Addressing & Assessing Communication Skills

*Beginning in Fall, 2014, required in ALL core components*

*Revised: July, 2016*
Overview

- **State definition of Communication Skills**
- **A few FAQs**
  - Do I have to address all 3 types of communication in my course?
  - Do I have to require written papers or oral presentations in my core class?
  - How much does the student have to write?
  - What is visual communication?
  - What is a rubric?
- **Addressing Communication Skills in Your Class**
- **Assessing Communication Skills**
- **Overlapping Assignments & Assessments**
THECB Definition of Communication Skills

[The] effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
A few FAQs
Do I have to address all 3 types of communication in my core course?

It depends.

Is the course:

In the COMM Component or a Component Area Option course that maps to COMM requirements?

Yes, all 3 types of communication must be addressed.

Not in the COMM Component?

No, at least 2 of the 3 types of communication must be addressed.

Note that this is a change in UTSA policy based on a new THECB interpretation of requirements.
The Core Curriculum Committee recommended, and Interim Provost Agrawal approved, the following:

"Core Course Coordinators (for those courses not in the COMM FCA) will, in consultation with course faculty, identify and include any two (of the three) types of communication appropriate for the course."

- Carefully consider with faculty which aspects of communication skills can best be addressed within the Core Curriculum course.

- Discussions with faculty may include consideration of the discipline and practical realities of class size as well as other variables. However, there must be consistency across all sections of each core course. Any changes made will be reflected in future core course assessment reports beginning with the Fall, 2016 semester.
Do I have to require written papers or oral presentations in my core class?

No.

Although these are excellent ways to address written & oral communication, there are other effective ways to include these requirements.

(More on this later in the document.)
How much does the student have to write?

You will need a writing sample long enough to evaluate students’ writing abilities.

Remember, you will assess students’ communication skills (in addition to course content).
What is visual communication?

Interpreting & expressing ideas visually

The specifics will vary widely across disciplines. However, examples might include student created/developed:

PPT,

Line graph, bar graph, pie chart,

Flow charts or schematic diagrams,

Cartoons,

Artwork,

Dance,

Math symbols
• Communication Skills are always assessed using a rubric.

• Numerous samples of rubrics are available online.
What is a rubric?

A rubric is a document that articulates the expectations for an assignment by listing the criteria, or what counts, and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor.

Heidi Andrade
Addressing Communication Skills in Your Class
Addressing Written Communication

Examples of suitable writing requirements:

1. Written paper/essay (1 page or more)

2. Written paragraph(s) such as an essay or short answer question(s) on exam(s)
Addressing Oral Communication

Examples of suitable oral requirements:

- Student presentations in class
- Group presentations, e.g.: panel discussions, debate, in class or via video posted to Bb
- Small group discussions or “think-pair-share” activity in class
Can’t spare class time for presentations?

Students video their group or individual presentation & post it directly to Bb. Students may upload a video to Bb in the same way they would upload any other file. Directions Re how to do this are included in a pdf on this web site. A link to a video designed to explain the process to students is below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZuZW9-KAjY&list=PLontYaReEU1seUE3ACG3sEc3zR7Br7URU&index=2

Students may also use Video Everywhere that connects directly to the webcam of the student’s computer. Directions for using Video Everywhere are online at

https://youtu.be/glYGzdwx-mM

[For course assessment purposes, you could view & assess a representative sample.]
Consider using small group discussions in class

- **Groups discuss a point from the lecture or reading**

- **Circulate during the activity and complete a brief rubric.**

- **Get to different groups each time to ensure a representative sample.**
Tips & Information for Large Lecture Hall Sections
The Library Can Help

If students need a place to make a video, a room may be reserved in the library for video recording.

Most students have electronic devices with video capability. However, the library has a variety of resources available at the circulation desk for students to check out including:

- Web Cams
- Microphones (e.g.: voice over ppt slides)
- Tripods for portable devices (e.g., phone, I-pad, etc.)
- Laptops *

* Note that laptop check out is very popular & all resources are limited. Students will need to plan ahead to ensure they have time to complete their assignment.
Overlapping Assignments & Assessments
Cover Multiple Communication Skills With 1 Assignment

A 2-fer (oral & visual communication)
Oral presentation that includes a visual aid (e.g.: ppt, etc.)

A 3-fer (oral, visual & teamwork)
Oral presentation in pairs or small groups that includes a visual aid

A 3-fer (oral, visual & written communication)
Oral presentation that includes a visual aid & written summary
Or more than one state-required objective

One assignment might cover:

- Oral, Written, & Visual Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Teamwork

As well as additional state-mandated objectives.
See *Resources* section for additional guidance.