**Purpose:**

During the 2014/2015 academic year, the assessment committee engaged in an assessment project to determine the extent to which students in 200-level courses were meeting the Communication Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO). The outcome states that at the end of their program of study, students will be able to “communicate effectively in a clear, well-organized manner to convey ideas with an intended audience in a variety of academic and professional settings.”

**Collection:**

Assignments were solicited from instructors through e-mail and participation was voluntary (see appendix A). All instructors teaching 200-level courses were asked to provide papers from three students that demonstrated a range of ability in communication. Since papers were to be reviewed anonymously, the committee note-taker collected all assignments, documented the course number (no section numbers were recorded), and removed any identifying information about the student, course, and/or instructor.

**Sample:**

Out of 53 possible courses, the committee received a total of 25 assignments from 7 courses (13.21%). English courses represented more than half of the sample (60%), but contained a variety of assignments (e.g. analysis papers, e-mails, and business plans). Papers were also collected from courses in Science, Psychology, and Health Information Management. Assignments from both face to face and online courses were represented in the sample.

**Process:**

Five members of the committee met to review the papers. After a brief norming session where one paper was read and scored collectively, each committee member independently read and scored five papers. The results were aggregated and discussed to formulate a recommendation.

**Results:**

The committee scored a total of 25 assignments using the Communication Rubric (see appendix B). The majority fell into the Average to Developing range for each of the competency areas.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exemplary** | **Average** | **Developing** | **Ineffective** | **N/A** |
| **Content Development** | 7 | 9 | 9 | 0 |  |
| **Organization** | 6 | 10 | 9 | 0 |  |
| **Sources and Evidence** | 3 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| **Professionalism** | 3 | 14 | 8 | 0 |  |

**Recommendation:**

Based on the findings of this assessment project, the assessment committee recommends that the institution focus on improving student learning in the area of Sources and Evidence, specifically in the consistent and ethical use of high quality sources. The committee finds that students often make an attempt to cite sources where appropriate, but that the source material is poorly integrated into the assignment. For this reason, the committee suggests an institutional focus on the integration of sources (to include paraphrasing, quoting and summarizing) as a way to improve student learning in this area.

*Contributing Assessment Committee Members (AY 2014/2015):*

Stefanie Forster (Chair)

Claudette Dupee

Sam Kelley

Rita Perron

Annette Tanguay

**Appendix A**

From: Stefanie Forster

Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 4:01 PM

To: Joy Locher

Subject: Seeking 200 Level Papers for Assessment Committee

Hello 200-Level Instructors!

The Assessment Committee is seeking papers from 200-level courses to use in an assessment project on communication. Would you be willing to provide three papers from the fall 2014 semester for us to use in our project? Choose three random, or one of excellent quality and one of low quality and one in the middle, but please don’t choose the three best students you have. We are looking for a range of papers at all levels of ability from 200-level courses. Joy Locher will be collecting the papers and removing all identifying information.

Our goal is to determine how well students communicate toward the end of their program of study. In order to do this, we are looking for a variety of papers from across the curriculum and will be measuring student learning using a rubric that the committee developed last year. We want to be very clear that we are assessing student learning, and will not be using the papers to evaluate teaching performance. Your name or any identifying information will be removed from the paper, and the committee will not know who the paper is from or in what class it was written. Please let me know if you have any concerns or questions about this.

In order to ensure confidentiality and to make it as easy as possible for you to supply us with papers, please send them to Joy Locher. She will remove all and any references to student and instructor identity. If you have actual paper papers, feel free to drop them off. If you have digital copies feel free to email them. Your help is greatly appreciated!

I am happy to answer any questions about the project!

Stefanie

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 4: Exemplary | 3: Average | 2: Developing | 1: Ineffective |
| Content Development |  Central message is clear and concise; illustrates mastery of the subject Language is appropriate and relevant to audience Demonstrates relevance and engagement with the topic that reveals a thorough understanding of context, audience and purpose |  Central message is somewhat clear and consistent; illustrates an adequate level of understanding of the subject Language is somewhat appropriate for audience Demonstrates engagement with the topic that reveals an adequate understanding of context, audience and purpose |  Central message is minimally clear or consistent; illustrates minimal understanding of the subject Language is marginally appropriate for audience Demonstrates some engagement with the topic with minor awareness of context, audience and purpose |  Central message is unclear and inconsistent; understanding of the subject is not evident Language is inappropriate for audience Demonstrates the lack of engagement with the topic and no awareness of context, audience and purpose |
| Organization |  Introduction and conclusion are present and establish the central message Examples are well developed, documented and support the purpose Main topics are linked with smooth transitions |  Introduction and conclusion are present though slightly developed and vaguely establish the central message Examples are somewhat developed and support the purpose Main topics are linked with transitions |  Introduction or conclusion is missing, not well developed and minimally establish the central message Examples are provided and minimally support the purpose Some main topics are linked with transitions |  Introduction and conclusion are missing or they do not establish the central message Examples are not developed or they do not support the purpose Main topics are not linked with transitions |
| Sources and Evidence |  Demonstrates consistent and ethical use of high quality sources Demonstrates skillful use of credible, scholarly and relevant sources Consistently establishes relevance of sources to the topic |  Demonstrates ethical use of sources Demonstrates use of credible and relevant sources Establishes some relevance of sources to the topic |  Demonstrates an attempt at ethical use of sources Demonstrates use of some credible and relevant sources Establishes vague relevance of sources to the topic |  Does not demonstrate ethical use of sources Does not demonstrate use of credible and relevant sources Does not establish relevance of sources to the topic |
| Professionalism |  If written: essay is typed, neat, and follows academic formatting with flawless use of grammar and punctuation If media: presentation demonstrates appropriate use of graphics; adheres to professional design principles If oral: delivery is polished, interesting and clearly spoken, speaker appears professional and well prepared |  If written: essay is typed, somewhat neat, and shows some attempt to follow academic formatting with adequate use of grammar and punctuation If media: presentation demonstrates some appropriate use of graphics; somewhat adheres to professional design principles If oral: delivery is mostly clear, speaker appears somewhat prepared |  If written: essay is typed, marginally neat, shows little attempt to follow academic formatting; patterns of error in grammar and punctuation are evident If media: presentation demonstrates minimal use of appropriate graphics; minimally adheres to professional design principles If oral: delivery is somewhat clear, speaker appears marginally prepared |  If written: essay is not typed or does not follow academic formatting If media: presentation does not use appropriate graphics; does not follow professional design principles If oral: delivery is not clear, speaker does not appear to be prepared or professional |

**Appendix B**