NCA’s Monthly Teleconference Series
CARD Calls: Communicating About Research and Professional Development

Assessing Student Learning in an Undergraduate Communication Program

Featured Speakers:

Terrel L. Rhodes, Vice President, Office of Quality, Curriculum and Assessment, Association of American Colleges and Universities
Wende Morgaine, VALUE Initiative Manager, Association of American Colleges and University & Faculty, Portland State University
Helen Tate, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Communication and Theatre, Columbia College

Monday, February 9, 2009—1:00pm Eastern

Moderator:
Brad Mello, Associate Director for Educational Initiatives
National Communication Association
Show me the learning!

National Communication Association

February 2009

Terrel Rhodes, PhD (rhodes@aacu.org)
Vice President for Quality, Curriculum, and Assessment, Association of American Colleges and Universities

Wende Morgaine, MST (wendemm@gmail.com)
VALUE Initiative Manager, Association of American Colleges and Universities & Faculty, Portland State University
An Ongoing Tension

- External imperatives:
  - Department of Education’s *A Nation at Risk* (1983),
  - Bennett’s *To Reclaim a Legacy* (1984),
  - Boyer’s *College* (1987), and
Pressures for accountability and assessment of student learning

Department of Education

States and accrediting associations

Colleges and universities
Call for “interoperable outcomes-focused accountability systems designed to be accessible and useful for

– students,
– policymakers, and
– the public,

as well as for internal management and institutional improvement.”
Accountability

• Is a college or university using its resources appropriately and well?
• What does that question mean?
Two Paradigms of Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic dimensions</th>
<th>Assessment for Continuous Improvement</th>
<th>Assessment for Accountability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Formative (improvement)</td>
<td>Summative (judgment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predominant ethos</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Application choices</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Multiple/triangulation</td>
<td>Standardized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of evidence</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference points</td>
<td>Over time, comparative, established goal</td>
<td>Comparative or fixed standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of results</td>
<td>Multiple internal channels and media</td>
<td>Public communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses of results</td>
<td>Multiple feedback loops</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six fundamental questions:

1. student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, degrees, and students?

2. evidence that students achieve stated learning outcomes?

3. analysis and use of evidence of student learning?
Six fundamental questions:

4. shared responsibility for student learning and for assessment of student learning?

5. evaluation and improvement of assessment and student learning?

6. informing the public and other stakeholders about your students’ learning?
Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) 2007

• Responding to the Spellings Commission report

• National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)

• American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
VSA Template--three sections

• I) Student and Family Information,
• II) Student Experiences and Perceptions, and
• III) Student Learning Outcomes.

Virtually all of the information has been collected and reported by institutions for years, but not in one place and through one frame.
NSSE

- Measure students’ participation in those activities that research shows lead to deep learning.
- Encourage institutions to improve the student learning experience.
- Put the focus on what students are actually doing.
LEAP—AAC&U

- Embed assessment in meaningful student learning experiences.
- Include assessment experiences at key milestones in the students’ entire baccalaureate career.
- Assess meaningful work over important learning dimensions.
- Put the student in the center.
What assessments do we have?

**Employers Find College Transcripts Of Limited Use In Evaluating Potential**

How useful do you find the college transcript in helping you evaluate job applicants’ potential to succeed at your company?

- Not sure 4%
- Very useful 13%
- Fairly useful 16%
- Not useful 33%
- Just somewhat useful 34%
What assessments are valued?

Assessments’ Effectiveness In Ensuring College Graduates Have Skills/Knowledge

- Supervised/evaluated internship/community-based project where students apply college learning in real-world setting:
  - Very effective: 69%
  - Fairly effective: 83%

- Advanced comprehensive senior project, such as thesis, demonstrating student’s depth of knowledge in major & problem-solving, writing, and analytic reasoning skills:
  - Very effective: 46%
  - Fairly effective: 79%

- Essay tests to evaluate level of problem-solving, writing, and analytical-thinking skills:
  - Very effective: 35%
  - Fairly effective: 60%

- Electronic portfolio of student’s college work, including accomplishments in key skill areas and faculty assessments:
  - Very effective: 33%
  - Fairly effective: 56%

- Multiple-choice tests of general content knowledge:
  - Very effective: 7%
  - Fairly effective: 32%
Eportfolios are useful assessments

Assessments’ Usefulness In Evaluating College Graduates’ Potential For Success

- Faculty supervisor’s assessment of applicant’s student internship/community-based project applying college learning in real-world setting: 40% very useful, 67% fairly useful
- Sample of applicant’s student senior project and overview of faculty assessment of the project: 30% very useful, 61% fairly useful
- Electronic portfolio of applicant’s college work, including accomplishments in key skill areas and faculty assessments: 30% very useful, 56% fairly useful
- Applicant’s score on essay test to evaluate level of problem-solving, writing, and analytical-thinking skills: 23% very useful, 54% fairly useful
- Applicant college’s score showing how the college compares to others in advancing students’ critical-thinking skills: 14% very useful, 36% fairly useful
- Applicant’s score on multiple-choice test of general content knowledge: 6% very useful, 29% fairly useful
Different publics have different:

- expectations of higher education
- definitions of student learning
- Points of interest and concern
  - Cost and efficiency
  - Graduation rates
  - Workforce preparedness
Questions shift if we include the students’ role in student learning

• Does assessment help students learn?
• Does it improve student learning?
• What is the consequential validity of assessment?
• Importance of “engagement”
In terms of student learning

• If we (e.g., students, faculty, institutions) engage in meaningful, consequential assessment activities,
• we will generate the evidence for accountability.
Assessment of student learning

Program Review and Results Report

Internal Planning (Institutional Research Cost & Enrollment Studies)

Accreditation
VALUE: *Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education*

- All of the essential learning outcomes
- Actual work of students through their curriculum
- Rubrics that articulate criteria for demonstration of learning at progressively complex, unscripted levels
- Eportfolios as medium – transport and transparency
Major VALUE Project Activities

• Advisory board (12 members)
• Rubric collection
• Creation of metarubrics (different campuses)
• Piloting and refining metarubrics through three cycles of leadership and partner campus use (12 leadership campuses)
• Final reliability and ease-of-use check with three groups of users
VALUE National Advisory Board

• Randy Bass, Georgetown
• Marcia Baxter-Magolda, Miami
• Veronica Boix-Mansilla, Harvard University
• Johnnella Butler, Spelman
• Helen Chen, Stanford
• Gloria Edwards, ABET
• Arianne Hoy, Bonner Foundation
• Marcia Mentkowski, Alverno College
• George Kuh, Indiana
• Peggy Maki, consultant
• Robert Sternberg, Tufts
• Kathleen Yancey, Florida
open ed

• A website open to everyone in higher education
  – Free to join, easy to sign up
  – openedpractices.org
• A library of sorts...a site where a collection of rubrics (and other best practices) can be:
  – Stored
  – Shared
  – Tagged
• Built with open source software to share knowledge and best practices openly
## Resources for Teaching & Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>AAC&amp;U Outcomes</th>
<th>Popularity</th>
<th>Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubric for Coding Problem-Solving Analysis Protocol (P-SAP)</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>22 Aug 2008 - 9:22pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Steps to Cultivate Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Foundations &amp; skills for lifelong learning</td>
<td>20 Aug 2008 - 8:43pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993/95 Core Outcomes Assessment, College of Arts and Sciences, Santa Clara University</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>2 Apr 2008 - 10:03pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002 PROVINCIAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT IN CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Association of American Colleges &amp; Universities</td>
<td>Creative thinking</td>
<td>10 Oct 2008 - 12:49am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Perspective from Industry on Characteristics of Life Long Learning</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Foundations &amp; skills for lifelong learning</td>
<td>20 Aug 2008 - 8:46pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ELOs for Metarubric Development

• Inquiry and analysis
• Critical thinking
• Creative thinking
• Written communication
• Oral communication
• Quantitative literacy
• Information literacy
• Teamwork
• Problem solving
• Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
• Intercultural knowledge and competence
• Ethical reasoning
• Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
• Integrative learning
Rubric Process

• Team of faculty from around the country
  – Subject matter experts, or
  – Assessment experts
• Review rubrics stored at openedpractices.org
• Develop criteria from rubric collection
• Each rubric development team member writes a row of performance descriptors for one criteria
• Draft rubric then discussed and debated, edited and transformed
Rubric Process

• Initial creation (Spring 2008)
• First testing (Summer 2008)
• First revision (Fall 2008)
• Second testing (Winter 2009)
• Second revision (Early spring 2000)
• Third testing (Late spring 2009)
• Third and final revision (Summer 2009)
• Final release of rubrics (Summer 2009)
Current Rubric Development Teams

Agnes Scott College
Alverno College
Association of American College & Universities
Atlantic Cape Community College
Augustana College
Azusa Pacific University and Claremont Graduate University
Bellevue Community College
Bowling Green State University
California State University, Sacramento
Carleton College
Christopher Newport University
College of San Mateo
College of Wooster
Columbia University Teachers College
Community College of Baltimore County
Concordia University, St. Paul
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
Eastern Michigan University
Georgetown University
Hamline University
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Intercultural Communication Institute
International Partnership for Service Learning & Leadership
Kapi'olani Community College
King's College
Longwood University
Maryville College
Meredith College
National Communication Association
North Carolina State University
North Hennepin Community College
Portland State University
Prescott College
Sacred Heart University
St. Olaf College
The Bonner Foundation
United States Air Force Academy
University of Baltimore
University of Colorado, Denver
University of Massachusetts Boston
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
University of North Dakota
University of San Francisco
University of the Pacific
University of Vermont
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Washington State University
Wellesley College
Western Oregon University
VALUE Leadership Campuses

- Alverno College
- Bowling Green State University
- City University of New York LaGuardia Community College
- College of San Mateo
- Kapi'olani Community College
- Portland State University
- Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- San Francisco State University
- Spelman College
- St. Olaf College
- University of Michigan
Current VALUE Partner Campuses

Augustana College
California State University, Long Beach
Clemson University
College of Wooster
DePaul University
Jackson State University
James Madison University
King’s College
Lorain County Community College
Lourdes College
Minnesota State Colleges & Universities
Morehead State University
North Central College
Northwest Technical College
Oregon Institute of Technology
Pepperdine University
Prescott College
Queensborough Community College
South Central College
Southern Oregon University
Temple University
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Central Florida
University of Delaware
University of Idaho
University of Kansas
University of Michigan Flint
University of Minnesota Duluth
University of North Carolina at Fayetteville
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of the Pacific
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
W2eP (Web 2.0 Eportfolios)
West Liberty State College
Youngstown State University
Next Steps for VALUE

• Your campus could test the VALUE rubrics and become a Partner Campus *(either between now and February 15 or in the month of May)*
• You could have your students give us feedback on the rubrics
• You could have your students services people test out the rubrics and give us feedback
• You could have your local community partners test out the rubrics on student work and give us feedback
• Other ideas?
Helen Tate: Where to Begin Program Assessment Plan: The Big Picture

- Mission of the College
- Mission of the Department
- Learning Goals
- Course Requirements and Electives
- Assessment Measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals for Major in Communication</th>
<th>Assessment Procedure</th>
<th>Assessment Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will demonstrate their ability to present an effective speech.</td>
<td>Randomly selected speeches from the Advanced Public Speaking class will be rated by department faculty (other than the instructor of the course) on speaking competencies from the National Communication Association’s Competent Speaker Form.</td>
<td>Rubric 1: Speaker Competency form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will demonstrate their ability to solve practical problems in small group situations.</td>
<td>Randomly selected group projects from the Small Group Communication class will be rated by department faculty (other than the instructor of the course).</td>
<td>Rubric 2: Problem Solving form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will demonstrate effective communication behaviors while working in small groups to solve a problem.</td>
<td>Randomly selected groups from the Small Group Communication class will be videotaped and observed in small group interaction by department faculty who will rate their ability to communicate effectively in groups.</td>
<td>Rubric 3: Group Interaction form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will demonstrate the ability to select and use appropriate presentation technology.</td>
<td>Randomly selected speeches from Advanced Public Speaking will be rated by department faculty (other than the course instructor) for the appropriate and effective use of speaking technology.</td>
<td>Rubric 4: Presentation Technology form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of communication theory through critical inquiry.</td>
<td>Randomly selected senior projects from Senior Seminar will be rated by department faculty (other than the instructor) for their ability to use communication theory to ask and answer relevant research questions.</td>
<td>Rubric 5: Critical Inquiry form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students will understand how culture influences the communication process.</td>
<td>Randomly selected exams questions from the Survey of Communication class will be rated by department faculty other than the instructor.</td>
<td>Rubric 6: Intercultural Understanding form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students will feel positively about their ability to communicate effectively in a variety of communication contexts.</td>
<td>Seniors taking the Senior Survey will agree that their communication coursework has improved their interpersonal communication, small group communication and presentation skills.</td>
<td>Senior Survey, NSSE data</td>
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</table>
## Assessment Rotation for Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every Year</th>
<th>Fall Even Years</th>
<th>Fall Odd Years</th>
<th>Spring Even Years</th>
<th>Spring Odd Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 7 (Senior Survey)</td>
<td>Goal 1 (Advanced Public Speaking)</td>
<td>Goal 2 (Small Group)</td>
<td>Goal 3 (Small Group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4 (Advanced Public Speaking)</td>
<td>Goal 5 (Senior Seminar)</td>
<td>Goal 6 (Survey of Communication)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessment Rotation of General Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every Year</th>
<th>Fall Even Years</th>
<th>Fall Odd Years</th>
<th>Spring Even Years</th>
<th>Spring Odd Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4 (CC Senior Survey) * NSSE given every third year * CIRP/YFCY every third year</td>
<td>Goal 1 (COMM 100, informative speeches)</td>
<td>Goal 2 (COMM 100, persuasive speeches)</td>
<td>Goal 6 (THEA 105, 107, student analyses)</td>
<td>Goal 3 (COMM 100, group interaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5 (COMM 100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goal 7 (THEA 105, 107)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major Assessment Rubrics

• Goal 1: NCA Competent Speaker Form, Advanced Public Speaking
• Goal 2: Department Matrix, Small Group Communication
• Goal 3: Department Matrix, Small Group Communication
• Goal 4: Department Matrix, Advanced Public Speaking
• Goal 5: Department Matrix, Senior Seminar
• Goal 6: Department Matrix, Survey of Communication
• Goal 7: Department Senior Survey (part of Campus-wide assessment)
Gathering Data for Program Enhancement

1. Collect assessment data from courses based on assessment rotation
2. Assess student work and compile data
3. Meet with faculty to review results & discuss possible enhancements to program
4. Implement changes, enhancements

The process is cyclical, with each step leading to the next, forming a feedback loop for continuous improvement.
Assessment Report Findings

• Assessment can reveal ongoing problem areas
• Changes to courses and requirements can be made in response to problems
• Teaching weaknesses can be identified and strengthened
• Faculty begin to see their individual classes as part of a larger department goal
• Problems with assessment process and measures can also be identified
To register for one or more of the teleconferences, please fill out this form and return it to Melissa Anderson via email manderson@natcom.org or fax (202) 464-4600. Please note that the registration deadline for each teleconference is 72 hours prior to the start of the teleconference. However, there will be a registration limit of 100 phone lines (more than one person can be participating from a single phone line), so please register for the teleconferences that interest you as soon as possible to ensure that you get spots. You will receive a registration confirmation email within 48 hours of submitting this form. Slides for the presentation and dial-in information will be sent to all registered teleconference participants 48 hours before the teleconference.

Name:  
Affiliation:  
Email Address:  
Phone Number:  

Registration for: (please X all teleconferences for which you would like to be registered)

• **Free Speech Absolutism: A Defense**—James Aune, Professor, Department of Communication, Texas A&M University & NCA Distinguished Scholar—Thursday, March 12, 2009—2:00pm Eastern

• **Communication in the National Research Council Doctoral Education Survey**—featuring Edward Fink, Professor of Communication, University of Maryland; Linda Putnam, Professor, Department of Communication, University of California, Santa Barbara—Friday, April 17, 2009—3:00pm Eastern

• **Study Abroad: International Education for American Students in Rhetoric and Communication**—featuring Tom Benson, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, Penn State University—Monday, May 18, 2009—12:00pm Eastern time

• **Current Trends in Master’s Education for Communication**—featuring James Cherney, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Miami University; Dan Cronn-Mills, Professor and Chair, Speech Communication Department, Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Kendall Phillips, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University—Thursday, June 11, 2009—1:00pm Eastern

If you have any questions about the teleconference series, please contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@natcom.org or (202) 464-4622 x. 124.
Resources for National Communication Association Members

**Current RFP Tracker**

The *Current RFP Tracker* identifies funding opportunities (including research grants, residential fellowships, travel funds, awards, etc.) for communication scholars. To access the Tracker, please go to: [http://www.natcom.org/rptracker](http://www.natcom.org/rptracker). *Questions?*

Contact Associate Director for Research Initiatives Nancy Kidd, NCA, nkidd@natcom.org

**List of Higher Education Communication Programs**

The *List of Higher Education Communication Programs* includes detailed information about approximately 400 institutions and the various degree programs they offer ranging from Associates Degrees to Ph.D.s. This is a living document with information being updated on a routine basis. *Questions?* Contact Director for Research and Educational Initiatives Melissa Anderson, NCA, manderson@natcom.org

**New 2009 NCA Member Benefit- Free Online Journal**

NCA members can now get free online access to a selected Routledge, Taylor & Francis Journal. Choose from the following:

- Chinese Journal of Communication – [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rcjc](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rcjc)
- Journal of Family Communication – [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/hjfc](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/hjfc)
- Health Communication – [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/hhth](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/hhth)
- Feminist Media Studies – [www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rfms](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rfms)

To activate your online access today, contact Jennifer Roberts: jennifer.roberts@tandf.co.uk

State the name of the journal, your membership status and quote ‘NCA Member Free Access’ in the subject bar of the email.

**NCA Doctoral Honors Seminar: June 1-5, 2009, West Virginia University**

The 2009 seminar themed, “Communication as Engaged Scholarship,” hosts approximately 36 doctoral students selected based on the submission of the issues involved in engaged scholarship. *Deadline for submission is March 11, 2009.* For more details, please go to: [http://www.natcom.org/nca/Template2.asp?bid=8899](http://www.natcom.org/nca/Template2.asp?bid=8899). *Questions?* Contact Dr. Scott A. Myers, Seminar Coordinator, at dhs2009@mail.wvu.edu

**NCA 2009 Summer Conference on Intercultural Dialogue: July 22-26, 2009**

The conference and events are designed around two main issues: the current status of intercultural communication in various contexts, and exploring ways of understanding and managing productively interactions through dialogue. The conference will be held July 22-26 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey. For more details, please go to: [http://nca.maltepe.edu.tr/](http://nca.maltepe.edu.tr/). *Questions?* Contact Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, Chair of the Organizing Committee, wendy.leeds.hurwitz@gmail.com
February 9, 2009 Conference Call: Dial-In Information

• Dial the Access Number: 1.800.920.7487
• When prompted, enter the Participant Code followed by #
• Your Participant Code is 66623635#

Participant Star Commands
• *4-Volume: Pressing *4 will increase/decrease the volume
• Q &A Session: Participants press *1 to ask a question, and the moderator will take your questions in the order that they arrive
• For technical assistance during the teleconference, contact Customer Service at 1.800.989.9239