

2022-23 Masters in Communication Studies Learning Objective Outcomes

Based on the National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication Project¹

Five students graduated from our master's program in Spring '23. Assessments were completed by the these graduate students' major professors following the thesis/project defense.

Three primary learning outcomes:

Employ Communication Theories, Perspectives, Principles, and Concepts

<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Explain Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts■ Synthesize Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts■ Apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts■ Critique Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts	<p>40% Achieves the ability to describe and employ communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts. In particular the student can clearly, and accurately employ communication concepts and theories. In addition, the student has addressed the majority of items listed under the learning objective.</p>	<p>60% Approaches the ability to describe and employ communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts. Specifically, the student may achieve some but not all of the items contained in the learning objective. Detail may be lacking or some details might be incorrect.</p>	<p>Lacks the ability to describe and employ communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts.</p>
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¹ https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/publications/LOC_1_What_Should_a_Graduate_with_a_Communication_Degree.pdf

Engage in Communication Inquiry

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Interpret Communication scholarship ■ Evaluate Communication scholarship ■ Apply Communication scholarship ■ Formulate questions appropriate for Communication scholarship ■ Engage in Communication scholarship using the research traditions of the discipline ■ Differentiate between various approaches to the study of Communication ■ Contribute to scholarly conversations appropriate to the purpose of inquiry <p><u>For rhetoric students:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ identify meanings embedded in messages ■ Articulate characteristics of mediated and non-mediated messages. ■ Recognize the influence of messages. 	<p>60% Achieves the ability to engage in communication inquiry. In particular the student can clearly, and accurately interpret, evaluate, and apply communication scholarship. In addition, the student has addressed the majority of items listed under the learning objective.</p>	<p>40% Approaches the ability to engage in communication inquiry. Specifically, the student may achieve some but not all of the items contained in the learning objective. Detail may be lacking or some details might be incorrect.</p>	<p>Lacks the ability to engage in communication inquiry.</p>
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Create Messages Appropriate to the Audience, Purpose, and Context

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate and use information relevant to the goals, audiences, purposes and contexts ■ Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals ■ Adapt messages to the diverse needs of individuals, groups and contexts ■ Present messages in multiple communication modalities and contexts ■ Adjust messages while in the process of communicating ■ Critically reflect on one's own messages after the communication event 	<p>60% Achieves the ability to create messages that are appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. In particular the student can adapt messages and adjust messages while in the process of communicating. In addition, the student has addressed the majority of items listed under the learning objective.</p>	<p>20% Approaches the ability to create messages that are appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. Specifically, the student may achieve some but not all of the items contained in the learning objective. Detail may be lacking or some details might be incorrect.</p>	<p>20% Lacks the ability to create message that are appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.</p>
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Assessment:

All five of the students were able to achieve or approach the learning outcomes, except one student in one area.

Concern 1: A student was assessed as lacking efficiency in creating messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. A note was included from the professor explaining that the student was not necessarily lacking proficiency; rather, the student was not provided the opportunity and/or the professor was not able to witness the student present their work to a variety of audiences.

Response: Two changes have already been made that will help rectify the situation. First, graduate students will now be teaching assistants with their own recitation sections for public speaking for an entire year (in prior years, they have assisted public speaking during the first semester and instructed interpersonal communication their second semester). Second, graduate students will present their work to a broad audience of family, undergraduate student, faculty, etc. during the departmental research symposium. The students will also present to their academic peers for their thesis/proposal defense. These changes should provide students with more opportunity to work on/consider how to create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. It will also give additional opportunities for their major professors to witness and evaluate their presentations.

Concern 2: For all three objectives, 40-60% of the students did not approach, but did not achieve proficiency in objectives the program has deemed essential learning.

Response: This is the first year the program has engaged in this assessment. Reminding the graduate faculty that these are the outcomes we want for our graduates will help in achieving those goals. Also, the evaluated cohort came in fall 2021. With the pandemic, we were aware that some of the students we accepted would need extra assistance gaining proficiency. There were also some mental health concerns. For a few of the students, approaching the ability still showed major growth in their academic and professional development. While not achieving proficiency, the faculty are still please with the students' achievements. We plan to run this assessment for one more cohort before decided to make any changes to the program, especially based on the positive Qualtrics responses we received from students who had graduated during the last three years.