

Instruction: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment (December 2012)

Course number and name: COMM 1010. Fundamentals of Public Speaking.

“Public speaking principles with emphasis on preparation and presentation of informative and persuasive speeches.”

Number of sampled sessions: One (1) with 12 students (100% participation) which is 1/54 of sessions offered on-ground Fall 2012. The course is an 8 week session.

Measured outcomes: locate 3-5 resources for an informative speech topic; create a bibliography in APA format; identify 2 major keywords from the speech title and thesis statement; only use periodical sources.

-locate 3-5 resources: 100%

-create a bibliography in APA format using cite software link: 66.6%

-find 2 major keywords from the speech title and thesis statement to use in search: 100%

-use of only periodical resources: 66.6%

Learning outcome for research instructor (librarian): I learned that the students’ knowledge about “how to do research” varied enormously; from knowing very little to knowing very much. All students were 1st semester freshmen. Once they understood how to use selected keywords from the speech title and thesis statement to create a search strategy, coupled with a suitable data base, they were able to locate appropriate resources. All students created a bibliography in APA format, 8/12 did so successfully missing only minor punctuation; while 4/12 missed spacing, indentation, lower vs. upper case letters, and italic scripting. One of the 4/12 missed the correct APA title (references) for the bibliography.

Future instruction improvement based upon study: Schedule two research sessions instead of one; first session used to introduce students more thoroughly to the value of selecting the best possible data base(s) for their speech subject/topic; more time to explain the differences between the 3 data bases/indexes (1 general and 2 special) selected for use in this course. The following databases are successfully used in finding sources for the varied speech topics: Academic Search Premier, CQ Researcher and Communication and Mass Media Complete. The speech topics are mostly on a minor academic level.

The second session would be used to review and discuss the students’ search strategies and expand on the value of using descriptive keywords in subject suited data bases; explain the citation content and the writing formats in more detail. Unfortunately, in some classes both APA and MLA formats are used. Students get confused when exposed to two different formats in one class session.

P.S. The lower achieving students should be in the semester long course. And, the focus in a research session for a COMM 1010 course should be how and where to find appropriate resources; only APA formatting should be used since it is the accepted format for communications.