spectra

DEVELOPING AND *IMPLEMENTING* LEARNING OUTCOMES *IN COMMUNICATION*

ABOUT spectra
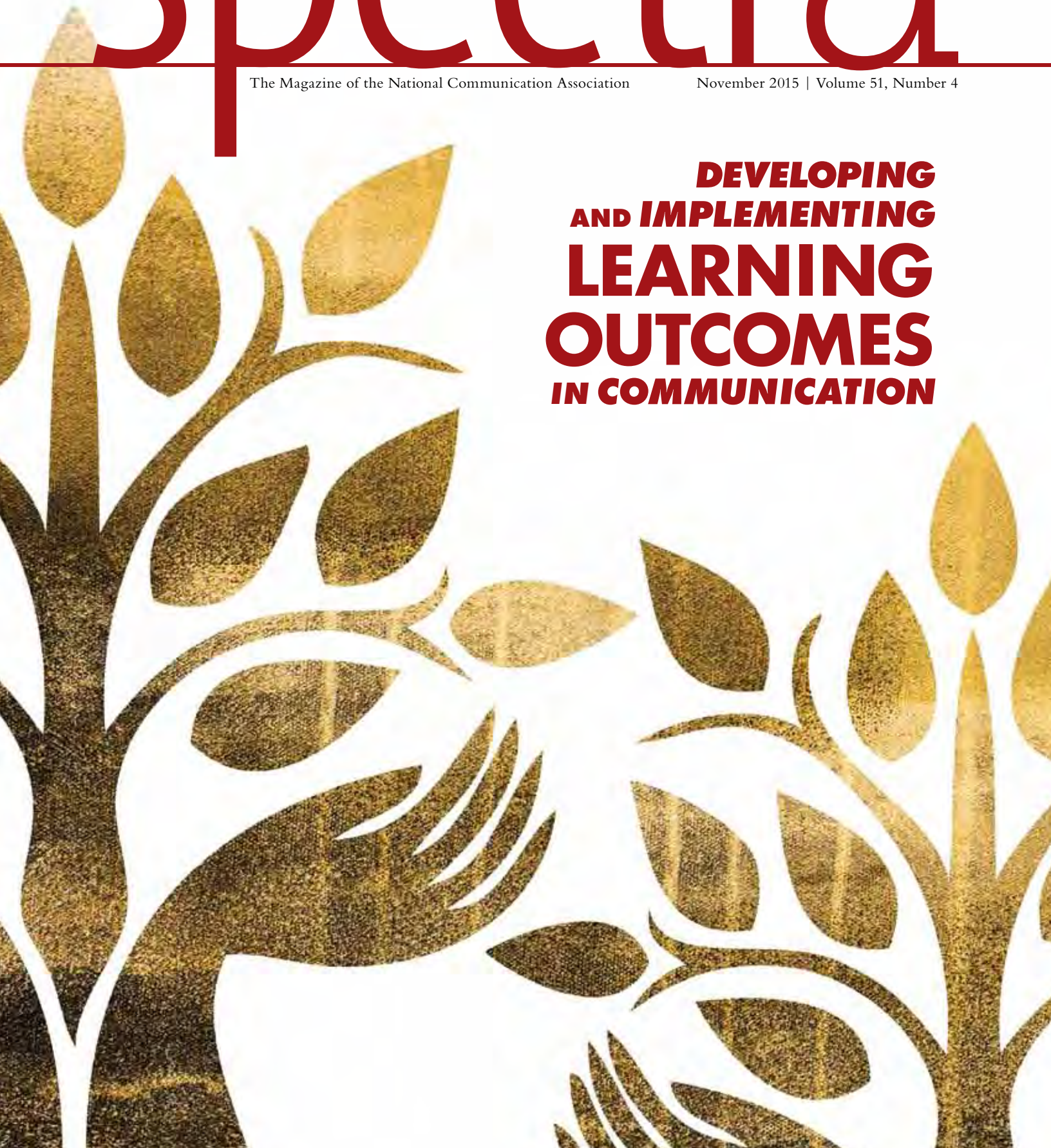
Spectra, the magazine of the National Communication Association (NCA), features articles on topics that are relevant to Communication scholars, teachers, and practitioners. *Spectra* is one means through which NCA works toward accomplishing its mission of advancing Communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry.

NCA serves its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.

The views and opinions expressed in *Spectra* articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Communication Association.

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In this issue

DATA ABOUT THE DISCIPLINE

Findings from the 2015 NCA Department Chairs Survey

Two hundred eighty-eight department chairs participated in the 2015 biennial NCA Department Chairs Survey. Following are some key findings from the survey regarding teaching and learning in Communication departments.

STUDENTS

Figure 1 shows that 68 percent of chairs report having more than 100 undergraduate Communication majors in their respective departments. Nearly 18 percent of respondents have more than 500 departmental majors.

Figure 1. Number of Undergraduate Communication Majors
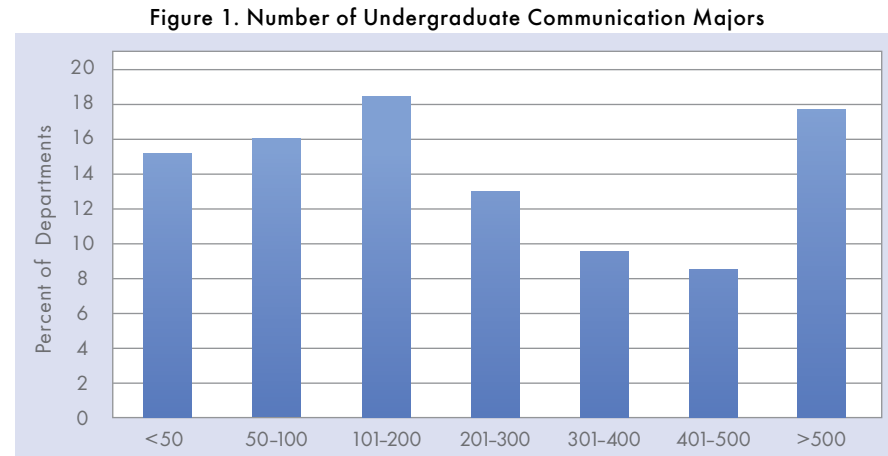
FACULTY

Thirty-six percent of department chairs report that they have five or fewer tenure-track faculty, and 56 percent of department chairs report employing five or fewer non-tenure track faculty in their departments, as shown in Figure 2. Less than 1 percent of the respondents report having more than 30 tenure-track faculty members, while 3 percent report having more than 30 non-tenure track faculty.

Figure 2. Number of Faculty Employed in Communication Departments
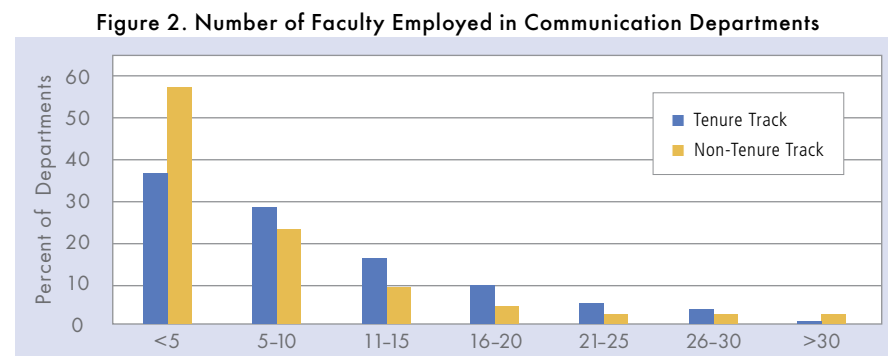
TEACHING LOAD

Figure 3 shows the average number of classes each faculty member teaches during the academic year. Twenty-seven percent of tenure-track faculty members teach an average of six classes during the academic year; 26 percent of such faculty members teach an average of eight classes during the year. Conversely, 38 percent of non-tenure track faculty teach an average of eight classes per academic year, and 14 percent teach an average of six classes per year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Figure 4 shows that nearly all faculty members are offered some form of support for their teaching. The most commonly reported types of support are new teacher orientations, teacher workshops, and classroom/instructional technology training.

Figure 3. Average Academic Year Teaching Load for Communication Departments

Figure 4. Types of Support Available to Faculty
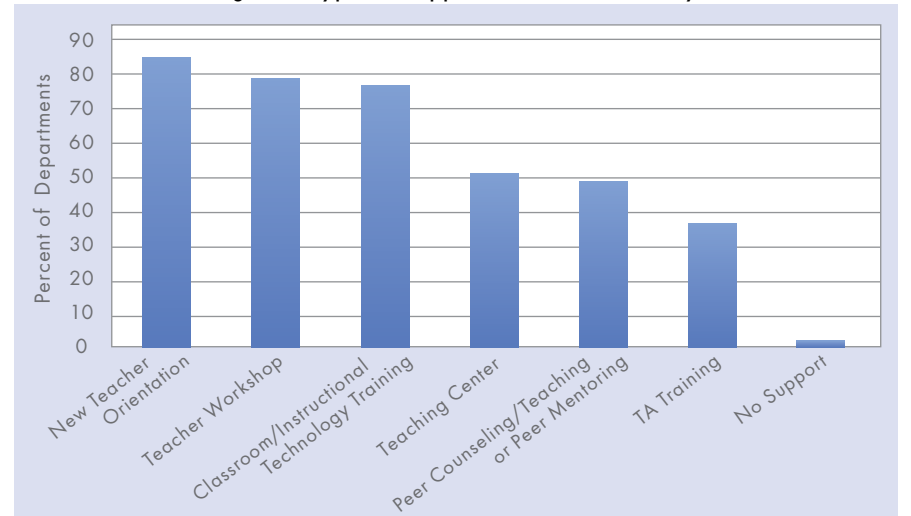
IN OUR JOURNALS

Jeffrey Kuznekoff, Stevie Munz, and Scott Titsworth, "Mobile Phones in the Classroom: Examining the Effects of Texting, Twitter, and Message Content on Student Learning," *Communication Education* 64 (2015): 344-365.

In this article, Kuznekoff, Munz, and Titsworth examine mobile phone use in the classroom. The authors used an experimental design to study how texting and tweeting affect student learning. The researchers studied students who used mobile devices in class to respond to messages that were related or unrelated to classroom material; additionally, the researchers varied the form of the messages (responding to another message or composing an original one) and the frequency of the texts. Participants watched a video lecture, took notes, and completed a test of student learning. Those not using mobile devices and those using devices to send class-relevant messages earned a 10-17 percent higher letter grade, scored 70 percent higher on information recall, and scored 50 percent higher on note-taking than those students who composed tweets or responded to irrelevant messages. The findings suggest that while frequent messaging unrelated to class content interferes with student learning, messaging relevant to the coursework does not have a negative impact.

Robert Margesson, "A Special Kind of 'Right': The Supreme Court's Affirmation of Academic Freedom," *First Amendment Studies* 49 (2015): 86-97

During the Red Scare and McCarthyism of the 1950s, tenets of free speech were challenged on the state and federal levels, as multiple pieces of legislation were passed in an effort to stem the tide of communism. Margesson's article analyzes the Supreme Court's rhetoric concerning the relationship between free speech and academic freedom. Margesson offers a history of academic freedom, as well as a review of the first court cases to address this topic. Margesson concludes that while it is not certain that the Supreme Court truly strengthened academic freedom during the 20th century, the importance of an authoritative voice during a time of tension and fear cannot be discounted.

Christy-Dale L. Sims, "Competency and Connection: Undergraduate Students and Effective Email Messages," *Communication Teacher* 29 (2015): 129-134.

In her essay, Sims addresses the need for improving students' written communication and interpersonal communication skills via emails through the use of an "Email Communication Competency" assignment. Each student emails the instructor within the first weeks of the semester to demonstrate their understanding of effective email writing practices. The instructor then provides an individual response, offering feedback, answering questions, and building rapport with the student. Sims notes that, overall, the assignment appears to increase both the students' ability to craft competent email messages and their willingness to interact with the instructor outside of class. The competency aspect of this assignment is most effective for lower-level students; however, rapport-building can occur at multiple levels and across different courses.

NCA's *Learning Outcomes* IN *Communication* PROJECT

By Carole Blair, Ph.D.

Having observed the development and implementation of NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC) project over the past years, I am proud and gratified that the LOC participants' good work has resulted in a set of learning outcomes that now are being shared across the country for use in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

As you will see in the pages of this issue of *Spectra*, this work has entailed countless hours of dedicated focus by 30 faculty members whose commitment to the discipline of Communication is an inspirational reminder of one of the things that makes the academy so compelling—our colleagues. I hope you will join me in thanking the LOC participants for this contribution to our collective future. ■

LOC PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

(Back row, from left) Armeda Reitzel, Humboldt State University; Melissa Chastain, Spalding University; Brad Mello, Saint Xavier University; Theresa Castor, University of Wisconsin-Parkside; Sara Weintraub, Regis College; Deanna Dannels, North Carolina State University; Patricia Hernandez, California Baptist University; David Marshall, Institute for Evidence-Based Change; Mary Toale, State University of New York-Oswego

(Center row, from left) Timothy Brown, West Chester University; Claire Procopio, Southeastern Louisiana University; Brad Love, University of Texas at Austin; Jimmie Manning, Northern Illinois University; LaKesha Anderson, National Communication Association; David Bodary, Sinclair Community College; Shawn Wahl, Missouri State University; Timothy Ball, James Madison University; Leila Brammer, Gustavus Adolphus College; Betsy Bach, University of Montana; Trevor Parry-Giles, National Communication Association

(Front row, from left) John Frederick, University of North Carolina-Charlotte; Qingwen Dong, University of the Pacific; Rebecca Curnalia, Youngstown State University; Lynn Disbrow, Huntingdon College; Kristen Berkos, Bryant University; Cindy White, University of Colorado-Boulder; Chad McBride, Creighton University; Kerry Byrnes, Collin College; Kesha Morant Williams, The Pennsylvania State University-Berks; Elizabeth Goering, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; Nancy Kidd, National Communication Association

(Not pictured) Philip Backlund, Central Washington University; Jonathan Bowman, University of San Diego; Kandace Harris, Clark Atlanta University

Reflecting on Experience:

THE HEART OF NCA's LEARNING OUTCOMES IN COMMUNICATION PROJECT

By Nancy Kidd, Ph.D.

We do not learn from experience… we learn from reflecting on experience.

—*John Dewey*

From the time of my earliest memory, the scene for holiday dinners with my parents has remained the same. Extended family gathers around the beautifully set table and the aromas of homemade delights abound. We eagerly read the menu my mother has designed with appropriate holiday images and placed on each plate, and ready ourselves to begin eating what has been artfully described. But before we can begin, we must listen to a sermon of sorts from my father. The arc of the sermon is predictable: some relevant historical context for the holiday followed by some analogies to our present-day experience. Then, inevitably, comes a reference to John Dewey. I have to admit that for many years, the Dewey reference generated some typical teenage eye rolling on my part. John Dewey seemed always to be standing between my turkey and me.

Over time, however, I have developed a great appreciation for my father's holiday sermons and the values regarding education that those sermons have instilled in me. His Dewey citations provided me with an understanding of the power of reflection. I now understand that experience itself is not transformational; it is only in organizing that experience, and making decisions about it, that it becomes meaningful. It is through that lens that I view NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC) project with great enthusiasm; the project is fundamentally about reflecting on educational experience with the goal of improving student learning.

Funded by Lumina Foundation, the multi-year LOC project was driven by a team of 30 competitively selected

faculty members from diverse institutions around the country who were charged with answering the question "What should a graduate with a Communication degree know, understand, and be able to do?" Project participants relied on a "Tuning" process that allowed them to determine specific, desired learning outcomes for the discipline via consultations with an array of stakeholders, including disciplinary colleagues, students, alumni, and employers. First used by European educators in 2000, and introduced in the United States in 2009, Tuning involves a set of iterative steps that include identifying essential learning outcomes, mapping career pathways, consulting stakeholders, and honing learning outcomes. It is a non-prescriptive, open process, driven by interaction with and among stakeholders. It is a process that broadens discussions while preserving faculty control over the end results. Tuning in the United States thus far has been mostly state-based; only the American Historical Association and NCA have engaged in national disciplinary Tuning efforts.

Tuning is a faculty-driven effort that is fundamentally about deep reflection on teaching and learning, with a focus on students. It is meant to stimulate meaningful conversations among faculty members about enhancing curricular development in the interest of improving student learning. The LOCs are a starting point for conversations; they are not exhaustive or prescriptive. They are designed to be adapted by individual departments based on their particular imperatives and areas of focus. There is no one-size-fits-all implementation strategy for a Tuned discipline. At the center of Tuning is the belief that curricula should not be standardized. Ultimately, the LOCs are a foundation for effective assessment of student learning.

This issue of *Spectra* introduces readers to the LOC project and how it can be useful for faculty who are reflecting on course and curriculum development. Deanna P. Dannels, Professor of Communication and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at North Carolina State University, served as one of the six faculty team leaders for the LOC project. In her article, "More than Verbs: Behind the

Scenes of the Learning Outcomes in Communication Project," Dannels draws us into the process undertaken by the 30 LOC faculty team members. Her description of place and time evokes a feeling of participation and conveys both the exhilaration and exhaustion that emerged from this deeply reflective process.

David Marshall, Associate Professor of English at California State University San Bernardino and Associate Director of Tuning USA at the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, served as the Project Facilitator for the LOC project. In his article, "'He said they've already got one!' Strategies for Engaging with the LOCs," Marshall offers practical approaches for aligning current departmental activity with the LOCs in ways that are appropriate for each institutional context. He provides instruction for undertaking a sequence of core curricular activities including aligning outcomes, curriculum mapping, and assignment alignment, as well as guidance for drafting program descriptions.

Pat Hutchings, Senior Scholar at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), and Natasha Jankowski, Associate Director of NILOA and Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization & Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, authored "Rethinking Boundaries: Bringing General Education and the Discipline Together." They convey the importance of thinking about the Communication curriculum and general education in an integrated fashion and also address the faculty role in assessing LOCs.

I hope this collection of articles serves as motivation for many readers to use the Learning Outcomes in Communication in ways that make sense on their respective campuses. If you are interested in learning more about local implementation and/or working with NCA to support your engagement efforts, please visit www.natcom.org/LOC or call the National Office.

While this project is fundamentally about improving student learning, and the articles in this issue of *Spectra* focus primarily on that goal, it also serves

a very important secondary purpose. The LOC project provides a clear articulation of the relevance of the discipline of Communication to a wide range of audiences; it allows Communication faculty to advocate for the discipline. Knowledge and understanding of communication and strong communication skills allow people to create and maintain interpersonal relationships; employers in all sectors seek employees with strong communication skills; and society needs effective communicators to support productive civic activity in communities. In the broad current context of assessment and accountability, there are a number of stakeholders who want to know what graduates know, understand, and are able to do with a Communication degree.

The LOCs do not exist to meet the demands of legislators or accreditors, but they do help these stakeholders understand the discipline. The LOCs do not exist to support the hiring agendas of employers, but they do help employers understand how the knowledge and skills held by Communication graduates align with their needs. The LOCs do not exist to assuage employability or other concerns of prospective majors or their parents, but they do make the relevance of the discipline explicit. The LOCs can be used to advocate for disciplinary support from legislators and accreditors, for the hiring of our students by employers, and for students to become Communication majors. These are just a few examples of how (and among whom) the LOCs can be used to advocate for the discipline.

An additional important audience for which the LOCs can serve an advocacy role is campus administration—the deans, provosts, and presidents who make decisions about the allocation of resources across the college or university, and who make decisions about the place of Communication in general education. The LOCs are not designed to generate data for administrators, but they do serve to clarify the discipline for them.

NCA has created written materials that are designed specifically for some of these audiences. At www.natcom.org/LOC, for example, you can find a booklet introducing

the LOCs to administrators. Please consider giving it to your dean, provost, and president. At the same URL, you will find a flyer that focuses on making clear to employers the value of hiring graduates with a Communication degree. Please consider giving it to your campus career services office to distribute. At www.natcom.org/bookstore, you will find *Why Study Communication? Pathways to Your Future.* With the tagline "Be Valued, Get Hired, Make a Difference," this publication uses the LOCs to make the case to students and their parents that majoring in Communication serves one well, and allows one to serve others well, personally, professionally, and in the civic arena. It also provides majors with tangible ideas for post-graduation employment or graduate study and gives them the tools they need to articulate to employers and others what they know, understand, and are able to do.

The clarifying role of the LOCs will become even more salient as we move into one of the next steps of this project—considering the role of Communication in general education. It is noteworthy that communication is often characterized as a generalized skill that is critical to students' success in general education and even to successful student learning in other disciplines. Examples of this abound. In the 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act, signed into law by President Clinton, one of the eight National Education Goals is "adult literacy and lifelong learning." Among the six objectives under that goal is to increase the "ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems." The Association of American Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative is organized around 12 essential learning outcomes that "are best developed by a contemporary liberal education." Written and oral communication is one of those learning outcomes (Rhodes, 2010). Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) provides reference points for what a student should know, understand, and be able to do with associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, irrespective of the chosen major. The DQP includes five "essential areas of Learning," one of which is "Intellectual

Skills." "Intellectual Skills" is broken down into six sub-categories, one of which is "communicative fluency." Lumina Foundation says "[t]he crosscutting intellectual skills define proficiencies that transcend the boundaries of particular fields of study. They overlap, interact with and enable the other major areas of Learning described in the DQP" (Lumina Foundation, 2014).

I know of no other discipline which is routinely invoked as a generic skill. In addition to the many important and commonly understood reasons to identify and clearly articulate learning outcomes for any discipline, there seems to be an additional imperative for the discipline of Communication. Articulation of student learning outcomes is one way to present the broader picture of the Communication discipline and its full range of concepts and competencies. It may be productive to have conversations on campuses and among higher education policymakers about how to align the unidimensional "communication competency" with the broader picture of the discipline. It is critical to ensure that there is an understanding of, and appreciation for, the theoretical basis and essential concepts of the Communication discipline, as well as the skills-based dimensions of Communication. In addition, the discipline's competencies are far more multidimensional

than what is conveyed with a single "communication competency." With a well-articulated, publicly shared articulation of LOCs, we can ensure robust incorporation of Communication into the general education curriculum.

I have turned into my father. I am sure I will generate my fair share of eye rolls from my daughters (at ages 4 and 6 they are still, fortunately, too young for that) as they routinely hear me invoke John Dewey and talk about the related educational philosophy at moments that seem inopportune to them. My hope and expectation is that they, too, will come to appreciate the importance of work like NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication project. I have no doubt that they will be the beneficiaries of this work as they progress through the educational system with teachers who, like NCA members, engage in "reflecting on experience" to improve student learning. The LOCs, found on page 16 of this magazine, are an important tool for this process of reflection.

Thank you to all of the wonderful teachers in our membership who reflect on teaching and learning in big and small ways every day.

"Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into."—*John Dewey* ∎
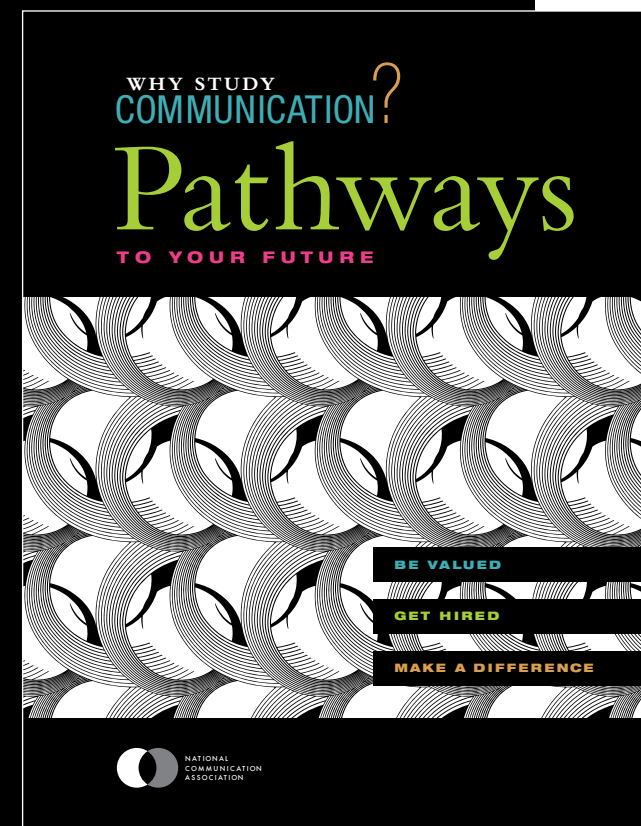
NANCY KIDD is Executive Director of the National Communication Association. Prior to joining NCA, she was a program officer at the Russell Sage Foundation, policy director for a state workforce development board, and head of a strategic management consulting group for a federal government contractor. Kidd has won awards for teaching, research, and professional service.

More than Verbs:

Behind the Scenes of the Learning Outcomes in Communication Project

By Deanna P. Dannels, Ph.D.

Learning Outcomes in Communication Project team leaders (from left) Brad Mello, Saint Xavier University; Timothy Brown, West Chester University; Lynn Disbrow, Huntingdon College; Sara Weintraub, Regis College; Deanna Dannels, North Carolina State University; and David Bodary, Sinclair Community College.

May 2015

FINAL RETREAT TEAM LEADERS WORKING SESSION

"I have one name for you: Bernie Madoff. Madoff, theoretically, accomplished this student learning outcome. Look, the way the outcome is written—'persuade people and contexts.' You can persuade people and contexts in a negative way. Don't we want to make a statement that we want our students to persuade toward positive ends?"

"How about negotiate instead of persuade? Negotiate with people and contexts."

"No. Negotiate is problematic. It makes me think you are trying to maneuver around and manipulate."

"Look up a different verb, if persuade and negotiate don't capture it. Or add 'ethically' to the statement."

"Let's step back. You can do any of these things in an unprincipled way. We don't need to articulate 'ethically' in every statement."

"Right. Let's look at another outcome: 'analyze and engage in Communication research.' We've all heard stories of unethical researchers. But we don't have 'engage ethically in Communication research.' Why do we need it in the persuasion statement?"

"I have an issue with that particular outcome. What do we want our students to be able to do with regards to research? Do it? Analyze it? Do we really want to say that our community college students need to be able to do research?"

"What does 'engage' mean, anyway? I think we know it when we see it, but is that a verb we want to measure?"

"We'd better call down and tell the group we won't be joining them for dinner. We're nowhere near being done."

Having been engaged in conversation for three hours, six team leaders were sitting in a small conference room in an Embassy Suites hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. This was it. Our task was to synthesize a year and a half's worth of work on the NCA Learning Outcomes in Communication project into one document that could draw consensus from the full group of 30 project participants. Our commitment was to honor and represent the voices of our team members. They had all come to the project with different motivations regarding outcomes-driven projects, but in their year and a half together, they had grown to care about the conversations and processes that had forced them to ask: "Who are we as a discipline and who do we want to be?" The products we were developing were born from those critical conversations, and we knew it was important to honor the conversations and treat them with care. Our challenge was to do this *and* at the same time accomplish our goal. It felt like we were running in circles.

Let's rewind: NCA received a grant from Lumina Foundation to fund a faculty-driven student learning outcomes project. The project brought together six teams of five faculty members, with each facilitated by a team leader to work on answering the question, "When students complete a program of study in Communication, what should they know, understand, and be able to do?" Over three retreat weekends and multiple virtual meetings that spanned a year and a half, the teams marched forward in their tasks, assisted by facilitator David Marshall from the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (who serves as author of another article in this issue) and NCA senior staff representatives.

When initially considering my participation as a team leader, I was a bit skeptical. The project would involve 24 faculty representing distinct institution types, carrying various educational pedigrees, and bringing to the table diverse experiences with outcomes-based projects. Six team leaders similarly representing distinct institutional types and bringing to the table varied leadership styles. Six different team processes. Three face-to-face retreats to work through a very complex and nuanced process. The ultimate goal? One document that would articulate core learning outcomes for the Communication discipline. Yes, I was skeptical. But I never shy away from a good challenge, and I am forever an optimist when it comes to bringing people together.

"I'm in."

January 2014

TEAM LEADER RETREAT

"Two teams will start with Tuning and move to the DQP, two will start with the DQP and move to Tuning, and two will do both simultaneously. Each team will work separately in the first phases, and we will share materials closer to the end when we bring everyone together. Essentially, groups will test whether it is appropriate to look for linkages between Tuning and the DQP—at the start of the process, throughout the process, or at the end of the process.'"

The facilitator was explaining the rationale for the team set-up to the six team leaders at our initial retreat.

For context: Tuning is a five-step, faculty-driven process used to define the core of a discipline by: 1) drafting competency statements and measurable student learning outcomes; 2) identifying career pathways for graduates; 3) seeking feedback from various stakeholders; 4) refining outcomes based on feedback; and 5) implementing the outcomes statement at a local level. The Degree Qualification Profile (DQP) is a framework for what graduates (associate, bachelor's, or master's) should know and be able to do, regardless of their major. The DQP presents outcomes for the three levels of degrees along five broad categories of proficiencies: specialized knowledge,

LOC faculty team members (clockwise, from left) Elizabeth Goering, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; Claire Procopio, Southeastern Louisiana University; Timothy Ball, James Madison University; David Bodary, Sinclair Community College; and Qingwen Dong, University of the Pacific.

broad and integrative knowledge, intellectual skills, applied and collaborative learning, and civic and global learning. The intent is not to use the DPQ as a definitive structure to be applied to all institutions. Rather, it is an armature upon which various institutions can sculpt their distinct identities. Both tools—Tuning and the DQP—are intended to foster reflective, sustained interactions among students, faculty, and administrators, ideally strengthening the quality of teaching and learning at various levels.

And so it began.

March 2014

FIRST TEAM RETREAT

"Ok, you've all read the online materials on Tuning and the DQP. Now, let's have each person talk a little bit about what brought you to the project. I'd also like to talk through our process and set some team goals for the weekend," I said, looking at my four team members, who were practically strangers to me and one another.

The first day of the first full team retreat started with a large group discussion regarding the project's goals, the role of the facilitator, and an overview of Tuning and the DQP. Then, individual teams began their work.

"How's the process going?" asked our facilitator, during the team leader debriefing time midway through the weekend. The leaders chimed in:

"Well, it's a little bumpy."

"We're doing great—we've made huge progress."

"There are a lot of questions. We're struggling trying to figure out the way into the DQP."

"Tuning is fun, but there are some questions about whether we're reinventing the wheel."

"I've gotten some questions, too, about what we actually need to produce."

"We're drowning in Bloom's Taxonomy. I swear my mind is spinning with verbs."

"Our questions have been about how to tackle both the DQP and Tuning together."

"We've had some frustrating moments."

"We've had some personality clashes."

"I think some people are a bit overwhelmed."

"I'm a bit overwhelmed!"

"My team needs some help."

Throughout the first retreat, all teams voiced various uncertainties and questions about process, product, and the best way to manage a complex task with limited face-to-face time. Each team landed at different stopping points at the end of the first retreat. All teams left knowing they had quite a bit to accomplish in between March and October. Six different documents/products were emerging; by the end of the first retreat, they were blurry pictures, waiting to come into focus.

October 2014

SECOND TEAM RETREAT

"We've got a lot to do this weekend. We're now at a point where we need to change our process to the next phase. Most of you uploaded your materials to the Dropbox folder—let's go through everything," I said, as my team members logged into Dropbox.

In the seven months since our first retreat, each team had pursued its own paths and focused on tasks relevant to its specific process. I approached the second retreat a bit anxiously; we hadn't gotten as much stakeholder feedback as

I had hoped. The story was the same for each team; all had worked on their tasks, but no team felt ahead of the process.

"Well…. how's it going?" the facilitator asked, during a midway team leader debriefing.

"We have questions about whether we can scaffold these outcomes."

"The Communication outcomes are throughout the DQP; we can't separate them."

"We are struggling to make sure our outcomes cover all institution types."

"Moving from one process to the next has been painful."

"I love the DQP; it just makes so much sense."

"I hate the DQP; it makes no sense whatsoever."

"How in the world did you get through the Tuning process in so little time?"

"I think everyone's working better together now."

"We hit the wall today."

"Verbs, verbs, verbs…"

"I'm not sure we're going to finish."

The time pressures were growing for each of the teams. Having experienced the challenges associated with completing work virtually between retreats, there was a sense that we had to get as much done in our face-to-face time as possible. The clock was ticking.

Processes varied: Some teams worked visually, documenting their work on flip charts. Some worked electronically, using collaborative writing software. Some had all members on computers, researching models and answering questions. Some even spent time rearranging hotel conference rooms, so that everyone could see and access one document being projected onto a wall. Snacks appeared in the large group room every couple of hours, but many teams worked right through the snack time. The work was hard, but there was a shared sense that it was important.

Fortunately, there was an offsite dinner at the end of the weekend.

Off site, participants mixed and mingled:

"Of course, I knew your name, but I had no idea you did this kind of work."

"Data? That word just doesn't live in my world."

"Are you kidding? You went to graduate school there? Did you know…?"

"That sounds like a fascinating article, I'd love to read it—can you send me the link?"

"Are you happy you moved? How's the new department?"

"That would be a very cool project to work on together."

"Let's take a team picture."

"I think we should go bowling."

"We're going dancing."

"We have a crew doing some late-night shopping."

"Who wants to join?"

"I'm in."

After the second retreat, the pictures were less blurry. Each team was proud of its work. They all felt ownership. They had established team identities, and most felt a growing affinity with their team. And now, team leaders had to prepare for what was next: merging six products into one. Unavoidably, some things would need to be cut. Ownership could be problematic. Team affinity could be counterproductive. We were all in. And now we needed to prepare to let go.

(Upper) LOC faculty team members (clockwise from left) Lynn Disbrow, Huntingdon College; Kesha Morant Williams, The Pennsylvania State University-Berks; Katie Schultz, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (observer); Kandace Harris, Clark Atlanta University; Kristen Berkos, Bryant University; and Shawn Wahl, Missouri State University.

(Lower) LOC faculty team members (clockwise from left) Patricia Hernandez, California Baptist University; Cindy White, University of Colorado-Boulder; Leila Brammer, Gustavus Adolphus College; Betsy Bach, University of Montana; and Brad Mello, Saint Xavier University.

February 2015

TEAM LEADER CONFERENCE CALL: PREPARATION FOR FINAL RETREAT

"At this point, we are going to reconstitute the teams. The teams have congealed beautifully, but now we need everyone to let go of their individual products so that we can create one document."

The facilitator, NCA staff, and team leaders were discussing the upcoming final retreat. Team leaders reflected:

"We've spent a year and a half with these teams. People on the teams trust each other. If we reconstitute, we're then with new people with whom we have no history."

"We need to find a way not only to create one document, but also to become one team who will stay engaged enough to be champions of the cause after the retreat."

"There's no way we can do this as a committee of 30."

"We have a lot to do in a short amount of time."

"Is it even do-able?"

I got off the phone, ambivalent about how this was going to play out. Faculty on each team had learned to work with others they'd never known before. Team members had grown accustomed to the facilitative style of their team leaders. Each team had settled into a distinct style of work. Team norms had formed. Friendships had been born. And now… we were about to mix it up.

May 2015

FINAL TEAM RETREAT

"Your team leaders have spent the morning merging your documents. We now have three new teams, not six, and we've asked three people who aren't team leaders

LOC faculty team members (clockwise from left) Chad McBride, Creighton University; Kerry Byrnes, Collin College; Timothy Brown, West Chester University; Jonathan Bowman, University of San Diego; and Theresa Castor, University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

to facilitate the groups in discussing the new set of outcomes. After your new team provides feedback, the team leaders will get back to work while we work with you on a dissemination plan."

The initial merge had gone fairly smoothly. There were redundancies that allowed us, as team leaders, to bring things together. After receiving feedback, the team leaders settled in for the afternoon, hoping to move quickly through the feedback and revisions in time for the manager's reception at the hotel. That session proved more difficult.

"I have one name for you: Bernie Madoff. Madoff, theoretically, accomplished this student learning outcome. Look, the way the outcome is written—'persuade people and contexts.' You can persuade people and contexts in a negative way. Don't we want to make a statement that we want our students to persuade toward positive ends?"

And so it continued… discussions of what counts as learning, what value we want to place on the kinds of learning we foster, and what matters in terms of student success. The team leaders missed the manager's reception. And dinner. We continued to work through the document, carefully trying to address all of the feedback and to represent the voices of the people we had grown to respect over the previous year and a half; the 24 people outside the room had worked long and hard on this project.

"I know I'm a broken record on this, but it drives me crazy seeing multiple verbs in one outcome. I'm not just being picky. Pick one strong verb: engage or analyze?"

"This is maddening."

"Words matter. The conviction of the people outside this room is clear. We have to be intentional. There's more than verbs at stake here."

"Let's go with engage; it is more active."

"I still have an issue with the word 'research.' What about 'inquiry' instead? Does that make it applicable to a broader audience?"

"I hate to bring this up again, but can we revisit the debate between persuade and influence?"

"Persuade is too specific to a subdiscipline. This isn't about having one outcome for each subdiscipline. People need to see themselves in all the outcomes."

"We need to return to the ethics issue."

"If we aren't going to put an ethical statement in each outcome, we need to make a statement somewhere about our big picture message."

Team leaders finished the draft of the revised set of outcomes and brought it to the larger group. We were hoping for… well, to be honest, we were hoping for resounding applause. We knew, though, that the people on this project were too good and too invested to sign off without questioning. And, we did want them to question. We all knew that once the document left our hands, it had the potential to spark new conversations across the nation and to encourage stakeholders to reflect on the core of who we are and what we do. We knew it would be a live document, rather than a prescriptive one—a conversation starter. We wanted everyone to be willing to commit to starting the conversation. And we knew that commitment began with us and the 24 people waiting outside the room. So, yes, we wanted them to question. And they did. And the leaders went back to work. We were close.

"We need to make a big picture statement. Somewhere, we want to say our students are communicating for the good of others and society."

"How about 'Do the right thing?'"

"Too cliché."

"Engage in the community?"

"We already used engage."

"Render ethical judgments?"

"We already covered ethics."

"How about this: Empower individuals to promote human rights, human dignity, and human freedom."

Silence.

"Yes. Let's end with that."

LOC faculty team members (clockwise from left) Sara Weintraub, Regis College; Philip Backlund, Central Washington University; John Frederick, University of North Carolina-Charlotte; Rebecca Curnelia, Youngstown State University; Jimmie Manning, Northern Illinois University; Brad Love, University of Texas at Austin; Deanna Dannels, North Carolina State University; Armeda Reitzel, Humboldt State University; and Mary Toale, State University of New York-Oswego.

Two hours later, the full group committed to the document. Twenty-four faculty, six team leaders, one facilitator, and several NCA staff members; three retreats, countless Skype calls, and endless e-mails; six Dropbox folders and countless iterations of documents; a year and a half of work; one document, waiting to be shared.

What does it mean to engage?

You know it when you see it. You know it when you feel it. And we felt it.

Let's continue the conversation.

We hope you will engage. ∎

DEANNA P. DANNELS is Professor of Communication and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at North Carolina State University. She served as a team leader during the LOC project processes described in this article. Dannels' research explores theoretical and curricular protocols for teacher development, as well as instructional models for designing, implementing, and assessing communication within the disciplines. She has published widely in areas of teacher training, communication across the curriculum, pedagogy, design and engineering education, business and technical communication, oral communication genres, and professional identity construction.

NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication

A central assumption of these Learning Outcomes in Communication is that Communication constructs the social world and is relational, collaborative, strategic, symbolic, and adaptive.

LOC #1: DESCRIBE THE COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE AND ITS CENTRAL QUESTIONS

- Explain the origins of the Communication discipline
- Summarize the broad nature of the Communication discipline
- Categorize the various career pathways for students of Communication
- Articulate the importance of communication expertise in career development and civic engagement
- Examine contemporary debates within the field
- Distinguish the Communication discipline from related areas of study
- Identify with intellectual specialization(s) in the Communication discipline

LOC #2: EMPLOY COMMUNICATION THEORIES, PERSPECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, AND CONCEPTS

- Explain Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Synthesize Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Critique Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts

LOC #3: ENGAGE IN COMMUNICATION INQUIRY

Interpret Communication scholarship
- Evaluate Communication scholarship
- Apply Communication scholarship
- Formulate questions appropriate for Communication scholarship
- Engage in Communication scholarship using the research traditions of the discipline
- Differentiate between various approaches to the study of Communication
- Contribute to scholarly conversations appropriate to the purpose of inquiry

LOC #4: CREATE MESSAGES APPROPRIATE TO THE AUDIENCE, PURPOSE, AND CONTEXT

- Locate and use information relevant to the goals, audiences, purposes and contexts
- Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals
- Adapt messages to the diverse needs of individuals, groups and contexts
- Present messages in multiple communication modalities and contexts
- Adjust messages while in the process of communicating
- Critically reflect on one's own messages after the communication event

LOC #5: CRITICALLY ANALYZE MESSAGES

- Identify meanings embedded in messages
- Articulate characteristics of mediated and non-mediated messages
- Recognize the influence of messages
- Engage in active listening
- Enact mindful responding to messages

LOC #6: DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH COMMUNICATIVE GOALS (SELF-EFFICACY)

- Identify contexts, situations and barriers that impede communication self-efficacy
- Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy
- Articulate personal beliefs about abilities to accomplish communication goals
- Evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses

LOC #7: APPLY ETHICAL COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

- Identify ethical perspectives
- Explain the relevance of various ethical perspectives
- Articulate the ethical dimensions of a communication situation
- Choose to communicate with ethical intention
- Propose solutions for (un)ethical communication
- Evaluate the ethical elements of a communication situation

LOC #8: UTILIZE COMMUNICATION TO EMBRACE DIFFERENCE

- Articulate the connection between communication and culture
- Recognize individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Appreciate individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Respect diverse perspectives and the ways they influence communication
- Articulate one's own cultural standpoint and how it affects communication and world view
- Demonstrate the ability to be culturally self-aware
- Adapt one's communication in diverse cultural contexts

LOC #9: INFLUENCE PUBLIC DISCOURSE

- Explain the importance of communication in civic life
- Identify the challenges facing communities and the role of communication in resolving those challenges
- Frame local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Evaluate local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Utilize communication to respond to issues at the local, national, and/or global level
- Advocate a course of action to address local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Empower individuals to promote human rights, human dignity and human freedom
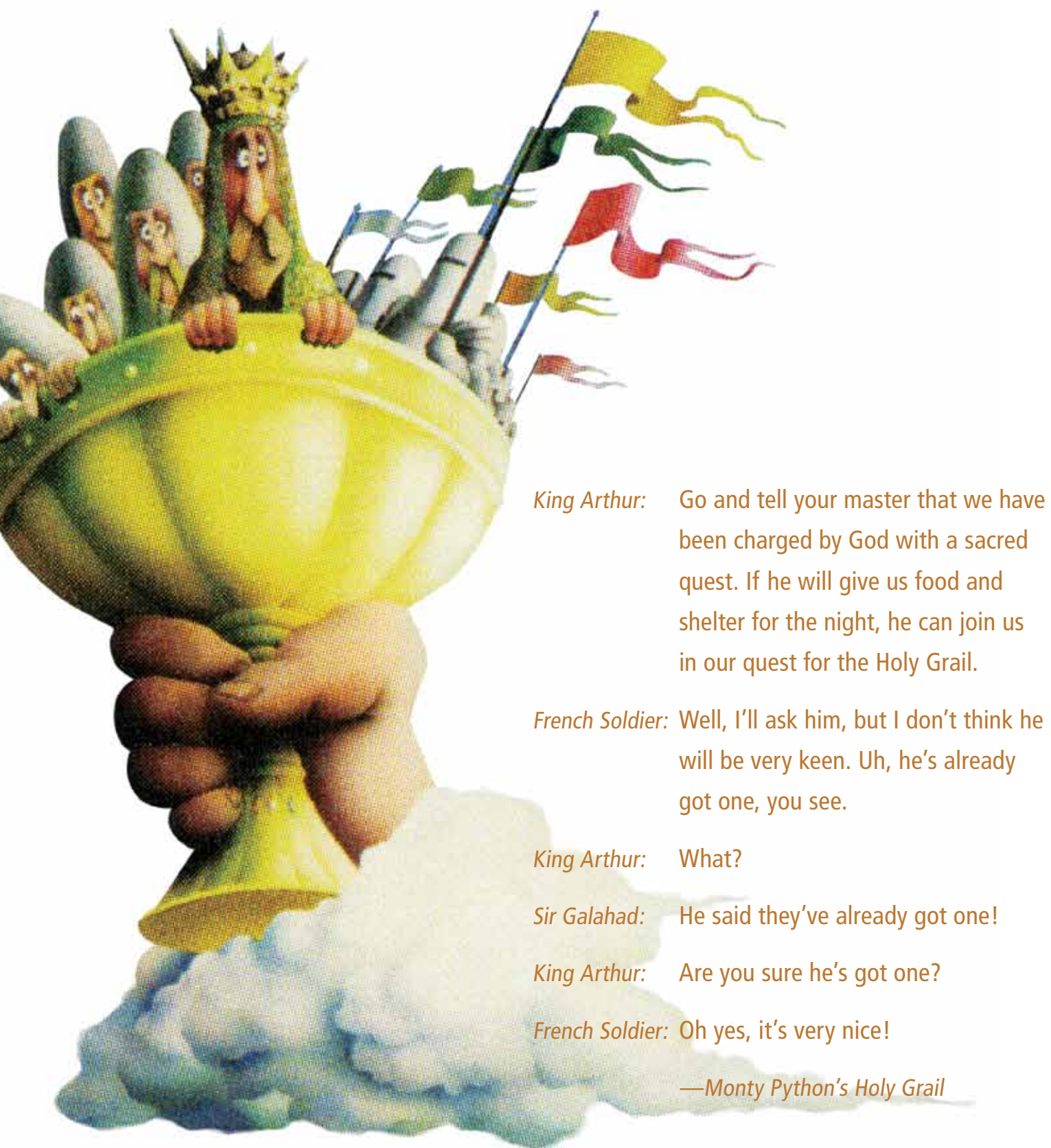
King Arthur:	Go and tell your master that we have been charged by God with a sacred quest. If he will give us food and shelter for the night, he can join us in our quest for the Holy Grail.
French Soldier:	Well, I'll ask him, but I don't think he will be very keen. Uh, he's already got one, you see.
King Arthur:	What?
Sir Galahad:	He said they've already got one!
King Arthur:	Are you sure he's got one?
French Soldier:	Oh yes, it's very nice!
	—Monty Python's Holy Grail

"He said they've already got one!"

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING WITH THE LOCs

By David W. Marshall, Ph.D.

So begins a trying experience for Monty Python's King Arthur and his questing knights, replete with catapulted livestock. As absurd as the comparison may seem, the film's scene offers an apt comparison for Communication departments nationally as they look at the Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOCs) that were developed over an 18-month period by a group of 30 Communication faculty members from around the country. The academic department that has no learning outcomes of its own is, by now, a mythical beast, thus upon looking at the LOCs, Communication departments may have a response similar to the French Soldier's: "We've already got some, and they're very nice!" That response, as understandable as it may be, begs an important question: what do we do with the LOCs? What activities might a department's faculty engage to strive toward the goals articulated by the LOCs in their own programs? The LOCs are a tool for reflecting on the curriculum and pedagogies used by groups of faculty in their own departments. Collective and collaborative reflection, therefore, is the core task.

REFLECTING ON CURRICULA WITH THE LOCs

Fundamentally, the LOC initiative aims toward not only clear definition of learning in the discipline, but also the alignment of programs (their curricula and pedagogies) to the statements of that learning. This is not to say that the LOCs assume programs will abandon the particular curricular structures or the outcomes that direct them. On the contrary, as others in this issue have said, the idea of alignment is internal to the individual department, even if the project creates a stronger sense of relative comparability among Communication departments. In curricular activities, therefore, program faculty might begin most productively by collectively comparing their own outcomes to the LOCs. Doing so enables faculty to reflect on their own department's learning outcomes (which can tend to ossify and sit interrogated) and discuss their own particular iteration of the LOCs. A department is then well-positioned to evaluate how well its own curricula and pedagogies are structured to enable students to learn and demonstrate learning described in the mapped learning outcomes.

You will notice that the above paragraph refers to collective activity among a faculty. These activities are most effective if undertaken collectively. While an individual might take the lead in initial comparison or mapping, program faculty should at the very least be included in the review and discussion of that work. The activities described in this article prove to be most productive when undertaken as collective reflection regarding not just *whether*, but *how* a program is or is not constructed to support student attainment of learning in Communication.

Sequence of Core Curricular Activities

1 Aligning Outcomes

While your department might simply adopt the LOCs as the program-level outcomes, you likely already have existing outcomes that have defined your activities. The ideal starting point for curricular alignment, therefore, is a comparison of the LOCs to the existing program-level learning outcomes or goals. The LOCs were developed by a consensus-building process that largely makes explicit what most faculty members in the discipline already hold to be the core learning in Communication. Your department's faculty will likely find a great deal of overlap between your own outcomes and the LOCs.

The exercise of aligning the two sets of outcomes enables your faculty to identify the degree to which your existing outcomes parallel those developed in the LOC project. In efforts from other disciplines, departments have located areas in their own outcomes that, in light of the discipline-wide outcomes, were determined to be insufficient or, conversely, areas where they felt their own outcomes surpassed those of the discipline outcomes.

As a process of collective reflection, asking questions such as those listed in the box below provides an opportunity to discuss how your department understands learning in the discipline in relation to the LOCs. Where your own outcomes seem to have gaps, as revealed by comparison to the LOCs, discussions will need to turn toward whether or not those gaps are important enough to prompt a revision of your existing outcomes, or adoption of LOCs that your existing outcomes do not include.

As may be apparent, the kinds of reflection undertaken in aligning outcomes provide a foundation for looking at the ways in which your program is built to encourage student learning. These lines of inquiry are foundational, as programs depend on clear articulations of learning on which intentional programs can be built. Having established your department's outcomes (either through adoption, revision, or validation), the logical next step is to analyze how the department's curriculum is constructed in relation to the accepted outcomes.

COMMON QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION WHEN ALIGNING OUTCOMES

- What do we understand the LOCs to mean?

- How do each of these outcomes appear in our own program-level outcomes?

- What makes the LOCs different from our own program-level outcomes?

- Are there any outcomes in one document that do not appear in the other? Why might that be?

- What changes do the LOCs suggest for our own program-level outcomes?

2 Curriculum Mapping

Curriculum mapping often takes the form of creating a table in which outcomes are arrayed along the top and courses in a program are arrayed along the left side, as in the example below. At the points of intersection between outcome and course, faculty members indicate whether the specific course attends to the specific outcome. There are different ways to identify how the course addresses an outcome: faculty might simply place an X in the box or, as in the example below, they might indicate whether a particular area of learning is introduced (I), developed (D), or mastered (M).

FIGURE 1. SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAPPING TABLE

	Describe the Communication discipline and its central questions	Employ Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts	Engage in Communication inquiry	Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context	Critically analyze messages	Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals (self-efficacy)	Apply ethical communication principles and practices	Utilize communication to embrace difference	Influence public discourse
COMM 101	I			I		I		I	
COMM 102		I		D		I	I		
COMM 201	D	D	I		I			D	I
COMM 301			D	M	D		D	M	
COMM 401	M	M	M			D	M		D

Be leery of too many ticked boxes. Courses rarely address every outcome in a meaningful way, and few outcomes are addressed in every course in a program. Curriculum mapping focuses on courses in which students' learning is actually assessed through some sort of assignment. Therefore, while each class in a program may address each of the outcomes, a box would be ticked only if the course includes an assignment by which students demonstrate their learning of an individual outcome. You may find disagreement about the particular purpose of a course. By discussing how the curriculum is constructed around the outcomes, faculty can create a shared understanding.

Curriculum maps are best completed—or at least reviewed—collectively, as this activity can help faculty begin to develop an explicit and shared understanding of how the program's curriculum is structured to help students attain the learning expressed in the outcomes. Two questions in particular promote a productive mapping exercise:

1. Which classes evaluate learning of this outcome?
2. How does each of those classes promote and evaluate learning of this outcome?

The first of these questions identifies where in the curriculum particular outcomes are addressed. Where a column has no ticked boxes, faculty will see that the curriculum does not target a particular outcome. Where a row has no ticked boxes, faculty will see that a course does not contribute to the core learning in the discipline. These are, obviously, extreme cases. Look for outcomes that appear to be under-addressed, or courses that seem to be underutilized. The second question encourages reflection about what kinds of pedagogies are used to promote student learning and what kinds of assignments students complete to demonstrate their learning. When faculty members identify types of pedagogy and assignment, they prepare themselves to think about aligned design of learning experiences, which is the subject of the next step in the sequence.

3 Assignment Alignment

Assignments are where the proverbial rubber meets the road. Program-level outcomes ideally structure curricula and suggest pedagogical approaches (though these are more individual to specific educators), but if the assignments students complete are not aligned to the outcomes, then students are not given opportunities to demonstrate the learning expected of them. Even worse, students are evaluated on learning that differs from what is communicated in the outcomes.

Because the LOCs are built around operational verbs, the kinds of assignment activities students can be given should be apparent. Alignment of assignments to outcomes entails matching the type of student activity to the outcome verb. Where students are asked to "explain," for example, a multiple-choice test would not be appropriate. Explanation requires a more substantial student behavior, such as an essay or short-answer question.

Assignment alignment also depends on how student demonstrations of learning are evaluated by faculty. Faculty members have different understandings of what constitutes proficiency, in part because they have different understandings of what satisfactory demonstration of learning means. Rubrics can be a useful tool for establishing a narrower range of expectations. As with the activities described earlier, development of rubrics works best when undertaken collectively.

A well-built rubric identifies the outcome being evaluated in student assignments and describes different degrees of success. Those descriptions are what make a rubric useful, as a simple list of evaluative criteria leaves a broad array of possible interpretations for

"strong" or "weak." Rubrics need not be tailored to individual assignments. In fact, research suggests that analytic rubrics (rubrics that break out separate criteria) that are general enough for application to multiple assignments yield a higher degree of consensus across a curriculum. For examples, one might consult the Association of American Colleges & Universities' VALUE rubrics, which are available online.

Generation of rubrics written to evaluate student demonstrations of learning in Communication is most productive when undertaken as a consensus-building activity. Faculty can work in a variety of different ways, including shared discussion of how to describe ideal student work and student work that falls short to varying degrees. Alternatively, faculty might take up the more organic process of Dynamic Criteria Mapping (described briefly in the *Roadmap to Enhanced Student Learning: Implementing the DQP and Tuning* 18-19) Where the VALUE rubrics indicate "mastery," "milestones," and "benchmark" as distinct levels of performance, a program's rubrics might indicate some other way of describing performance.

Drafting Program Descriptions

A program description, sometimes called a "degree specification," provides a concise description of a particular degree program. Your department might draft a program description for each degree it offers. For example, a graduate-degree granting institution might have specifications for both its B.A. and its M.A. degrees, with each document describing what distinguishes the program from the other and from other programs offered at other institutions. Program descriptions include:

- the department's understanding of the discipline's nature and purpose, with more specific statements about the purpose of a degree program;

- the characteristics of the department's particular program, including specific resources and areas of emphasis;

- the career pathways opened to students with that particular degree in the discipline;

- the department's approach to education in the discipline, indicating hallmarks of the program, such as service learning, practicums, or capstone experiences (among other noteworthy aspects of the program);

- and the program's learning outcomes.

Program descriptions can be useful for communicating with multiple audiences. Campus advisors can use the program description to direct students to your program, while career resource centers might make use of the program description to help students identify potential employment or internship possibilities. Students may refer to a program description for clear articulation of a major or minor. If program descriptions are revised

for this purpose, they can serve as the basis for a student handbook. Other audiences might include institutions that receive students into graduate programs or through transfer, admissions offices, contingent faculty, library staff, and service learning offices.

The program description, thus, becomes a summative document that captures the various areas of reflection a department's faculty might undertake in working with the LOCs, and can be used to communicate the results of that reflection to others around the campus community—and beyond. We might consider it like a Grail, the object of the collaborative quest, but my grail metaphor works better if we recognize that grails are less valuable as objects than they are as ideals that motivate meaningful action. ∎

FIGURE 2. TEMPLATE FOR CREATING A PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT	
Institution Name & Department Degree Level & Name	
PURPOSE	A general statement on the degree track's overall purpose. This field can be used to provide a succinct statement of a department's philosophy as it relates to the specific degree level. The field might begin with a more general statement about the nature and purpose of the degree.
CHARACTERISTICS	The degree program as it is uniquely expressed at the specific institution. This field can highlight the distinctive features of the degree program, including disciplines and featured subject areas, general and specific focuses, etc.
CAREER PATHWAYS	A summary of the careers frequently undertaken by graduates, perhaps with reference to NCA's *Why Study Communication? Pathways to Your Future* document. This field can also note specific destinations of the degree program's graduates.
EDUCATION STYLE	The department's particular learning/teaching approaches, such as lectures, small seminars, and labs, and other distinctive aspects of the program's curricula and pedagogies.
PROGRAM COMPETENCIES & OUTCOMES	The program-level learning that was inspired by or mapped to the LOCs. This field might also include additional outcomes for specific departments.

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RETHINKING BOUNDARIES:
BRINGING **GENERAL EDUCATION**
AND **THE DISCIPLINE** TOGETHER

By Pat Hutchings, Ph.D. and Natasha Jankowski, Ph.D.

Key proficiencies should inform the full student experience, across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Making this transition is a challenge, certainly, but a growing number of institutions are moving in this direction.

DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE FIVE AREAS OF PROFICIENCY

1 Specialized Knowledge
2 Broad and Integrative Knowledge
3 Intellectual Skills
4 Applied and Collaborative Learning
5 Civic and Global Learning

Students completing college degrees typically take a program of coursework in their major as well as general education requirements. Long a staple of the undergraduate experience in this country, the idea is to combine depth (an understanding of the key concepts, content, and modes of thought that characterize the discipline or field) with the breadth offered by general education courses in a wide range of fields, along with attention to transferable skills across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Yet, as one study after another has indicated, many students leave college without the knowledge and skills they need to flourish in today's fast-moving society and world of work (Bok, 2006; Arum and Roksa, 2011), and with little sense of the connections among the learning they achieve in varied contexts and programs (Huber & Hutchings, 2004; Schneider, 2008). Much of the criticism, it must be said, focuses on general education, where checklist-like requirements lead students to select courses based on convenience and time of day rather than on their focus or fit within a larger plan. And, because no one "owns" general education, implementing substantial reform is a significant challenge, often leading to endless conversations (to use a polite word) and turf battles. But the relationship between general education and the major is also at issue here. Where the two are not integrated—and usually they are not—students are likely to see general education as something to get out of the way before moving into the

"real meat" of their learning in the major. The result is a fragmented experience at best, with serious implications for retention and graduation—and thus for life chances as well.

Since 2011, the two of us have been part of a team at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) that has been tracking campus engagement with both the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) and Tuning. Lumina Foundation's DQP provides a baseline set of reference points for what students should know and be able to do for the award of associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, regardless of their fields of study. "Tuning," on the other hand, is a discipline-specific process by which faculty determine desired learning outcomes for their subject area through consultations with one another, colleagues on other campuses, students, alumni, and employers. One lesson we have learned is about the power of clearly communicated student learning outcomes in both general education and the major, and the importance of integrating them in ways that create more purposeful pathways to learning and success for students. In this article, then, we focus on how engagement with the DQP and with Tuning efforts like the one that has been undertaken by the National Communication Association (NCA) can help strengthen student learning through more productive connections between general education and the major. In particular, we look at the power of wider conversations about student

learning outcomes, implications for assessment, and resources for further work. Our hope is that the national, cross-disciplinary perspective that NILOA's work provides can inform next steps in the NCA Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC) project and be of assistance to departments as they seek to utilize that work.

CONNECTING OUTCOMES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
One key finding from NILOA's work is that the DQP can be a powerful tool for connecting general education and the major in consequential and coherent ways. On many campuses today, there are multi-level conversations about outcomes underway. Some of these conversations focus on institution-wide outcomes; 84 percent of campuses now have such outcomes in place, according to Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, and Kinzie (2014). Many are about general education or "the core." And still others—including those catalyzed by the NCA LOC initiative—focus on the major or discipline. What we have heard in many different ways from DQP-active campuses is that these conversations are now coalescing in a way they never have before. Indeed, a sense of connection and alignment across levels reflects a central purpose of the DQP. With its five areas of proficiency (see graphic above), the DQP provides a framework for articulating the progression of learning through the associate, bachelor's, and master's levels in ways that apply to both general education and the

major. Thus, while there are different ways to approach the shared knowledge and skills within the major or in general education, both are—or should be—fostering students' progress through and across the curriculum toward successful degree completion.

To further underscore this point, one of the five DQP proficiencies is "broad, integrative learning," which "invites students to integrate their broad learning by exploring, connecting and applying concepts and methods across multiple fields of study to complex questions—in the student's areas of specialization, in work or other field-based settings and in the wider society." (2014, p.14) Notably, this expectation is a poor fit with the way many institutions have structured their general education requirements, expecting them to be fulfilled in the first two years and isolated from study in the major. The DQP insists, instead, that key proficiencies should inform the full student experience, across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Making this transition is a challenge, certainly, but a growing number of institutions are moving in this direction, for instance by creating a capstone experience that addresses the intersection of general education and disciplinary outcomes.

To put it differently, faculty who enter into DQP-like conversations about student learning outcomes often find themselves moving from "my course" or "my program" to a focus on "our curriculum," exploring how the various elements of undergraduate education

When assessment is about the work students do in their own classrooms,
it is much less likely to be a compliance-driven activity and much more likely
to be useful for the improvement of teaching and learning

come together (or don't) to provide a coherent student learning experience. Indeed, this kind of work has often involved partnerships with offices across campus (and sometimes—as with the LOC project—with employers beyond campus) that lead to promising program improvements and curriculum redesign. These efforts have been most successful when they are faculty-led and shift the unit of analysis from the institution or program to the success and learning of individual students.

ASSESSMENT
The importance of the faculty role in implementing a more connected view of learning outcomes and curriculum design raises a related issue: the role of faculty in assessing those outcomes. Though faculty have always assumed responsibility for evaluating the learning of their students, the student learning outcomes movement, which emerged in the 1980s in higher education, raised larger questions about educational effectiveness. With policy makers calling for evidence of "results," (National Governors Association, 1986), assessment was often framed in ways that distanced it from the day-to-day work of teaching and learning. The result: a great deal of evidence was generated, but often that evidence did not lead to improvements in the educational experience of students. Improvement, it turns out, is not possible without authentic faculty involvement.

This disconnect is one that the DQP seeks to change. In a widely circulated NILOA paper, Peter Ewell (2013) argues that a key implication of the DQP is a vision of assessment that differs markedly from current practice on most campuses, which tends to be "exo-skeletal" (added on to the regular work of teaching and learning) and looks only at a sample of students on average. In contrast, the DQP calls for *all* students to demonstrate their learning *as a condition for progress* toward and receipt of the degree. Accordingly, it points to the papers, projects, presentations, and exams that faculty regularly assign and expect within their courses as the most useful context for such assessment. Indeed, when assessment is about the work students do in their own classrooms, it is much less likely to be a compliance-driven activity and much more likely to be useful for the improvement of teaching and learning (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell, 2014).

When NILOA began tracking institutional involvement with the DQP and Tuning, we routinely heard from faculty that examples were needed: What would it look like for a student to demonstrate knowledge and skills in relation to a specific proficiency? What kinds of assignments would elicit evidence of such learning in ways that could inform judgments about the effectiveness of courses and programs? In addition to faculty requests for examples, a focus on assignments was listed as important by provosts, who indicated the most useful form of assessment information came from course-embedded assessments, e.g., assignments (Kuh, et al, 2014).

To answer these questions, we turned to the field and began undertaking assignment-design work with groups of faculty from across the United States. Faculty submitted assignments that aligned with DQP proficiencies for possible inclusion in an online library of assignments, and selected faculty were invited to join in a day-long assignment review process we referred to as a charrette—a term borrowed from architecture education denoting a collaborative design process. The charrette provided participants with an opportunity to share their assignment with others, revise the assignment based on peer feedback, and contribute to an online, high-quality, peer-endorsed assignment library. The result is a rich array of designs. For example, many of the assignments selected for the library ask students to demonstrate their proficiency in fairly traditional kinds of writing and speaking, but others invite alternative modes of communication such as website design, a Broadway musical, the creation of a toy or game, or collaboration with community agencies. The use of rubrics is widespread, both as a framework for evaluation and also as a mechanism for communicating expectations to students in more explicit ways. A number of assignments ask students to evaluate or reflect on their own learning, as well.

But the charrette process was powerful not only in prompting thoughtful assignment designs. While faculty discussed the main strengths of one another's assignments for assessing particular proficiencies, as well as the perspective of the student in the design of assignments, they also built a community of expert judgment and peer collaboration that recognizes the effective design and use of assignments as substantive intellectual and scholarly work.

Further, charrette participants began to shift their thinking about assignments as being bound to a particular course—moving away from "my course" to a larger vision of intended student learning outcomes, embedded and reinforced across a curriculum spanning general education and the major. In surveys of charrette participants, more than 80 percent of respondents noted that the experience "helped me more clearly see my assignment through my students' eyes." And more than half said it made them more aware of aligning assignments with "desired institutional outcomes." Some began working to scaffold assignments across courses so students could build on work started in a different course; others partnered with librarians to enhance cross-campus connections and perspectives on the use of information resources, or worked with student affairs to integrate the curriculum with the co-curriculum.

Carefully designed assignments that are aligned with key outcomes can be a vehicle for achieving and documenting general education outcomes while also advancing more discipline-specific learning goals. As noted earlier, assessment that is embedded in coursework is much more likely to provide faculty with information they can use to improve their work with students.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER WORK
For those interested in learning more about institutional work with the DQP and Tuning, and about connections with general education, the DQP/Tuning website is a valuable resource (http://degreeprofile.org). The site includes a resource kit, access to copies of the DQP, extended case studies and more condensed institutional examples, and the option to join an e-mail list for updates. For more information about implementing the LOCs,

see David Marshall's article elsewhere in this issue. In addition, a *Roadmap* that shares information on how to implement DQP and Tuning efforts at a local level is available (Jankowski & Marshall, 2014).

Also on the site is the Assignment Library, which, at this writing, contains about 50 assignments, indexed and searchable by field, assignment type, and DQP proficiency. For those interested in adapting the charrette model for local use, the Resources section of the Library includes a report on catalyzing assignment design work on your campus (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell, 2014).

One additional feature of potential interest to campuses working with NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication is the availability of a NILOA Coach to come for a free, one-day visit. DQP/Tuning Coaches are faculty, administrators, and staff from a variety of institutional types and backgrounds who have worked with the DQP and Tuning. They are experienced in assessment and assignment design, and work collaboratively with campuses to facilitate workshops and assist in local implementation efforts. Coaches are paired with institutions based on campus needs and the trajectory of the work. If interested, you can request a coach or learn more about available coaches at the DQP/Tuning website. We are working with NCA to adapt available resources for LOC project faculty participants to assist with bringing a discipline-specific perspective to local efforts.

Finally, additional resources related to the assessment of student learning can be found on the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment website (http://learningoutcomesassessment.org) and in our recent volume, *Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education* (2015). ■

PAT HUTCHINGS is a Senior Scholar with the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). Her work has focused on a variety of strategies for creating a campus culture of teaching and learning: student learning outcomes assessment, integrative learning, the peer collaboration and review of teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Recent publications include *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact,* co-authored with Mary Taylor Huber and Anthony Ciccone (2011); and, as part of the NILOA team, *Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education* (2015).

NATASHA JANKOWSKI is Associate Director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and Research Assistant Professor with the department of Education Policy, Organization & Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her work focuses on the issues of transparency, organization, and use of assessment, as well as narratives around institutional engagement with assessment through evidence-based storytelling. She is co-author with the NILOA team on *Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education* (2015).

Baylor University
Assistant Professor of Communication

The College of Arts & Sciences seeks a dynamic scholar to fill this position beginning August 2016. A Ph.D. in Communication is required. We seek a faculty member in Health Communication and Technology who can develop and maintain a strong program of scholarship in areas including clinician-patient communication, the use and impact of ICTs in healthcare settings and emergency situations, and organizational change initiatives in healthcare settings. Additionally, we are looking for a faculty member who can develop undergraduate and graduate courses in these areas, and also possesses a strong background in quantitative research methods. This faculty member should be willing to direct graduate theses. For position details and application information, please visit: www.baylor.edu/hr/facultypositions.

For information about the Department of Communication at Baylor University, please visit: www.baylor.edu/communication/.

Baylor University is a private Christian university and a nationally ranked research institution, consistently listed with highest honors among *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* "Great Colleges to Work For." Chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas through the efforts of Baptist pioneers, Baylor is the oldest continuously operating university in Texas. The university provides a vibrant campus community for over 15,000 students from all 50 states and more than 80 countries by blending interdisciplinary research with an international reputation for educational excellence and a faculty commitment to teaching and scholarship. Baylor is actively recruiting new faculty with a strong commitment to the classroom and an equally strong commitment to discovering new knowledge as we pursue our bold vision, *Pro Futuris*.

Baylor University is a private, not-for-profit university affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. As an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer, Baylor is committed to compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws, including those regarding age, race, color, sex, national origin, marital status, pregnancy status, military service, genetic information, and disability. As a religious educational institution, Baylor is lawfully permitted to consider an applicant's religion as a selection criterion. Baylor encourages women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities to apply.

Ph.D. in Communication is required.

This institution chooses not to disclose its domestic partner benefits policy.

Kent State University
Director

Kent State University School of Communication Studies seeks a Director.

Qualifications—Proven administrative ability; faculty and staff management experience; effective communication skills; experience with budget management; substantial record of scholarship; experience in development and alumni relations is highly desirable; past faculty and staff administrative experiences are preferred; doctoral degree in Communication is required; must have a record of research and academic credentials supporting the Full Professor rank; hold doctoral-level graduate faculty status.

The school is one of four in the College of Communication and Information. Academic programs include undergraduate major; social and behavioral science oriented M.A.; dual M.A./M.B.A.; college-wide Ph.D. program.

Kent State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, and is committed to a diverse community. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

Details: www.kent.edu/comm.

This institution offers benefits to same-sex and different sex domestic partners.

Kent State University
Two Tenure-track Assistant Professors

Kent State University School of Communication Studies seeks two tenure-track assistant professors.

Applicants for the first position need a strong program of research focusing on Health Communication; a secondary focus in Global Communication or Organizational Communication is highly desirable.

Applicants for the second position need a strong program of research focusing on Global Communication; a secondary focus in Organizational Communication, Health Communication, or Mediated/Mass Communication is highly desirable.

Both applicants may be involved and teach in the school's undergraduate and graduate programs in their respective areas.

The school is one of four in the College of Communication and Information, serving approximately 850 undergraduate majors and 60 graduate students.

Kent State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, and is committed to a diverse community. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply.

Details: jobs.kent.edu or www.kent.edu/comm.

This institution offers benefits to same-sex and different sex domestic partners.

Murray State University
Assistant Professor

The Department of Organizational Communication, Murray State University, housed in the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business, invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position at the Assistant Professor level starting August 15, 2016.

The successful candidate will teach both undergraduate- and graduate-level courses that blend Communication theory and practice in contemporary organizational contexts. Teaching opportunities are available in Communication Technology, Research Methods, Sports Communication, Intercultural Communication, Leadership, Interpersonal Communication, Health Communication, or other applied areas reflecting departmental needs and individual scholarly interests. Duties will include conducting research, advising students, providing service, and delivering instruction in traditional as well as alternative and online formats. Development of new courses is highly encouraged.

Doctorate in Communication is required by the date of appointment. An emphasis consistent with our Applied Communication curriculum is required. Must show evidence of research/publication potential and a strong commitment to service. Evidence of teaching excellence and strong classroom skills at the college level are required. Experience with alternative instructional delivery methods/formats is preferred.

Please submit online with your application: a letter of application, vitae, teaching evaluations, and unofficial graduate transcripts. Please send three letters of recommendation to Dr. Frances Smith, Search Committee Chair, Murray State University, Organizational Communication, 312 Wilson Hall, Murray, KY 42071.

To apply, please go to: http://www.murraystatejobs.com/postings/4764

Application Deadline: December 1, 2015

This institution chooses not to disclose its domestic partner benefits policy.

San Diego State University
Assistant Professor

The School of Communication at San Diego State University invites applications for a tenure-track faculty position in Intercultural Communication at the rank of Assistant Professor, to begin in Fall 2016. The selected candidate will be primarily responsible for teaching courses in Intercultural Communication at the undergraduate and graduate level. The ability to teach additional courses within the general Communication major such as Interpersonal Communication, Performance Studies, Organizational Communication, or Rhetoric is preferred. Applicants from all research methodologies are encouraged to apply. Salary is competitive and based on experience.

SDSU is a large, diverse, urban university and Hispanic-Serving Institution with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. Our campus community is diverse in many ways, including race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, national origin, pregnancy, medical condition, and covered veteran status. We strive to build and sustain a welcoming environment for all. SDSU is seeking applicants with demonstrated experience in and/or commitment to teaching and working effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and members of underrepresented groups. More information about the School of Communication is available at http://communication.sdsu.edu/, and information about San Diego State University is available at www.sdsu.edu.

Interested candidates must apply via Interfolio at http://apply.interfolio.com/30726. Screening of applications will begin October 15, 2015 and continue until the position is filled.

The person holding this position is considered a "mandated reporter" under the California Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and is required to comply with the requirements set forth in CSU Executive Order 1083 as a condition of employment.

A background check (including a criminal records check) must be completed satisfactorily before any candidate can be offered a position with the CSU.

Failure to satisfactorily complete the background check may affect the application status of applicants or continued employment of current CSU employees who apply for the position.

SDSU is a Title IX, equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, age, disability, pregnancy, medical condition, or covered veteran status.

Candidates should possess a demonstrated commitment to excellence in teaching and research, including the scholar-teacher model. Evidence of, or the potential for, external funding is preferred but not required. A Ph.D. (or other doctoral degree) is required for appointment at the Assistant Professor level; a doctorate in Communication is preferred, although related degrees or areas of study will be considered.

This institution offers benefits to same-sex domestic partners.

Utah State University
Department Head

The Department of Journalism and Communication at Utah State University invites applications for the position of Department Head in the Department of Journalism and Communication at the rank of Full Professor. The position is a 12-month tenured position and includes a strong expectation for a record of teaching excellence, scholarly/professional productivity and/or professional development, and service to the department, college, university, community, and media professions. The successful candidate will have a proven professional background in journalism/mass communication, demonstrated excellence in the field, understanding of the rapidly evolving mass communication environment, and a demonstrated record of or potential for leadership in the academic context. Applicants should be recognized scholars, mentors, and professionals in the media professions, with a distinguished and recent track record of university teaching and relevant professional experience. The Department Head assignment requires an experienced administrator and manager who is collaborative with faculty and staff in decision making and focused on student success. In addition, the successful candidate will have an articulated vision of the industry and the role that journalism/mass communication education plays in it. The Department Head is a member of the Dean's Leadership Team, providing input into college policies.

USU is a land grant university located in a mountain valley 80 miles north of Salt Lake City, Carnegie Research I, with 17,000 students on its main campus and another 12,000+ students on regional campuses around the state. Utah State University is strongly committed to achieving the goals of equal opportunity, and it employs faculty and staff of the highest quality who can reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the nation.

The JCOM Department (http://journalism.usu.edu/) is a professional Mass Communication program incorporating Journalism (print/broadcast/Web/multimedia) and Public Relations. The Department has nine full-time faculty and about 200 undergraduate student majors, and it is in an exciting period of development with the addition of five new faculty over the past two years. The Department produces an award-winning local news show (ATV News) and the oldest online news website in the state (Hard News Café). The Department has an active public relations student club, a student-run PR firm (True Blue Communication) and a student-run online news magazine (*Aggie BluePrint*). It also partners with Utah Public Radio and the student HD Aggie Radio.

Review deadline is November 20, 2015. Along with the online application, please attach: Current CV; cover letter; and a letter of administrative philosophy. The successful candidate must satisfactorily pass a background check prior to hire. The online position announcement can be found at: https://usu.hiretouch.com/job-details?jobid=653.

Employment in this position is contingent upon a satisfactory background check. Utah State University is an AA/EO Employer and encourages gender and ethnic diversity.

This institution chooses not to disclose its domestic partner benefits policy.

Western Washington University
Assistant Professor, Organizational Communication

The Department of Communication Studies at Western Washington University (WWU) invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Organizational Communication. Starting date is September 16, 2016. We seek a colleague who has expertise teaching a comprehensive survey of theories, concepts, principles, and critical perspectives related to a Communication-based focus on organizational life and work. Required qualifications include: Communication Ph.D. completed no later than September 16, 2016; specialization in Organizational Communication; evidence of successful undergraduate teaching; qualified to teach either Research Methods, Communication Theory, or Communication Ethics; experience in quantitative methodologies; demonstrated commitment to an active program of scholarship; and demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse students and colleagues. Preferred qualifications include experience in teaching Organizational Communication; ability to teach about issues related to identity and difference; evidence of commitment to community service; and experience with service-learning pedagogy. View full announcement, including all qualifications, responsibilities, and application procedures at https://jobs.wwu.edu/JobPostingsBrowse.aspx?CatID=85. Review of applications will begin December 1, 2015; position is open until filled. For further info, contact Ms. Michelle Reed Oppenheimer at 360-650-2294.

This institution offers benefits to same-sex and different sex domestic partners.

Don't Miss These
Special Learning Outcomes in Communication Sessions
at the
NCA 101st ANNUAL CONVENTION

With the NCA 101st Annual Convention just a couple of weeks away, plan to attend the sessions that focus on NCA's Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOC) project and learn how the project can help you improve teaching and learning on your campus.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

12:30–1:45 p.m.
Rio Conference Center, Amazon J
Learning Outcomes in Communication Project:
Starting Conversations on Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
Featuring LOC project faculty team members and Spectra *author David Marshall.*

After two years of careful discussion and collaboration, NCA's LOC project has developed its learning outcomes document for the Communication discipline. The goal of the LOC project is to productively support curriculum planning and improvement within the Communication discipline. This panel introduces the LOC's learning outcomes document and discusses how it can function to start meaningful conversations about curriculum, teaching, and learning in departments and on campuses.

3:30–4:45 p.m.
Rio Conference Center, Amazon J
NCA Department Chairs Forum: Accountability and Assessment in the 21st Century Communication Department
Featuring LOC project faculty team members and Spectra *author David Marshall.*
If you are not a department chair, encourage your chair to attend this special session!

The annual NCA Department Chairs' Forum focuses on the theme of "Accountability and Assessment in the 21st Century Communication Department." Department chairs are welcome to a discussion of how chairs and departments can confront increasing pressures from administrators and others, the role that the LOCs can play in formulating strong responses to such demands, and how to implement the LOCs at the department level.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

12:30–1:45 p.m.
Rio Conference Center, Coco B
Learning Outcomes in Communication Project: Assignment Design Workshop
Featuring LOC project faculty team members and Spectra *author Natasha Jankowski.*

Faculty leaders involved in the LOC participated in a "charrette," sponsored by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. The charrette was intended for faculty members who are designing and using assignments linked to learning outcomes and degree proficiencies. Bringing their experiences to NCA, the LOC charrette participants have designed this session to provide an opportunity to work with others with similar interests and to contribute to an online library of high-quality, peer-endorsed assignments.

For more information on these sessions, visit www.natcom.org/convention.

For more information on the NCA Learning Outcomes in Communication project, visit www.natcom.org/LOC.

SEE YOU IN LAS VEGAS!