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COMM 286: Business & Professional Communication

**A Peer Review of Teaching Project
Benchmark Portfolio**

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ABSTRACT

This instructional portfolio is an inquiry into the a large, multi-section standardized course at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This course was recently flipped into a hybrid design in order to improve consistency in learning objectives across course sections, streamline assessment processes, provide a better student educational experience, and to manage continued growth in the course. This inquiry examines the effectiveness of the course in meeting stakeholder needs, reducing communication apprehension, improving student confidence to communicate effectively in professional environments, and in teaching professional communication competencies. It is a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the course to include student, GTA, and course director perspectives. Analysis includes professional reflection, evaluation of student performance across assessments, quantitative analysis of survey data collected from students, and qualitative analysis of open ended response data collected from students and GTAs. Results suggest both that the course is effective in meeting stakeholder needs and teaching communicative competencies across professional contexts and that there is room to improve the focus of the course. Results suggest a need to adjust learning objectives to de-emphasize interviewing skills and emphasize team communication skills in order to better meet the most pressing stakeholder needs in the current design of the course.

KEY WORDS: Business and Professional Communication, Hybrid Courses, Standardized Courses, Basic Communication Courses, Pedagogy

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Description of the Course.....	4
Course Goals	4
Course History and Context	4
Students	5
Role of Graduate Teaching Assistants.....	5
Teaching Methods.....	6
Course Materials.....	6
Course Organization	6
Course Learning Objectives	7
Course Assessments.....	7
Questions Driving Course Portfolio Project for COMM 286, Fall 2016.....	8
Method	9
Participants	9
Data Collection.....	9
Course Grades.	9
Student Case Examples.....	10
GTA Feedback.....	10
Data Analysis.....	10
Assessment Plan for Question 1.	10
Assessment Plan for Question 2.	11
Assessment Plan for Question 3.	11
Assessment Plan for Question 4.	11
Assessment Plan for Question 5.	12
Results	12
Course Learning Objectives (Question 1)	12
Student Demonstration of Public Speaking Competency (Question 2)	14
Course Impact on Communication Apprehension. (Question 2	14
Course Impact on Communicator Competence.	14
Course Impact on Student Confidence Across Key Competencies.....	15
Student Learning: Taking a Closer Look.	15
Definition of Communication (Question 3)	19

Effectiveness of Course Assessments (Question 4)	20
Quizzes.	20
Impromptu.	21
Individual Speech (Outline and Delivery).	22
Interview Protocol and Summary.	22
Team Organizational Analysis.	23
Effectiveness of Weekly Course Meetings (Question 5)	24
GTA Perspective.	24
Student Perspective.	25
Discussion	26
Summation of Lessons Learned	27
Planned Changes.	28
References	30
Appendices	31
APPENDIX A: Course Syllabus	31
APPENDIX B: CASTLE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY	39
APPENDIX C : Impromptu Assignment Description and Grade Rubric	41
APPENDIX D: Individual Outline Description and Rubric	43
APPENDIX E: Individual Speech Delivery Assignment Description and Grade Rubric	48
APPENDIX F: Team Organizational Analysis Assignment Description and Grade Rubric.	50
APPENDIX G: Pre-Post Test Survey Questions	57

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

COMM 286 is a large, multi-section business and professional communication course. It is a 2xx level course and as such, its primary focus is on the development of key skills for communicating in the business environment. The purpose of this course is to serve simultaneously as a survey course for the Communication Studies discipline and as a service course for other departments and colleges who need their students to take a course focused on developing oral communication competency. Couched in a business and professional context, the course content includes a broad overview of five specific areas of our discipline: organizational communication, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, small group communication, and speech communication. The overview of each of these areas provides a basic introduction to theoretical underpinnings and an emphasis on the development of communicative competencies associated with each area.

Course Goals

This course has several goals aimed at meeting the needs of multiple course stakeholders. These goals, however, have shifted over time as departmental and university needs have changed. For example, as a large basic course in Communication Studies, it has served for many years as both an opportunity to develop key communication competencies as well as one primary way for students outside the major to get a glimpse into what we do in this discipline in order to attract students to the major. Thus, the primary goals of the course at that time was to provide basic theoretical underpinnings and communicative skill development across four key areas of our discipline within a business and professional context. These areas included interpersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication, and speech communication. As this course is located within the Business and Professional context, its central focus was on helping students develop basic theoretical knowledge and competencies that will facilitate professional success. These goals have remained intact despite a significant structural re-design of the course in 2013 driven by departmental desire to provide a more streamlined educational experience for students and increased demand for the course campus-wide in the absence of increased resources for teaching the course itself.

Course History and Context

COMM 286 was re-designed in 2013 to a flipped format. Prior to this re-design, it was comprised of 12 independent sections of 40 students that met twice a week. These sections were taught by GTAs with the assistance of 2-3 undergraduate instructional assistants (IAs). These were students that had completed and excelled in the course and who were recommended by their instructors to become IAs. These IAs worked with the Assistant Course Director and the GTAs to whom they were assigned to learn how to teach and assess student work. In the 2013 re-design, we eliminated the IAs from the course structure, ensuring that student work was entirely assessed by the GTAs teaching each section. We created 24 sections of 24 students taught by GTAs, and replaced one of the two course meetings each week with a required online lecture. This common lecture served to increase consistency in content delivery across all 24 sections.

Several changes in departmental and university climate require a re-evaluation of the purpose of the course and how its learning objectives can be tweaked to better represent the current needs of existing stakeholders in the course. For example, the department of Communication Studies has developed an entry level basic course entitled COMM 101 that serves as a requirement for all Communication majors and provides a rich overview of the discipline. Thus, though COMM 286 must still represent the discipline of Communication Studies well for those students familiar with it, the need to cover the breadth of the discipline is no longer pressing for this course. Further, one of the primary stakeholders in COMM 286 has traditionally been students in the College of Business Administration (CBA), all of whom were required to take the course as a part of their program. In the last two semester, CBA has introduced an alternative to COMM 286, MRKT 257, resulting in a significant reduction of business students in our course, though they still comprise just under half of the student population. This move was fortuitous given that our department recently decided to remove our basic speech communication course from our curriculum (COMM 109). This course fulfilled the general education requirement for a multitude of other programs across campus and, with the shift in CBA students, COMM 286 was and is well positioned to absorb those students and help fulfill the necessary requirement, and, in fact, has, having grown from a 480 seat course to a course that seats between 576-624 students each semester.

Students

The course teaches a total of 1344-1488 students annually, with 576-624 students taking the course each fall and spring semester, and another 192-240 taking it over the summer session. The course fulfills the ACE 2 general education requirement, is an option for Communication Studies majors and minors, and is a requirement for several majors and professional programs across campus. In fact, many programs rely on this course to remain in compliance with their accreditation requirements. Thus, we have a wide variety of students in any given semester. The course is open to all levels, so our students range from freshmen to seniors, and they have a wide variety of interests and majors. They came from multiple colleges (e.g., Arts and Sciences, College of Business, Architecture, Engineering, College of Education).

Role of Graduate Teaching Assistants

The role of the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) has also shifted in these two re-designs. Their role initially was to teach the course as autonomous instructors that had full ownership and control over course content and assessment. They are now a part of a large lecture course running assessment periods. GTAs take ownership in teaching the course and assessing their students in order for them to work effectively with their students. This means they need some autonomy in the course processes. However, because the course is standardized and has to meet the specific needs of a wide variety of stakeholders, consistency in learning outcomes across sections is a priority. Further, GTAs come into this course with disparate levels of teaching experience. Some are already seasoned instructors who just need to get familiar with teaching here at UNL. Others are new to teaching at the collegiate level and need support/guidance on all aspects of teaching. In other words, an indirect objective of

this course is to meet the varying and often disparate needs of our incoming GTAs as they develop as teacher-scholars here at this university.

TEACHING METHODS

Course Materials

The primary materials used in this course are an e-book, online course lectures, and BlackBoard, the university learning management system (LMS). The e-book is a customized version of Adler, Elmhurst, & Lucas (2013) *Communicating at work: Strategies for success in business and the professions*. This customized book includes content that I designed specifically for this course. The lectures are specifically designed to build from and move beyond the content in the book so students can enrich their understanding of each concept. They also help to guide students toward completion of key assignments in the course. BlackBoard is essential to the course in that this is how we provide students with all of the content, extensive resources designed to facilitate their ability to master the content, navigate the course material, turn in assignments, contact and work with their GTAs.

Course Organization

The course is organized around one weekly online lecture and one weekly class meeting with the GTA teaching the section. The course shell provided for students in BlackBoard, UNL's current learning management system (LMS), is fully loaded with all course content organized by week for students to follow. Students are required to read assigned content from the e-book and watch the assigned lecture each week before meeting with their GTAs in a weekly course meeting. The weekly class meeting with the GTA is designed for students to take a quiz to assess their knowledge of concepts from the reading and the lecture and to apply those concepts as they develop the skill sets highlighted in the course.

Another central element of the course organization is GTA availability to their students via email, office hours and individual appointments. The GTAs who teach this course are committed to the success of their students. They offer in depth, constructive feedback to help students improve over the course of the semester. They maintain regular office hours to answer student questions and are responsive to student questions via email. They work tirelessly to support student learning in the course and their role in the course is critical to its success.

Given that there are 24 sections taught by 7-9 different GTAs each semester, we do several things to achieve consistency in learning objectives across sections. First, we work from a common syllabus, course policies, schedule, assignments, rubrics, and quizzes across all sections. Second, I've created an organization in BlackBoard for all COMM 286 GTAs that provides activity suggestions, guidance on managing the course, and serves as a means to communicate with all GTAs via email. Third, we meet as a team each week to review the weekly learning objectives, discuss potential activities to help students apply the concepts, review expectations for performance on all assignments in the course, and identify points in the course that need additional clarification. These meetings all serve as an opportunity for GTAs to talk over issues they are experiencing in the classroom, ideas for helping improve

student comprehension and engagement, brainstorm solutions to specific issues, and clarify expectations for student performance. GTAs with more experience routinely offer guidance and suggestions to GTAs with less experience. GTAs with new ideas share them in ways that can re-invigorate student engagement across sections. Finally, I regularly check in with GTAs and offer one-on-one guidance to them when they have questions about how to handle a particular situation.

Course Learning Objectives

The current learning objectives for this course are listed below:

1. **Use theories and concepts to analyze communication in the workplace**
2. **Plan and productively participate in effective team meetings**
3. **Develop teamwork skills and specific strategies to work effectively in teams**
4. **Plan and conduct information-gathering interviews**
5. **Research, organize, and deliver professional oral presentations**
6. **Attend more closely to your own verbal messages (both formal and informal), and make conscientious efforts to improve your oral communication skills**
7. **Understand and intelligently discuss communication issues and problems that affect contemporary organizations**

These learning objectives were each an integral part of the course after its 2011 curricular re-design. However, as the environment in which the course is situated and the primary stakeholders and their accompanying needs have changed, so too must these learning objectives. It has become particularly important to streamline these learning objectives in light of both the shifting context of the course and in accommodating the necessary structural changes in the course format. In short, though the primary purpose and overall structure of the course has changed in the last couple of years, the learning objectives have remained unexamined. This last piece of the re-design process will facilitate a more streamlined course that can better and more efficiently serve its purpose for all stakeholders.

Course Assessments

In evaluating the current course assessments, they match well with most of the existing learning objectives, with one glaring exceptions. Though students must learn how to plan and productively participate in team meetings to successfully complete the team project, we used to have an assignment that tied explicitly to this learning objective. We no longer have that assignment (a consequence of the flipped design).

The current assessments along with the learning objectives that they correspond with in the course are listed below:

1. **Weekly Quizzes:** Basic comprehension of all course concepts that provides a foundation for the development/enhancement of each identified skill set.
2. **Impromptu:** Attend to/improve informal verbal messages; deliver professional presentations

3. **Interview Protocol:** Plan and conduct information gathering interviews
4. **Interview Summary:** Plan and conduct information gathering interviews
5. **Informative Speech Outline:** Research and organize professional presentation; Use theories and concepts to analyze communication in the workplace
6. **Individual Speech Delivery:** Deliver professional presentation
7. **Team Organizational Analysis:** Use theories and concepts to analyze communication in the workplace; Understand and intelligently discuss communication issues that affect contemporary organizations; Research, organize, and deliver professional presentations; Develop teamwork skills and strategies to effectively work effectively in teams

It is clear that the current assessments in the course are effectively aligning with the current learning objectives. Thus, in making an adjustment to the course goals and the subsequent learning objectives to better reflect the changing context, structure, and ultimately, priorities of the course, I will need to adjust the assessments to reflect these changes. This will enable me to streamline the course even further and ensure GTAs are able to make the most of their weekly course meetings with their students.

QUESTIONS DRIVING COURSE PORTFOLIO PROJECT FOR COMM 286, FALL 2016

Question 1: Do the current learning objectives reflect the needs of the current stakeholders? The goal here is to ascertain whether or not the current learning objectives need to be streamlined and/or modified in light of three factors: (a) a shift in the departmental and university environment in which the course is situated, (b) a shift in the primary student population and, subsequently, stakeholder needs and (c) the 2013 structural re-design of the course.

Question 2: Is the course effective in helping students develop the primary communicative competency for which it is certified in the general education program at UNL? That is, does it help students learn how to better develop and deliver professional presentations (ACE 2)? This can be answered by answering three sub-questions:

- Does COMM 286 improve student ability to effectively develop and deliver professional presentations?
- Does COMM 286 reduce student communication apprehension?
- Does COMM 286 improve student confidence in public speaking situations?

Question 3: Does the course effectively teach students to embrace a more nuanced understanding of communication as a complex process?

Question 4: Are the current course assessments the most effective options and productive use of course resources (e.g. GTA time and attention) in teaching the most important skill sets?

Question 5: Given that class time is limited in a hybrid course, can weekly class meetings be made more effective in helping students apply relevant course concepts and develop communicative competencies?

METHOD

Participants

Participants included 541 students who completed COMM 286 in spring 2016. All course averages are based on this particular population. The quantitative analysis of student responses to the survey items was based on a subset of these students (N=190) who completed both the pre and post test surveys. The qualitative data in this analysis is drawn from a subset of respondents that answered the open ended questions included on the pre and post-tests (N=101). Student case examples were drawn randomly from the subset of students that gave consent to have their work included in this analysis.

Data Collection

Pre-Test and Post-Test. In order to answer the research questions posed in this portfolio, I did several things. First, I conducted a pre-test and a post-test in spring 2016. The survey consisted of a series of demographic questions, an area to give consent to use student work in this analysis, McCroskey's (1982) personal report of communication apprehension measure, Weinmann's (1977) communication competence scale, and an open ended text box in which students were asked to define communication. I also asked students to rate their confidence in developing and delivering a professional presentation, working in a team, conducting an interview, and communicating across professional situations. The post-test included space for students to respond to open ended questions about their experience in the course. The pre-test was administered online via Qualtrics in the first 2 weeks of the semester. The post-test was administered online via Qualtrics in the last 2 weeks of the semester. For both tests, students were provided in-class time and were also given the opportunity to respond outside of class. Students were asked to define communication and were given an open textbox in which to respond. Students who completed both surveys were awarded 5 points of extra credit in the course (this was one of several opportunities to earn extra credit over the course of the semester).

Course Grades. In order to get a clear sense of overall student performance and learning in this course, I took a look at average student performance across key assessments in the course. This includes overall student performance, performance on quizzes, performance on impromptus, individual outline, individual delivery, and team delivery. These data were used to understand how students perform on the primary skill set for which students take this course-learning how to develop and deliver professional presentations. Additionally, I evaluated improvement in performance on delivery from the first to the last student presentation.

Student Case Examples. In order to get a more in depth look at individual student learning, I randomly chose one student who had consented to having their work included in this inquiry from 6 of the 24 sections offered in Spring 2016. This represents 25% of the sections.

GTA Feedback. In order to get most comprehensive picture of this course, I spent all of spring semester soliciting informal and formal feedback from GTAs who teach the course. These GTAs range in experience both with teaching and with this course specifically. GTAs were invited to offer feedback in conversation with me, in formal meetings, as well as via an anonymous survey.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this inquiry consisted of qualitative and quantitative approaches. First, its important to recognize that my own reflection on my experiences in the course, the course history, the changing context, and the changing student population informs my analysis of the qualitative data. In sum, the qualitative analysis consisted of this personal reflection as well thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) in which I coded student responses to open ended questions about communication, what they value about the course, what is not valuable to them about the course, and what they'd like to see added to the course. After coding the data, clear themes emerged. Those themes are reported in this inquiry and ultimately inform planned changes in the course. I also identified 6 individual students and evaluated their performance on assessments associated with the public speaking competency to take a more in depth look at student learning of this competency over the course of the semester.

The quantitative analysis was relatively simple for this inquiry. First, I averaged student grades overall as well as on all assessments associated with the public speaking competency. I chose this competency because this is the primary reason students take the course (i.e., to fulfill their ACE 2 requirement or to fulfill a program specific requirement that specifies public speaking). Second, using SPSS statistical software, I ran several repeated measures paired sample t-tests to compare pre and post test means across several measures. First, I ran a repeated measures paired sample t-test to determine whether self-reported student communication apprehension was significantly less at the end of class than at the beginning. Next, I ran another repeated measures paired sample t-test to determine if self-reported student communicative competence was higher at the end of class than at the beginning. Finally, I ran 5 different repeated measures paired sample t-tests to determine if student confidence in organizing a professional presentation, delivering a professional presentation, working in a team, conducting a professional interview, and communicating in professional situations was higher at the end of the class than at the beginning. Below, I lay out specifically how I answered each of the questions driving this inquiry.

Assessment Plan for Question 1. This question asked if the current learning objectives reflect the needs of the current stakeholders. The best way to answer this question is through a critical reflection and evaluation of student and GTA feedback.

- Critical reflection on the current departmental environment (i.e., the role of this course for majors and minors in light of the development and growth of COMM 101, for servicing other departments in light of the elimination of COMM 109)
- Critical reflection on current university environment, to include continued demand for growth in the course. This reflection will include a consideration of the role of this course as an ACE 2 general education requirement, the introduction of an alternative course for business students, who historically have represented our primary student population, and an increasing interest in the course from professional schools
- Evaluation of student feedback on the most valuable elements of the course

Assessment Plan for Question 2. This question was aimed at understanding how well students learn how to better develop and deliver professional presentations and thus how well they meet the university ACE 2 general education requirement. I assessed this in several ways:

- Evaluation of overall student performance on assessments associated with organizing and delivering a speech (e.g., impromptu, individual outline, individual delivery, team organizational analysis)
- Assess whether the course significantly reduces communicative apprehension for students using pre-post test data
- Assess whether the course significantly increases communicative confidence across professional settings
- Assess whether student self-reported confidence was higher at the end of class than at the beginning of class across five key communicative competencies: organizing a professional presentation, delivering a professional presentation, working in a team, conducting a professional interview, communicating in professional contexts
- Select 6 students (one from ¼ of the sections) performing at different levels in the course and examine their performance on specific course assessments related to public speaking to determine if they improve in this skill set over the course of the semester

Assessment Plan for Question 3. This question was aimed at understanding how well the course helps to complicate students' understanding of communication. I answered this question by conducting a thematic analysis of student responses on the pre-post test.

- Thematic analysis of student definitions of communication at the beginning of the course (pre-test) and at the end of the course (post-test)

Assessment Plan for Question 4. This question asked if current course assessments are effective in supporting student learning across learning objectives. I answered this question by engaging in critical reflection as well as by conducting thematic analysis of student and GTA feedback.

- Critical reflection on whether or not current assessments match up with existing learning outcomes
- Critical reflection on whether/how assessments (graded and non-graded) need to be adjusted to reflect any changes in learning outcomes that result from this analysis
- Thematic analysis of student feedback from post-test
- Thematic analysis of GTA feedback about the course

Assessment Plan for Question 5. This question asked if the weekly course meetings could be more effective in reinforcing student skill development.

- Critical reflection on the course as it currently exists and on the course as it will exist following this analysis
- Thematic analysis of student feedback from post-test
- Thematic analysis of GTA feedback

RESULTS

Course Learning Objectives (Question 1)

In thinking over the history of the course and its context, the curricular re-design in 2011, the structural re-design in 2013, and the projected growth of the course, and its changing role of the course in the university and departmental curriculum, it is clear that I need to adjust and re-prioritize the learning objectives of this course. There are currently 7 learning objectives in this course, all of which were a vital part of the course when the curriculum was re-designed in 2011. At that time, the course was standardized in 12 sections with 40 students each and each GTA taught 2 sections and had 2-3 undergraduate instructional assistants per section. The course met 2 days a week and had a common syllabus, assignments, and grade rubrics, though was not unified under one common lecture. This made it difficult to ensure that conceptual learning was consistent across all sections of the course, but facilitated more opportunities for in-class skill development and application. Though the textbook was common to all sections, GTAs often introduced additional material and had often quite distinct approaches to teaching the content. GTAs planned out their own course meetings, though kept to a common schedule. In this design of the course, there was more GTA instructional autonomy, less consistency in the presentation of course content and thus less consistency in conceptual learning, and more opportunity for skill development. However, this came at a cost given that in this design of the course, skill development was guided by a combination of GTAs and undergraduate instructional assistants. Thus, students had less direct feedback from graduate teaching assistants in this design.

In the 2013 structural re-design of the course, these 7 learning objectives were retained, despite a reduction in face-to-face course meetings. In this design of the course, we have a common lecture resulting in increased consistency in the presentation of some of the course content. There also exist fewer opportunities to facilitate hands-on skill development across these 7 learning objectives. GTAs maintain regular office hours, and students take advantage of these as needed over the course of the semester. In the current design, GTAs are encouraged to provide nuanced guidance and insight to their students in each of their class meetings on how best to develop and demonstrate their mastery of the learning outcomes. Thus, GTAs continue to add nuance to their individual sections and students, and assess their students in accordance with the course content presented in the online lecture, course readings, and in each of the weekly course meetings.

In order to facilitate student learning across all stated learning outcomes in this hybrid structure of the course, each learning outcome needs to be clearly articulated as one

concerned primarily with conceptual learning (i.e., learning about the concept) or as one concerned primarily with skill development (i.e., demonstrating your development of that particular skill). Those that are primarily concerned with conceptual learning will serve as content areas in which students can practice the skill sets we prioritize in the course. The first step, then, is to identify which learning outcomes should be framed as skill development and which should be framed as conceptual learning.

Given the context of this course is business and professional communication, it is vital that the course continue to meet the needs of students seeking to develop communicative competencies that will facilitate their success in professional environments. Thus, any adjustment to learning outcomes has to be made mindfully to ensure we are still providing students with the opportunity to develop skills that will enable them to excel in a professional environment. In light of this, we will continue to prioritize helping students to develop strong public speaking skills in this course given that it is fundamental to professional success. Further, the primary reason students take this course is either to fulfill their ACE 2 general education requirement or to fulfill a major or program specific requirement that is geared toward ensuring their students learn how to speak effectively in public. Students sign up for the course expecting to develop this core skill.

The second skill set that we will focus in on this class is the ability to work effectively in teams. In reflecting on student feedback from this inquiry, informal feedback from professional program administrators across campus, successful alumni of our program, and consistent reports from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) that employers are looking for employees who can work productively as a part of a team (<http://www.nacweb.org/s11182015/employers-look-for-in-new-hires.aspx>). In light of all of this, COMM 286 will continue to prioritize helping students develop a strong skill set that allows them to work effectively in team environments.

Thus, public speaking and the ability to work productively in a team are the two skill-based learning objectives. The remaining learning objectives will be conceptual in nature, and thus will serve as content areas in which students work on skill development. For example, given that this course will focus on developing public speaking and working productively in team environments as skill sets while other content areas are aimed at developing conceptual knowledge, I will likely move interviewing from a skill based learning objective to a conceptual-based learning objective. In making this move, I can develop an activity or formal assessment whereby students develop a speech about interviewing techniques, thereby supporting the conceptual learning of one conceptual based learning objective with the skill development of a skill-based learning objective.

In light of this, I've revised existing learning objectives to better reflect course priorities. Further, I've articulated which objectives are centered on developing conceptual knowledge and which are centered on skill development. Thus, the new learning objectives are comprised of 3 conceptual learning objectives and 3 skill-based learning objectives:

- 1. Use theories and concepts to advance your understanding of communication (conceptual)**

2. **Use theories and concepts to expand your communicative repertoire to help you successfully navigate professional life (conceptual)**
3. **Develop/enhance your ability to research, organize, and deliver professional oral presentations (skill-based)**
4. **Develop/enhance impromptu speaking skills (skill-based)**
5. **Develop/enhance teamwork skills and specific strategies to work effectively in teams (skill-based)**
6. **Use theories and concepts to understand and intelligently discuss communication issues and challenges in contemporary professional life (conceptual)**

Student Demonstration of Public Speaking Competency (Question 2)

In order to understand how well students are learning to develop and deliver professional presentations in this course, I first turn to an analysis of their performance on the assessments associated with this competency. First, the average overall grade in the course (N=541) was a B- (82%). The average score on quiz 3, the quiz over content related to developing a speech outline in the current course structure, was 80% (B-). This is significantly higher than the overall quiz average for the course 72% (C-), suggesting that students really grasped these competencies related to developing a speech quite well. This bore itself out in student performance on these assignments, with the average impromptu grade sitting at 86% (B). The average outline grade was 84% (B) and the average speech delivery grade was 87% (B+). Finally, on the final team project in which students were given one last chance to demonstrate their ability to effectively organize and a professional presentation in the team organizational analysis, their average grade was 92% (A-). Taken together, this data suggests that students grasped these competencies quite well and improved in their abilities over the course of the semester. This broad look at student performance provides important insight into the effectiveness of this course in teaching students how to more effectively develop and deliver a professional presentation. However, it is not the full picture. An important part of improving these competencies is reducing apprehension and improving perceived communicator competence.

Course Impact on Communication Apprehension. (Question 2). In order to understand whether this course helped to reduce communication apprehension in professional settings, I surveyed students at the beginning and end of the semester using McCroskey's (1982) personal report of communication apprehension scale. The pre and post-test measures of communication apprehension revealed a statistically significant difference in the pre (M=2.73, SD=.67) and post-test (M=2.58, SD=.63), $t(158) = 4.44, p < .001$.

Course Impact on Communicator Competence. In order to understand whether this course improved communicator competence for students in the spring 2016 semester, I survey students at the beginning and again at the end of the semester using Weinmann's (1972) Communicator Competence scale. Student self-evaluation of their communication competence was not significantly different from the beginning of the course to the end. The pre-test mean was 74.08, and the post-test mean was 74.09, $t(152) = -.73, p = .47$.

Course Impact on Student Confidence Across Key Competencies.

Though overall self assessed communicative competence in general was not statistically different from the beginning of the course to the end, I was interested in understanding more specifically improvements in student confidence across the four key competencies introduced in this course. Student confidence in their ability to develop and organize a professional presentation increased significantly from the pre (M=3.20, SD=.93) to post test (M=3.47, SD=.90), $t(171) = -3.35$, $p = .001$. Student confidence in their ability to effectively deliver a business presentation also increased significantly from the pre (M=2.91, SD=.99) to the post test (M=3.42, SD=.93), $t(171) = -6.79$, $p < .001$. Further, student confidence in their ability to conduct a professional interview increased significantly from the pre (M=3.04, SD=.1.03) and post test (M=3.58, SD=.92), $t(171) = -6.79$, $p < .001$. The analyses show that there was not a significant increase in students' confidence in their ability to effectively work in a team from the pre (M=3.77, SD=.81) to the post-test (M=3.80, SD=.86), $t(170) = .42$, $p = .68$, suggesting a need to re-focus the weekly course meetings on developing student confidence working effectively in teams.

In considering these results as a whole, it is clear that this course has a positive impact on student learning. Student grades are consistently high on competencies associated with public speaking and show improvement on the final demonstration of this competency. Further, student self-evaluation of communication apprehension was significantly reduced as a result of this course. Though student self-reported general communication competence was not significantly higher at the end of the course, a more targeted analysis of student confidence across key communication competencies specific to professional success was significantly higher upon completion of this course.

Student Learning: Taking a Closer Look.

All of this is great information, though it is also beneficial to take a more in depth look at individual student performance across these assessments over the course of the semester. In order to do this, I purposefully chose one student from 6 different sections of the course (or 25% of the sections offered in spring 2016). The course average was a B- (82%) and most students need to earn a C or better in order for the course to serve its purpose in their degree program. Thus, I chose to more closely examine the performance and background of 2 students who earned As in the course, 2 students who earned Bs in the course, and 2 students who earned Cs in the course. This enabled me to take a closer look at student performance/experience across different levels of performance: one grade level above the course average, at the course average, and one grade level below the course average.

This analysis evaluates earned grades on each assignment aimed at helping students develop and/or enhance their ability to develop, organize and deliver professional presentations. All student names have been changed for the purposes of this inquiry in order to protect the privacy of our students. I have included all relevant assignment descriptions and grade rubrics as appendices for the reader's convenience in understanding what each assigned grade represents in terms of specific competencies/expectations.

It's important to note that this course is designed for students to get several opportunities to engage the linear speech pattern and to practice speech delivery. Their first opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the concepts associated with public speaking is with Quiz 3—this is the quiz on which they demonstrate their understanding of speech organization. Their next opportunity is on the impromptu assignment—this represents their first chance to engage the linear speech pattern and practice speech delivery. The next opportunity is the formal full sentence individual speech outline. This assignment further engages the linear speech pattern, and introduces the process of identifying and properly citing credible support for the claims they make in their speech. Next they have the opportunity to work with extensive feedback offered by their GTA on the outline to improve their delivery of this speech—further engaging the linear speech pattern and reinforcing the delivery skills first introduced with the impromptu assignment. Finally, students end the semester with a fully developed team presentation that represents a synthesis of their learning about communication in professional environments over the course of the semester. It is one last opportunity to demonstrate they can organize a professional presentation using the linear speech pattern and it is their third opportunity to formally deliver a professional presentation. Thus, examining individual student performance on these assignments over the course of the semester provides valuable insight into student learning of this skill set.

Student 1: “Lorna”

Lorna consented to using her work in this inquiry at the beginning of the class. She is an 18 year old female freshmen Business major who is taking the course to fulfill her ACE 2 general education requirement. This student was on the speech team in high school and so began the course with a clear background in public speaking, though she had no prior collegiate level public speaking course nor had she previously taken a Communication Studies courses.

With regard to her performance in COMM 286, Lorna earned an A in the course. Her overall quiz score was a B- (80%) and she earned an A (93%) on Quiz 3—the quiz centered on concepts related to public speaking. She earned an A on her impromptu (96%), an A (98%) on her outline assignment, and an A (100%) on her speech delivery. The team organizational analysis presentation was also an A, (99%). This student clearly demonstrated consistent mastery of the concepts and skill set related to public speaking throughout the semester.

Student 2: “Jenna”

Jenna consented to using her work in this inquiry at the beginning of the semester. She is an 18 year old female freshman majoring in Business. She took the course in order to fulfill her major requirements. This student had taken a collegiate level public speaking course prior to COMM 286, though it was offered through the Engineering College rather than through our department.

With regard to her performance in COMM 286, Jenna earned an A (97%) in the course. Her total quiz grade was an A (96%). She aced Quiz 3, the quiz focused on public speaking skills. She earned an A on her impromptu (96%), her speech outline (96%), her speech delivery (99%), and her team organizational analysis (96%). This student also demonstrated mastery of public speaking concepts and skills throughout the semester.

Student 3: “Brad”

Brad consented to including his work in this inquiry at the beginning of the semester. He is a 20 year old male sophomore majoring in Engineering. He took this course in order to fulfill requirements for his major. This student had no previous courses in Communication Studies at the collegiate level, though did have some exposure to public speaking in high school.

With regard to his performance in COMM 286, Brad earned a B (85%) in the course. He earned a D+ (67%) on the quizzes overall, and a C- (60%) on Quiz 3—the quiz covering public speaking concepts. He earned an B- (81%) on the impromptu assignment. He earned an A (94%) on the outline assignment and an A- (90%) on the speech delivery. He earned an B+ (89%) on the final team presentation. He clearly improved his public speaking skill set over the course of the semester.

Student 4: “Gina”

Gina consented to using her work in this inquiry at the beginning of the semester. She is a 19 year old female freshman majoring in Engineering. She took the course in order to fulfill her major requirements. As far as previous exposure to communication studies, she has taken COMM 101 in our department, an introductory survey course designed to provide an introduction to the Communication Studies major. It introduces, but does not go into depth on public speaking concepts. She also indicated on the pre-test survey that she had no prior experience with public speaking.

In terms of her performance in COMM 286, Gina earned a B- (82%). Her total quiz grade was a C (73%) and she earned a C (73%) on Quiz 3, the quiz focused on public speaking skills. She earned an A on her impromptu (98%), though she earned an F on her speech outline (59%), suggesting that she needed to improve her ability to structure her speech and provide credible support for her arguments. She clearly benefitted from her GTA’s feedback on the speech outline as she earned a B (86%) on her speech delivery. She earned an A- (91%) on her team organizational analysis. Thus, this student clearly improved her public speaking skills over the course of the semester.

Student 5: “Luke”

Luke consented to including his work in this inquiry at the beginning of the semester. He is a 19 year old male sophomore who is undeclared. He took this course in order to fulfill his ACE 2 general education requirement. He has not taken any previous courses in Communication Studies at the collegiate level, though he has had some exposure to public speaking through his high school curriculum.

With regard to his performance in COMM 286, Luke earned a C (76%) in the course. Dale earned a D (64%) on the quizzes overall, though he earned a C (73%) on Quiz 3—the quiz covering public speaking concepts. He earned an B- (80%) on the impromptu assignment. He earned a B (84%) on the outline assignment and a B (83%) on the speech delivery. He ended the semester by earning an A (99%) on the final team presentation. This student clearly improved his ability to develop, organize and deliver a professional presentation.

Student 6: “Jim”

Jim consented to using his work in this inquiry at the beginning of the semester. He is a 20 year old male sophomore majoring in Architecture. He took the course in order to fulfill his major requirements. He had taken COMM 109, offered out of the Communication Studies department, prior to taking COMM 286.

With regard to his performance in COMM 286, Jim earned a C (74%) in the course. He missed 2 of the quizzes and performed poorly on the rest, with a total quiz grade was an F (43%). He did not take Quiz 3, the quiz focused on public speaking skills. He earned an A on the impromptu (93%), a B- on his speech outline (80%), a B+ (87%) on his speech delivery, and an A- (92%) on his final team delivery. This student’s performance, though above average on the public speaking skill set, reflects the absence of commitment to engaging course concepts to improve his public speaking skills. He was absent for 2 of the 7 quizzes and performed poorly on the rest of the quizzes, suggesting that he did not carefully read or watch the assigned lectures. This obviously hinders his ability to use the concepts from the course to enhance his own public speaking ability.

Interestingly, Jim had previously taken one of the other basic courses in our department (COMM 109) that also teaches public speaking. It’s possible that he relied on past knowledge to perform well on the public speaking element of this course rather than engaging the concepts and ideas central to COMM 286. This would explain why his performance on the quizzes was so low, but his performance on the public speaking element of the course was higher than average.

It’s clear that students are learning how to effectively develop, organize, and deliver professional presentations in this course. All students in this review either demonstrated consistent mastery of the public speaking skill or demonstrated improvement in their public speaking skills over the course of the semester based on their grades on each assessment. The individual speech and the final team speech use the same rubric in terms of speech structure and delivery, with a few additions specific to team presenting on the team speech.

Despite the clear evidence of student learning, it’s important to note the diversity in student experience and readiness across the student population of this course. Some students come into this course with more background in public speaking than others, and students take the course for a wide variety of reasons. Of course, in a course this size, there is a wide range of student motivation and commitment to the educational process. Some students are clearly committed to performing well on all course assessments, and others are clearly looking to just “get by” and fulfill a requirement. Some students are interested in and receptive to feedback, others are resistant and even resentful when constructive feedback is offered. Further, we teach students at every level—to include freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors—resulting in a wide range of collegiate experience. Further, our students vary in terms of their experience with public speaking. In light of all of this, this course is providing a solid, common background from which student with all levels of experience can develop. Those with no background can easily grasp the concepts and improve their skills and competence in public speaking situations. Those with extensive experience and background are afforded an opportunity to fine tune their already developed skills.

Definition of Communication (Question 3)

In order to answer the third question driving this inquiry, I focused in on the ways in which student definitions of communication changed over the 16-week semester. One of the goals I have as the director of COMM 286 is to complicate students' understanding of communication in a productive way. I want them to move from the more traditional idea of communication as the transmission of messages—the conduit model—to a more sophisticated understanding of the process of communication, to include verbal communication, nonverbal communication, listening, and to pave the way for them to begin conceptualizing it as a process that constitutes meaning. This particular goal is important in that it provides students who are not Communication majors with a more in depth understanding of communication and helps to articulate for those students one fundamental aspect of our discipline.

A subset of respondents (N=101) to the pre and post test surveys completed the open ended questions on the surveys. In conducting a thematic analysis of student pre-test definitions of communication and comparing them to definitions of communication that students reported in the post-test, it is clear that most students are adopting a more complex definition of communication through the course. In the pre-test, 82 (81%) of respondents defined communication in accordance with the conduit model, or in terms of message transmission (e.g., “people talking to each other). 8 (8%) of respondents articulated that communication was both verbal and nonverbal (e.g., “the exchange of messages via nonverbal and verbal channels”), 7 (7%) of respondents expressed an understanding of communication as relational (e.g., “I define communication as the process of creating a relationship, whether working or personal, through verbal or nonverbal communication”), and 1 (1%) respondent indicated that communication is constitutive (e.g., “co-creating the universe of discourse”). As these numbers suggest, the vast majority of definitions of communication at the start of the class fit within the conduit model of communication. In other words, students primarily defined communication as a tool to express ideas or to convey information and as effectively talking with other people. One student defined communication as an activity meant “to transfer some information with somebody”. Another student defined it as, “The act of two or more people exchanging ideas”. Still another student defined it as “Speaking with others in order to convey something”. Other students recognized that communication is both verbal and nonverbal in nature, though most often even these students focused primarily on communication as transmission of information “Sending messages either verbally or nonverbally to get a point across”. 7 respondents demonstrated a recognition that communication is relational in nature, with one student indicating that communication is “sending and receiving messages, giving feedback, creating relationships”. In sum, prior at the beginning of this course, students not surprisingly tended to see communication as primarily a tool used to send messages to others, with a clear minority of students seeing communication as something more than a mere tool to convey information.

In the post-test administered in the last two weeks of the semester, there was a clear improvement in student understanding of communication with many more students articulating a more nuanced, complex understanding of the process. Though 56 (55%)

students continued to define communication from a conduit model of communication, 44 (43%) demonstrated a more complex understanding of communication. These definitions included an understanding of communication as verbal and nonverbal (e.g., “verbal and nonverbal interaction between people”), an emphasis on the importance of listening (e.g., “being able to listen and understand someone”), a recognition of communication as cultural (e.g., “being able to interact with someone of differing or similar cultures, backgrounds, or viewpoints”), and a recognition of communication as constitutive. For example, one student articulated “proper communication is the creation and maintenance of a shared pool of meaning between two or more people in order to facilitate mutual understanding and expression”. Another student said that communication was “The stuff of life. Foundation of all relationships”. Ultimately, though not every student left this course with a more nuanced, complicated, and productive understanding of communication, there was a clear improvement in many students’ understanding of the concept.

In sum, I am pleased with these results in that it was clear that the course did facilitate and result in a more complicated and productive understanding of communication for many students. It appears that this course is serving as a good introduction to the communication studies discipline in that it is laying a solid foundation for students outside the major to begin to challenge the lay understanding of communication as a transfer of messages from one person to another. There is some evidence in these data to support that many students who enroll in the course are embracing this more nuanced understanding.

Effectiveness of Course Assessments (Question 4)

In order to answer question 4 driving this inquiry, I solicited feedback from students, GTAs and evaluated overall student performance across course assessments. Students were solicited during the post-test in which they were provided an open textbox articulate the most helpful assignments in the course. GTAs were provided informal opportunities to talk with me throughout the semester in addition to more formal meetings. They were also provided the opportunity to respond to an anonymous survey. After coding all survey responses and referencing notes from GTA meetings, I have identified several striking themes regarding the value of each assessment in the course.

I was pleased to find in this analysis that students tended to find all of the assignments in the course to be helpful to their development of professional communicative competencies. They really seemed to value the opportunities they had to perform the skill rather than simply learn about it. The impromptu assignment, individual outline and speech delivery assignment, interview assignment, and team analysis were consistently cited as the most useful. Essentially, they valued the ability to practice the skill sets they were learning in the course.

Quizzes. This course employs weekly quizzes covering reading and lecture to ensure students are coming to class prepared. These are 30 point quizzes—15 questions worth 2 points each. Students can drop one quiz. Students tended to not value the quizzes. There were no responses explicitly identifying them as valuable to their learning, and 18 (17%) of the 101 respondents indicated that the quizzes did not help their learning. Conversely, GTAs overwhelmingly pointed to the quizzes as vital to ensuring student preparedness each week,

despite the fact that they would prefer the quizzes not take class time. Further, given that half of the class is comprised of an online lecture, students must be held accountable for watching these lectures and reading the course material. In the spring 2016 semester, there were 541 students in the course and average student performance on the quizzes was 72% (C-).

Weekly quizzes remain a necessary assessment for the course in its current structure as they ensure that students striving for success in the course will come to class prepared and ready to engage the concepts. Though we could consider online quizzes in order to free up some class time at some point, this is not a move I am willing to make at this time. First, the university is just now initiating a move to a new learning management system so it is not prudent to introduce additional online components to a course of this size on the precipice of a university-wide transition of this nature. Second, this course already requires students to be self-motivated and organized given the reduced in-class time. Our student population has shifted to include a large number of students who are new to collegiate level work and learning management systems in general. I don't see adding another level of technological complexity in the form of ensuring online quizzes are taken correctly to their experience as beneficial at this point.

Impromptu. The impromptu assignment is the students' first opportunity to engage the linear speech pattern that we are teaching them to adopt as well as their first opportunity to stand up in front of their peers and deliver a formal speech. Students tended to perform well on the impromptu assignment, averaging 86% (B). 58 (57%) students indicated that speaking assignments were the most valuable, with 19 (38%) of these responses specifically citing the impromptu as the most valuable assignment. One student highlighted the value of the impromptu assignment, saying, "The Impromptu Speeches were extremely effective. I thoroughly enjoyed them because they make you think on your feet and put together a cohesive speech in a limited amount of time (thus applying the skills gained from the class), while also requiring you to just get over any fear of speaking in front of the class since everybody has to do it". Another student said, "Impromptu speaking helps a lot for meetings. Learning to organize your thoughts on the fly is a very important skill, and maybe even more important than the ability to prepare a talk on a researched topic". Another student agreed, saying, "The impromptu speech was good because it was a challenge to your ability to just stand in front of a group and talk about a subject. It forces you outside of your comfort zone of preparing".

One consequence of being twice removed from students as the online lecturer and director of this course, I am usually reliant on GTA feedback on the effectiveness of course assessments. GTAs tend to report that students are not taking the impromptu seriously, and given that the assessment takes 2 class periods to engage, I was thinking that this might be a good assignment to remove from the course to free up more time for in-class discussion. However, after hearing from the students how much they value and appreciate this opportunity, this assignment will remain in the course. It supports a central learning objective, the majority of students that responded to this survey not only indicated that it was valuable but also expressed a desire for more opportunities to deliver these kinds of speeches.

Individual Speech (Outline and Delivery). The individual speech outline and delivery are two assignments in one. Students first research and develop a formal, full sentence outline that they turn in to their GTAs (worth 50 points). These are graded and students are offered extensive feedback that they are to use to improve their speech delivery (worth 100 points). Students tended to perform well on this assignment as well, earning a B average (84%) on the outline and a B+ average (87%) on their delivery. 58 (57%) students named speaking assignments as the most valuable to their learning in the course. 10 (17%) of these students specifically identified the outline as valuable to their learning. In describing the value of these assignments, students focused primarily on the ability to learn how to identify and use credible sources to support their claims. One student said, “developing my speech was huge because I got familiar with how to research credible sources”. Another student stated “Developing an outline before our speeches [was most valuable]. This was helpful because we got to exactly write out what we were going to say”. Another student indicates, “I did learn a great deal about the flow and organization of speeches, which I will use countless times in my professional career”.

It is clear that the process of developing a full sentence outline that is focused on helping students support their claims with credible sources is valuable to student learning. The process of delivering impromptu and individual speeches is also extremely valuable. Thus, these assessments will remain in the course.

Interview Protocol and Summary. This assignment requires students to identify an organization that they plan to analyze, identify a member of that organization, develop an interview protocol, set up and conduct an interview and then summarize that interview. This assignment was introduced to the course when the vast majority of students were sophomore, junior, and senior CBA students. It is designed to do a number of things for students. First, it is designed to help students develop their informal network with professionals in the community. Second, it is designed to help students develop interviewing skills rather than simply reading about them. Third, it is designed to help students analyze the communication and culture of a particular organization. 21 (20%) students identified the interview protocol and summary assignment as the most valuable to their learning and saw it as another great opportunity to develop real-world skills. One student indicated, “The interview assignment was particularly helpful to me as I was able to step out of my comfort zone and interview a stranger from a foreign corporation. Since the interview went better than I thought it would, that gave me some confidence to be able to conduct such an interview again. Additionally, I think developing a speech was also helpful as I realized that after I have a speech outline, it isn't all that scary”. Another student agreed, “Not very often are college kids doing a professional interview to a professional. Usually we are the ones being interviewed by a professional. I feel that by interviewing a professional I now have a better understanding of what professionals want out of me when I am being interviewed. This interview was very helpful”.

The interview protocol and summary assignment is one that students clearly value, and one that, historically, GTAs value as well. However, there has been a noticeable increase over the past 2 semesters of some students handling this assignment unprofessionally (e.g., not showing up for interviews, attempting to schedule them at the last minute, conducting themselves without professionalism). In light of the recent shift in our student population to

include more first-year freshmen and as the course continues to grow, this assignment is becoming less feasible and is increasingly frustrating to GTAs who teach the course. Specifically, we are finding that as the course shifts in composition to include more inexperienced students, a larger proportion of our students are not prepared to conduct a professional interview. Combine this with less class time to support student development in this particular competency, the assignment seems to exceed the capacity of this course in the current structure. I've grown increasingly concerned that the assignment is counter-productive for our current student population in that those that are not prepared to do this assignment represent themselves (and the university) poorly within the professional community rather than boosting their informal professional network. Thus, while I would like to be able to facilitate practice of interviewing skills in this course, I need to re-conceptualize that for the benefit of our students, our GTAs, and the course.

Team Organizational Analysis. The team organizational analysis is a team presentation developed from their research, use of course concepts, and interviews of organizational members as they analyze an organization's culture. It is the final project in the course and represents an opportunity to demonstrate a synthesis of their learning over the course of the semester. They structure this speech outline and delivery in accordance with the linear speech pattern they employed in the impromptu, individual speech outline and individual speech delivery. Students averaged an A- (92%) on this assignment, slightly better than the individual speech deliveries themselves. The grade rubric for this project is nearly identical to the individual speech delivery grade rubric, thus, demonstrating student improvement in this key competency. 14 (13%) of students indicated that the team project and process of working as a team was the most beneficial to their learning, so many students clearly valued the opportunity to develop team communication competencies. One student stated, "I like working in a team, just because later in our careers we will have to work in teams. I think that this is a good way of developing social skills and cooperation skills". Another student indicated "It is very important to be able to know how to appropriately work in a team with others to achieve an overall goal". Another student said simply "You can learn a lot working in a team". This competency will remain a focus of this course given the value students place on it, as well as the informal feedback from program administrators whose students take this course and who indicate a need for their students to develop the capacity to work effectively in a team. Despite the value of learning this skill, it can be painful to teach and to learn. This is one of the most difficult assessments for our GTAs to coordinate and it is often difficult for students to come together. Some teams struggle to work effectively together based on differing levels of commitment to the course, to school, or to the group itself. This can complicate the experience for all other students. For example, one student said "Working in my team was very difficult. I [*sic*] got assigned a team that didn't speak very [*sic*] well English and didn't have phone numbers and really had no good way to get ahold of them. This made this assignment very difficult and frustrating for me. I feel like I did almost all of the work for this group which made the skill of working productively in a team not very beneficial". Despite the difficulty in teaching this skill, it is important for that the course continue to focus on it because of its important to competent communication in business environments as well as in meeting the needs of the stakeholders.

What is most striking here is that students valued the process of working in a team more than anything else about this assignment. The analysis of an organization's culture was useful and enlightening for a couple of students in this sample, but the vast majority of those that commented on the team organizational analysis focused on the value of learning the *process* of working as a team rather than the task they were assigned to complete as a team. This suggests to me two things: 1) We can and should revise the project to simplify the process for students and GTAs (e.g., eliminate the need to interview employees of an organization) 2) Further, in light of the fact that student confidence in their ability to work effectively in a team did not significantly improve in this analysis, we should provide more in class time to allow students to practice the skill of working in a team.

Effectiveness of Weekly Course Meetings (Question 5)

As has been detailed, COMM 286 is a hybrid course, with one course each week (the lecture) being delivered online and the other course each week meeting in person with the GTA teaching the course. This structure is responsive to 3 key concerns: (1) the need for consistency in the delivery of course content across all 24 sections, (2) the need for GTA feedback to facilitate student learning (rather than undergraduate teaching assistants) (3) the need to accommodate consistent growth in demand for this course in light of university-wide growth and the resultant need to accommodate more students who need to fulfill their general education program requirements, specific program accreditation requirements, and growth in the Communication Studies major.

On the flip side, this structure is not ideal in that developing skills happens with practice. As a 2xx level course, its primary purpose for students is skill development. Reduced class time means students have fewer opportunities to practice the skills that we are teaching. Content must be delivered via assigned readings and assigned lectures, and the weekly meeting needs to be focused and purposeful in developing particular competencies. 2 of 15 course meetings are reserved for impromptu deliveries, 3 or reserved for individual speech deliveries, and 1 is reserved for team speech deliveries. This leaves 7 course meetings in which students must take a quiz and develop the critical competencies associated with the course. Clearly, we need to make the most of our time in the remaining 7 course meetings. In order to do the best, more comprehensive thinking about this, I will explore this from the perspective of GTAs who offered feedback as well as from students who offered feedback.

GTA Perspective. As has been detailed above, in analyzing these data, this course is clearly meeting the needs of its students despite limited in-class time. Though GTAs commonly report that they wish they had more class time with their students, most informal conversations about the course suggest that they see improvement in their students' learning and ability to engage concepts. GTAs often comment on the slick, seamless design of the course and refer to it as a "well-oiled machine". These GTAs are often the more experienced GTAs in our department who have had the opportunity to teach this course and then move into their own independent courses.

One GTA reported that s/he felt that most student learning happened in the first 2 weeks of the course, with the rest of the course centered on helping students to complete assignments.

I want to address this comment as it prompted a good deal of reflection on my part with regard to overall GTA attitude about the course. I appreciate this sentiment as it is a reflection of a GTA who is committed to student learning and who has specific ideas about how to best facilitate that. This type of comment is often a reflection of a GTA who is new to the course and thus, who is still learning their role in facilitating student learning across all elements of this course as it is designed. For example, the completion of assignments in the course meetings with GTA guidance does, in fact, facilitate student learning quite effectively throughout the course of the semester, as is evidenced by the analysis of student feedback about and performance in the course. GTAs new to teaching in this course design often need time to adjust to and trust that the structure of the course supports their students' learning. This suggests to me that I need to provide more specific explanation to our GTAs about how they fit in the larger structure of the course and the effectiveness of this structure to facilitate student learning. The current analysis will provide a wonderful opportunity for GTAs new to the course to see that the course is designed to support their students' learning and they play an absolutely critical role in their students' success in this course design. They must adjust their approach to teaching to incorporate and build from the structure. It is important that they take ownership of their classrooms and of their students, and it is equally important that they recognize they are teaching their students from a fully developed framework of content that is being delivered outside their classrooms. They can and should build from this content in their weekly class meetings as they guide their specific students toward meeting the course learning objectives. GTAs new to this course sometimes attempt to re-deliver content from the lecture and cover all course concepts in the weekly meeting. This is not the goal or purpose of those meetings, and what I find is that when GTAs recognize that they are supposed to enhance student understanding of the content and provide nuance to it rather than re-teach it, they, and their students, tend to have a better experience in the course.

One common challenge in all basic standardized courses is working with GTAs who vary markedly in their teaching experience and confidence. Each GTA that is assigned to teach this course is a graduate student in Communication Studies and has extensive knowledge to guide their approach to the course and to work with their students. They are all highly qualified to teach the content. Some GTAs come in to this course having taught their own independent courses and these GTAs often struggle in adopting a standardized approach, resulting in frustration. Other GTAs come into this course with little teaching experience and, though they are well-served by the structure and guidance provided in a standardized course, they are often overwhelmed by their status as novice teachers. Still other GTAs have taught the course in the past, have moved into more independent teaching, and are returning to this course as they finish out their graduate programs. These GTAs often value their experience in the course and bring that experience/expertise to the newer GTAs working their way through the program.

Student Perspective. Given that this course is hybrid and students are required to watch the lectures on their own time, I suspected that some students would dislike the online lecture portion of the class. 12 (11%) of respondents indicated they did not like the online lecture. However, many students commented that the course is meeting their needs and there is no need to make any adjustments to the course. For example, when prompted to ask what should change, one student indicated "Nothing comes to mind, I like the structure". Another student

indicated “The course is handled very well as it is!”. Given the size of the course, the clear effectiveness of the course, and the fact that most students either did not comment on this as an area to change or specifically indicated that they liked the structure, I am satisfied that this design has been effective on all fronts.

Though this course is clearly meeting student needs, there are ways that we can improve the focus of the course in light of the changing context in which it is situated to make the most of our weekly class meetings. When students did indicate areas for improvement in the course, they primarily focused on having more opportunities to practice the skills. 21 (20%) respondents indicated they would like either more in class discussion, more hands on practice, and/or more time in class to work on assignments. 43 (42%) respondents indicated that they would like more practice speaking. 10 (9%) respondents indicated they would like more practice working in teams.

Given GTA and student feedback, my own observations, and the changing context of this course, it is clear that we can make better use of our weekly course meetings by introducing more opportunities to practice key skill sets as students dive into the conceptual elements of the course. The key here is to identify what parts of the course I am comfortable teaching conceptually and what parts of the course I prioritize as skill development. Given stakeholder needs it is clear that both public speaking and teamwork skills are the highest priority for students taking the course across campus. I see interviewing skills as valuable, though not as fundamental for our stakeholders as public speaking and teamwork. Given the need to be purposeful in using limited class time for the development of the most important skill sets, weekly course meetings will be re-designed to provide more time practicing working in teams and presenting. Presentations and teamwork will be centered around enhancing conceptual knowledge of course content (e.g., weekly team speech competitions about the assigned content for that week). I will look for ways to encourage practice of interviewing skills, perhaps by encouraging interviews as one source for the team presentation and/or by being creative about this as an extra credit opportunity.

DISCUSSION

In sum, what I learned in this analysis is invaluable. This opportunity to hear directly and candidly from our students and GTAs about what is working well in the course and what could be improved has been a thoroughly refreshing experience. As someone who delivers weekly lectures online to our students, I am twice removed from their experiences, having to rely primarily on end of course student evaluations and informal GTA feedback about the course. End of course student evaluations are always beneficial, and this inquiry provided students with an opportunity to give even more thoughtful, constructive feedback on their experiences. Given my role as course director and mentor to GTAs teaching the course, the feedback offered by GTAs is often centered on things with which they need help or advice on, so it is often negative in nature. I do not often hear from GTAs about things that they appreciate about the course or that are going well in the course—particularly not from GTAs that are new to the program. This tends to skew my perception on the effectiveness of the course. Further, having re-structured the course 3 years ago to improve consistency in learning objectives, remove undergraduate grading assistants from the structure, and

accommodate continued growth in the course, this in depth look at the student experience and learning was invaluable. I was exceptionally pleased with what I learned about the student experience in COMM 286 and this inquiry has affirmed that the re-design was a tremendous success in that it made the best use of resources while continuing to provide students with a sound introduction to the communication studies discipline and an excellent opportunity to develop communicative competencies critical to their professional success.

While this analysis confirmed the effectiveness of this course, it also highlighted our need to be responsive to the changing culture (both departmental and university) in which the course is situated so that we can continue to provide the best, most productive experience possible for our students and GTAs. Thus, we need to streamline the learning objectives and be more purposeful in providing students with opportunities to practice key communicative competencies (i.e., public speaking and teamwork) that the stakeholders of the course (e.g., students, professional programs, our department, other colleges and majors) rely on us to teach. We also need to be responsive to GTA experience in the course, recognizing that current assignments have become increasingly difficult to facilitate. To accomplish this, we can be more strategic in our weekly meetings to help students master these skill sets as they work with and apply concepts to a variety of situations. It is also clear that, though GTAs consistently do a fantastic job providing detailed, timely feedback to their students, we need to better support our GTAs in helping them to leverage each graded assignment in ways that support and reinforce the learning objectives of the course. This can be accomplished by pulling graded assignments that stray from the streamlined learning objectives, introducing additional non-graded activities that reinforce a common skill set, and focusing GTA time on assignments that reinforce the two key skills—public speaking and working effectively in teams.

Summation of Lessons Learned

In light of the changing climate, a recent structural re-design, shifting stakeholder needs, and increasing demand for the course, this critical, comprehensive evaluation of COMM 286 is timely and has provided a great deal of insight into the things we are doing well for our students. For example, it is clear that COMM 286 is effectively introducing students to a more complex, nuanced understanding of communication. Further, we are clearly teaching students how to effectively develop, organize, and deliver business presentations. Finally, we are providing students with opportunities to practice and develop professional communication that they value.

Conversely, this evaluation has also pointed to areas that we need to re-focus course resources on specific, relevant learning objectives for current course stakeholders. This will enable us to further enhance and support student learning in the course. For example, it is clear that COMM 286 must turn its focus from providing a broad survey of Communication Studies to students to providing opportunities for students across campus to fulfill their required oral communication requirement. The general education program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln requires students to take a course that helps them to develop oral communication competence. Thus, as an ACE 2 certified course, one primary focus is teaching public speaking to ensure all students taking it to fulfill this requirement develop

oral communication competence. The public speaking element of this course is also central to the accreditation processes of several professional programs as well as for a multitude of other majors and colleges in the university system. Thus, one primary goal is teaching students how to prepare and present professional presentations.

Planned Changes

Based on my analysis of the current environment in which the course is situated, current stakeholder needs, student performance, formal and informal feedback from students and GTAs alike, and my overall reflection on the course, I plan to make several key changes to the course. This will include an adjustment to the learning objectives that will provide a more focused structure for the course aimed at developing 2 key skills (public speaking and the ability to work productively in a team). This change will lead to a change in the course schedule, a change in course assignments to reflect the adjusted learning outcomes, a change in weekly online lectures that reflect these newly defined emphases, and a re-tooling of weekly course meetings to include more skill development. Taken together, these changes will result in a more focused, streamlined experience for students and GTAs within the course structure.

Specifically, I will remove the learning objectives that are focused on interviewing and running a team meeting. Though I see interviewing as an important learning objective, it is not one that is conducive to the changing student population and the current course structure and it is not prioritized as highly as teamwork by the majority of stakeholders in the course. Further, it is clear that teamwork and the ability to work effectively in teams is of critical importance to all of our stakeholders (i.e., students, professional programs, employers). With this in mind, I will remove the interviewing learning objective in favor of turning course resources toward helping students develop the ability to work effectively in teams. I will add one focused specifically on impromptu speaking and will adjust each one to reflect whether its conceptual or skill-based in nature. Lectures will now focus more heavily on developing student agency and responsibility in professional contexts via their expanded communicative repertoire. The schedule will place skill-based competencies at the beginning of the semester so as to provide a foundation for students to work with and practice over the course of the semester. They will use the skills they learn about public speaking and teamwork each week as they dive into the conceptual learning objectives more deeply. In this way, each class meeting provides an opportunity to develop more in depth conceptual knowledge and to develop skills. For example, weekly meetings may consist of weekly team competitions where they must work in teams (use team work skill) to develop short speeches (public speaking skills) about the topics (conceptual) that are the focus of that week (i.e., interviewing). I plan to remove the interview protocol and interview summary assignment and add a team outline assignment with a team-based reflection on their team processes over the course of the semester. This will further support the emphasis on team work skills and alleviate a good deal of pressure from students and GTAs who often struggle with the interview assignment.

The final team presentation will be focused on researching common communication problems and/or important communication skills/practices for a specific profession or

industry. Given the wide range of students who take this course (e.g., Engineering students, Business students, Architecture students, Education students), this will provide students with a chance to dive more deeply into a professional field or industry of interest to them. This makes this assignment more relevant and useful for them. For those that are near graduation, it's an opportunity to develop an in depth knowledge of their intended professional field. For those that are just beginning their collegiate career, it's a chance to begin feeling out specific industries more directly. Further, it will remain a synthesis of skills because it requires them to conduct in depth research on specific communication skills in professional life (i.e., leadership, conflict management, networking, team-based problem solving) and to conduct profession-specific career research (i.e., engineering, architecture, banking, education, nursing).

Given that we are limited on face-to-face class time, I want to be sure that all assignments in the course build on one another in some specific way. Thus, one thing I am considering is assigning teams early enough in the semester so that students can strategically theme their individual speeches (i.e., each one do a speech on a different element of conflict management), and thus can rely on those to inform a final project focused on conflict management in nursing. This will be helpful for students and GTAs and will leverage GTA feedback on individual outlines (e.g., source credibility for conflict management) more effectively in that students would be able to draw from that feedback to better inform their approach to the team speech.

In sum, this inquiry has reinforced the value of this course for students taking the course to fulfill their general education ACE 2 requirement, for students who are taking the course to fulfill a requirement for their major and/or professional program, and for students seeking out more information on communication studies. Specifically, it is helping to reduce communication apprehension, increasing their confidence in preparing and delivering professional presentations, increasing their confidence in conducting professional interviews, and increasing their confidence in their ability to communicate effectively across professional situations. Further, students are learning these competencies as is demonstrated in their average grades across assessments. Students clearly see the assessments as valuable in helping them to develop important communication skills that are important to their professional success. Finally, students are clearly gaining a more in depth understanding of communication as a result of this course.

This inquiry has also pointed to ways that I can adjust the course so that it is more streamlined and focused on learning objectives that are most highly prioritized for all stakeholders in the course. For example, given the clear priority that professional schools, employers, and students place on learning how to work effectively in teams, this will become a high priority learning objective in this course. Despite the importance of learning how to conduct a professional interview, this communicative skill is less of a priority for stakeholders than is public speaking and teamwork skills. Given the limited class time, interviewing skills will move to the periphery of the course such that students will have the opportunity to develop these skill sets optionally via extra credit or as a potential resource for their speeches rather than being a central focus of the course. This will enable us to use our weekly meetings more effectively to develop the highest priority communication skills,

public speaking and teamwork, thereby improving both the student and GTA experience in the course.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Course Syllabus

COMM 286: Business & Professional Communication



Course Syllabus | Spring 2016

Course Description and Objectives

Employers often identify “good communication skills” as a requirement in job descriptions. In fact, employers consistently list communication skills in their most highly desired skill sets in new and existing employees. It’s no secret that the ability to effectively communicate your ideas in public and interpersonal spaces in the professional environment and to negotiate workplace relationships often means the difference between getting that promotion and being passed over for it. Evidence of your ability to communicate well is one of the top skills that interviewers assess when evaluating job candidates. But what does it really mean to have good communication skills? In this class, you will develop and refine your oral communication skills so that you will be able to apply them in your workplace interactions, both at the interpersonal level and in a more public space. But achieving “good communication” in organizational contexts depends upon far more than organizational members’ possession and execution of these often taken for granted and under-developed skills. Therefore, as you develop your oral communication skills set in this course, we will examine communication issues that are important to contemporary organizations, as well as the communication-based problems with which they grapple.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Use theories and concepts to analyze communication in the workplace
2. Plan and productively participate in effective team meetings
3. Develop teamwork skills and specific strategies to work effectively in teams
4. Plan and conduct information-gathering interviews
5. Research, organize, and deliver professional oral presentations
6. Attend more closely to your own verbal messages (both formal and informal), and make conscientious efforts to improve your oral communication skills
7. Understand and intelligently discuss communication issues and problems that affect contemporary organizations

Required Reading & Resources

Adler, Elmhurst, & Lucas (2013). *Communicating at work: Strategies for success in business*

and the professions. [Customized e-textbook for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln].

Lincoln, NE: McGraw Hill.

The required text for this course is a customized e- textbook hosted by McGraw-Hill. The access code can be purchased EITHER directly through McGraw-Hill at the link provided in your BlackBoard course shell OR it can be purchased at the University Book Store.

The required text for this course is a custom package found only through the University Bookstore on campus or directly from McGraw-Hill online. In addition to the text chapters that have been drawn from multiple texts, the faculty have included content in the textbook package necessary for success in this course. Further, the faculty have worked directly with the publisher to provide a cost-effective package to UNL students in the e-book format. Students taking this course are expected to utilize the components of the package available in the bookstore or online.

ACE Credit

COMM 286 satisfies ACE Outcome 2A: *demonstrate communication competence by employing a repertoire of communication skills for developing and maintaining professional and personal relationships*. In this course, you will learn concepts, theories, and techniques of effective communication that will facilitate professional relationships in the workplace: problem-solving teams, conducting interviews, and delivering impromptu, prepared, and group speeches (including research, organization of material, delivery, visual aids).

Assignments & Quizzes

Your final grade will be determined based on your performance on the following. **Please Note:** You are expected to read all assignment descriptions, grade rubrics, and pay attention to your in-class instructors for all assignments. *Each assignment and quiz is an assessment of how well you are understanding and applying concepts presented in class via the textbook, lectures, and in-class discussions.* You are encouraged to work with your GTA to clarify questions prior to completing your work. Full details for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard. You are expected to do your best work on each quiz and assignment. **No assignment may be re-done for credit.**

Quizzes (6 @ 20 points each). **You are expected to read all assigned reading with attention to detail and a focus on understanding. You are expected to watch and take notes over the lectures assigned for the week before you meet in your weekly assessment period. These quizzes will be designed to test your knowledge and mastery of the concepts presented in the course material. There will be seven total content-based quizzes, each worth 20 points. You can drop your lowest score.**

Student Information Sheet (10 points). **You will fill out, sign, and submit the student information sheet. To receive the full 10 points, you must submit it through SafeAssignment (5pts) and turn in a hard copy to your instructor (5pts). This ensures you know how to submit your work in this class (through SafeAssignment in BlackBoard) and provides your GTA with an opportunity to get to know you. Be sure to ask questions if you have difficulty submitting this through BlackBoard.**

Field Interview Protocol (25 points). **You will prepare an interview protocol with your team so that you can each conduct a professional interview that will help your team complete the final project in the course (the Team Organizational Analysis).**

Interview Summary (25 points). **You will write up the information for the professional interview that you conducted, listing the name of the interviewee, professional contact information for that person, and a summary of information specific to each of the required areas that your team must address in the final project. This should be a detailed, thorough summary of the information that can inform your team's final project.**

Impromptu Speech (30 points). **You will deliver one unrehearsed speech on a topic chosen by your instructor.**

Individual Speech (150 points). **You will research, organize, and deliver a professional oral presentation that focuses on business-related issues. This assignment includes points for the outline (50 pts) and an in-class presentation (100 pts).**

Team Organizational Analysis (105 points). **With your teammates, you will research and organize a professional, cohesive team business PowerPoint presentation that analyzes a real-world organization.**

Extra Credit (15 points maximum). You may earn extra credit by participating in research studies, rehearsing your speech delivery in the Communication Studies Speech Lab, reporting on additional research presentations, or writing short papers that link course concepts to current events. Please speak with your GTA early in the semester to identify options for extra credit. When you participate in research studies, you can earn 5 points for each research credit (studies can be worth one research credit or multiple research credits—please pay close attention to the informed consent form of the study). Alternatively, you can earn 5 points of extra credit for each one half hour spent engaging in an approved extra credit activity--please speak with your instructor to learn about options. All extra credit is due by the end of Week 15. See Blackboard and talk to your instructor for details on extra credit opportunities in your particular section of the course. You may earn a maximum of 15 extra credit points total for this course.

Expectations

Self-Direction and Personal Responsibility for Success. **Your success in this course is dependent on your ability to take control of your learning experience—develop a personal plan and commit to being responsible for coming to your assessment periods fully prepared.** In addition to the communication skills and teamwork skills you will be learning in this class, employers list self-direction and self-motivation as highly desirable skills in today's workplace. This class has been designed to promote your development of these skills. You will be expected to take personal responsibility for the weekly material presented online—the readings from the text, the weekly online lectures and the supplemental online material posted for your professional and personal development as communicators.

Academic Honesty. Just as ethics are important in business, they also are important in educational settings. Academic honesty and integrity are expected in this course. Any student who is found to have engaged in an act of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, complicity,

misrepresenting excuses for missing class for turning in late work) will automatically fail the assignment. Additionally, he or she may fail the course and/or be reported to his or her academic advisor and Dean for further action. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse for academic dishonesty. Please read Article 3, Section B-1 of the UNL Student Code of Conduct (<http://stuafs.unl.edu/DeanofStudents/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20May%20Rev%202014%20a.pdf>) for definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Please note: It is possible to plagiarize yourself. You may not submit work that you completed in a prior semester (for this or any other class) for a grade in the current semester. ***Doing this constitutes self-plagiarism.*** If you have questions about this, please talk with your instructor.

Attendance & Timeliness. It is important that you attend class each day. Assignments and quizzes given in class cannot be made up in the event of unexcused absences. Excused absences will be granted only for (a) documented personal illness or injury; (b) representing the university in an official capacity (athletic events, ROTC, academic conferences, etc.); or (c) a death in the family. Documentation is required in all cases, regardless of reason.

Students must provide satisfactory documentation (as determined by the instructor) for all absences within 2 class periods of the absence so the instructor can determine if the absence is excused. Failure to provide documentation within this time frame will result in an automatic unexcused absence.

Timeliness is as important as attendance. Therefore if you are late to class and miss a quiz or other point-bearing assignment, you will not be allowed to make it up unless your tardiness is excused with proper documentation.

Participation. You are expected to participate actively in the course, both in your approach to taking notes over the reading material as well as the online lectures AND in your participation in the assessment meetings. In order to do so, you should prepare yourself by reading assignments and watching lectures before your assessment meetings and thinking critically about the material. Although you are encouraged to challenge ideas, you must show respect for people who share differing viewpoints in support of a climate that encourages participation from everyone.

Assignment Turn In. All assignments must be submitted through SafeAssignment in BlackBoard as explained in each assignment description. Assignments will not be accepted via email or any other format. It is your responsibility to use BlackBoard effectively to turn in your assignments and to ensure that your assignment is properly submitted before the assignment due date according to course specifications. PLEASE NOTE: Your assignments MUST be Microsoft Word documents. If you are saving your assignments on your MAC, you must add the .doc or .docx file extension to your document in order for it to be accepted.

Deadlines. Meeting deadlines is very important and a mark of professionalism. All assignments are due in class on the assigned day. Late assignments will be docked 20% of the total points possible for every calendar day they are late, beginning the minute class begins on the date the assignment was due. Assignments will not be accepted more than four calendar days past the due date. In the event of a missed speech, you will not be able to make up the speech except in the case of verified illnesses, funerals, or university-supported activities.

All speeches, quizzes and other point-bearing assignments missed due to an *excused* absence must be made up no later than 1 week following the excused absence, at the convenience of your instructor (in office hours, by appointment, etc). Failure to make assignments up within 1 week of the excused absence will result in a loss of the opportunity to make up the assignment and will result in a zero. Point bearing assignments missed due to an *unexcused* absence cannot be made up.

Written Work. The work you turn in should reflect your professionalism. All written assignments must be typed and proofread for errors. Handwritten work will not be accepted.

Communication Speech Lab

The Communication Speech Lab (329 Burnett Hall) offers a variety of assistance for COMM 286 students: outlining help, delivery tips, managing communication apprehension, research strategies, etc. If you would like additional help in the course, please visit the lab during established hours (announced in class and is on Blackboard).

Statement on Special Needs Accommodation

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, (402) 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Mission Statement

The mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, technology, and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts.

The department's research and teaching devote particular attention to scholarly initiatives aimed at understanding and explaining the role of communication in (a) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing for social change, (b) constituting individual and family health, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

Course Grading Scale

A = 93%+	B+ = 87-89.9%	C+ = 77-79.9%	D+ = 67-69.9%	
A- = 90-92.9%	B = 83-86.9%	C = 73-76.9%	D = 63-66.9%	
	B- = 80-82.9%	C- = 70-72.9%	D- = 60-62.9%	F = < 60%

My Grades" Student Grade Record

(* = Group Grade)

Assignment	Possible	My Score
Student Information Sheet	10	_____
<i>Total Quiz Score (7@20 points, drop lowest score)</i>	120	_____
<i>Quiz 1</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 2</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 3</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 4</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 5</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 6</i> _____		
<i>Quiz 7</i> _____		
Impromptu Speech	30	_____
Individual Speech Outline	50	_____
Individual Speech	100	_____
Field Interview Protocol*	25*	_____
Interview Summary	25	_____
Team Organizational Analysis*	105*	_____
Optional Extra Credit (max. 15 points)	--	_____
TOTAL POINTS	465	_____

Week	Date	Topic/ Assigned Reading/Lecture	Assignment Due
1	January 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Intro - Course Syllabus, Calendar, Policies - Tips for Success - Why Communication? - Weekly Lecture- Introduction to Course 	Course Intro Quiz
2	January 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining Communication - Ch 1 - Communicating at Work - Four Models of Communication insert (in E-Book) - Weekly Lecture-Communication Models 	Student Information Sheet (Submit on <i>Safe Assignment</i> and hard copy) Quiz 1- reading and lecture
3	January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening and Verbal & Nonverbal Communication - Ch 3 – Listening - Ch 4 – Verbal and Nonverbal Messages - Weekly Lecture: Dialogue 	Quiz 2- reading and lecture
4	February 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing Business Presentations - Ch 9 Developing and Organizing the Presentation - Ch 10 Verbal and Visual Support - Review Individual Speech Outline Assignment and Grade Rubric - Weekly Lecture: Outlining 	Quiz 3- reading and lecture
5	February 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and Organizational Culture - Ch 2 and 2A - Communication, Culture &Work - Organizational Culture AND Socialization Insert (in E-Book) - Weekly Lecture: Organizational Culture 	Quiz 4- reading and lecture
6	February 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviewing - Ch 6 – Principles of Interviewing - Developing Interview Protocol Insert (in E-Book) - Review Interview Protocol, Summary and Team Org Analysis Assignments - Weekly Lecture: Interview Protocol 	Quiz 5- reading and lecture Outline Individual Speech Due In Class Work on Team Plan/Schedule
7	February 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration - Ch 7- Leading and Working in Teams - Ch 8- Effective Meetings - Review Impromptu Assignment and 	Quiz 6 – reading and lecture

		Grade Rubric - Weekly Lecture: Small Group Problem Solving	
8	March 3	Business Presentation Delivery - Ch 11- Delivering the Presentation - Ch 12 – Types of Business Presentations - Impromptu Delivery Pointers - Weekly Lecture: Impromptu	Team Interview Protocol Due Impromptus
9	March 10	- Review Individual Speech Delivery Assignment and Grade Rubric - Weekly Lecture: Delivery Tips	Impromptus
10	March 17	- Speech Day	
11	March 24	SPRING BREAK!	
12	March 31	- Speech Day	
13	April 7	- Speech Day	Individual Interview Summaries Due
14	April 14	NO CLASS- CSCA Use this time to work with your team on the completion of your final team organizational analysis	
15	April 21	Relating in the Workplace - Ch 5 Interpersonal Skills Weekly Lecture: Conflict Management	Quiz 7 – reading and lecture All Extra Credit Due
16	April 28	Team Organizational Analysis Presentations	Team Organizational Analysis Due
Finals Week	May 2-6	Optional: If need be, final time may be used for Team Organizational Analysis	Extra Credit will be calculated this week

*Class Schedule is Tentative and Subject to Change

*Please Note: Your proactive involvement in the course (coming to each class prepared having read the required material and watched/taken notes over the required lecture) and with your team is a necessity (meet with your team well informed and fully prepared to make progress

APPENDIX B: CASTLE TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching philosophy centers on the idea of **respect**. Quite simply, I respect my students as individuals engaging in the learning process in unique ways, I respect the value and importance of the material that I am teaching for each and every one of my students, and I respect the educational process and the role that both my students and I play in that process.

Respect for Students

I see my students as individuals that come into the learning process with different experiences, different expectations of themselves, of the course, of me. These differences enrich the classroom in important ways.

Some are excited to learn from the first day of class while others are simply trying to get through their degree program. Some of them are uncertain and anxious about learning, lacking self-confidence and in need of reassurance while others are confident and sure of themselves and their ability to succeed. I recognize that my students are coming at this material from a variety of different experiences, backgrounds, circumstances and I do what I can to ‘meet them where they are’ as I work to create a classroom environment that supports each of them in their learning. I want them all to succeed and I make myself available to them both in and outside of the classroom to support their success.

An important manifestation of the respect I have for my students is my recognition of the fact that one of the most important parts of any face-to-face classroom is the value that students bring to one another through classroom discussion. Students learn a great deal from one another, not just in terms of course content, but in terms of recognizing and learning to honor and respect important differences in experiences and perspectives.

Respect for Material

I am committed to the importance of the material that we teach in this discipline. I’m passionate about this subject—I’ve dedicated my life to its value, both as a researcher and as a teacher, and I want to share that with these students whose learning I care so much about. In essence, for me and for my students, the study of communication is about agency and responsibility. I approach teaching communication as empowering students in their daily personal, professional, and civic lives. Students learn how to navigate difficulty, advocate for themselves and others, and relate to others in healthier, more productive ways. There is great power in this as they shape the world around them through their communicative choices. With this increased agency comes a great deal of responsibility for self and other. As my students gain a greater insight into the power of their communicative choices, they begin to understand that some of us hold more power than others in our interactions, and thus more power to shape the world that we all live in. Many of my students are positioned more powerfully than most in their everyday interactions. Thus, I teach them to be mindful communicators. I teach them to consider their position and use it to empower others in their interactions. My students learn how to claim agency and embrace responsibility in their everyday interactions.

Respect for Educational Process

I believe in the educational process. The educational process is a partnership to which I and my students must be committed. I demonstrate my commitment to that process by:

- (a) developing courses that are important and useful to my students
- (b) being transparent
 - (1) articulating clear, consistent learning objectives
 - (2) articulating clear, consistent course policies
 - (3) providing clear assignment descriptions and grade rubrics
 - (4) being clear and consistent on course and assignment expectations
 - (5) maintaining current grades
- (c) providing students with resources that empower them to be successful in the course
- (d) making connections between the material, course objectives, and personal/professional development
- (e) developing assignments that promote and build on student learning
- (f) facilitate learning by providing clear, consistent, thorough, and timely feedback from which students can build to improve on their performance in the class
- (g) holding my students accountable for engaging the learning process
- (h) being available to help students through the process of learning

In essence, I see education as a process that each student engages to varying degrees, and I am their partner in that process. As an educator, I have a responsibility to provide students with the opportunity to engage in an educational experience that will challenge their current way of thinking, complicate their understanding of the world in productive and meaningful ways, and help them to grow personally and professionally. My role in their educational process is to act as their guide provide opportunities for learning in my class that are designed to challenge them to grow beyond their current understanding.

APPENDIX C : Impromptu Assignment Description and Grade Rubric

COMM 286: Business & Professional Communication



Impromptu Speech

Purpose

In the “real world,” you won’t always get a week or more to prepare oral presentations. In fact, it is more likely the case that you will be asked to get up and speak on topics with little, if any, prior notice. For this assignment, you will prepare and deliver an impromptu speech on a business topic. The topic will be chosen by your instructor and will center on course material assigned in the course up to and including the date on which you deliver your impromptu.

Specifics

Throughout the semester there will be two days dedicated to impromptu speeches. On these days, individuals will be selected at random to deliver an impromptu on a topic determined by your GTA. Over the course of these two days, each member of the class will deliver one impromptu speech. These impromptus should reflect a knowledge and application of the linear speech pattern (introduction, body, conclusion and appropriately placed transitions).

Your speeches should meet the following guidelines:

- Be 2-4 minutes long
- Address the assigned topic
- Include the following components
 - A clear thesis statement
 - Preview of main points
 - Three main points
 - Supporting information (e.g., story, example, current event) for each point
 - Review of main points
 - Transition between points, introduction-body, body-conclusion

Additionally, on impromptu speaking days you are required to:

- Bring a hard copy of your **Impromptu Feedback Sheet** to class
- Bring a note card or paper for jotting down your speaking outline
- Submit your presentation notes at the end of your speech
- Contribute to providing each speaker a respectful, attentive audience

Grading

You will be graded on the structure of your speech, the clarity of your thesis statement, the development of your main points, your extemporaneous delivery, your enthusiasm, and your professionalism.

Criteria	NI	F	G	VG	Total Points
Attention Getter					/1
Clearly stated thesis					/3
Preview Main Points					/1
Transition					/1
Main Point 1					/3
Transition					/1
Main Point 2					/3
Transition					/1
Main Point 3					/3
Transition					/1
Review of Main Points					/1
Re-stated thesis					/2
Clincher					/1
Delivery					/3
Professionalism					/5

*Key: VG= Very good; G= Good; F= Fair; NI= Needs Improvement
Deductions (1 point deducted for every 30 seconds over/under time).

Time:

Total Points: /30

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX D: Individual Outline Description and Rubric

COMM 286: Business & Professional Communication



Individual Presentation Guidelines-Outline

Communication in the Workplace

Individual Speech Outline Assignment Description and Grade Rubric

Purpose

Oral presentations remain an important channel for delivering information in business situations. Your ability to translate your knowledge in a concise, well organized, and articulate manner will be an essential ingredient to your career success. The purpose of this speech is to develop and deliver an **informative** speech that increases your audience's knowledge of an issue related to communication in the workplace. This speech outline must be fully developed and should inform your audience beyond what they have learned in the course to this semester—so remember to go beyond what you have learned in your readings and in course lectures.

Specific Requirements

- Topic must be an issue related to communication in the workplace
- Full-sentence outline (Please see sample of this in Student Sample Work in Student Skill Center on BlackBoard)
 - Submit your response via the BlackBoard /SafeAssignment assignment submission procedures*
- The outline must include the introduction, body, conclusion and all transitions
- Your speech outline should include no less and no more than 3 Main Points
- All Main Points must be clearly developed and well supported with credible support
- At least 3 credible sources **in addition to your textbook** (ie—no dictionary.com or Wikipedia, for example) for support. Please note—you might need more than three to fully develop your main points (Please see APA tutorial for proper in text citations as well for proper development of Reference Section).
 - At least one of your sources (though I encourage more) should be from an academic journal (use the databases Academic Search Premier and Communication Mass Media Complete when researching using UNL Love Library's electronic sources). See specific tutorial on how to research electronic resources from Love Library online in the Research Support area of the Student Skill Center.*
 - Sources must be cited in APA style within the text of your full sentence outline as well as on a references page attached to your outline (please see the APA tutorial located in the Research Support area of the Student Skill Center of the course).*
 - When you pull information from your textbook in your speech, you must cite it. However, this speech should be informative to your audience (classmates who have read the book), so the information you provide should go beyond the textbook.*
- Speech outlines should be developed enough to yield a 5-8 minute speech

HINT: Your speech outline should be a fully developed speech—not a “rough draft”. Develop this outline so that you could deliver your fully developed speech from it.

HINT: This is *not a manuscript* of your speech. You are developing an outline for an extemporaneous speech—it should be developed as a full sentence outline, not as a word for word script of what you will say. Your delivery of this speech outline will never be exactly the same.

Grading

- Points possible: 50
- You will be evaluated based on how well you structure your speech in accordance with the linear speech pattern presented in your reading (introduction, transition, body, distinct and related main points that support a clear thesis statement, main points fully developed and supported with credible sources, conclusion, transitions between). This outline should include parenthetical citations and a fully developed APA Reference Section
- Significant point deductions will be made for the following:
 - Not meeting the requirements of the assignment (not full sentence, not presented in outline format, main points not fully developed, sources not cited, topic not centered on communication, etc.)
 - Failure to support each of the main points with credible external sources

Need some help getting started? For some Sample Topics, please refer to the suggested topics in your textbook to start brainstorming possible speech ideas. These topics can be a broad starting point from which you can narrow your interests and develop a clear thesis statement for this speech outline. As always, if you have questions after reviewing these resources, feel free to contact your instructor.

COMM 286: Outline Grading Sheet (50 Points)

Name: _____ **Topic:** _____ **Date:** _____

Introduction (10 points)		
Criteria	Possible	Points
1. Topic Centered in Communication	2	
2. Clearly Stated Thesis	3	
3. Attention Getter (Related to Topic, Relevant)	2	
4. Preview of Main Points	3	

Body (15 points)		
5. Each Main Point Supports Thesis	3	
6. Each Main Point Contains One Distinct Idea	3	
7. Main Points Are Well Developed	6	
8. Each Main Point Cites At Least One External Source	3	
Conclusion (8 points)		
9. Thesis Re-stated	3	
10. Review of Main Points	3	
11. Connect Back To Introduction	2	
Organization (7)		
12. Clear Transitions	5	
2. Organizational Structure (Clear, Concise, Smooth)	2	
References (10 points)		
Criteria	Possible	Points
1. Three Sources Cited in Reference Section (APA Format)	3	
2. Textbook Cited	1	
3. Sources Cited Throughout Outline (APA Format)	3	

4. Source Credibility	3	
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"Big Picture" Feedback	
Strength:	
Strength:	
Way to Improve:	
Way to Improve:	

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APPENDIX E: Individual Speech Delivery Assignment Description and Grade Rubric

COMM 286: Business & Professional Communication



Speech Delivery

Purpose

Oral presentations remain an important channel for delivering information in business situations. Your ability to translate your knowledge in a concise, well organized, and articulate manner will be an essential ingredient to your career success. The purpose of this speech is to develop and deliver an informative speech that increases your audience's knowledge of an issue related to communication in the workplace. Bear in mind that your audience has read the textbook—your speech should take a topic related to what is learned in class and delve more deeply into it for the benefit of your audience.

Specific Requirements

This assignment builds from your speech outline assignment. You will take the feedback from your outline and use it to revise the outline and improve your overall speech delivery.

Deliver Speech In-Class (100 points)

- Deliver your (revised and improved) speech in class
- 5-8 minutes long
- All sources referenced should be properly orally cited
 - All outside sources that you draw from in your speech
 - Don't forget to cite your textbook as well ("According to Adler, Elmhorst, & Lucas in their 2013 textbook...")
- Extemporaneous delivery required (**NOT** manuscript or memorized delivery)
- Submit your speaking aids to your instructor at the end of your presentation
- Nonverbal communication is an important element of your speech in any environment, and the business environment is no different. Therefore, business casual dress (i.e., collared shirt or sweater, khaki pants/dress slacks/skirt) is required for your in-class presentation
- Responsible and attentive audience member- You must attend speaking days on the days you are not scheduled to speak to demonstrate your ability to listen attentively and respectfully to your peers. Use this as an opportunity to monitor your verbal and nonverbal behavior as an audience member to convey interest, support and engagement with the speaker. You should also look for opportunities to enhance your own speaking abilities by listening to your peers' speech deliveries.
- **HINT: Use feedback from the outline assignment, the grade rubric for your speech delivery, and be sure to rehearse your delivery several times (in front of an audience whenever possible) to enhance your extemporaneous delivery.**

Grading

- You will be evaluated by criteria identified on the Individual Presentation Feedback Sheet
- Significant point deductions will be made for the following:
 - Not meeting the requirements of the assignment (time, number and credibility of sources, etc.)

○ **READING FROM YOUR NOTES INSTEAD OF DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH EXTEMPORANEOUSLY**

○ **FAILING TO PROPERLY CITE YOUR REFERENCES IN YOUR DELIVERY**

○ **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR FAILING TO BE AN ATTENTIVE, RESPECTFUL AUDIENCE MEMBER ON SPEECH DAYS**

Name: _____ Topic: _____ Time: _____

****PLEASE NOTE: This rubric is a guide for assessing mastery of course concepts as presented in the textbook, lecture, and your weekly class meeting. Be sure to apply course concepts to all elements of your assignment **

INTRODUCTION (10 pts.)

Attention Getter	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Effective & relevant (3)
Thesis Statement	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (4)
Main Points Preview	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (3)

/10

BODY (50 pts.)

Main Point 1			
<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (4)	Strong with source support (6)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (2)	Relevant (3)	Strongly supports thesis (4)
Main Point 2			
<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (4)	Strong with source support (6)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (2)	Relevant (3)	Strongly supports thesis (4)
Main Point 3			
<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (4)	Strong with source support (6)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (2)	Relevant (3)	Strongly supports thesis (4)
Source Citation _____	Source 1 (3)	Source 2 (6)	Source 3 (10)
(author/source/date)	A S D	A S D	A S D
Organizational Structure	Hard to follow (2)	Appropriate (3)	Very effective (5)
Transitions	Missing (0)	Present (3)	Smooth and effective (5)

/50

CONCLUSION (10 pts.)

Main Points Review	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (3)
Thesis Statement	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (4)
Clincher	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Effective & relevant (3)

/10

DELIVERY (30 pts.)

Eye Contact	70-80% or more (8)	80-90% (9)	90% or more (10)
	40-50% (5)	50-60% (6)	60-70% (7)
	<20% (2)	20-30% (3)	30-40% (4)
Posture	Poor (0)	Minor problems (1)	Good (2)
Gestures & Movement	None (1)	Appropriate/natural (3)	Properly used for emphasis (5)
Enthusiasm & Energy	Low energy and/or monotone (1)	Some vocal energy and variety (3)	Excellent vocal energy and variety (5)
Speed	Very fast slow (1)	Somewhat fast slow (2)	Good speed (3)
Volume	Very soft loud (0)	Somewhat soft loud (1)	Good volume (2)
Business Casual Dress	No (0)		Yes (3)

/30

ADJUSTMENTS

Delivery/Structural	Distracting fillers (-3) like uh you know	Distracting movement (-3) swaying fidgeting	Pronunciation and enunciation (-3)
Problems	Use of Biased/ Exclusive Language (-3e)	Not crediting text (-3)	Text Not Centered in Communication (-3)
	Reading 20%+ from notes (-5)		Reading 60%+ from notes (-10)

**COMM 286:
Business & Professional Communication**



Team Organizational Analysis

Purpose

Throughout the course, you have been learning personal skills for communicating more effectively in organizations. But another important skill to have is the ability to analyze a “real world” organization to understand how communication is used at an organizational level. The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore the vital role communication has in organizations, analyze communication occurring in a particular business or nonprofit organization, and present these findings to the class in a professional and cohesive team presentation.

Specifics

You will present a professional team presentation to your class that outlines the key findings of your organizational analysis. The analysis will build off of your interview protocol and summary assignments. This team presentation assignment should meet the following requirements:

1. Organizational Research

In addition to the interviews that your team conducted for the Interview Protocol and Summary assignments, your team also should conduct research on the organization. While you likely did some of this as you prepared your interview protocols, now is the time to bolster this a bit more so you can contextualize what you learned in your interviews. Sources to consider include: organization website, newsletters, brochures, newspaper coverage of the organization, organizational charts, etc.

2. Identify strengths and weaknesses in the organization’s culture/communication patterns

As you evaluate the organization’s culture, make note of what they do well and what they can improve upon based on what you have learned this semester about communication in a business context. Consider how communication constitutes organizational culture, how employees can influence culture based on their communication, and how communication influences employee satisfaction, commitment to organizational goals. You might consider how communication can be inhibited or encouraged based on communication patterns and organizational structure/culture. Use the 8 dimensions of organizational culture presented in your text to help guide your analysis.

3. Organizational Culture and Communication Research

Now you're ready to follow up on what you've noticed about your organization with some research. What things stand out to you about this organization—and what more can you learn about these things from an academic standpoint to help inform your observations?

4. Organizational Analysis

This analysis is the most integral part of this assignment. Once your interviews are complete and your additional research has been conducted, your team must critically analyze the organization's communication. Attempt to address each of these areas when completing your analysis:

- **Main Point 1:** A *brief* description of the organization's history and mission
- **Main Point 2:** Provide a *well-supported* analysis of the organization's culture using course concepts from your textbook and lectures as a guide -See chapters 2 and 2A
- **Main Point 3:** Identify the *key communication strengths within this organization based on this analysis*-explain why they are strengths based on what you've learned this semester
- **Main Point 4:** Identify the *key communication challenges faced by the organization*-explain why they are challenges and their impact on the organization's culture, productivity, efficiency.
- **Main Point 5:** Detail your *team's recommendations to the organization* based on your research and knowledge from this class.

Specifics on the content of the presentation:

- Develop an introduction for the presentation that establishes the context of the organization you examined and a rationale or justification for conducting your analysis. **Note:** you will want to have an attention getter, thesis statement, and preview main points in your introduction.
- Include a brief description of the organization's history and mission. Inform the audience what organization was chosen, what the organization does, and the various people interviewed.
- Provide an overview of the organizational culture and/or structure in the organization.
 - Assess the culture based on the information you learned over the course of the semester. Start with the information provided in chapters 2 and 2A. Decide what elements of what you learned were most prevalent in your analysis of the organization, and go from there.
 - This analysis should include attention to how the communication patterns you identified within the organization shape and are shaped by the culture in positive and negative ways
- Identify the key communication challenges faced by the organization-explain why they are challenges and their impact on the organization's culture, productivity, efficiency
- Provide concrete suggestions as to how the organization could improve its communication and culture
- Develop a conclusion for the presentation that includes the restatement of the presentations thesis, a review of main points, and ends with a clincher.
- Presentation needs to be delivered as a "**cohesive presentation**" and each individual presentation/section should blend well with the whole presentation. The presentation should be delivered in a uniform manner and easily transition from one speaker to another, which out seeming disjointed or disorganized.
- Be sure to use your *Team Organizational Analysis Outline* as a resource while you complete this—you will turn this in with your PowerPoint and Reference Page before you deliver your team presentation.

5. Organizational Analysis Presentation

You will orally present the findings of your analysis in a professional team presentation that meets the following requirements:

- The presentation should be **12-15 minutes** long-this will take practice—***you will need to practice this speech together and then cut, edit and adjust the speech to be sure you adequately address required points within the established time frame.*** This will help you work as a team to deliver a well-developed, yet concise presentation as you work together to meet these requirements.
- A professional PowerPoint presentation accompanies the oral presentation
- There is a minimum of two sources per team member
 - Each interview counts as one source
 - Group members must each use different sources
 - The textbook **does not** count toward the source minimum
 - All sources must be cited in APA format
 - A References page must be provided to the instructor before you speak
- Presentation should adhere to the principles of good oral presentational speaking
 - Presentation is delivered extemporaneously
 - Include an introduction and a conclusion to the presentation
 - Use internal summaries
 - Include smooth transitions between main points (and between speakers)
- All team members participate equally in the presentation
- Business casual attire is required
- ***Turn in your completed Team Organizational Analysis Outline Sheet and Peer Assessment as ONE document to Safe Assignment PRIOR to your presentation***
- ***Turn in one printed out copy of the PPT presentation in person at the time of your presentation***

6. Peer Assessment

You will complete a confidential peer evaluation for each of your team members. **If there is evidence that a team member did not do his or her fair share of the work for the project, the instructor may adjust the individual's grade for this project by up to 50% of the total points possible.** Teams experiencing difficulty with team members should bring the instructor in early and provide documentation of their peer's failure to be involved throughout the process.

7. Failure to Complete an Interview Summary

Given that the center piece of this organizational analysis is the interview summaries that were required earlier in the semester, if you did not turn in an interview summary, you will be automatically docked one full letter grade on the Team Organizational Analysis. **This reduction in your grade on this assignment will affect only you rather than your whole team.** In other words, your grade for this assignment will be one full letter grade lower than what the rest of your team members earn. Additionally, you will be evaluated by your peers just like all team members are and if their assessment is such that you did not contribute equally to the completion of the project, your grade may be further reduced in accordance with the peer assessment statement above.

Grading

A "C" assignment meets the basic requirements (e.g., length, presence of main parts, number of sources). You demonstrate that you have developed a **basic** understanding of your organization.

Your communication analysis is more descriptive than analytic. Your research may draw too heavily from a single source or organization. Speech has been transformed from individual parts to uniform group presentation

A “B” assignment meets all of the “C” requirements. Additionally, you demonstrate that you have developed a **solid** understanding of your organization. Your communication analysis is thorough. Your recommendations are reasonable. You integrate course concepts into your analysis. The presentation is well organized and professionally delivered. When presenting some elements of presentation are well blended, others are not.

An “A” assignment meets all of the “B” and “C” requirements. Furthermore, you demonstrate that you have developed a **comprehensive and insightful** understanding of your organization. Your communication analysis is provoking in its depth and/or clarity. Your recommendations are on-target and/or creative. Your research is meticulous and/or extends past the minimums. Individual presentations delivered together as a cohesive group.

I expect that these following grades will NOT apply to you. However:

A “D” assignment exhibits major deficiencies. It does not meet the basic requirements of the assignment and/or reflects egregious errors in content. There are major problems in organization or delivery that distract from your main points.

An “F” assignment demonstrates an insincere effort to complete the assignment or represents an act of academic dishonesty.

Name(s): _____ Topic: _____ Time: _____

****PLEASE NOTE: This rubric is a guide for assessing mastery of course concepts as presented in the textbook, lecture, and your weekly class meeting. Be sure to apply course concepts to all elements of your assignment.**

INTRODUCTION (10 pts.)

Attention Getter	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Effective & relevant (3)
Thesis Statement	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (4)
Main Points Preview	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very clear (3)

/10

BODY (60 pts.)

Main Point 1

<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Strong with source support (5)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (1)	Relevant (2)	Strongly supports thesis (3)

Main Point 2

<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Strong with source support (5)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (1)	Relevant (2)	Strongly supports thesis (3)

Main Point 3

<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Strong with source support (5)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (1)	Relevant (2)	Strongly supports thesis (3)
Main Point 4			
<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Strong with source support (5)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (1)	Relevant (2)	Strongly supports thesis (3)
Main Point 5			
<i>Point Development</i>	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Strong with source support (5)
<i>Connection to Thesis</i>	Unclear (1)	Relevant (2)	Strongly supports thesis (3)
Organizational Structure	Hard to follow (2)	Appropriate (3)	Very effective (5)
Transitions	Missing (0)	Present (3)	Smooth and effective (5)
Source Citation	Missing (0)	Half Cited (5)	All Sources Properly Cited (10)

/60

CONCLUSION (10pts)

Main Points Review	Missing	Present (2)	
Thesis Statement	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Very Clear (4) Very Clear (3)
Clincher	Missing (0)	Present (2)	Effective & relevant (3)

/10

DELIVERY (25 pts.)

Eye Contact	70-80% or more (8) 40-50% (5) <20% (2)	80-90% (9) 50-60% (6) 20-30% (3)	90% or more (10) 60-70% (7) 30-40% (4)
Posture	Poor (0)	Minor problems (1)	Good (2)
Gestures & Movement	None (0)	Appropriate/natural (1)	Properly used for emphasis (2)
Enthusiasm & Energy	Low energy and/or monotone (0)	Some vocal energy and variety (1)	Excellent vocal energy and variety (2)
Speed	Very fast slow (0)	Somewhat fast slow (1)	Good speed (2)
Volume	Very soft loud (0)	Somewhat soft loud (1)	Good volume (2)

/20

		<u>GROUP</u>		
		<u>COHESIVENESS(10)</u>		
Speech Connectivity	Individual presentations delivered together (0)	Some elements of speech are well blended, others are not(1)	Speech has been transformed from individual parts to uniform group presentation (2)	
Non-speakers' Nonverbals				
Evidence of Reinforcement Stage of Group Problem Solving	All members' NV lack professionalism (0)	Some members' NV are professional, some are not (1)	All nonverbal are professional (2)	
	I/Me language (0)		Us/We language (1)	<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> /5

		<u>ADJUSTMENTS</u>		
Delivery/Structural Problems	Distracting fillers (-3) like uhh you know	Distracting movement (-3) swaying fidgeting	Pronunciation and enunciation (-3)	
		Not Crediting Text (-3)		
Business Casual Dress	Use of Biased/Exclusive Language (-3) No (-2)			
Power Point	Submitted but unprofessional (-3)	Submitted but not synced well with presentation (-3)	Not submitted at all (-10)	
Time Limit (12-15 Minutes)	Time under over 5-60 sec. (-5)		Time under over 61+ sec. (-10)	

TOTAL

/10
5

INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBER SCORES ARE SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Peer evaluation of individual contribution to team:** May result in that individual team member being docked up to a 50% of the total points possible for this assignment.

2. **Failure to conduct an interview and/or complete the Interview Summary Assignment:** Will result in a full letter grade deduction from the team's earned grade for that individual team member.

APPENDIX G: Pre-Post Test Survey Questions

Qualtrics Summative Assessment: Pre and Post Test Administered to all 24 Sections

1. What is your name?
2. What is your NU ID number?
3. What is your year in school?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
4. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
5. What is your age?
 - a. 18 or younger
 - b. 19
 - c. 20
 - d. 21
 - e. 22
 - f. 23
 - g. 24 or older
6. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Pacific Islander
 - f. Native American
 - g. Other _____
7. Are you a first generation college student? In other words, are you a part of the first generation in your family to attend college?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What is your major?
- a. I'm Undeclared
 - b. I'm in the College of Business Administration
 - c. I'm in Architecture
 - d. I'm in Engineering
 - e. I'm in Textiles and Design
 - f. I'm in the College of Education
 - g. I'm in Nursing
 - h. I'm in Construction Management
 - i. I'm in English
 - j. I'm a Communication Studies Major
 - k. Other _____
9. Why are you taking this course?
- a. I'm fulfilling my ACE 2 requirement
 - b. I'm required to take this for my Major
 - c. I'm required to take this for my Minor
 - d. I was curious about Communication Studies
 - e. Other _____
10. Have you taken other Communication Courses?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I haven't taken them before but am taking other Communication courses this semester.
11. If you've taken or are taking Communication courses, please list those courses below.
12. Who is your GTA?
- a. Darcy Hahn
 - b. Elizabeth Flood-Grady
 - c. Jaclyn Marsh

- d. Jennifer Rome
- e. Janell Walther
- f. Christina Ivey—not listed as GTA on post-test. Examine via Section Numbers
- g. Ashley Garcia
- h. Kristen Everhart—not listed as GTA. Examine via Section Numbers

13. What is your section number?

- a. 901
- b. 902
- c. 903
- d. 904
- e. 905
- f. 906
- g. 907
- h. 908
- i. 909
- j. 910
- k. 911
- l. 912
- m. 913
- n. 914
- o. 915
- p. 916
- q. 917
- r. 918
- s. 919
- t. 920
- u. 921
- v. 922
- w. 923
- x. 924

14. Are you considering majoring in Communication Studies?
- Yes
 - Maybe
 - No
15. Is English your native language?
- Yes
 - No
16. If no to question 15: What is your native language
17. If no to question 15: Please rate how confident you are in your ability to understand the following material, with 1 meaning not confident at all and 5 meaning extremely confident.
- The professor's online lectures
 - The textbook
 - The information presented in class meetings
 - The required quizzes
 - The assignments for this course
 - Conversations with your GTA
18. If no to questions 15: What resources have you used to help you be successful in your coursework? Please select all that apply.
- I have not used any resources
 - UNL Intensive English program
 - (PIESL) Programs in English as a Second Language
 - International Student Scholar Office
 - International Engagement Office
 - First Year Experience and Transition Workshops
 - Academic Success Coaches
 - The Writing Lab
 - The Speech Lab
 - Other _____
19. If Yes to question 15: What resources on campus have you taken advantage of to help you be successful in your coursework?

- a. The Writing Lab
 - b. The Speech Lab
 - c. First Year Experience and Transition Workshops
 - d. UNL Academic Success Coaches
 - e. I have not used any resources
20. What experience do you have with public speaking? Please select all that apply.
- a. None whatsoever
 - b. I took public speaking in high school
 - c. I was on the speech team in high school
 - d. I've had another college level public speaking course
 - e. Other _____
21. How would you describe your public speaking ability?
- a. I'm not good at it at all
 - b. I'm below average
 - c. I'm an average public speaker
 - d. I'm above average
 - e. I'm an excellent public speaker
22. What grade are you striving to earn in this course?
- a. A
 - b. B
 - c. C
 - d. D
 - e. F
 - f. I don't care what I earn in this course
23. Do you plan to carefully read the assigned readings each week?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
24. Do you plan to carefully watch the lectures each week?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

25. How would you describe your organizational skills?

- a. I'm unorganized
- b. I can get organized, but it takes a lot of work
- c. I'm organized as well as the average person
- d. I'm usually pretty organized
- e. I'm extremely well organized

26. How would you describe your study skills?

- a. I have poor study skills
- b. I can study, but I don't have good strategies in place
- c. My study skills are average
- d. I have above average study skills
- e. I have excellent study skills

27. How well prepared do you feel to succeed in college level coursework?

- a. Not well prepared at all
- b. I will have to work hard, but I can do it
- c. I feel about as well prepared as the average student
- d. I'm prepared to excel
- e. I'm prepared to be at the top of my class

28. How do you define "communication"?

29. Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA)

This instrument is composed of 24 statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people. Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with each statement. There are not right or wrong answers. Many of the statements are similar to other statements. Do not be concerned about this. Work quickly, just record your first impression.

- a. I dislike participating in group discussions.
- b. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussion.
- c. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
- d. I like to get involved in group discussions.
- e. Engaging in group discussions with new people makes me tense and nervous.
- f. I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.

- g. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
- h. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
- i. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion at a meeting.
- j. I am afraid to express myself in meetings.
- k. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
- l. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
- m. While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
- n. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
- o. Ordinarily, I am tense and nervous in conversations.
- p. Ordinarily, I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
- q. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
- r. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
- s. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
- t. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
- u. I have no fear of giving a speech.
- v. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
- w. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
- x. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
- y. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
- z. While giving a speech, I get so nervous, I forget facts I really know.

30. COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE SCALE (Weimann, 1977)

Complete the following questionnaire/scale about yourself. Indicate whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Undecided/Neutral (3), Disagree, (4) or Strongly Disagree (5) by selecting the corresponding bubble. Always keep yourself in mind as you answer.

- a. I find it easy to get along with others.
- b. I can adapt to changing situations.
- c. I treat others as individuals.
- d. I interrupt others too much.
- e. I am "rewarding" to talk to.

- f. I can deal with others effectively.
- g. I am a good listener.
- h. My personal relations are cold and distant.
- i. I am easy to talk to.
- j. I won't argue with someone just to prove I am right.
- k. My conversation behavior is not "smooth".
- l. I ignore other people's feelings.
- m. I generally know how others feel.
- n. I let others know that I understand them.
- o. I understand other people.
- p. I am relaxed and comfortable when speaking.
- q. I listen to what people say to me.
- r. I like to be close and personal with people.
- s. I generally know what type of behavior is appropriate in any given situation.
- t. I usually do not make unusual demands on my friends.
- u. I am an effective conversationalist.
- v. I am supportive of others.
- w. I do not mind meeting strangers.
- x. I can easily put myself in another person's shoes.
- y. I pay attention to the conversation.
- z. I am generally relaxed when conversing with a new acquaintance.
- aa. I am interested in what others have to say.
- bb. I do not follow the conversation well.
- cc. I enjoy social gatherings where I can meet new people.
- dd. I am a likeable person.
- ee. I am flexible.
- ff. I am not afraid to speak with people in authority.
- gg. People come to me with their problems.
- hh. I generally say the right thing at the right time.
- ii. I like to use my voice and body expressively.

- jj. I am sensitive to others' needs of the moment.
31. How confident are you in your ability to develop and organize a professional presentation?
- a. Not confident at all
 - b. A little confident
 - c. Average confidence
 - d. Above average confidence
 - e. Extremely confident
32. How confident are you in your ability to deliver a professional presentation?
- a. Not confident at all
 - b. A little confident
 - c. Average confidence
 - d. Above average confidence
 - e. Extremely confident
33. How confident are you in your ability to work effectively in a team?
- a. Not confident at all
 - b. A little confident
 - c. Average confidence
 - d. Above average confidence
 - e. Extremely confident
34. How confident are you in your ability to conduct a professional interview?
- a. Not confident at all
 - b. A little confident
 - c. Average confidence
 - d. Above average confidence
 - e. Extremely confident
35. How confident are you in your ability to communicate effectively in professional situations?
- a. Not confident at all
 - b. A little confident

- c. Average confidence
- d. Above average confidence
- e. Extremely confident

Post Test Repeat these questions plus have these Additional Questions:

1. Did you carefully read the assigned readings each week?
 - a. I never read the book
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. All of the time
2. How often did you take notes over the reading?
 - a. Never
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. All of the time
3. Did you carefully watch the lectures each week?
 - a. I never watched the lectures
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. All of the time
4. How often did you take notes over the lectures?
 - a. Never
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. All of the time
5. How many class periods did you miss this semester?

- a. None, I attended all class periods
 - b. One class period
 - c. Two class periods
 - d. Three or more class periods
6. How often did you ask questions related to the course material during your weekly class meeting?
- a. Never
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. Every class period
7. How often did you meet with your GTA in office hours?
- a. Never
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Half of the time
 - d. Most of the time
 - e. All of the time
8. How often did you visit the Speech Lab?
- a. Never
 - b. Once
 - c. 2-3 Times
 - d. More than 3 Times
9. What services did you use from the Speech Lab (please select all that apply):
- a. Help with developing my individual outline
 - b. Help with developing my team outline
 - c. Help with delivering my impromptu speech
 - d. Help with delivering my individual speech
 - e. Help with delivering my team presentation
 - f. Other _____

10. Please rate how helpful the Speech Lab was this semester, with 1 meaning Not Helpful at All and 5 meaning Extremely Helpful:
- Not helpful at all
 - A little helpful
 - Helpful
 - Very helpful
 - Extremely helpful
11. What were the most helpful assignments and/or activities in helping you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships)? Please explain why they were helpful.
12. What were the least helpful assignments and/or activities in helping you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships). Please explain why they were not helpful.
13. What would you like to see more of in this class that would help you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships)?

POST TEST QUESTIONS ONLY

1. What were the most helpful assignments and/or activities in helping you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships)? Please explain why they were helpful.
2. What were the least helpful assignments and/or activities in helping you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships). Please explain why they were not helpful.
3. What would you like to see more of in this class that would help you to develop these skill sets (developing a speech, delivering a speech, working productively in a team, interviewing, communicating effectively in professional relationships)?