Speech Department Assessment Report 2004-2005
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A. Undergraduate Assessment by Degree/Certificate Program

   1.   List in detail your Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each undergraduate degree/certificate offered.

        The Department of Speech at the University of Hawaii offers an innovative B.A. program emphasizing the central processes and functions of human communication. To that end, the program focuses on developing a cross-situational understanding of the three areas central to the discipline: **Message Processing**, **Relational Communication**, and **Social Influence**.

        All students are expected to develop understanding in the 3 aforementioned content areas (message processing, relational communication, and social influence) as well as understanding and skills in research methods.

   2.   Where are these SLOs published (e.g., departmental web page)?

        Our Department web page, course catalog, flyers.

   3.   Explain how your SLOs map onto your curriculum, i.e., how does your curriculum produce the specific SLOs in your students?

        For research skills, we have a research methods course required of all majors – Sp 302.

        For the content areas, we have basic required courses reflecting the three focus areas: Relational Management (Sp 381), Message Processing (Sp 470 and Sp 370), and Social Influence/Persuasion (Sp 364). We also have elective courses in the three focus areas.

   4. What specific methodologies were used to collect data?

        The Department of Speech has undertaken various facets of assessment over the past three semesters. Our largest effort to date has been an assessment of **Speech majors' acquisition of fundamental content in human communication** as presented in our required classes: Sp 301, Theories in Speech Communication; Sp 251, Public Speaking; Sp 302, Introduction to Inquiry; Sp 364, Persuasion; Sp 370/470 (students choose between Verbal Communication or Nonverbal Communication); and Sp 381, Interpersonal Communication.

Assessment Overview

An instrument was developed that uses a multiple choice format to assess students' knowledge of the content areas covered by our core courses. The instrument is administered in the first week of each semester to the Sp 151 (Personal and Public Speech) and Sp 251 (Public Speaking) classes. Most of these students have not been exposed to Speech department courses before. Their data serve as the base line for assessment.

At the end of each semester, all graduating majors and minors are required to make an appointment to complete a variation of the same instrument administered to the Sp 151 and Sp 251 classes earlier in the semester. These data serve as the "post-experimental manipulation" data, the data that allow us to assess acquisition of course content.

Instrument Development

Each faculty member who teaches or has taught one of the required courses submitted approximately ten items from their test question pools for midterm and final exams in the core courses. Dr. Amy Hubbard, the previous Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Department of Speech, collected the items and developed a pool of assessment items from which each instrument is constructed. Dr. Hubbard selected approximately equal numbers of items from each content area for each instrument used at the beginning and end of the semesters.

Data Analysis

We have not yet analyzed 2004-2005 data as yet, however last year's assessment showed significant differences in acquired content between graduating majors/minors and students who have never taken a Speech course before. Significant differences ($p < .05$) were found across each of the 7 required classes. In all cases, the averaged scores of the graduating Speech majors were higher than the Sp 151 students. Effect sizes ranged from lows of 6% (Sp 301) and 8% (Sp 302 and S0 370) to highs of 32% (Sp 381) and 33% (Sp 364). The average effect size across the seven classes is 17.6%. The overall effect size comparing Sp 151 students to Speech majors collapsed across classes was 43%.

Interpretation

Speech majors have learned and retained the materials provided in their Speech classes to a degree that is significantly greater than their counterparts who have taken no or minimal Speech classes. This finding is consistent across all of the classes required for majors. However the range of effect sizes across the scores for the individual classes indicates that the difference between majors and non-majors is greater in some classes than others. This may be due to the unique content (i.e., less redundancy) in some classes such as Sp 301 (Theories), Sp 302 (Research Methods), and Sp 370 (Verbal Communication). Also, Sp 370 may not have been taken by all of the grading majors (since they have the option to take

either Sp 370 OR Sp 470 (Nonverbal Communication). Effect sizes may be related to when the classes were taken. Ideally, Sp 301 and Sp 302 are taken prior to the other required classes. Interestingly, the classes with the greatest effect sizes are classes that students typically enjoy the most.

Our second facet of assessment has focused on **students' subjective assessments of their learning** and, relatedly, **students' assessment of the Department of Speech**. These data are collected in an exit survey developed by Dr. Hubbard. The instrument records various demographic data; the number of Speech classes students have taken; students' perceptions of faculty *knowledge* and *enthusiasm*; students' beliefs about the *importance* and *usefulness* of what they learned in Speech classes; and students' *interactions with professors* in Speech. Finally, students also respond to items that assess their perceptions of their learning in the various contents covered by the core courses as well as student perceptions regarding their improvement in *writing skills*; *oral communication skills*; *critical thinking skills*; and *information search and retrieval skills*.

Approximately 100 of these exit surveys have now been collected and we are in the process of analyzing the data.

5. How were the assessment data/results used to inform decisions concerning the curriculum and administration of the program?

The faculty met and discussed the results of the assessment analyses and improvements that could be made. For example, we concluded that the Speech Department may serve its majors better by incorporating more discussion of theory, and particularly research methods into other required courses. Specifically, instructors can offer more analysis and criticism of the research that is discussed in classes in order to reinforce the materials covered in Sp 302.

Since the results to date suggest the Speech department is performing effectively and Speech majors are graduating with a knowledge base on human communication that separates them from their peers, we decided that changes in pedagogy or administrative changes are not needed at this time. Faculty members agreed to try to incorporate more discussion of theory and research methods across courses in the Department to reinforce learning of core content in our discipline.

6. General Education Assessment Within the Major:

Manoa's General Education Program includes the following requirements of majors. All students who graduate with the major:

1)   are proficient in the primary information-accessing and information-processing methods of the field; by either integrating such skills within courses or research projects or by recommending an appropriate course offered in another department (computer/info sciences, etc.);

2)   are proficient in the problem-solving and oral communication methods of the field;

3)   have had training and experience in the modes of inquiry and analysis appropriate to the field. The purpose is to have all students actively engaged in scholarship at a high level, and to avoid having students completing their degrees by means of passive learning alone.

How have you met the above requirements in your degree program?

With regard to proficiency in information accessing and processing, the Sp 302 course incorporates instruction on library usage (typically a 2-hour workshop conducted by library staff) and information search tools.

With regard to proficiency in problem-solving and oral communication methods in the field, our majors are required to take Sp 251 (Principles of Effective Public Speaking). Most of our upper-division courses require individual and/or group presentations, allowing students to increase their public communication skills. In addition, we offer Sp 351 Professional Presentations, and Sp 493 Teaching Speech. Storytelling (Sp 333) and Story Theatre (Sp 335) are popular electives which enhance public speaking skills of our students.

Many of the Speech Dept. courses teach students various problem-solving skills, such as Sp 455 Conflict Management, Sp 352 Group Decision-Making and Leadership, Sp 361 Leadership Skills.

With regard to training and experience in the modes of inquiry and analysis in the field of Communication, our students conduct a research project first-hand in the Sp 302 and many other upper-division Speech courses.

B.   Graduate Assessment by Degree/Certificate Program

1.   List in detail your Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each graduate degree/certificate offered.

The Department of Speech at the University of Hawaii offers an innovative M.A. program emphasizing the central processes and functions of human communication. To that end, the program focuses on developing a cross-situational understanding of the three areas central to the discipline: **Message Processing**, **Relational Communication**, and **Social Influence**. The program is predicated on the belief that in-depth integration of contemporary research and theory in these areas best serves the needs of students whether their ultimate goals reflect further scholarly endeavors or the application of communication theory and research in public or private sector employment.

All graduate students are expected to develop understanding in the 3 aforementioned content areas (message processing, relational communication, and social influence) as well as understanding and skills in research methods.

2.   Where are these SLOs published (e.g., departmental web page)?

Our Department web page, flyers, graduate information packets distributed to prospective gradua

3.   Explain how your SLOs map onto your curriculum, i.e., how does your program of graduate studies produce the specific SLOs in your students?

For research skills, we have a 2 course sequence: Sp 602 and Sp 702
For the content areas, we have three basic courses reflecting Relational Management (Sp 681), Message Processing (Sp 670), and Social Influence/Persuasion (Sp 654).

4.   What population(s) is covered by your assessment(s)?

All graduate students in our program.

5.   Please list/describe all the assessment events and devices used to monitor graduate student progress through the program. Consider the following questions:

– How are written exams used to assess graduate students?
– In core courses (Sp 601 and Sp 602), graduate students take a midterm and final exam. In elective courses, exams are at the discretion of the professor. However all graduate courses have a written paper requirement.

– How are independent and/or culminating projects (theses, dissertations, performances, capstone courses, etc.) used to assess graduate students?

Most of our graduate students complete a thesis. A smaller number complete the applied project. In both cases, an advisor and two committee members read and provide feedback to the student regarding the paper.

– How are oral presentations/reports/performances used to assess graduate students?

For thesis and applied project graduate students, students are required to have a proposal meeting where they orally defend their proposed paper. After completion of the thesis/project, graduate students again have a formal meeting where they defend their work in the front of the committee. The advisor and committee members collaboratively decide whether the graduate student passes the oral defenses.

6.   Please list/describe how your graduate students contribute to your discipline/academic area? Consider the following questions:

– To what extent do your graduate students present their work at professional conferences?

Our current graduate students and alumni routinely present conference papers at our National and International Communication Association meetings, as well as regional and specialty conferences. Our graduate students are taking on leadership roles in the professional organizations in our field (e.g. graduate student representative, paper readers, etc.)

– To what extent do your graduate students publish their work?

Many of our graduate students have published their work in collaboration with a faculty mentor including some of the top journals in our discipline.

7.   What attempts are made to monitor student post-graduate professional activities?

Our Departmental web page has an alumni link which encourages our graduates to provide current contact and employment information. We also send a Departmental newsletter to our alumni. In addition, we make regular contact informally with our alumni via e-mail.
– In which industries/professions do your graduates find employment?

Many of our MA graduates choose to go on for the Ph.D. They are highly successful in getting accepted to the top ranked Ph.D. programs in the country (in our field) and invariably are awarded graduate assistantships and fellowships. Now several of our alumni who earned Ph.D.s are faculty members at prominent universities across the nation (e.g., Michigan State University). One recent graduate earned a Post-doctoral fellowship.

Many of our graduates who do not pursue a Ph.D. are instructors at the college level.

Other graduates are pursuing careers in a variety of industries (i.e., non-profit organizations, advertising, media/entertainment, personnel, corporate training).

– How successful are your graduates in their chosen professions and careers?

Objectively speaking, our graduates are highly successful and demonstrably leaders in their chosen fields.

8.   How were the assessment data/results used to inform decisions concerning the curriculum and administration of the program?

While we have been highly successful in cultivating graduate students in our Ph.D. track, to cater to graduate students who wish to embark on a non-academic

career, we added a Plan B option to our curriculum.

– Was pedagogy changed? For graduate students taking the Plan B option, they are not required to enroll in the second of the research methods series (Sp 702). However the two core courses (Sp 601 and 602) are required of all graduate students.

– Were degree requirements changed? To increase the rigor or our program, we added an additional 3-credit requirement, totaling 33 credits.

– Did you make administrative changes? We did and have received formal approval for the Plan B option and 3-credit increase.

– Were there changes in interactions with students? Advising, counseling, etc. No.

– Were courses changed? No.