

Annual Departmental Assessment Report

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

Academic Year of Report: 2018-2019

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:

Objective A. Standard IV-B: Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic human communication and swallowing processes, including the appropriate biological, neurological, acoustic, psychological, developmental, and linguistic and cultural bases. We sample the areas of biological, developmental, linguistic, and cultural bases for the purposes of evaluation.

Objective 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 regarding objective A was evaluated based on performance on exam questions and assignments in CDS 442 and CDS 450. Related to objective C, the specific areas assessed were reading and analysis of research (CDS 462) and clinical writing (CDS 431). The clinical writing competency was not scheduled to be assessed until academic year 2019-2020. However, the faculty member teaching the related course had accepted a new position out of state, and she kindly collected those data so the new instructor would not have that extra activity on their workload.

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.

Knowledge of basic human communication was evaluated through performance across two courses.

CDS 442: biological bases. Student performance was evaluated using specific exam questions and case based assignments completed in class.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
knowledge of anatomical structures	15	22	7	11
knowledge of physiology and clinical application	10	22	10	13

n=55

CDS 450: developmental, linguistic, and cultural bases. Student performance was evaluated using specific exam questions.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
cultural and linguistic diversity	51	6	1	1
normal developmental processes	47	6	4	2
knowledge of linguistic processes	40	9	7	3

n=59

Reading and analyzing research in CDS 462 was assessed using assignments requiring description and analysis of treatment research articles.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	1	2	3	4
Research question	25	21	0	0
Methods	10	19	13	4
Results	10	17	16	3
Analysis	11	19	12	4

n= 46

Clinical writing in CDS 431 was assessed using clinical reports prepared from a speech/language client case.

	Capstone	Milestones		Benchmark
	4	3	2	1
context and purpose	14	25	11	0
content development	12	20	15	3
disciplinary conventions	13	23	12	2
construction, organization, and proofreading	13	18	18	1

n=50

These data reveal two key points:

- Many students performed well in CDS 442; however, a concerning number of students did not perform at levels of previous cohorts. While natural fluctuations in ability occurs across cohorts, these data point to the need to provide additional supports for students performing below the milestone level.
- While there was a great deal of variation for clinical writing in CDS 431, with more student performing in the less capable range, this is not overly concerning to our program. While we will want to continue providing more examples and supports, this course involves initial exposure to clinical writing. Students are new to the conventions, so mastery would not be expected. Refinement of clinical writing skills occurs in graduate programs in conjunction with treating clients.

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.

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

Evaluating performance across various courses and identifying student supports has been an ongoing focus for our undergraduate curriculum committee and relates to objectives in our departmental strategic plan. For the 2019-2020 academic year, we are piloting additional support strategies for the students in complex areas (e.g., anatomy) including providing additional help sessions and exam reviews, identifying students who are struggling earlier in the term in order to provide supports, referring students to the Tutoring and Academic Engagement center, and increasing in class application exercises to expand understanding of complex concepts. We are collecting data and sharing these in the undergraduate curriculum committee in order to refine and add to our strategies through the year.

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience

We are currently putting together a survey, and possibly a focus group, to query all CDS students on supports they may need across a broad array of concerns.

Section 5: Plans for Next Year

In the next academic year, we will be re-assessing the following learning outcomes:

- B – social impact
- C – speaking and writing; specifically, academic writing and public speaking

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, the success of newly implemented supports, and development of additional strategies. There is no anticipated budgetary impact of these actions, but rather are part of our ongoing program evaluation and refinement.