COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
Plan for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement
2004-2005

From the Mission of Hocking College

*To prepare learners for technical careers
or for transfer to other institutions of higher learning.*

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Mission of Academic Affairs Unit

To promote learning and learner success.

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Mission of Arts and Sciences Department

*To provide an innovative learning-centered environment in which experienced-based
learning prepares students with the core competencies and job-related skills needed for success
in the workplace, in society and for transfer to four-year institutions.*

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Mission of Communications Program

*To work closely with the technologies to provide an innovative experience-based education
that prepares students to be competent readers, writers, speakers, communicators, and thinkers.*

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Central Objective

*Graduates of Hocking College will be effective
communicators both orally and in writing.*

▼ Success Skills

The following general outcomes are life and work skills cultivated in all students seeking the Associate Degree.

1. Communicates effectively.

2. Demonstrates math skills.

3. Demonstrates learning and critical thinking skills.

4. Maintains professional skills and attitudes.

5. Practices human relations skills.

6. Demonstrates knowledge of science and the environment.

7. Demonstrates community, cultural, and global awareness.

8. Maintains a code of ethics.

▼ Program Outcomes

The following outcomes express additional, particular skills, behaviors, and attitudes cultivated in students taking Communications courses.

Students who have completed their required Communications classes should be able to:

1. Write documents that:
   ♦ Have a clear purpose and thesis.
   ♦ Are clearly organized.
   ♦ Are adequately developed.
   ♦ Are clearly expressed and free of grammar, usage and punctuation errors.
   ♦ Are formatted appropriately for their purpose.
   ♦ Are adapted to the needs of their audience.

2. Read, analyze and evaluate different types of writing.

3. Think critically about issues and express their thoughts in writing.

4. Research a topic using secondary sources including library and internet.

5. Integrate source material into written work and document it correctly.

6. Deliver formal presentations that:
   ♦ Are adapted to their audience and purpose.
   ♦ Are clearly organized and well developed.
   ♦ Use appropriate visual aids.
   ♦ Are delivered articulately using correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary.

7. Communicate effectively in small groups or one to one.

8. Know and be able to write specialized documents appropriate to their technologies.

The Success Skills and Program Outcomes combine to form a single set of skills, behaviors, and attitudes determined desirable for entry-level practitioners, for graduates transferring to four-year institutions, and for educated citizens.

1. Eighty percent (80%) of students completing Communications II coursework will write a clear, coherent, organized essay which passes rubric specifications developed by faculty.

Data gathered for 2004-2005:

Total number of essays written	*1292*
Number of essays passing	*1162*
Percentage of essays passing	*90%*
Number of essays reviewed	*200*
Number of passing reviewed essays	*180*

Analysis of data:

Most often marked reasons for passing were:
1. *It has a clear thesis and a strong sense of purpose consistent with the specifics of the prompt.*
2. *It shows evidence of critical thinking (analysis, thoughtfulness, complex thinking).*
3. *It has a clearly executed organization.*
4. *It contains well-developed introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs.*
5. *It has a logical flow of ideas.*

These five items have been consistently marked as the top five reasons for passing the test essay over the last eight years. The order changes from year to year but essentially students are regularly meeting these criteria for writing coherent and well-developed test essays.

Most often marked reasons for failing were:
1. *The content does not reflect adequate critical thinking (analysis, thoughtfulness, complex thinking).*
2. *Errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or usage distract from the flow of ideas.*
3. *The flow of ideas breaks down in key places.*
4. *Thesis and sense of purpose are not clear. AND it is unclear at some points.*
5. *The organization is not clear. AND introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs need further development.*

Critical thinking items again received high marks this year, reflecting a renewed commitment to development of critical thinking skills in Communications II following the last two years' Assessment Day discussions. Students are also writing clearer theses this year, which is part of the department's ongoing commitment to improving students' writing skills. The Department continues to choose test essay prompts that are less personal and require higher-level analysis.

Program change planned for 2005-2006 as a result of this analysis:

Critical thinking remains an area of focus and the discussion on Assessment day centered on the following issues:

1. *Instructors will continue to debate the merits of assigning a narrative essay early in course but there is some consensus on the importance of choosing essay topics that require more critical thinking throughout the rest of quarter. In terms of the narrative essay, instructors agree that students must be taught how to use the narrative form to move beyond simple*

storytelling or basic description to include the significance of the experience in such a way that audience reaction is considered. But the supporters of narrative insist that some of our students lack a worldly view and that, at least, the narrative component should always be taught as a part of the essay process. MEETINGS for further discussion are scheduled.

2. *Students continue to need a better understanding of the role of thesis and how it shapes an essay and considers audience. The question of "Who is my audience and why should they listen" encapsulates an important part of what writing instructors need to teach as part of writing process. Of course, all of our instructors teach "audience" but to differing degrees and in different ways, so MEETINGS for further discussion are scheduled.*

3. *The issue of how much time to spend teaching punctuation and grammar is again an issue of concern; MEETINGS are scheduled.*

4. *Some sharing of approaches for "teaching critical thinking" and plans for more of this kind of instructor exchange are planned; MEETINGS are scheduled.*

This Criterion will be changed to read as follows in our 2005-2006 Plan:

No changes will be made to this criterion.

2. Eighty percent (80%) of the Communications III/IV students in a randomly selected sample will pass each rubric item used to evaluate a research document.

Data gathered for 2004-2005:

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This criterion was proposed as a new measure for academic year 2004-2005, with data collection tentatively scheduled to begin Winter Quarter 2006.

Number of documents reviewed:	
Outcomes and expectations for research document	
1. Contains a thesis and sense of purpose appropriate to course outcomes	
2. Illustrates mature analysis of complex issues	
3. Demonstrates a clearly executed organization	
4. Has a logical flow of ideas	
5. Provides well-developed introductory, body and concluding sections	
6. Maintains correct grammar, usage, and punctuation	
7. Follows prescribed format	
8. Considers audience	
9. Uses reliable sources	
10. Incorporates a sufficient number of sources	
11. Evaluates source materials thoroughly	
12. Documents sources correctly	
Overall Aggregate	

Analysis of data: No data gathered.

A group of twelve (12) Communications instructors spent two hours discussing the criterion (above) and using it to evaluate three anchor research papers to determine how effectively the rubric works in evaluating this type of writing. The three anchor research papers were chosen to represent a high pass, a medium to low pass and a fail. The process used here was similar to that used to prepare Communications instructors to grade test essays at the end of each quarter.

Specifically, all instructors present were asked to read the three anchors and to evaluate each one based on the rubric shown above. Overall, the rubric criteria were effective; some refinement will continue. One problem still being worked on is exactly how to measure the evaluation using a scale of 1-5. We may change to a pass/fail model similar to the one we use for Communications I and II rubrics.

This discussion generated some important concerns about making the teaching of the research process and research paper format more standard, but this is one of the outcomes we are looking for through assessment of this writing component. We need to agree on the number of sources, the length of the paper, the use of MLA (and how stringently); we also need more discussion on the databases (professional journals/magazines, books, internet sources, and other secondary sources) that should be used as research and how to evaluate them as valid sources of research.

Program change planned for 2005-2006 as a result of this analysis:

We are choosing a random sampling of research papers from our Communications III/IV course this winter quarter (2006). We will meet spring quarter as a group to evaluate these research papers and continue to discuss how to meet a more uniform set of standards as mentioned in the Analysis of data section.

This Criterion will be changed to read as follows in our 2005-2006 Plan:

Changes in the criterion will be made pending further discussion during 2005-2006. Please see comments in the previous sections.

3.   Eighty percent (80%) of the randomly selected sample of students enrolled in Speech or Verbal Career Skills will pass each rubric item used to evaluate an electronically recorded speech.

Data gathered for 2004-2005:

Speech instructors for Communications 130 (Speech) and 135 (Verbal Career Skills) met in the spring of 2004 and during academic year 2004-2005, to discuss an assessment process for speeches. During this time period we created the process of recording a random sampling of speeches on a master CD.

Analysis of data:

After viewing the first set of these speeches in a pilot session, instructors discussed and created a rubric appropriate to the evaluation of these speeches for assessment purposes. We are currently refining the procedures but we are satisfied with the choice of type of speech to be recorded by speech instructors, the CD format (with computer technician control over technical aspects), and the rubric as assessment tool.

Program change planned for 2005-2006 as a result of this analysis:

We plan to continue to refine process and to implement full process of assessment.

This Criterion will be changed to read as follows in our 2005-2006 Plan:

This criterion may be modified as the process and the rubric are refined. Please see the comments in the previous sections.

4. The aggregate score for the Success Skill "Communicates Effectively" evaluated by employers on a survey will be 3.5 or higher (on a 5-point scale) indicating the employers' satisfaction with the preparedness in communications of the Hocking College graduate.

Data gathered for 2003-2004*:

Technology	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Aggregates "Communicates Effectively"
Accounting	27		
Archaeology	8		
Associate Individual Studies	8		
Associate Technical Studies	14		
Audio/Video Productions	9		
Automotive Parts	14		
Backcountry Horsemanship	13		
Business Management	36		
Compressed Air & Gas	8		
Computer Electronics	2		
Computer Programming	9		
Construction - Carpentry	1		
Construction - Electricity	2		
Corrections-Dept	18		
Culinary Arts	36		
Drafting & Design	7		
E-Commerce & Web Design	5		
Ecotourism & Adventure	26		
Environmental Restoration	10		
Equine Health & Compl Ther	8		
Fire/EMS	8		
Fish Mgt. & Aquaculture	14		
Fitness Management	5		
Food Service Management	11		
Forest Management	16	1	4.00
GIS/GPS	2		
Hospitality Management	11		
Hotel & Restaurant Mgt.	39		
Human Serv. & Correct.	22		
Industrial Ceramics	8	1	3.00
Interactive Multimedia	2		
Juvenile Services	31		
Massage Therapy	3		
Materials & Manufacturing	6		
Medical Assistant	4		
Medical Records	10		
Nanny and Business	3		
Nanny and Dietetics	1		
Natural & Hist. Interpret.	12		
Nat Rsrcs Mgt. (Rec & Wild)	21		
Network Systems	18		
Nursing, Level I (Prac)	157		
Nursing, Level II	147	5	4.40
Nutrition & Dietetics	2		
Office Management	9		
Opticianry	5		
Physical Therapist Asst.	19		
Police Science	24		
Ranger Services	11		
Travel & Tourism	2		
Wilderness Horse	10		
Wildlife Management	48	2	4.00
Institutional Total	942	9	4.11

Analysis of data:

Two employers provided comments addressing communication skills of Hocking College graduates. Writing and speaking were listed as strengths on the survey returned for a graduate from the Forest Management program, and ability to communicate with others was listed on the survey returned for a graduate from the Wildlife Management program.

Although this is a very limited response since slightly less than 1% of employers of graduates completed the survey, it is gratifying that the overall aggregate exceeded the goal. One potential area of concern is the rating which fell below goal by the employer in the field of Industrial Ceramics; however, only one employer responded from this field.

Compared to the previous reporting year, the overall aggregate has increased; however, the number of respondents has decreased by more than half (see IP 0304, page 8 – 3.91 reported by 22 employers).

In looking at data that has been compiled since 1998-1999, the number of employers responding to the survey has continually decreased; however, the overall aggregate for satisfaction concerning communication skills of our graduates has remained about the same (3.9 to 4l1 reported – see Trend Data).

Does this analysis support conclusions drawn from other assessment data analyzed for 2003-2004? Please elaborate.

During the same time period, nineteen (19) programs reported data for "Communicates Effectively" as evaluated by on-site practicum supervisors. They rated the skill at 4.38 (on a 5-point scale), which is consistent with the ratings for previous years (see IP0405, page 11).

During the same time period, eighty-five (85) graduates rated themselves at an aggregate of 3.88 (on a 5-point scale). This rating is slightly lower than the 3.92 reported the previous year (see IP0405, page 9).

*Graduate and employer survey results for 2003-2004 are reported with data for 2004-2005; survey results are not available until 15 months following June graduation.

5. The aggregate score for the Success Skill "Communicates Effectively" evaluated by graduates of Hocking College on a survey will be 3.5 or higher (on a 5-point scale) indicating the graduates' satisfaction with their preparedness in communications at Hocking College.

Data gathered for 2003-2004*:

Technology	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Aggregates "Communicates Effectively"
Accounting	27	5	3.80
Archaeology	8	1	4.00
Associate Individual Studies	8	2	3.50
Associate Technical Studies	14	4	3.75
Audio/Video Productions	9	1	5.00
Automotive Parts	14		
Backcountry Horsemanship	13	1	3.00
Business Management	36	2	4.00
Compressed Air & Gas	8		
Computer Electronics	2		
Computer Programming	9		
Construction - Carpentry	1		
Construction - Electricity	2		
Corrections-Dept	18	1	4.00
Culinary Arts	36	3	4.33
Drafting & Design	7	1	3.00
E-Commerce & Web Design	5		
Ecotourism & Adventure	26	3	4.67
Environmental Restoration	10	2	3.00
Equine Health & Compl Ther	8		
Fire/EMS	8	2	4.50
Fish Mgt. & Aquaculture	14	2	4.00
Fitness Management	5		
Food Service Management	11		
Forest Management	16	5	3.60
GIS/GPS	2	1	5.00
Hospitality Management	11		
Hotel & Restaurant Mgt.	39	1	4.00
Human Serv. & Correct.	22	4	4.00
Industrial Ceramics	8	2	4.00
Interactive Multimedia	2		
Juvenile Services	31	2	5.00
Massage Therapy	3	1	4.00
Materials & Manufacturing	6		
Medical Assistant	4	1	5.00
Medical Records	10	2	4.00
Nanny and Business	3		
Nanny and Dietetics	1		
Natural & Hist. Interpret.	12		
Nat Rsrcs Mgt. (Rec & Wild)	21	5	3.80
Network Systems	18		
Nursing, Level I (Prac)	157	7	3.57
Nursing, Level II	147	12	3.75
Nutrition & Dietetics	2		
Office Management	9	1	4.00
Opticianry	5		
Physical Therapist Asst.	19	1	4.00
Police Science	24	2	4.00
Ranger Services	11	1	3.00
Travel & Tourism	2		
Wilderness Horse	10		
Wildlife Management	48	7	3.71
Institutional Total	**942**	**85**	**3.88**

<u>Analysis of data:</u>

The graduates did not include many comments about communication skills. Some indicated more report writing was needed but those comments were directly linked to the requirements of specific professions.

Eighty-five graduates rated "Communicates Effectively" at 3.88 (on a 5-point scale) which exceeded the goal. Graduates from four programs rated the skill below goal including Backcountry Horsemanship, Drafting & Design, Environmental Restoration, and Ranger Services. The aggregate was at 3.00 for all four of these programs and the number of respondents was limited to one or two in each program.. Of this group, only Environmental Restoration fell below goal the previous reporting year (see IP0304, page10).

The overall aggregate decreased slightly when compared to the previous reporting period when an overall aggregate of 3.92 was reported by 170 graduates (see IP0304, page 10).

<u>Does this analysis support conclusions drawn from other assessment data analyzed for 2003-2004? Please elaborate.</u>

During the same time period, supervisors from nineteen (19) programs reported data for "Communicates Effectively" as evaluated by on-site practicum supervisors. They rated the skill at 4.38 (on a 5-point scale), which is consistent with the ratings for previous years (see IP0405, page 11).

During the same reporting period, nine (9) employers rated their employees who were Hocking College graduates at an aggregate of 4.11 (on a 5-point scale) (see IP0405, page 7).

*Graduate and employer survey results for 2003-2004 are reported with data for 2004-2005; survey results are not available until 15 months following June graduation.

6.   The aggregate score for the Success Skill "Communicates Effectively" evaluated by on-site practicum supervisors for Hocking College students will be 3.5 or higher (on a 5-point scale) indicating better-than-average to excellent performance.

Note: *The data was collected by reviewing the program/technology assessment reports submitted for 2003-2004 for those programs reporting on this type of experience.*

Data gathered for 2003-2004*:

Technology	"Communicates Effectively"	Number of Practicum Students
Accounting Skills*	4.68	25
Backcountry Horse	4.35	10
Business Mgt	4.31	22
CAGS	4.50	6
Ecotourism & Adv	4.37	31
Educational Parapro.	4.60	20
Fire/Emerg Serv*	4.75	30
FMAQ	4.18	11
Fitness Management	3.30	6
Forest Mgt.	4.67	10
Hotel/Rest.	4.17	19
Human Serv & Cor*	4.50	65
Industrial Ceramics	4.33	3
Interpretive Serv	4.72	9
Medical Records	4.62	8
Natural Resource Mgt.	4.47	16
Opticianry	4.00	3
Ranger Services	4.26	19
Wildlife Management	4.37	47
Number of Ratings	**19**	
Institutional Aggregate	**4.38**	

Analysis of data:

Data received from practicum supervisors indicates all reporting technologies/programs (19 programs) have exceeded the goal of 3.5 (on a 5-point scale) with an overall aggregate rating of 4.38.

The rating is consistent with the previous reporting year in which an aggregate of 4.33 was recorded for 15 programs (see IP0304, page 12).

Does this analysis support conclusions drawn from other assessment data analyzed for 2003-2004? Please elaborate.

During the same reporting period, nine (9) employers rated their employees who were Hocking College graduates at an aggregate of 4.11 (on a 5-point scale) (see IP0405, page 7).

During the same time period, eighty-five (85) graduates rated themselves at an aggregate of 3.88 (on a 5-point scale) (see IP0405, page 9).