



Communication | 2013-2014 Assessment Report

One of the learning outcomes of the Communication program is that students will demonstrate that they can work collaboratively with others. Our assessment plan is to target that outcome. The primary pedagogical tool for accomplishing this is group projects in many of our classes. The program has recently revised its curriculum in part to tighten up its prerequisite structure. In the past a looser prerequisite structure meant that students more experienced with group work were often working in groups with less experienced students resulting in some friction. Our assessment plan is in part an effort to find out if the tighter prerequisites have reduced that problem. Our method of direct assessment is to collect data how faculty are judging the success of group projects and the individuals within the groups.

In the two semesters of 2013-2014 we collected data from 13 courses (4 lower division and 9 upper division) containing a total of 172 group projects. Of these, 15 projects were judged to be disappointing by the instructors (10 at the lower division and 5 at the upper division) and 40 individual students were identified as problematic in meeting the learning outcome (25 at the lower division and 15 at the upper division). To a certain extent difficulties in working in groups can be healthy learning opportunities and in fact in one course the data suggest an inversion correlation between the tension within the group and the overall success of the group's project. Nevertheless, if we find a pattern of persistent failure in students, some correction is needed. If the recent curricular changes in prerequisites were a move in the right direction, then there should be fewer problems, both with groups and individuals in the groups, in the upper division courses than in the lower division courses. So far the data confirm this. If the difficulties experienced by students are indeed learning experiences, then the same students should not be encountering problems in later courses. This also is confirmed so far by the data. None of the 40 individuals identified as problematic were problems in more than a single class. We plan to continue this assessment to see if these patterns continue.

Learning outcome to assess: #8 Work collaboratively with others

Technique: determine out of the number of group assignments how many groups encountered significant problems and how many individuals had significant problems working within their groups

Fall 2013

<u>courses</u>	projects	group problems	individual problems
133	12	0	0
205 1 st project (3 sections)	18	6	1
205 2 nd project (3 sections)	18	3	
237 (2 sections)	5	1	5
309	6	1	
335	7	0	2
477	5	0	1
TOTALS	71	11	9

Spring 2014

<u>courses</u>	projects	group problems	individual problems
133	12	0	0
200	8	0	8
205	32	0	6
237	5	0	5
306	6	0	0
308	10	2	5
333	7	2	1
381	3	0	1
430	1	0	4
480	9	0	1
TOTALS	101	4	31