently assess these programs. This revision will be complete in AY 2021-2022.

A. Program Locations

All Communication Studies students are located on the Klamath Falls campus, but the department is developing hybrid and online offerings to make the major more appealing to students in other locations. Communication faculty are present on the Klamath Falls campus (9 full-time, 1 single-year contract), the Portland-Metro campus (2) and online (1).

The program serves primarily Communication Studies majors, but also serves students in other fields interested in communication-related course work to complement their chosen major.

B. Enrollment and Retention Trends

According to FAST data, there were 43 total Communication Studies majors in Fall 2019, including 11 first year students, 8 sophomores, 6 juniors and 14 seniors. 10 additional students joined the major during AY 2019.

	AY 2017	AY 2018	AY 2019
Total Students	46	51	51
Graduated by End of Year	11	14	18
Retained from Previous Year	23	27	38

Table 1: Communication Studies B. S. Enrollment and Retention

Retention numbers are presented above by class standing and only count students persisting from year to year. As the Communication Studies program has many students who transfer in from Community College programs or from other programs at OIT mid-year, common retention data focused on first-time freshmen would not accurately describe our retention figures.

C. Program Graduates

In AY 2019, 18 students graduated with a Communication Studies B. S. Other students also majored in Population Health Management, Nursing, Business (Accounting Option), and Applied Psychology. One Communication Studies student also received the Dispute Resolution Certificate offered by the department.

D. Industry Relationships

The Communication department as a whole does not maintain industry relationships beyond its advisory board, which includes school board members, Jeld-Wen employees and members of the community.

During AY 2019, the Communication department continued its membership in the MadCap Scholar Program, which grants access to the professional MadCap Flare suite of technical writing applications for students (normally $1,799 per license).

E. Learning Experiences

In April of 2021, two students presented papers at the Northwest Communication Association's annual conference, along with many of their faculty. Their work was presented at the same level as graduate students and faculty from universities across the Pacific Northwest.

F. Program Changes

The Communication Studies B. S. has no programmatic changes from AY 2018 to AY 2019 due to formal assessment data. Curricular changes in AY 2019-2020 were largely the result of COVID and a move to fully-online or hybrid classes.

AY 2019-2020 saw the second iteration of COM 135: Communication Software following informal program assessment (focus groups and a review of assignments and student work). The course has been largely successful in addressing concerns over technological preparedness and will continue into the future as an alternative to the major's required MIS courses on Microsoft Office.

AY 2019-2020 was initially slated as a time to test and review new approaches to PSLO 5 (Use technology to communicate effectively in various settings and contexts). The additional variables

introduced by the university's COVID response made this an inappropriate year to begin that process, so more formal work will begin in AY 2020-2021.

IV. Program Education Objectives and Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

A. Program Education Objectives

Upon completion of the Communication Studies program, students should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate communication skills across settings, purposes, and audiences.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and application.
3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well-founded perspectives related to the students' emphases.
4. Build and maintain healthy and effective relationships.
5. Use technology to communicate effectively in various settings and contexts.
6. Demonstrate appropriate and professional ethical behavior.

B. Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking
2. Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication
3. Apply communication theories
4. Understand opportunities in the field of communication
5. Use current technology related to the communication field
6. Respond effectively to cultural communication differences
7. Communicate ethically
8. Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges

C. Origin and External Validation

The program objectives are reviewed annually by the department and at each advisory board meeting. They are implicitly discussed at each CSAC (Communication Studies Advisory Committee) meeting, occurring twice per academic term, as individual students' programs of study are reviewed.

The Communication department has not yet begun external validation of these outcomes nor assessment of student proficiency after graduation.

V. Curriculum Map

The AY 2017 assessment report concluded that the existing curriculum map's focus on individual courses for particular PSLOs and the resulting assessment cycle was suboptimal for a small program with such rapidly changing programs of study (i.e. focused sequences). As a result, a fuzzy ISM analysis (Singh & Garg, 2007) was conducted on courses taught during AY 2018 to begin remapping the curriculum according to faculty perceptions of where each PSLO was emphasized. This mapping process is intended to be recalibrated academic each year. Most courses are taught by the same faculty member or small group of faculty members each year, likely resulting in minimal change in

the map over time, but it is believed that this continual recalibration of our map will improve the data received in our annual assessment cycle.

The maps from AY 2018 are reproduced here, as additional data collected in AY 2019 did not significantly change the weighting of individual courses and PSLOs on each other.

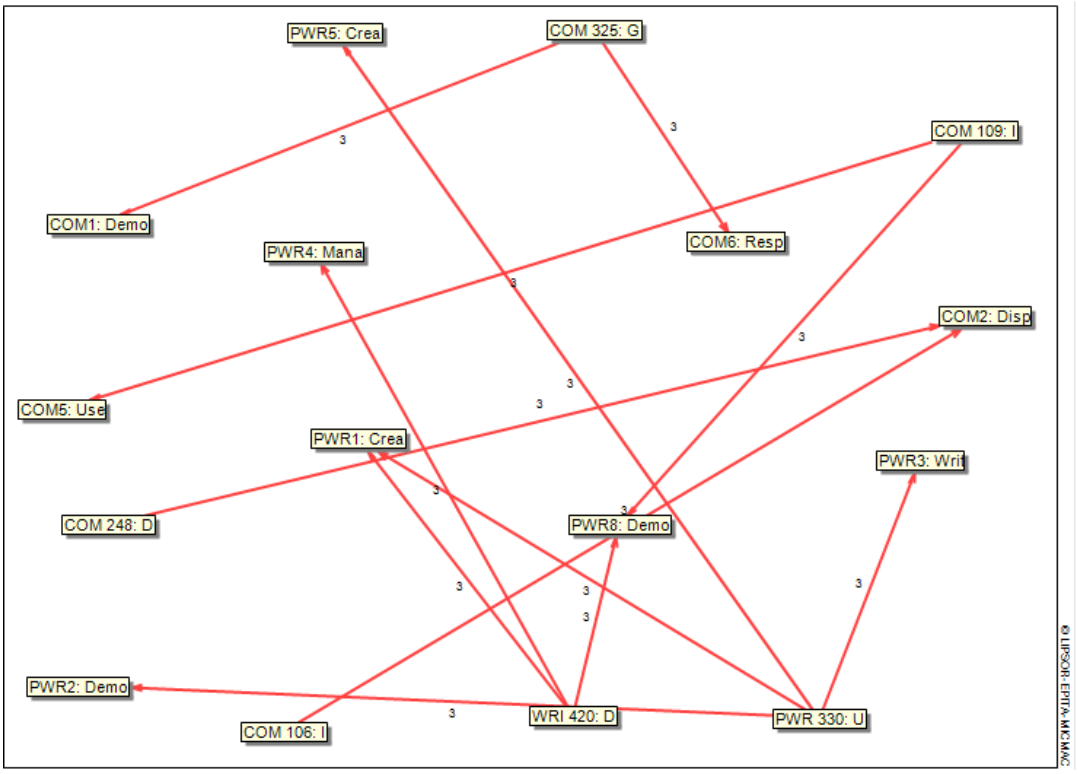

Figure 1: MICMAC Direct Influence Graph, Strongest Influences Only (cf. Godet & Bourse, 2010)

Figure 1 above shows the courses and PSLOs[1] with the most direct, dependent connections to each other – what we might consider the core of our program. Figure 2 below, while more difficult to read, shows the degree of connection between courses and PSLOs with some influence on each other. These maps were generated using the LIPSOR MICMAC method developed by Godet and Bourse (2010). Arrow-heads on lines indicate the direction of influence.

This map was developed by asking each faculty member teaching an in-major course during AY 2018 to rate the importance of each PSLO in determining a student's final grade. Ratings were ranked nominally as **Necessary**, **Important**, **Tangential** or **Not Assessed**. In the LIPSOR method, impactors are rated on a scale from 3 (strong influence) to 0 (no influence) on other

[1] Maps include both COM and PWR prefixes. Communication and Professional Writing course sequences have several overlapping courses, and department faculty teach in both areas. Additionally, Communication and Professional Writing have several similar PSLOs. Rather than attempt to extricate Communication-specific data from the complete set, this report and the Professional Writing report will present shared curriculum mapping data.

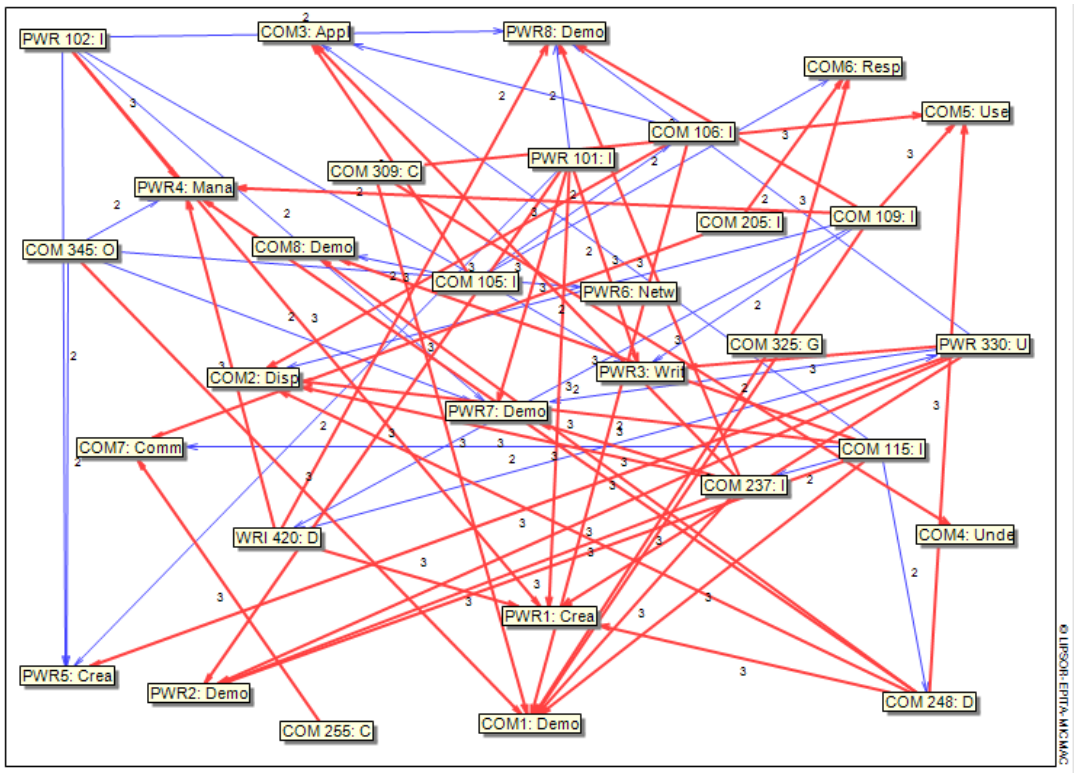

Figure 2: MICMAC Direct Influence Graph, Strongest and Relatively Strong Influences Only (cf. Godet & Bourse, 2010)

variables, and the software then uses these ratings to determine the structural relationships between variables based on those impacts. In our map, if demonstration of a PSLO had a definite impact on a student's grade (the Necessary rating), this was ranked as a 3. Important ratings were ranked as 2, Tangential as 1 and Not Assessed as 0. Because faculty in the Communication department often rotate courses between each other, it is assumed that their subjective evaluations need no additional external validation (Buyserie, Macklin, Frye, & Ericsson, 2020).

Course	**COM 1** Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking	**COM 2** Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication	**COM 3** Apply communication theories	**COM 4** Understand opportunities in the field of communication	**COM 5** Use current technology related to the communication field	**COM 6** Respond effectively to cultural communication differences	**COM 7** Communicate ethically	**COM 8** Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges
COM 104: Introduction to Communication	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 105: Introduction to Communication Theory						✓		
COM 106: Introduction to Communication Research		✓			✓			
COM 109: Introduction to Communication Technology	✓				✓			
COM 115: Introduction to Mass Communication	✓	✓					✓	✓
COM 135: Office Software		✓			✓		✓	
COM 205: Intercultural Communication						✓	✓	
COM 216: Essentials of Grammar and Punctuation		✓						
COM 225: Interpersonal Communication		✓	✓			✓	✓	
COM 237: Introduction to Visual Communication	✓	✓						
COM 248: Digital Media Production		✓			✓			✓
COM 255: Communication Ethics							✓	
COM 276: Democracy and Media	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 301: Rhetorical Theory and Application	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 305: Contemporary Rhetorical Theory	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 309: Communication Technology in Use	✓		✓	✓	✓			
COM 325: Gender and Communication	✓					✓		
COM 326: Communication Research	✓		✓				✓	
COM 345: Organizational Communication I	✓							

COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 358: Communication and the Law	*Insufficient rating data*							
COM 424: Capstone	✓	✓		✓				
JOUR 211: Publication / Student Newspaper	*Insufficient rating data*							
SPE 314: Argumentation	*Insufficient rating data*							

Table 2: Preliminary Curriculum Map by PSLO and Course

VI. Assessment Cycle of Student Learning Outcomes

Along with recalibrating the curriculum map each year, the Communication department collects artifacts across several courses offered, with several faculty members rating a sample of them on all PSLOs. This method follows a model put forth by Buyserie et al. (2020). It assumes that all faculty in an academic program can act as expert readers of student work produced in that program. While the method loses some finer definition of individual students' performances in each artifact, it does allow for wide-spread data collection and comparison within an individual program.

This method is especially appropriate for the Communication Studies program, as many of our students progress through core program courses in a different sequence from that listed in the OIT Catalog—whether that is due to transferring in with several upper- and lower-level courses satisfied, changing majors mid-career at OIT *after* taking some core courses as general education requirements or simply taking courses out of the listed sequence due to scheduling needs. As a result, what may be a "foundational" course in a PSLO (e.g. COM 109: Introduction to Communication Technology, offered each Spring) might be taken after an "intermediate" or "reinforcing" course in that same PSLO (e.g. COM 248: Digital Media Production, offered each Winter).

This report will include a discussion of each PSLO as measured in several Communication Studies courses in AY 2019-2020.

VII. Summary of 2019-2020 Assessment Activities

The Communication Studies faculty participated in formal assessment of the Teamwork Essential Studies Learning Outcome. Direct and indirect assessments of all PSLOs are discussed below.

Indirect assessments were formed by taking up to five years (AY 2015-2019) of final grade data from FAST, examining student performance in a series of courses (described below). In previous reports, this data was compared to responses in the Student Exit Survey, broadly measuring the agreement between students and faculty about their performance in these outcomes. This inexact process helped fill the gaps in artifact gathering. Only one student graduating in 2020 responded to the Exit Survey, and they only responded to the numerical questions. Without any text responses to contextualize their high ratings of the Communication Studies program, this data cannot be used effectively here.

Direct assessments were conducted through Portfolium. **Direct assessments** were conducted using a career-long, nominal scale. This scale is not intended to be used by untrained or non-expert raters, and therefore does not intend to be reliable if used by individuals outside the Communication department's current faculty roster. Instead, the goal is to be both reflexive and trustworthy (cf. Lincoln & Guba, 1985), prompting faculty discussion of student performance and desired changes. The scale is presented in Appendix C: Direct Assessment Rating Scale.

Due to limited bandwidth for collecting and rating artifacts, the direct assessment data below focuses on COM 255 (Communication Ethics) and COM 309 (Communication Technology in Use), but they are contextualized across student performance in all Communication Studies courses.

As there is some overlap in courses relevant to each PSLO discussed in this report, readers are encouraged to consult Table 2: Preliminary Curriculum Map by PSLO and Course above to see how each course fits in the curriculum overall. Course descriptions are included in Appendix B: Assessed Course Descriptions.

Indirect assessment data includes both final grades and exit survey data (where applicable). The final grade tables are presented in ascending order. While these courses are not experienced in a direct progression from top to bottom in this table, lower-division courses are generally taken prior to upper-division courses. This cross-section likewise does not track the trajectory of individual students over time, but it does suggest the type of progression we might observe in Communication Studies students over their academic career. The courses included in each table are those where faculty rated an individual PSLO as **Necessary** to for grading in the course (see V: Curriculum Map).

A. Indirect Assessment of PSLOs: Final Grades

1) PSLO 1: Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking

	AY 2015-	2019		AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM109	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	63.16%	21.05%	15.79%	Survey of communication technologies
COM115	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	38.46%	46.15%	15.38%	Survey of mass comm. strategies
COM237	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	30.43%	65.22%	4.35%	Visual rhetorical strategies
COM309	80.77%	19.23%	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	Application of comm. technologies
COM325	63.33%	36.67%	0.00%	85.71%	0.00%	14.29%	Analysis of gender and comm.
COM326	39.02%	53.66%	7.32%	29.41%	64.71%	5.88%	Research methods in Communication
COM345	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	17.65%	82.35%	0.00%	Strategies for organizational comm.
COM424	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	Capstone

Table 3: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 1 Highly

Table 3 shows the final grades for all students in AY 2019-2020 in courses that value critical and innovative thinking highly. A majority of students perform at a satisfactory or greater level (as indicated by a passing grade or greater), but a *decreasing amount* of students perform below satisfactory level as their careers progress. As the "goalposts" for critical thinking become continually more challenging as courses increase in level, we can read the consistent bulk of B/C grades as students consistently rising to each course's expectations for this PSLO.

Areas of Pride: Students in Capstone (a Spring course) are those preparing to graduate that term or before the next offering. Capstone is both a review of in-major material leading up to that course and preparation for professional life (or graduate school) following graduation. Because Spring 2020 was the beginning of COVID restrictions, a large part of Capstone's focus was on preparing for a professional world with significant social distancing requirements and remote work expectations, both in the immediate future and as planning for the next such pandemic or other disaster. As Communication Studies students at OIT do not have a single career path following this degree, this exercise required a substantial willingness to innovate and find new ways of doing what they were prepared to do in a quickly changing world.

Areas for Improvement: Courses in the "technology sequence" (here, COM 109 and COM 309, the introduction to and application of communication technologies) show some slipping in innovative strategies for communication across technological platforms. The faculty teaching these courses have begun working on better ways to transition students from one course to the other, but trustworthy assessment data will not be available until AY 2021-2022.

2) PSLO 2: Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM106	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	18.18%	54.55%	27.27%	Intro. to research in Communication
COM115	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	38.46%	46.15%	15.38%	Survey of mass comm. strategies
COM135	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	Intro. to common comm. software
COM216	80.77%	19.23%	0.00%	30.00%	45.00%	25.00%	Grammar and style for written comm.
COM225	63.33%	36.67%	0.00%	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	Strategies for interpersonal comm.
COM237	39.02%	53.66%	7.32%	30.43%	65.22%	4.35%	Visual rhetorical strategies
COM248	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	78.57%	21.43%	0.00%	Comm. strategies in many media
COM424	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	Capstone

Table 4: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 2 Highly

Table 4 shows final grades in courses that value written, oral, and visual communication skills highly, typically in the form of adhering to specific external expectations for that mode of communication

(e.g. following a style manual or cultural norms). This cross-section shows a regular (and, comparing introductory to Capstone courses, substantially) *decreasing* amount of below-expectation performance and a moderate trend towards performance above expectations.

Areas of Pride: The courses above cover a wide range of media and modes of communication. COM 106 and COM 115 both emphasize traditional, academic writing in the form of research and analysis papers, while COM 237 and COM 248 combine analysis and production of multimedia documents (e.g. infographics, videos) and COM 424 includes regular oral communication. The trend towards above-expectation performance is noteworthy as students spend their programs of study learning a variety of techniques to communicate successfully with audiences.

Areas for Improvement: Many of the courses with students performing below-expectations are typically taken during a student's first year in the Communication Studies program—whether they are a traditional first-year college student or changing majors from another degree path at OIT. COM 106 (offered in Spring 2020, during the initial curricular changes due to COVID) and COM 216 (offered in Fall 2019) both have the largest amount of students struggling with this PSLO. While some of these numbers do reflect on the preparation of students prior to entering the program, the Communication department may consider strategies to support students who may be learning research strategies and advanced grammar for the first time.

3) PSLO 3: Apply communication theories

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM225	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	Strategies for interpersonal comm.
COM309	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	Application of comm. technologies
COM326	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	29.41%	64.71%	5.88%	Research methods in Communication

Table 5: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 3 Highly

Table 5 shows the final grades for courses that value a robust understanding of theories of communication. Unlike other performance discussed here, this PSLO sees an *increasing* trend toward below-expectation performance over time.

Areas of Pride: As noted in the Learning Experiences section on page 5, many students from COM 326 presented their final course projects at the Northwest Communication Association regional conference in Spring 2020. OIT students regularly present these projects at the conference, and the changes in conference structure due to COVID did not deter them.

Areas for Improvement: The *decreasing* performance in courses over time and informal discussion among Communication department faculty suggests that this is an area where students struggle. Communication theories are taught in many courses, as individual media and modes of communication tend to be studied with a very specific lens. As a result, knowledge from a course

like COM 225 (Interpersonal Communication) may not appear immediately useful in a course like COM 309 (Communication Technology in Use). The Communication department may consider structuring the exposure to theories of communication more explicitly to make connections between courses more accessible to students.

4) PSLO 4: Understand opportunities in the field of communication

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM309	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	Application of comm. technologies
COM424	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	Capstone

Table 6: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 4 Highly

Table 6 shows the final grades for courses that emphasize an understanding of professional opportunities. Most of the students in COM 309 (Fall 2019) were also in COM 424 (Spring 2020) for this data set, so there is some longitudinality to these numbers. Overall, these numbers show a *decreasing* amount of below-expectation performance and an *increasing* amount of above-expectation performance.

Areas of Pride: There has been an increase in emphasis on this PSLO across the department in the last few years. While it is not a **necessary** to outcome for doing well in a course across the Communication Studies program, students are used to connecting individual courses to their career objectives. COM 309 and COM 424 both make this an explicit requirement, either by asking students to anticipate changes to their career field and understand their ability to adapt (in COM 424) or by assigning course projects that directly copy expectations of many work environments that Communication experts may face (in COM 309).

Areas for Improvement: As Communication Studies students approach graduation, they submit their program of study and a rationale for their Focused Sequence to the Communication Studies Advisory Committee (comprised of all faculty teaching in-major courses). This committee approves or recommends revision to Focused Sequences if a student still has enough terms until graduation to make meaningful change. To augment understanding of this PSLO, future assessments should include notes about proposed revisions and preparation for professions after graduation.

5) PSLO 5: Use current technology related to the communication field

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM106	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	18.18%	54.55%	27.27%	Intro. to research in Communication
COM109	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	63.16%	21.05%	15.79%	Survey of communication technologies
COM135	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	Intro. to common comm. software
COM248	80.77%	19.23%	0.00%	78.57%	21.43%	0.00%	Comm. strategies in many media

COM309	63.33%	36.67%	0.00%	36.36%	54.55%	9.09%	Application of comm. technologies

Table 7: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 5 Highly

Careers in Communication are defined both by the ability to convey and collect information between humans and by the media or technologies that we use for that process. Table 7 shows final grades in courses that place significant value on the use of *current* technologies (e.g. specific software, websites, or equipment) as part of the course's grading schema.

Areas of Pride: The general *decrease* in below-expectation performance and the general *increase* in above-expectation performance (particularly in COM 109, COM 135, COM 248 and COM 309, which comprise the "technology sequence" of courses).

Areas for Improvement: COM 309 stands out as a place where students struggle again with communication technology. While this data only reflects AY 2019-2020, discussion among the faculty who teach this course suggests that the data are not atypical. This course in particular asks students to not only operationalize their technological skills to a greater degree than other courses, it also asks them to use communication theories and research strategies to create complex, high-quality final products. The faculty teaching this course have begun working on strategies to improve outcomes at this level, but the PSLO data in this report suggest that COM 309 may need to borrow curricular approaches from COM 424 to allow students to transfer their knowledge into the course more easily.

6) PSLO 6: Respond effectively to cultural communication differences

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM105	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	69.23%	30.77%	0.00%	Intro. to theories of communication
COM205	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%	Strategies for intercultural comm.
COM225	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	Strategies for interpersonal comm.
COM325	80.77%	19.23%	0.00%	85.71%	0.00%	14.29%	Analysis of gender and comm.

Table 8: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 6 Highly

Responding to cultural differences effectively is a cornerstone of Communication Studies as a discipline. It is little surprise that Table 8 shows generally high performance in courses that make this PSLO a **necessary** requirement of the course, as this PSLO is also valued at as least **tangential** to 15 of the 21 core courses in the Communication Studies program.

Areas of Pride: In general, where students are asked to explicitly describe or operationalize theories of intercultural communication, they perform well. This is a general strength of Communication Studies students.

Areas for Improvement: COM 325 (Gender and Communication) is the only course that highly values this PSLO where students did not *all* meet or exceed expectations. While the numbers do not indicate that any immediate action is necessary, the fact that students performed *either* above or below expectations is cause for further evaluation in AY 2020-2021.

7) PSLO 7: Communicate ethically

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM115	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	38.46%	46.15%	15.38%	Survey of mass comm. strategies
COM135	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	81.25%	12.50%	6.25%	Intro. to common comm. software
COM205	72.41%	27.59%	0.00%	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%	Strategies for intercultural comm.
COM225	80.77%	19.23%	0.00%	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	Strategies for interpersonal comm.
COM255	63.33%	36.67%	0.00%	70.59%	29.41%	0.00%	Strategies for ethical communication
COM326	39.02%	53.66%	7.32%	29.41%	64.71%	5.88%	Research methods in Communication

Table 9: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 7 Highly

Table 9 shows final grades for courses that value ethical communication strategies, whether that's read as following citation and attribution guidelines (COM 115, COM 326), understanding ethical theory in the realm of Communication Studies (COM 255), or communicating with others in a culturally appropriate form (COM 205, COM 225).

Areas of Pride: Communication Studies students generally perform well in this PSLO, as many of its expectations align with other program outcomes, like demonstrating skill in written communication (which includes citation and attribution) or skill in cultural understanding (which includes understanding the ethics of other cultures).

Areas for Improvement: The data do not suggest a need for curricular changes in regards to this PSLO.

8) PSLO 8: Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges

	AY 2015-2019			AY 2019			
	A	B/C	Below C	A	B/C	Below C	Course Focus
COM115	22.22%	62.96%	14.81%	38.46%	46.15%	15.38%	Survey of mass comm. strategies
COM248	78.57%	21.43%	0.00%	78.57%	21.43%	0.00%	Comm. strategies in many media

Table 10: Final Grade Performance in Courses that Value PSLO 8 Highly

While all Communication Studies courses value group communication and teamwork, COM 115 and COM 248 place a high enough value on discussion and group-work that this outcome is **necessary** to do well in the course. As Communication Studies is not an especially large program, students of all levels tend to have strong interpersonal bonds going into most classes. The data in

Table 10 are not surprising, then. In COM 248 in particular, students worked in small teams to create short, narrative films (part of the Teamwork ESLO assessment process).

Areas of Pride: Communication Studies students perform well in group projects, small group discussions and full-class discussions.

Areas for Improvement: The data collected here and the data collected through the Teamwork ESLO assessment do not suggest a need for curricular change.

B. Indirect Assessment of PSLOs: Exit Survey

As noted above, the Exit Survey data was not included as only one student responded.

C. Direct Assessment: COM 255 and COM 309 Student Work

Student artifacts from COM 255 and COM 309 received sufficient ratings from department faculty to be included here for direct assessment. As noted in Table 2, COM 255 and COM 309 value PSLOs 1-7 highly. Because the assessed assignments are similar in nature (determining an appropriate communication strategy on an ethics-oriented subject for a specific audience), they are aggregated by course and disaggregated by student standing. Students who were not Communication Studies majors were removed from this data set.

Class Standing	*Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking*	*Display competence in oral, written and visual communication*	*Apply communication theories*	*Understand opportunities in the field of communication*	*Use current technology related to the communication field*	*Respond effectively to cultural communication differences*	*Communicate Ethically*
Senior	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 2 **Beg. Student**: 3 **Unobserved**: 1 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 2 **Adv. Student**: 3 **Beg. Student**: 1 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 0 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 3	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 0 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 6	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 1 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 1 **N/A**: 4	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 3 **Beg. Student**: 1 **Unobserved**: 2 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 5 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 1 **N/A**: 0
Sophomore	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 2 **Beg. Student**: 4 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 1 **Adv. Student**: 3 **Beg. Student**: 1 **Unobserved**: 1 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 0 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 1	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 0 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 1 **N/A**: 5	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 0 **Beg. Student**: 0 **Unobserved**: 3 **N/A**: 3	**Expert**: 0 **Adv. Student**: 2 **Beg. Student**: 2 **Unobserved**: 2 **N/A**: 0	**Expert**: 1 **Adv. Student**: 2 **Beg. Student**: 3 **Unobserved**: 0 **N/A**: 0

Table 11: Aggregate Student Performance on Coursework Valuing PSLOs 1-7

Table 11 breaks down student performance on the assignments described above according to faculty judgment of the quality of their work and their class standing. As noted in Appendix C: Direct Assessment Rating Scale, the ratings do not correspond directly with course levels, but we assume that "Expert" performance is something we would expect of someone who was working professionally, while "Beginning" and "Advanced Student" are performances we would expect from students who had just begun the Communication Studies program or had several terms of work behind them, respectively.

Senior students (n = 6) performed generally as we might expect in these courses, typically at an Advanced Student level. Lower ratings may have been the result of the particular assignment assessed, as students may not have felt a need to be particularly innovative or challenging, but instead simply needed to apply course theories or frameworks to the problem at hand.

Sophomore students (n= 6) likewise performed generally well, at rates similar to Seniors in each relevant PSLO *except* for PSLOs 5: Use Technology… and 6: Communicate Ethically. However, only PSLO 5's ratings raise concerns, as students were judged by faculty as either not needing to use appropriate technology for this particular assignment or that the faculty member simply could not observe the use of technology appropriate to the field. COM 135 was created for precisely this gap observed in previous years, but it is too soon to tell if it is working as intended.

VIII. Action Plan

As a result of formal and informal data collected in AY 2018, the Communication department has the following goals.

A. AY 2020 recommendations from this report

The data collection and assessment process was complicated by COVID effects and continued staffing problems over the past year: Communication Studies department faculty have too many commitments. While four of the ten department faculty were able to rate and review student work, Portfolium does not dynamically allocate artifacts to participating raters. Even if we had more time to rate student work (which was unlikely for two raters), the assessment tool did not facilitate that well. **It is recommended that future direct assessments take place in person, similar to the ESLO "Assessment Days" events, which would allow immediate follow-up and discussion of ratings.**

For **PSLO 1 and 5**, faculty teaching in the "Technology Sequence" have already begun finding ways to better align course curricula to set students up for success in critical thinking.

For **PSLO 2**, faculty teaching courses common to students' first year in the Communication Studies program should work with students to create better supports for those who have not encountered research writing, advanced grammar or other course concepts prior to enrolling at OIT.

For **PSLO 3 and 4**, more explicit discussion of communication theories and professional opportunities in the field of communication would likely prepare students better to contextualize and understand their coursework in a larger framework.

B. AY 2019 recommendations from AY 2018 report

COM 135 artifacts were collected from Fall 2019. Additional ratings of those artifacts were not included here due to limited availability of raters during Winter and Spring 2020 and AY 2020, when artifacts from the previous year are rated. COM 135 artifacts were collected for assessment in Fall 2020, and that analysis will be included in the AY 2020-2021 report.

C. Ongoing

As discussed in the Summary of Activities section, the Communication department has shifted its assessment strategy to sample a broad set of artifacts from as many courses as possible each term. Because Communication Studies is a smaller program, this will allow us to measure achievement across the entire program each year rather than focusing on a small number of students in a few courses each year.

IX. Closing the Loop

A. AY 2017 Report: Longitudinal Tracking

The AY 2017 report suggested that longitudinal tracking of student development could be a more meaningful data collection method than taking snapshots of individual courses each year. While this report only examines artifacts from a small set of courses, the change has led to conversation on additional ways to improve our programmatic assessment using disciplinary methodologies, such as focus grouping faculty and student feedback or performing natural language processing of survey and reflection data.

B. Continuing Conversations

While the loop has not fully closed yet, the Communication department has begun work on several large-scale revisions to its program. Some of this has involved the creation of new courses, and that course creation has underscored the need to hire more faculty to handle both general education offerings and the specific technical skills we teach. This has also led to further discussion of a departmental laptop requirement or other methods of solving technological access problems.

Ultimately, while these conversations center on the allocation of financial and institutional resources, our ability to act on them is limited to (a) faculty who are willing to teach out of load until searches are approved or (b) faculty who are willing to be creative in scheduling access to institutional spaces and resources necessary for these new curricular changes to take effect.

X. References

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Singh, R. K., & Garg, S. K. (2007). Interpretive Structural Modelling of Factors for Improving Competitiveness of SMEs. *International Journal of Productivity and Quality Management, 2*(4), 423-440.

Appendix A: Ethical Reasoning ESLO Rubric

Ethical Reasoning Rubric (2018-19 Assessment)

DEFINITION
Ethical reasoning is the process of recognizing which decisions require ethical judgements, determining potential reasonable courses of action, finding support for potential courses of action, and then selecting the course of action best supported.

CRITERIA				
	High Proficiency (4) The work *meets listed requirements* for this criterion; little to no development needed.	**Proficiency (3) The work *meets most requirements*; minor development would improve the work.**	**Some Proficiency (2) The work needs moderate development in *multiple requirements.***	**Limited Proficiency (1) The work does not meet this criterion: it needs substantial development in *most requirements.***
Theory: Student demonstrates knowledge of different ethical theories and codes.	The student demonstrates a developed knowledge of different ethical theories and codes, and provides rationale for their preferred theory or code.	The student demonstrates a developed knowledge of different ethical theories and codes.	The student demonstrates a basic knowledge of different ethical theories or a code. Student understands the difference between ethics and law.	The student exhibits no knowledge of different ethical theories and codes. The student may confuse legal and moral codes.
Recognition: Student can recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments.	The student is able to successfully recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments without prompting, and can clearly explain to others why they require ethical reasoning.	The student is able to successfully recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments without prompting.	The student is able to recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments with prompting.	The student is unable to recognize decisions requiring ethical judgments.
Logic: Student demonstrates knowledge of the logic of ethical reasoning.	The student can formulate and test plausible moral principles* and apply them to a case to derive a course of action.	The student can formulate basic moral principles* and apply them to a case to derive a course of action.	The student can take an existing moral principle* (possibly from a code of ethics) and apply it to a case to derive a course of action.	The student exhibits no knowledge of the logic of ethical reasoning, and/or applies it improperly/inadequately.
Judgment: Student can make and support plausible ethical decisions.	The student is able to apply ethical reasoning to novel situations and provide detailed support for their decisions, as well as refuting other possible decisions.	The student is able to make plausible ethical decisions and support them at a competent level. At this level, the student begins to generalize their reasoning to similar situations.	The student is able to make plausible ethical decisions, but their support may be rudimentary or underdeveloped.	The student does not make or support plausible ethical decisions.

XI. Appendix C: Direct Assessment Rating Scale

Communication Studies PSLO scoring uses a nominal rating scale based on the quality of student work. It is intended to cover the range of possibility in a student's work from their first term through graduation. The descriptions are intentionally left broad and subjective. As Communication technology and practices change frequently, and as each Communication student crafts their major for their own narrow career goal, the scale assumes that faculty have the expertise necessary to judge the quality of work according to these broad categories (cf. Buyserie, Macklin, Frye, & Ericsson, 2019, forthcoming).

Expert: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for a Communication professional. This is work that could be used as a class resource.

> e.g. PSLO 6: Respond Effectively to Cultural Communication Differences. The artifact might demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural needs of its audience as well as additional audiences that may encounter the work. The artifact does not compromise the values of its creator's culture.

Advanced Student: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for someone with training in it but who is still learning its application. This is work that is rough around the edges.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact might demonstrate awareness of or sensitivity to the cultural needs of its audience, but it may do so imperfectly. It might also compromise the values of its creator's culture.

Beginning Student: This outcome is demonstrated at a level appropriate for someone just learning about it. This is work that shows an ability to identify or understand the outcome, but not necessarily apply it.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact might state its audience's cultural values or needs but not demonstrate any sensitivity to them.

Unobserved: This outcome could be demonstrated in the artifact, but it is not.

> e.g. PSLO 6: The artifact may be written entirely from the creator's cultural standpoint.

N/A: The outcome cannot be demonstrated in the artifact.

> e.g. PSLO 6: A student asked to create a PowerPoint template for a fictional client may not have any way to demonstrate awareness of different cultural communication values.

XII. Appendix D: Direct Assessment Assignment Prompts and Rubrics

A. COM 255

COM255—Communication Ethics
Final Paper—Requirements
Worth 300 Points

Due on Friday, 6/12/20 (uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 p.m.); no late papers accepted

As explained in our text, particularly in chapters 1, 2, and 4, people have different views of "the good," and those views are based on established narratives. When people take these narratives about "the good" for granted, these views become "common sense" to those who hold them.

For this final paper, you are going to find an issue for which there are two clear opposing sides (examples include, but are not limited to, gun control, abortion, samesex marriage, marijuana legalization, assisted suicide, etc.). This paper will have three related yet distinct parts.

1. Explain one side of the issue. You need to avoid value-laden language.
    a. In your explanation, please cite at least three sources (they do not have to be academic). You are going to explain what this side considers "the good," and **you will explain the narrative that underlies this view** of "the good." (summary and sources=40 points; 25 for the summary, 5 for each source [15 points for sources)
    b. From there, you will briefly overview how this narrative and view of "the good" became commonsensical for those who hold such a view; you may find it helpful to discuss overarching cultural events that tie to the narrative. (15 points)
    c. You need to tie in at least one ethical theory that underlies this view of "the good." Be sure to cite at least one outside academic source as you fully explain the theory and apply it to this view. *I will post a link to the most common ethical theories on our Blackboard page, and we will work with these handouts early in the term.* (30 points; 20 for the theory connection and analysis, 10 for the academic source)
2. Explain the other side of the issue. You need to avoid value-laden language.
    a. In your explanation, please cite at least three sources (they do not have to be academic). You are going to explain what this side considers "the good," and **you will explain the narrative that underlies this view** of "the good." (summary and sources=40 points; 25 for the summary, 5 for each source [15 points for sources)
    b. From there, you will briefly overview how this narrative and view of "the good" became commonsensical for those who hold such a view; you may find it helpful to discuss overarching cultural events that tie to the narrative. (15 points)
    c. You need to tie in at least one ethical theory that underlies this view of "the good." Be sure to cite at least one outside academic source as you fully explain the theory and apply it to this view. *I will post a link to the most common ethical theories on our Blackboard page, and we will work with these handouts early in the term.* (30 points; 20 for the theory connection and analysis, 10 for the academic source)

3. Explain your own view.
    a. In your explanation, be sure to explain how you were first introduced to the narrative and its corresponding view of "the good." (20 points)
    b. From there, explain how this view became common sense to you. (20 points)
4. Finally, explain how this exercise can allow you to communicate more ethically with those who share a different view than you. (20 points). Additionally, you need to tie in at least one of the other contexts we have learned about (interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, or public sphere). Specifically, address how understanding different views of the good can allow you to be more interpersonally, interculturally, or organizationally competent. (30 points)

Since this is an academic paper, you will need to have an intro with a thesis, body paragraphs linked by transitions, and a conclusion that ties everything together. You need to use correct APA formatting for both in-text citations and the reference list. Finally, grammar, mechanics, and spelling all count. For the detailed points breakdown for writing and APA, please see the rubric. (40 points total)

B. COM 309

Our second project will extend your analysis in the first. Now that you have identified what makes a good content strategy work, we need to find a client with a bad strategy in need of revision.

For this project, you will need to *find* the following out in the wild:

- An existing media campaign that fails to deliver its message or delivers a counterproductive message in some way.

You will then need to produce:

- At least *two* mock-ups of new texts*, each in a different medium, fixing the failing campaign. Ideally, you should revise a text that already exists, but you can certainly create one whole cloth if you want to. This process should involve at least one piece of software or tool you've learned in COM 109, COM 248, PWR 102, COM 135/MIS 101-103, or any other course with a focus on media production.
- A *brief* report (1) documenting the failings of the existing campaign and (2) assessing the impact of its failings on its audience.
- A memo explaining your revisions/new texts* to your client and why they're an improvement.

*"Text" here refers to any document, object, audio/video message or other *thing* that you could revise. You cannot revise a human's actions.

Deliverables

Mock Ups (15 points)

Your mock-ups should be detailed enough that your client would understand what the final product would look like -- pencil drawings on a Burger King napkin are not acceptable (under most circumstances), but a very detailed PowerPoint or a well-executed cell phone video (with some cleanup) could be all your audience needs. The focus here is on creating a system of documents that all contribute to the overall message rather than expecting a single document to do all of the work.

Campaign Analysis (10 points) and Assessment of Flaws (10 points)

Your report should analyze this failing campaign in the same way your Project 1 report analyzed a successful campaign. You are free to do a short summary of campaign aspects that are successful and instead put greater effort to analyzing what's failing and why. This analysis must include discussion of the campaign's target audience and the message that the audience is meant to receive.

Additionally, your report should assess the particular flaws that you want to fix in your mock-ups. This assessment should include a specific discussion of what your mock up will need to do in order to demonstrate to your audience that you've *fixed* the problem.

Release Memo (5 points)

At the conclusion of this project, you will write a brief (1-2 page) memo to your client explaining why your fixes have solved the problem.

Criteria	Ratings				Pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Mock Ups - Rhetorical Effectiveness	9 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	7 pts High Quality Mock ups convey their intended message *and no other message.* You have fixed the problem identified in your report and/or memo.	3.5 pts Satisfactory Mock ups convey their intended message. You have fixed the problem you identified in your report and/or memo.	0 pts Unsatisfactory Mock ups fail to convey their intended message.	9 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Mock Ups - Quality	6 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	5 pts High Quality Mock ups have all the major structural features of a	3 pts Satisfactory Mock ups show that you have some skill with the	0 pts Unsatisfactory Mock ups are extremely low quality.	6 pts

Criteria		Ratings			Pts
		finished product, but may lack some of the polish of a professional text.	technology(ies) used to produce them.		
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Campaign Analysis - Key Terms	2 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	1.7 pts High Quality You discuss MEDIUM, MODES, CHANNELS and AUDIENCE for at least one aspect of the failed campaign, and you address several of these terms in other aspects of the campaign. You connect some of these discussions together.	1 pts Satisfactory At minimum, you discuss MEDIUM, MODES, CHANNELS and AUDIENCE for at least one of the failing aspects of the campaign.	0 pts Unsatisfactory You fail to connect any of the terms we used in class to the campaign you're analyzing.	2 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Campaign Analysis - Connections to Readings	4 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless. A good way, but not the only way, to achieve this rating is to *also* include references to readings from other courses (e.g. COM 109, COM 301/305, COM 115).	3.5 pts High Quality You reference several of our readings in discussing the failures of the campaign.	2 pts Satisfactory You discuss at least one of our readings in analyzing the failures of the campaign.	0 pts Unsatisfactory You did not incorporate any of our course readings so far into your analysis.	4 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Campaign Analysis - Depth	4 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	3.5 pts High Quality Your analysis effectively isolates issues in failing components from the strengths of working components.	2 pts Satisfactory You provide enough analysis that it's clear where the campaign was working and where it was not.	0 pts Unsatisfactory Your analysis is surface level at best.	4 pts
This criterion is linked to a	5 pts	4.5 pts	2.5 pts	0 pts	5 pts

Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Learning Outcome Assessment of Flaws - Rhetorical Analysis	Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	High Quality You identify at least one major rhetorical flaw in this campaign. You analyze the nature of that flaw in enough detail that it's clear what your mock up will need to do to fix the problem.	Satisfactory You identify at least one major rhetorical problem in this campaign (in the construction of its message for its audience).	Unsatisfactory You do not discuss the rhetorical efficacy of this campaign in much or any depth.	
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Assessment of Flaws - Depth	5 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	4.5 pts High Quality You identify clear flaws in the existing campaign and explain how they muddle or distort the intended message. You connect those flaws to the MEDIUM, CHANNEL or other rhetorical choice by the campaign creator.	2.5 pts Satisfactory You identify clear flaws in the existing campaign and explain how they muddle or distort the intended message.	0 pts Unsatisfactory You might identify flaws, but you do not discuss them.	5 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Release Memo - Connecting Mock Ups to Audience	2 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	1.7 pts High Quality You explain how your mock ups clearly meet your client's needs. You discuss specific aspects of both mock ups.	1 pts Satisfactory You explain how your mock ups clearly meet your client's needs.	0 pts Unsatisfactory You do not explain how your mock ups meet your client's needs.	2 pts
This criterion is linked to a Learning Outcome Release Memo - Connecting Mock Ups to Report	3 pts Professional As "High Quality," but flawless.	2.7 pts High Quality You explain how your mock ups meet the needs you identified in your report. You draw attention to specific	1.5 pts Satisfactory You explain how your mock ups meet the needs you identified in your report.	0 pts Unsatisfactory You do not discuss any of the content of your report.	3 pts

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
	aspects of both mock ups.	