

Communication Studies MA

Research Literacy

Goal Description:

To understand, assess, and report the results of communication research

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Research Literacy

Learning Objective Description:

Graduate students will be able to understand, assess, and report the findings of communication research.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Mastery Of Written Communication

Indicator Description:

The second component of this rubric is Control of the Mechanics of Written Composition. The 5-point scale for measuring this degree objective will be the same throughout the department's set of objectives for MA students.

Criterion Description:

An average grade of 4 out of a possible 5 is the criterion for satisfying the target outcome. This average will be taken over all student papers and all reviewers.

Findings Description:

The mean student score for understanding of theory was 4.1. This meets the criterion set by the department for mastery of communicating theory using writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Improving Student Writing Competence

Action Description:

Continue to monitor student writing using standards developed by department with the aim of improving student language competence in written communication. Faculty discuss best practices to improve student writing across various classes.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Research Literacy

Indicator Description:

We will measure this goal with an annual evaluation of a sample of student research literature reviews assigned in appropriate graduate courses. The first component of this rubric is Evidence of Understanding of the Applicable Theory or Theories including the Effective Connection of Theory or Theories to Communication Behavior.

Criterion Description:

An average grade of 4 is the criterion for satisfying the target outcome. This average will be taken over all literature reviews and all reviewers.

Findings Description:

The mean score for research literacy was 3.7. This result is below the criterion set for the department on research literacy. Even though improvement was shown over the previous year's results, continued improvement is needed to raise students' ability to understand, evaluate, and report research.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Assessing Research Literacy

Action Description:

Sample student papers will be used to judge students' ability to interpret and synthesize research in their own writing.

Understanding And Written Communication Of Theory

Goal Description:

Advanced students in Communication Studies must learn and be able to elucidate the theoretical concepts essential for mastery of the field.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Understanding Of Theory

Learning Objective Description:

Graduate students will be able to understand the applicable theories of communication and related fields. Examples of these theories include, but are not limited to, expectancy violations theory, social penetration theory, relational dialectics theory, social judgment theory, cognitive dissonance theory, standpoint theory, and face-negotiation theory.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Mastery Of Written Communication

Indicator Description:

The second component of this rubric is Control of the Mechanics of Written Composition. The 5-point scale for measuring this degree objective will be the same throughout the department's set of objectives for MA students.

Criterion Description:

An average grade of 4 out of a possible 5 is the criterion for satisfying the target outcome. This average will be taken over all student papers and all reviewers.

Findings Description:

The mean student score for understanding of theory was 4.1. This meets the criterion set by the department for mastery of communicating theory using writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Improving Student Writing Competence

Action Description:

Continue to monitor student writing using standards developed by department with the aim of improving student language competence in written communication. Faculty discuss best practices to improve student writing across various classes.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Understanding Of Theory

Indicator Description:

We will measure this goal with an annual evaluation of a sample of student papers assigned in graduate courses. The first component of this rubric is Evidence of Understanding of the Applicable Theory or Theories. The scale for measuring this degree objective will be the same throughout the department's set of objectives for MA students.

Criterion Description:

An average score of 4 out of a possible 5 is the criterion for satisfying the target outcome. This average will be taken over all student papers and all reviewers.

Findings Description:

The mean student score for understanding of theory was 3.8. Although this represents considerable improvement over the previous year's result (3.1), further improvement is needed to meet the criterion set for mastery of this objective.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Assessment of Student Theoretical Knowledge

Action Description:

Sample student papers will be judged to assess their grasp of communication theories and their connection to important communication principles.

Update to Previous Cycle's M. A. PCI

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

New courses have been added to the curriculum intended to address both the deficiencies in Research Literacy and in Understanding Theory. Also, scheduling of core classes on a yearly basis has made it easier for graduate students to enroll in foundational classes earlier in their program, which should facilitate them learning important theories earlier in their program.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

1. Graduate Faculty will implement all aspects of the SHSU “Online Rubric for Distance Education Courses” into the development and implementation of graduate courses.
2. As part of an overall program assessment, the Graduate Faculty will hold bi-monthly meetings to discuss information from IDEA assessments and how that information can improve pedagogy across the program.
3. From those discussions, Graduate Faculty will develop more detailed rubric to pinpoint pedagogical issues that need attention.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1. The Online Rubric for Distance Education Courses has been implemented in all existing Communication Studies graduate courses and in the development of proposed courses.
2. The Graduate Faculty held in-depth discussions of IDEA assessments with the focus on using that information to implement best practices in program pedagogy.
3. Work on Graduate Online Instruction Evaluation Rubric is progressing.

4. The Graduate program underwent its required periodic external review during this past cycle. The faculty has already implemented recommendations from the report (e.g., adoption of Miller Analogy Test for admission requirement) and is in the process of working to implement others.

Plan for Continuous Improvement 2015-16

Closing Summary:

While students met the standard in Writing Competency, they fell short in both Research Literacy and Understanding Theory. These areas need further consideration in faculty discussions for how course delivery may be adjusted to improve in those areas.

The faculty will use the Graduate Program Review as a starting point to seek ways of improving areas where students' scores indicated more attention is needed.