

1. Student Learning Outcome	2. Strategy or Method of Assessment	3. Observations gathered from data	4. Actions recommended based on observations	5. Plan and timetable for taking action	6. Overall evaluation of progress on objective
<p>Integration/<b>Synthesis</b> (See EWU. catalogue, CMST 490 description below.)</p> <p>Student originates, integrates, and combines ideas into a product, plan or proposal that is new to him or her. Activities: Create, Design, Hypothesize, Invent, Develop. (Bloom’s Taxonomy)</p>	<p>Instructor designed assessment rubric for pre-test and post-test comparisons. Also embedded test questions into midterm exam and required exit-interview with portfolio demonstrating concept.</p>	<p>From Post-Test comparisons: Over 57% of students demonstrated “above expectations” competency for all three dimensions of evaluation (deconstruction of discipline-based contributions, governance and crisis concepts, and scenario solutions). [See additional description on attached rubric.]</p>	<p>Because even the catalogue description <i>implies</i> synthetic ability—without explicitly stating it— instructors of the capstone course should <b>EXPLICITLY</b> include synthesis into the learning objectives of the course and work with students to understand the concept—<b>and</b> recognize their ability as it develops.</p>	<p>By January 2011: Institute the express inclusion of <b>SYNTHESIS</b> and other cognitive skills into the capstone course with a more self-conscious attempt to gauge student development of synthetic/cognitive ability. Include synthesis as a learning objective in the course and utilize portfolios as each student’s opportunity to demonstrate cognitive skills (along with content and pragmatic skills).</p>	<p>This SLO is still central to program mission.</p>

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION: CMST 490 Senior Capstone Seminar: Communications Studies (5)** [Satisfies senior capstone university graduation requirement.] Senior Capstone is a required course for all students graduating with degrees in Communication Studies. Communication topics **integrated into course content** will include audiences, codes, interaction, power and influence, strategy, ethics, messages and contexts. In a seminar format and focused on contemporary issues relating to communication, the course will focus on the professional development of communication studies students. Students will also prepare and defend a portfolio.

## CMST 490, Winter 2010 Capstone Assessment

A capstone course that focused on the two themes of “board governance” and “crisis management” was designed to help students to integrate their developing knowledge of board governance in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations with their developing knowledge of crisis communication. They were asked to demonstrate their ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions. At least two opportunities (pre- and post-test) were provided to allow students to demonstrate their learning and level of mastery of the required competency. In particular, this course focused on producing evidence of the competency of *synthesis* through the a pre- and post-test synthesis exercise. Additional modes for assessing this competency included the following:

- In-class exercises for developing synthetic muscle
- Exam questions assessing synthesis
- Mini-case study writings privileging synthesis

**1. Student Learning Outcome (Competency):** Students are expected to demonstrate:

- understanding of major concepts in the board governance of for- and not for-profit organizations, and the major concepts of crisis communication;
- ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.

**2. Student Work (Evidence): (See attached rubric)** A test in which students were asked to demonstrate their ability to (1) “disintegrate” the distinct characteristics of particular courses, and (2) re-assemble or synthesize their understanding and propose one or more approaches or solutions to the problem outlined in the test.

**3. Evaluation Criteria:** Student work will be evaluated on three criteria: 1) disciplinary core concepts are correctly identified and deconstructed; 2) appropriate concepts in crisis communication and the governance of organizations are considered; and 3) one or more reasonable approaches or solutions to the scenario component is described.

The scoring sheet can specifies what is expected on each of the three dimensions of evaluation (deconstruction of discipline-based contributions, governance and crisis concepts, and scenario solutions) in terms of varying levels of performance. For example, each pre-test is compared to each corresponding post-test and ranked on each dimension as below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations (see sample Rubric #1). Goals or benchmarks were set for the entire set of responses: no work will be scored as below expectations on more than one dimension, or that at least 25% of students will be scored as exceeds expectations on at least one dimension.

**4. Assessment methods:** The pre-test was conducted on the first day of class. The same test was taken a second time on the last day of the course. Bergland and Chantrill compared the pre- and post-test responses and used the scoring rubric to identify pre-test benchmarks and post-test improvements according to the dimensions of “below expectations,” “meets expectations,” or “exceeds expectations.”

**5. Time Frame:** At least one section of CMST 490, Senior Capstone is offered every quarter. Students are encouraged to take the capstone in—or near—their last quarter of attendance before graduation. Assessment of student work will take place over the spring and summer. Results will be presented at the first department meeting of the fall.

**6. Who will do the Assessment?** Chantrill (with help from Helen Bergland for intercoder reliability)

**7. Type of Feedback:** Bergland and Chantrill will analyze and score the evidence; Chantrill will report it to CMST faculty and submit it to the appropriate university assessment committee to be included in the institution’s assessment report. Specifically, the report will include a summary of student performance on the singular outcome of synthesis under assessment (e.g., percentage of students judged as below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations) on each of the three criteria:

1. Ability to disintegrate
2. Ability to analyze and synthesize into new understanding of key concepts, and
3. Elaboration of one or more reasonable approaches or solutions.

**8. How data will be used to improve program or revise curricula?** For areas where students did not meet expectations, instructors of the capstone will recommend actions to improve student success.

The scoring sheet specifies what is expected on each of the three dimensions of evaluation (deconstruction of discipline-based contributions, synthesis of governance and crisis concepts, and scenario solutions) in terms of varying levels of performance. For example, each pre-test is compared to each corresponding post-test and ranked on each dimension as below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations (see below). Goals or benchmarks were set for the entire set of responses: no work will be scored as below expectations on more than one dimension, or that at least 25% of students will be scored as exceeds expectations on at least one dimension.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

Student Name	PRE-TEST Evaluation Dimensions		
	Deconstruction of Discipline	Concept Synthesis	Solution
Below expectations			
Meets expectations			
Exceeds expectations			
Comments:			

	<b>POST-TEST</b> Evaluation Dimensions		
	Deconstruction of Discipline	Concept Synthesis	Solution
Below expectations			
Meets expectations			
Exceeds expectations			
Comments:			

**Course Assessment for Communication Studies Capstone: CMST490**

*Eastern Washington University*

*Fall 2009*

*Assessment coordinated by Dr. Helen Bergland, Office of Undergraduate Studies*

Name: Dr. Patricia Chantrill

Department: Communication Studies

College: CSBS

Course enrollment:

Number of students: 25

Describe students: Majors / Capstone CMST 490

**Student Learning Outcome to be assessed:** Students will demonstrate ability to synthesize across the discipline.

**First assessment**

Type of assessment: Synthesis assessment rubric (developed by instructor)

Date: Early in quarter (first day of class, January 2010)

\_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ students were able to answer the assessment correctly.

**Second assessment**

Type of assessment: Post-test, Synthesis assessment rubric

Date: End of quarter (last day of class, March 2010)

\_\_\_\_\_ out of \_\_\_\_\_ students were able to answer the assessment correctly.

Overall increase / decrease in student success / understanding / comprehension: \_\_\_\_\_%

**Supporting documents:**

✓

✓

✓

Helen will search for models of synthesis along the lines of Bloom's taxonomy (define, apply, analyze, evaluate).

(optional) Based on results, I propose to revise the SLO/assignment/project/quiz/etc in the following manner:

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1. Check the box beside every course you took within **each** of the 3 core areas of the Communication Studies curriculum.

<b>Core Area 1</b>	<u>Rhetorical and Cultural Studies:</u> Focus on symbolic actions that exercise influence over human life. Emphases are on interpretive research as well as cultural, narrative, and rhetorical analyses of cultural phenomena and artifacts.
	CMST 450 Rhetorical Theory & Criticism
	CMST 451 Argument and Persuasion
	CMST 452 Cultural Studies
	CMST 458 Topics in Image, Messages, and Meaning
<b>Core Area 2</b>	<u>Organizational and Leadership Studies:</u> Focus on structures and practices influencing communication in private and public institutions. Emphasizes humanistic and social science approaches to leadership in all forms of social organizations.
	CMST 430 Communication and Organizations
	CMST 431 Communication Law and Ethics
	CMST 432 Media Systems & Comm. Technology
	CMST 438 Topics in Leadership and Strategic Comm.
<b>Core Area 3</b>	<u>Language and Social Interaction Studies:</u> Focus on sign systems such as language, gesture, film, etc. in human interaction. Emphasizes social scientific research approach to interaction and language use in face-to-face and small group settings.
	CMST 410 Language and Social Interaction
	CMST 411 Negotiation
	CMST 413 Comm. & Personal Relationships
	CMST 418 Topics in Semiotics

2. In the space below, briefly identify the ways in which EACH of the three core areas differs from the others. What is each core area's primary contribution to the discipline (as you understand it)? What makes each one important?

3. In the space below—and on the back of this page—respond to the following scenario: You are interviewing for the role of Executive Director (ED) of a non-profit organization. The last ED was fired for pocketing gift cards meant for needy families; the resulting crisis has disrupted all sectors of the organization and its shareholders. Clarify for the hiring panel the value of multiple perspectives and how the combined interpretation of the 3 core areas will help you define/address/solve problems, make deliberative (thoughtful) decisions, remain true to shared values, and communicate effectively to all the organization's shareholders. In other words, instead of analyzing each core area separately and breaking the cores into component parts (as you did in number 2 above), reorganize the components into a new interpretation and understanding—focused on demonstrating why you're right for the job. Show how each core area is connected to the others. Finally, demonstrate your ability to assess alternative approaches to solving the problems the organization currently faces.

## SYNTHESIS ASSESSMENT RUBRIC [pre- and post-test instrument]