



Communication | 2014-2015 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 targets that outcome. The primary pedagogical tool for accomplishing this is group projects in many of our classes. Our previous assessment suggested that we could do a better job shaping student expectations about group work in our supporting courses. In fact, most of the faculty started using the mantra, “Life is a group project”, in our classes. Our assessment plan was an effort to find out if emphasizing expectations about collaboration addressed that problem. Our method of direct assessment is to collect data on how faculty are judging the success of group projects and the individuals within the groups.

In the two semesters of 2014-2015, we collected data from 13 courses (4 lower division and 9 upper division) containing a total of 154 group projects. Of these, 10 projects were judged to be disappointing by the instructors (7 at the lower division and 3 at the upper division) and 21 individual students were identified as problematic in meeting the learning outcomes (15 at the lower division and 5 at the upper division). To a certain extent difficulties in working in groups can be healthy learning opportunities. In fact, in one course the data suggest an inverse correlation between the tension within the group and the overall success of the group’s project. The move to emphasize curricular expectations in lower-level classes should reduce the number of problematic groups and individuals. So far the data confirm this. In fact, we’ve seen a major improvement over last year’s encouraging results. We plan to continue this assessment to see if these patterns continue. We will use a faculty retreat to look more closely at the results and determine our next steps.

Learning outcome to assess: #8 Work collaboratively with others

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

Data**Fall 2014**

Course #	Projects	Group Problems	Individual Problems
133	12	0	0
205	15	2	0
237 (2 sections)	5	1	7
309	6	1	
335	7	0	2
447	5	0	1
TOTALS	71	4	10

Spring 2015

Course #	Projects	Group Problems	Individual Problems
133	12	0	0
200	8	0	0
205	30	0	4
237	5	2	5
306	6	0	0
333	7	2	0
381	3	0	1
430	1	0	1
480	9	0	0
TOTALS	91	6	11