Dec. 3, 2018

RE: Spring 2019 COM2 and COM3 Assessment Guidelines and Options

Dear COM instructor:

Thank you for doing the important work of teaching a COM course! Spring 2019 marks the pilot semester for assessment of these courses, which means that you are tasked with identifying an assessment project, conducting some form of data gathering and analysis, and generating a brief report of your efforts.

In the most basic sense, I define assessment as looking closely at teaching and learning in order to understand and improve teaching and learning. My goal is to provide multiple options for assessment, in hopes of suggesting at least one project idea that will be both interesting and valuable to you.

The goal during this pilot phase is to collect a broad array of information that can help guide ongoing COM assessment. Ideally, for this pilot semester, a project should not take any instructor more than 10 hours of time (which works out to less than 30 minutes a week, or less than 5 minutes a day) between January 1 and the report deadline of May 31.

Once you have identified a tentative project idea, please submit information about that idea HERE. I am happy to meet with you to help you plan or refine your idea; you can contact me at rick.fisher@uwyo.edu.

Additionally, these upcoming workshops may also help you in your course and assessment planning:
• Unpacking the COM student learning outcomes. Thursday, Dec. 13, 10-11:30am, Coe 218
• Aligning COM assessment with program, departmental, or college assessment. Tuesday, Dec. 18, 1-2:30pm, Coe 218
• Assignment redesign workshop: Promoting better communicating and learning through better assignments. Thursday, January 17, 9-10:30am, Coe 218

More information about these workshops will be available on the Writing Center webpage (look for the Communication across the Curriculum icon): uwyo.edu/writingcenter

Best,

Rick Fisher
Director, Communication across the Curriculum (CxC)
Associate Lecturer, Department of English
University of Wyoming
Spring 2019 COM2/COM3 Assessment Options

Notes:
1. The examples following each option below are meant to be illustrative, not restrictive. If the examples prompt you to think of an idea that isn’t a direct match to any of these options, please be in touch to see how we can make the idea work for you.

2. If you teach multiple COM courses, you should only complete one project focused on one course. Contact me if you would like guidance on which course to assess.

3. You’ll need to align your project directly with at least one of the COM2 or COM3 outcomes. (See p. 6)

4. Small stipends exist for instructors who take on a “preferred” project, as identified below.

5. Some additional funding and support exists for instructors who are interested in taking on a substantial, innovative assessment project (especially if you’re interested in possible publication about the project!).

COM assessment aligned with program or departmental assessment/accreditation

*Example:* Jake teaches a COM2 taken by all music majors. The music department wants to gather information about how well its students are meeting departmental learning outcomes. Jake helps draft questions for that departmental process that also provide information relevant to COM2 Outcome 3. When the department conducts their assessment, Jake pulls out the questions relevant to COM2 and submits a report for COM assessment based on that data. The department uses the broader data for its programmatic assessment report.

Reflection on teaching COM (for teachers who have taught the same COM course more than once)

*Example:* Ed teaches the psychology COM2 nearly every semester, and he has some thoughts about what is working and what is not. For his assessment project, he decides to reflect on his experience trying to effectively teach COM2 outcomes 3 and 5. He produces a detailed report of various struggles and successes of his efforts.

Participation (ideally with a student) in spring “Assignment Showcase” (*preferred; $50 stipend for first 12)

*Example:* Yihan is proud of an assignment he developed related to COM3 Outcome 7 (about responding to others and considering multiple perspectives); he thinks some aspect of the assignment is innovative and worth sharing with others. He agrees to present his assignment – ideally with a student who has completed this assignment – at a 20-minute session in late spring. He also submits a report that explains the assignment and why he thinks it works, along with the assignment guidelines. **NOTE:** The showcase is tentatively scheduled for April 18, 2019; specific details will be determined based on consultation with faculty who choose this option.

Close reading/viewing of at least 3 student assignments/presentations

*Example:* Jill has a vague notion that students are not as successful in structuring their literature reviews in her Ag Econ COM3 as she wishes they were. She decides to take a closer look at a targeted set of her student work to see if she can figure out what *specific* features lead her to judge some texts
“better” structure from “worse” structure. She writes a report which explains what she did, what she found, and how this information will help her teach the class differently next time around.

**Pre-/post- assessment related to one or more COM outcomes** (*preferred; $50 stipend*)

*Example:* Jason is teaching Intro to Lit and is really interested in whether students improve in their use of terminology for literacy analysis from beginning of semester to end of semester. He develops an assignment that students complete early in the semester and again at the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, he tallies up the use of key terminology in each student’s set of responses and calculates average change from early semester to late semester. He submits a report which explains his process, his results, and how this information helps him develop a better understanding of student performance related to part of COM2 Outcome 1.

**A survey of students**

*Example:* Bill realizes he has virtually no idea how his students approach the *process* of writing their term paper in his COM3 political science seminar course. Although he requires them to turn in a couple of prep assignments for the paper, he doesn’t really have a good sense for how they ultimately go about finding evidence, drafting, gathering feedback, and managing sources for this project. He uses Google Forms to develop a survey with several questions about process and actions and assigns it to students as an anonymous out-of-class task. He reports the findings in relationship to COM3 Outcomes 2 and 4.

**Interview of students**

*Example:* Maria has noticed that students seem to struggle revising their thesis statements in her COM2 religious studies class, even though she gives extensive feedback on their draft statements. She works with the Writing Center to develop a set of questions and to schedule a period when she can ask a small set of students to meet with a Writing Center consultant to talk through their plans for responding to her feedback. The Writing Center records the interviews and provides rough transcriptions of the interviews to Maria. She reports what she did, her interpretation of the interviews, and how this helps her rethink her strategies for teaching and commenting on thesis statements (related to COM2 Outcome 1 and/or 3).

**Participation in CxC-led assessment project** (stipend potentially available, amount TBD)

*Example:* Joyce is unsure how to develop her own assessment project, but she is interested in comparing student work from her COM3 biology course with the kinds of writing students produce in other COM3 courses. She agrees to contribute student work from her class and to attend a couple of group sessions during the semester where she and others read and discuss writing from various disciplines and genres. She submits a brief report of how this experience helps her (for example) rethink her definition of digital communication (related to COM3 Outcomes 1 and 4).

**Participate in a focus group with other COM instructors** (preferred, $50 stipend for first 18)

*Example:* Terese is frustrated about her efforts to develop good group presentations in her COM3 dance class. She signs up for a focus group related to Outcome 6, where she and other instructors answer a set of semi-structured questions and discuss their experiences. After the meeting, she writes
up a report which describes her key takeaways from the discussion and how the conversation may help her rethink her COM teaching. Options:

(1) Focus group about Outcome 6 (oral presentations), T, Feb. 26, 2019, at 9:30-11am
(2) Focus group about Outcome 4 (process and collaboration), Th, March 7, 2019, at 11-12:30pm
(3) Focus group about Outcome 7 (engage opposing viewpoints), T, March 12, 2019, at 2:30-4pm

Other or Undecided; will meet with CxC Director to develop project (stipend or support funds potentially available)

Example: Joe is excited about teaching his COM3 class for the first time and has a vague idea about a project for assessing students’ ability to effectively respond to hypothetical “clients” in his accounting class (COM3 Outcome 3). He schedules a meeting with the CxC director and they refine a project idea. At the end of the semester, he writes up a report about the project, results, and his ideas for revising this assignment for the next spring.
Reporting Requirements

Reports should be concise (2-5 pages) and should follow the format provided below. Please include additional documents (such as assignment descriptions or assessment rubrics) as relevant.

Reports (and additional documents) should be sent to Jake Hayden (jakeh@uwyo.edu) and are due May 31, 2019. Note: If you chose to conduct an assessment that overlaps with department/program assessment, a separate document will still need to be submitted for that assessment reporting process.

COM ASSESSMENT REPORT template

Course prefix, number, and name:
USP designation (COM1, COM2 or COM3):
Submitted by:
Date submitted:

1. What COM learning outcome(s) did you assess this semester? (See last page of this file for list of outcomes.)
   __ SLO1  __ SLO2  __ SLO3  __ SLO4  __ SLO5  __ SLO6  __ SLO7

2. What central QUESTION(s) drove your assessment project?

3. What kind of data did you collect for your project?

4. What were your key findings? (Quantitative findings are nice but not required. Include tables or other graphic representations of data within the report body or as an attachment/appendix.)

5. Interpret the results as they relate to the COM learning outcome(s) you focused on. What does your project suggest, in terms of how your course is meeting the outcomes?

6. What changes to the course (schedule, instruction, assignments, etc.) are contemplated or have been made as a result of these data? If you are not making changes at this time, please explain.

7. What kind of professional development workshops, learning communities, or other support would help you further improve your teaching of COM courses?
8. Finally, to help us gather a broad perspective of COM instructors’ *perceptions* about their instruction and about students’ performance, please enter a scale-based value for the following questions. **Place an X above the scale value that matches your response** in each box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Outcome 1:</strong> Responding to a breadth of communication experience</th>
<th>How much instruction and practice does your course include for this outcome? 0: Students get virtually no instruction and no opportunity to practice this outcome 4: Students get substantial instruction and opportunity to practice this outcome</th>
<th>By the end of the semester, how successful/effective are your students in achieving this outcome? 0: A majority of students still continue to struggle with most aspects of this outcome 4: A majority of students have achieved considerable success in achieving my expectations for this outcome</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2:</strong> Conducting and using research</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 3:</strong> Responding to audience, purpose, and structure</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 4:</strong> Making use of processes, technologies, and collaboration</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 5:</strong> Understanding and responding to conventions</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 6:</strong> Delivering oral presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Outcome 7:</strong> Engaging with alternate perspectives</td>
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</table>

**Any explanatory comments you wish to make (optional)?**
## Supplementary information: Quick access to the COM2 and COM3 outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome and central focus</th>
<th>COM2 (full outcome description)</th>
<th>COM3 (full outcome description)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1:</strong> Gaining a breadth of communication experience</td>
<td>Develop and communicate written, oral, and digital messages through a variety of assignments that include discipline-based or interdisciplinary purposes, forms, and audiences.</td>
<td>Use the discourse of a discipline or interdisciplinary field to communicate that field’s subject matter to academic or professional audiences through written, oral, and digital communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 2:</strong> Conducting and using research effectively</td>
<td>Find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately using a variety of sources.</td>
<td>Find, analyze, evaluate, and document information appropriately as applicable to the discipline, interdisciplinary field, or professional setting, as demonstrated by completing a substantial communication project that requires appropriate research skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 3:</strong> Developing appropriate structures for specific audience(s) and purpose(s)</td>
<td>Understand the different purposes of written, oral, and digital messages and employ appropriate organizational strategies, including developing thesis statements and main ideas.</td>
<td>Recognize and evaluate more advanced aspects of communication that respond to the purposes and needs of audiences in a discipline, interdisciplinary field, or professional setting.</td>
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<td><strong>Outcome 4:</strong> Making use of effective processes, technologies, and collaboration</td>
<td>Make effective use of multiple drafts, revisions, progressive assignments, computer technology, peer and instructor comments, and collaboration in the achievement of a final work of communication.</td>
<td>Make effective use of multiple drafts, revision, computer technology, peer and instructor comments, and collaboration to show understanding of communication standards in a discipline or interdisciplinary field.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 5:</strong> Understanding and responding to conventions</td>
<td>Observe the accepted conventions including spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery and documentation in oral, written, and digital messages.</td>
<td>Observe the accepted conventions of spelling, grammar, organizational structure, punctuation, delivery and documentation expected in disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or professional contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 6:</strong> Delivering effective oral presentations</td>
<td>Deliver prepared presentations in a natural, confident, and conversational manner, and display nonverbal communication that is consistent with and supportive of the oral message.</td>
<td>Deliver presentations in a confident and professional manner, consistent with the standards of the discipline or interdisciplinary field.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 7:</strong> Engaging with opposing perspectives</td>
<td>Interact effectively with audience members, engage opposing viewpoints constructively, and demonstrate active listening skills.</td>
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</tbody>
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