General Education Assessment Plan

Objective Review Committee Report

Objective: 2

Objective Review Committee Membership:

Chair: Catherine Gray

Member: Nancy Legge

A. Evaluate the assessment plan for each course, together with its implementation. Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

The 5-year review began in the Fall 2018 semester with all sections of COMM 1101 participating in the assessment plan. Each semester, all sections assessed all learning outcomes by reviewing speech outlines and sources, oral presentations, syllabi, and multiple choice questions in the final exam.   A common syllabus and final exam were used for all sections, including those offered in the College of Technology and in the Early College Programs.

The COMM 1101 instructors met each semester to discuss random samples of speech outlines with sources from those deemed "high quality" and "lowest passing grade" to discuss qualities appropriate to assess student learning, focusing on how to improve instruction. In addition, the syllabus was discussed at the same meeting each semester to discuss instruction plans and suggestions for improvements.

The competencies for Objective 2 were revised by the State Board of Education in 2021 and the revised assessment tools were to be used in Spring 2022. However, the results were incomplete with only four sections that provided results, so that information is not included in this report.

The assessment process appears to be very thorough and well-managed. Gathering the data for all student learning outcomes each semester may be a little excessive, although it provides a complete picture of the consistency of instruction and competencies learned in each of the various sections. The department requests feedback from a GERC representative during the assessment process and comments about the results. This would help them make revisions to their assessment and data gathering processes. They recognize the importance of assessment, but a more timely response so they can adjust instruction would be helpful.

B. Evaluate the assessment *outcome* for each course. To what extent are students in each course satisfactorily achieving the learning outcomes for the objective? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

For each student learning outcome, below are the percent of students that achieved each student learning outcome over the five-year period from Fall 2018-Fall 2021. Spring 2022 data were not included because the data were incomplete, due to problems with Early College Program instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants.

I.   Research, discover, and develop information resources and structure verbal messages to increase knowledge and understanding.
II.   Research, discover, and develop evidence-based reasoning and persuasive appeals for influencing attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
III. Understand interpersonal rules, roles, and strategies in varied contexts.
IV.   Effectively listen and adapt verbal messages to the personal, ideological, and emotional perspectives of the audience.
V.   Employ effective verbal and nonverbal behaviors that support communication goals.
VI.   Effectively recognize and critically evaluate the reasoning, evidence, and communication strategies of self and others.

REPORTING YEAR	Outcome I.	Outcome II.	Outcome IV.	Outcome V.	Outcome VI.
Fall 2018-Spring 2019:	78.1	74.2	74.6	78.6	72
Fall 2019-Spring 2020:	79	71	75	79	72
Fall 2020-Spring 2021:	80.44	73	76.2	79.88	72
Fall 2021-Spring 2022*:	75.5	72.98	79.52	83.16	76.66

*Spring 2022 had only one section reporting, and that section was very low. The complete AY21 is included here, however, noting that the scores for Spring 2022 are sparse.

The COMM 1101 coordinator was asked what the accepted level is for the students to achieve competency, and that is 70% competency. In addition, a benchmark level to demonstrate successful instruction for the course would be helpful. For example, recognizing that 70% of all students achieved all student learning outcomes, these scores would consider the COMM 1101 course successful.

The above scores reflect composite results, although there were many inconsistencies with the Early College Program (ECP) courses and courses taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA). Many of the ECP instructors and GTAs claimed to "not have time" to provide consistent feedback and often provided only a numerical score on each of the assessments. In addition, some ECP instructors and GTAs did not submit assessment results, and may not have given all assessments to students. As a result, several have not been retained as instructors, and striving for consistency among these instructors has become difficult.

C. Evaluate the list of courses currently approved to satisfy the objective. To what extent does the current list contribute to a strong, coherent system of general education. Would a reduction or increase in the number or variety of courses in this objective strengthen the overall system? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings. Describe any recommended changes.

The only course that satisfies Objective 2 is COMM 1101. The COMM 1101 coordinator strongly believes in the importance of the course to teach and practice oral communication and critical thinking skills, with a focus on the use of research, logic and evidence. These skills are essential to success in academic programs of study and in future employment.

The change to online instruction for many COMM 1101 sections has had a drastic impact on student learning and achieving the student learning outcomes. Students in online sections must watch recorded lectures, which lowers the level of engagement with the instructor and other students. In addition, they must record their speeches, which requires competency with technology that is not part of the communication learning outcomes.

The other concern is the concern about ECP sections offered through the high schools being taught and assessed with instructors that have not followed the syllabus developed by the department. There were several ECP instructors that did not submit the assessment results, and may not have assessed students based on the competencies developed by the State Board of Education. Although those instructors are no longer teaching the course through ISU, there are many students from those sections that may not have achieved those competencies. The COMM 1101 coordinator would like any high school students that want to enroll in the course to enroll in a standard section and participate via Zoom or online.

D. Evaluate the stated learning outcomes of this general education objective. Are there any problems with the learning outcomes as currently described, or ways in which they might be improved? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

The Student Learning Outcomes of COMM 1101 included these six competencies, which were assessed from Fall 2018-Fall 2021. The State Board of Education only required five competencies to be assessed, so #3 was omitted from the assessment process and reports.

I.   Research, discover, and develop information resources and structure verbal messages to increase knowledge and understanding.
II. Research, discover, and develop evidence-based reasoning and persuasive appeals for influencing attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
III. Understand interpersonal rules, roles, and strategies in varied contexts.
IV. Effectively listen and adapt verbal messages to the personal, ideological, and emotional perspectives of the audience.
V.   Employ effective verbal and nonverbal behaviors that support communication goals.
VI. Effectively recognize and critically evaluate the reasoning, evidence, and communication strategies of self and others.

In 2021, the State Board of Education revised the competencies, and these were to be assessed beginning with the Spring 2022 semester. However, there were many difficulties and few assessment results were

submitted, only data for four sections are available. This data was incorporated into the annual data, but not reported for the semester. Most of the competencies are comparable, although #3 of the old version was revised extensively and is #6 in the 2021 version below.

Upon completion of a course in this category, students are able to demonstrate the following competencies.
i.   Research, discover, and develop information resources and structure spoken messages to increase knowledge and understanding.
ii.   Research, discover, and develop evidence-based reasoning and persuasive appeals for ethically influencing attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
iii. Adapt spoken messages to the diverse personal, ideological, and emotional needs of individuals, groups, or contexts.
iv.   Employ effective spoken and nonverbal behaviors that support communication goals and illustrate self-efficacy.
v.   Listen in order to effectively and critically evaluate the reasoning, evidence, and communication strategies of self and others.
vi.   Demonstrate knowledge of key theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts in the Communication discipline, as applied to oral communication

COMM 1101 teaches all 6 of these competencies, but does not test for competency iii, although students do oral presentations. This aligns with the SBOE requirement that they address 5 of 6 competencies in our assessment.

No other changes are needed, these course goals are taught to prepare students for successful participation and performance in classes in all academic programs. Important critical thinking skills are taught, practiced and developed.

 E. Evaluate the objective itself and its place within the system of general education. To what extent does the objective, in its current form, contribute to a strong overall system of general education? Are there ways in which the objective could be modified to improve it? Could the system be improved with its elimination or replacement? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

No additional changes are needed to improve the objective in the role of providing general education to students. The course prepares students for successful participation in academic programs and develops presentation and critical thinking skills important for academic success. In addition, oral presentation skills and critical thinking skills are in demand for most employers in all career paths.

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