Assessment Date: Spring 2013

Faculty Name(s): KG Greenstein, Barbara Duggal, Kathy Sparling, Brenda Ahntholz

1. Course Name and Number:

| COMM 100 Introduction to Communication Theory |
| GE Plan A Area VII Information Competency |

2. All Course SLOs from the Course Outline of Record:

COMM 100 Course SLOs:
1. Identify the various definitions and concepts of communication and theory.
2. Explain the major theories that have shaped the field of communication studies.
3. Describe how particular communication theories and methods of research can be used to understand communication in social and cultural contexts.
4. Analyze research articles while demonstrating how to find, read, and cite research from journal articles in communication studies.
5. Write a research paper that answers a communication studies question that utilizes communication studies and related journals using APA style.
6. Characterize the ways in which theories and practices have been affected by power and changes in communication technologies.

GE Area VII Information Competency SLOs:
1. Develop effective research strategies.
2. Locate, retrieve, evaluate, and use information ethically and legally.

3. Specific Course SLO(s) assessed as part of this project:

COMM 100:
- SLO #4. Analyze research articles while demonstrating how to find, read, and cite research from journal articles in communication studies.

GE Area VII Information Competency
- SLO #1 Develop effective research strategies.
- SLO #2 Locate, retrieve, evaluate, and use information ethically and legally.

4. Assessment strategy or tool used in the assessment. (Describe below, and if applicable copy/paste any additional related documents at end of this form (i.e. Rubric, score sheet, test questions, essay assignment, etc.):
The COMM100 annotated bibliography was identified as the best assignment for assessing information competency. The assignment requires that students develop a research question, and find a minimum of four peer-reviewed academic journal articles or chapters from an edited academic book by using a library catalog or periodical database. The annotations must describe the scope of the article or book chapter and evaluate the findings and characteristics addressed by the study. Additionally, the bibliography must be in correct APA format. An Information Competency rubric was developed to assess the annotated bibliographies.

**NOTE:** This will usually consist of things you are already using to evaluate student work, i.e. Final Exam questions, Final Essay, Final Presentation or Culminating Project, other Assignments, Portfolio Evaluation, Performance Assessment, Department Testing, Pre and Post Tests, Vendor or Industry Certification Examinations, Indirect Assessments (Student Surveys, Focus Group Discussions, Interviews), etc.

5. **Specific aspects of the assessment tool which link up to specific Course SLOs being assessed** (i.e. Which specific test questions measured which Course SLOs? Note: May describe with #4 above):

See above #4

6. **Results and analysis of the data.** *(Explain below and if applicable copy/paste any related documents, i.e. spreadsheets with data at the end of this document.):

Overall, the annotated bibliographies point to satisfactory information competency skills. Students are identifying “researchable” academic topics to explore. There is great consistency in the ability of students to identify relevant academic, peer-reviewed journal articles. APA citation style was used consistently at an acceptable level of accuracy. For the most part, the annotations meet the expectations of the assignment. Students do a good job describing what the articles are about and how they relate to the research topic. However, because the current assignment does not require students to address other critical information competency considerations such as authority, currency, and bias, there is concern that students are not developing the kind of evaluative skills that are such an important part of information competency. We have to think of ways to get students to think more critically about the sources of information they use in their academic work. SLO#4 from COMM 100 may be too narrow in that it doesn’t address sources of information other than journal articles.

Here is an example of an annotation: “Leslie Baxter and Chitra Akkoor look at topic-based or avoidance in this paper. They want to see what topics are avoided or disclosed and why. Looking at monologues versus dialogue, they could relate certain issues such as smoking and drugs to be more of a monologue whereas everyday relationship talk as more of a dialogue. In a monologue situation parents have the final word no matter what. Overall they wanted to see what topics are avoided and why they are avoided.

This article will be helpful at looking closer at family communication and what types of communication are sacred and not so sacred for certain types of families. This article will allow me to talk about specific instances of family communication and how it relates to family dynamics. This article should also backup the article on everyday talk in family situations.”

The Information Competency rubric and results are appended at the end of this document.

7. **Describe any faculty dialogue that occurred as part of the assessment process** (i.e. Were results shared at a department meeting? Was there discussion about changing any SLOs? Etc.):
We shared excellent e-mail dialogue about the assessment.
On Oct. 30 Brenda wrote, “I wanted to respond to your comments about evaluation or the lack of it in your opinions. I disagree. I think our students are evaluating the articles in the annotated bibs by addressing how these articles answer their research question for their papers. I absolutely do not think that is appropriate to ask undergraduate students to evaluate the credibility of peer reviewed studies and PhD scholars. It is at best a graduate level activity. Undergraduate students are information seekers of peer reviewed academic research. This is why I ask students to focus their scope on how this article answers their research questions and how they will use it in their papers. Meaning, some articles agree and some articles disagree with their research questions and some add additional variables or circumstances to the situation.”

On Oct. 30 KG wrote in response, “Agree that it is too much to ask community college students to penetrate the mysteries of the "authority" of an article published in a peer-reviewed journal. In the main class we teach on information competency, LS101, we ask students to compile an annotated bibliography that includes a variety of sources, not just peer-reviewed journal articles. We ask them to evaluate each source using specific criteria similar to the CRAAP (currency, relevancy, authority, accuracy, purpose) test. I feel like the annotated bib assignment in COMM100 is a great assignment that teaches students to develop a research topic, search a library database, and identify relevant articles. But as we know, most students get their information from random web sites and Wikipedia. I think it's important that a class that fulfills the GE Info Comp requirement should include an activity or an assignment that requires students to think critically about information and teaches them how to evaluate information, like the CRAAP method in SPCH101. Maybe you are already covering this in the class in other ways?”

Brenda, KG, and Kathy met on Oct. 31, 2013 to discuss the assessment in person and talk about ways to include an additional information “evaluation” element to the class. We all agree that the annotated bibliography assignment does require students to evaluate the sources they find and that it does an excellent job of getting students to think about the relevancy of the articles they find. There is another project, “My Comm Theory” presentation that requires students to teach a specific theory to the rest of the class. It appears that this is the better assignment in which to introduce additional evaluative criteria such as currency, authority, accuracy, purpose.

8. Next steps (i.e. any planned revisions to curriculum or teaching strategies to promote student success, future assessment plans, etc.):

| Based on our discussion about adding more information competency specifically demonstrating evaluation of information on the Internet, I said the, “My Comm Theory Presentation” assignment was a better fit for this learning objective. I plan to increase the research requirement for this project/presentation and include the CRAAP test for sources as part of the assignment. The librarians and I will reassess in Spring 2014 to see if this objective is better covered and demonstrated at that time. – Brenda Ahntholz |

9. Results of implemented changes, if available at this time:
## COMM100 Information Competency Assessment
### Annotated Bibliographies
#### 28 Total Bibliographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLO #1 Develop effective research strategies.</th>
<th>EXCEEDS EXPECTATION</th>
<th>MEETS EXPECTATION</th>
<th>BELOW EXPECTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic for bibliography is focused and clear and appropriate to the academic discipline communication theory.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference list includes at least 4 peer reviewed academic journal articles that are relevant to the research topic. Sources are varied.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotations are evaluative and thoroughly describe the scope and authority of the articles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA citations are complete and reference list is correctly formatted.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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