

Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes -- Journalism
(For Degree, Certificate or Core Outcomes)

To complete this Assessment Report, please address the questions below, and send to learningassessment@pcc.edu by June 20, 2011; subject line: REPORT Assessment [SAC]

1. Describe changes that have been implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes that resulted from outcome assessments carried out in the previous academic year.

(Information provided here may be referenced, inserted into or summarized in Program Review 2.C.iii (for Core Outcomes) or 6.B.iii (for CTE Degree and Certificate outcomes).

As a result of the Critical Thinking Core Outcome, the SAC decided to focus more heavily on media literacy. Textbooks chosen emphasized media literacy, and several (six) films on the media and the practice of media literacy were added to the library collection at our request.

2. Identify the outcomes assessed this year, and describe the methods used. What were the results of the assessment (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

This year we assessed the Cultural Awareness Core Outcome: *Use an understanding of the variations in human culture, perspectives and forms of expression to constructively address issues that arise out of cultural differences in the workplace and community.*

3. Identify the outcomes assessed this year, and describe the methods used. What were the results of the assessment

a. Describe the method(s) you used.

In recent years, media literacy has become a focus in courses in mass communication and society. An understanding of media literacy leads to better communication skills and to better critical thinking and problem-solving. Does media literacy also lead to better cultural awareness? We think it does, only it is extremely difficult to quantify. Since we could not find any rubrics that have been created to assess cultural awareness, we decided to compose a survey instrument. We would present this survey in pre-test/post-test form by administering it at the beginning and end of the term.

Theoretically, as students learned the principles of media literacy, they would become more aware of the intertwining nature of media and culture.

We surveyed two sections of Journalism 201, "Mass Media and Society." In all 33 individual students completed the surveys.

We found a 2009 research report online by J.E. Rosenbaum, *Measuring Media Literacy: Youngsters, Television and Democracy*. In the abstract of her paper, Rosenbaum wrote "the media provide content that touches on people's culture, their norms and values, and other socio-cultural concerns." The paper devised an instrument for assessing media literacy. The reliability and validity of the questions were determined, and were then used to assess the student's media literacy in the areas of television, news gathering and democracy.

We used some of Rosenbaum's questions in our survey, but since J201 encompasses more than television, we felt that additional questions were warranted. The additional questions were not tested for reliability or validity.

Our survey consisted of 25 questions students were to respond to using a 5-point Likert Scale. (See attached.)

Evaluation

We hoped to demonstrate a shift in response from undesirable to desirable choices; this would indicate a greater command of media literacy and awareness of the cultural dimension of mass media. Unfortunately, while there was movement, desirable shifts were minimal. On many questions shifts were negligible, and on some questions shifts were regressive. (See attached) For example, on Question 1 "The American Mass Media act like a mirror reflecting our culture back to us," the desirable responses would have been disagree or strongly disagree. Instead, 24 responses were either disagree, strongly disagree or undecided; only 19 responses could be classified as desirable.

However, on question 4 there does seem to be a positive shift from disagreeing that "Net neutrality is a technical issue, not a cultural one" to agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Question 5 was disappointing, with little movement off the desirable response. Consumers do not have greater control over their media choices simply because more media are available. Students should know that control and choice is not the same thing.

Question 8 was also disappointing. Students continue to think that others are controlled by advertising, but they are not.

We could continue evaluating each question, but overall these results are disappointing. The questions are too ambiguous; they can be interpreted in too many ways. It's not at all clear that the questions are getting to the issue of cultural awareness. If we were to do this again, we would certainly subject the questions to reliability and validity testing.

On the other hand, we in the SAC are convinced that we are teaching cultural awareness in Mass Media and Society. The mass media are cultural. In teaching mass media, one is teaching culture

b. Results: What did you learn?

Very little. Students did poorly on the assessment because it was a poor assessment. Time constraints played a role, but it should be recognized that it is very difficult to separate the variables media and culture. If you can come up with a way for doing this please let us know.

4. Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes.

There was a general sense on the part of the faculty that greater focus should continue on incorporating media literacy into classroom instruction.

Also though discussing international events, stress the cultural differences between American mass media and media of other nationalities.

Discuss the cultural components of Facebook, Twitter, and other social media—how they are changing U.S. and international cultures.

J201/SP228 – Mass Media and Society

Media Survey

Instructions. This questionnaire is composed of statements concerning your feelings about the mass media. Please indicate on the scantron the degree to which you feel about each statement by marking whether you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) are undecided, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree with the statement. **There are no right or wrong answers**, so please work as quickly as you can.

1. The mass media act like a mirror, reflecting our culture back to us.
2. American media do not play a major role in shaping the cultures and identities of other nations.
3. Most of the countries of the world follow the American model of a free press.
4. Net neutrality is a technical issue, not a cultural one.
5. American consumers have greater control over the media today because there are more media choices available to them.
6. Government oversight ensures that a true diversity of viewpoints exists in the media today.
7. The American media system has become the model for the free world.
8. Sometimes I purchase a product because of advertising, but most times advertising doesn't influence me.
9. The lower classes who have less education are more influenced by media than the middle or upper classes.
10. Objectivity is no longer an important value in journalism.
11. Heavy television viewers are more likely than light television viewers to believe that the world is a violent place.
12. A reporter's political beliefs can influence how s/he presents a news story.
13. Television can influence whether men and women share chores in the home.
14. Television in the way it portrays gays and lesbians has changed Americans' attitudes toward gays and lesbians.
15. Television influences how younger children treat their parents.

16. Television news presents a complete picture of what is going on the world.
17. There's not as much stereotyping on television today as there was in the past.
18. TV crime shows such as *Law and Order* and *CSI* give us a fairly accurate portrayal of the American system of justice.
19. Television news is impartial and doesn't really affect how Americans think about Muslims.
20. The working class is generally presented in a positive light by the media.
21. Government regulations generally favor the interests of the public over the interests of business.
22. Even though some media corporations are huge, because they want to make a profit they have the best interests of the common citizen in mind.
23. They might deny it, but most peoples and nations around the world have a favorable view of American media.
24. News reporters on the whole strive to be objective and balanced.
25. Most people are smart enough to know when they are being manipulated by the media.