

Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Department or Program: Communication Disorders and Sciences; Department of Special Education and Clinical Sciences

Academic Year of Report: 2017-2018

Department Contact Person for Assessment: Karen McLaughlin, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report

We assessed our goals related to the following areas in our assessment plan:

- B. Students will understand and analyze the social impact of cognitive- communication disability on affected individuals and family members.
- C. Students will demonstrate the prerequisite speaking and writing skills to pursue graduate study and clinical training., and will access, read, and analyze the utility of research and other relevant information as a precursor to applying evidence to guide clinical practice.

Student performance was evaluated based on writing assignments in CDS 201, 431, and 462. Specifically, we evaluated understanding and analysis of social impact of communication disorders (CDS 201); academic writing (CDS 201 and 462), and clinical writing (CDS 431). Our students' ability to read and analyze research, and performance in public speaking/presentation, will be assessed in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Section 2: Assessment Activities

Data for the learning outcomes were collected from faculty teaching the above courses. We utilized rubrics to quantify student performance on assignments related to the relevant assessment areas. Below is a summary of student outcomes for each area.

Understanding of social impact was assessed through a written essay assignment requiring the student to analyze perspectives from a documentary film or interview with individuals affected by communication disorders (e.g., individual, parent, spouse).

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
understanding of social issues related to disability	80%	20%	0%	0%
analysis of factors contributing to social impact	60%	40%	0%	0%

n=35

Academic writing in CDS 201 was assessed with the writing rubric from the social impact assignment mentioned above.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
context and purpose for writing	54%	34%	12%	0%
content development	34%	52%	14%	0%
construction, organization, and proofreading	54%	28%	18%	0%

n=35

Academic writing in CDS 462 was assessed using an assignment requiring description and analysis of treatment research articles.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
context and purpose	20%	75%	5%	0%
content development	10%	60%	26%	4%
sources and evidence	20%	60%	20%	0%
disciplinary conventions	15%	65%	20%	0%
construction, organization, and proofreading	10%	50%	36%	4%

n=51

Clinical writing was assessed using a clinical report prepared from a speech/language client case.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
context and purpose	23%	61%	16%	0%
content development	25%	25%	39%	11%
disciplinary conventions	9%	43%	34%	14%
construction, organization, and proofreading	22%	46%	25%	7%

n=56

The data from these areas reveal several trends:

- Students in their freshmen/sophomore years (CDS 201) demonstrate good understanding and analysis of the social implications of communication disorders and disability, and are able to express this in written work.
- Evidence from written products in freshmen/sophomore years (also CDS 201) show mixed levels of ability, with some students performing below expected levels for a course which has WR 121 as a prerequisite. However, from review of data from students in other majors taking CDS 201, CDS students as a group perform better than those in other majors.
- Data from senior year (CDS 431 and 462) show the majority of students demonstrate strong writing skill (shown by performance in areas 3 and 4 of the rubrics) on high level research and clinical writing tasks. However, a fair number of students appear to need support for writing at this level.

These results have been shared with the CDS Program Director and will be distributed to all faculty members. The findings will be discussed in our undergraduate curriculum committee, which includes all faculty teaching undergraduate courses. The writing supports mentioned above will be a main focus in our existing agenda item of improving student support in our undergraduate program.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

The following action is planned for the following academic year:

- In winter 2019, convene the undergraduate curriculum committee to discuss the findings of this report and plans for student supports. Specifically, we will work to gather writing resources and adopt changes to assignments as necessary to support growth in high level writing tasks.

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience

We continue investigating the utility of a peer advising/tutoring program, and the discussion of providing student supports is an important area for both broader faculty meetings and the undergraduate curriculum committee.

Section 5: Plans for Next Year

In the next academic year, we will be assessing the following goals:

- We will revisit our learning outcome A, focused on acquiring knowledge in the bases/foundations of human communication.
- We will further address learning outcome C, related to the prerequisite speaking and writing skills to pursue graduate study and clinical training. Specifically, we will measure speaking skills, and reading and analyzing research, this academic year.

We will collect data from assignments in specific courses, including specific paper and presentation assignments, and rubric elements from those assignments. Data will again be analyzed to determine patterns of success, additional supports, and if additional educational opportunities are warranted to improve student knowledge and preparation (e.g., additional writing assignments or oral presentation opportunities in classes). There is no anticipated budgetary impact of these actions, but rather are part of our ongoing program evaluation and refinement.