

Southern Illinois University
Carbondale
School of Journalism

ASSESSMENT PLAN REPORT

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RESULTS: GRAMMAR TEST

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The SIUC School of Journalism has initiated a school-wide grammar diagnostic pretest and post-test. The test is given at the beginning and the end of each semester in the following writing classes:

JRNL 290 Writing Concepts for Media Professionals
JRNL 310 Writing for the Mass Media
JRNL 311 Reporting and News Writing

The test poses both basic and harder grammar questions and is intentionally challenging. It currently has two sections — Section A on grammar and Section B on homonyms. A further description and examples of questions can be found on pages 5-8 of the assessment plan.

The grammar test was first administered to the JRNL 310 and 311 course beginning in Fall 2007. JRNL 290 was added in Spring 2008. Test results are gathered by department staff. The results are statistically analyzed by a hired outside source.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE GRAMMER TEST

- Students know that their performance on the test has no effect on their grade. This may cause students to not do as well.
- A student who does not take one of the pre or post exams is not included in the analysis of the data.

INTERPRETING AND REPORTING RESULTS

The diagnostic test had two main goals. The pre-test results help instructors identify a student who needs special help. And by repeating the diagnostic in the last two weeks of classes, the school hopes to quantify whether students improved certain grammar skills over the semester.

A paired t-test with a 95% confidence level is used to show if the pre-test scores are less than the post-test scores. A p-value less than .05 means that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and post tests implying that there was an improvement.

FINAL RESULTS

JRNL 310			JRNL 311			JRNL290		
year	p-value sec A	p-value sec B	year	p-value sec A	p-value sec B	year	p-value sec A	p-value sec B
Sp 08	<.001	.024	Sp 08	.016	.025	Sp 08	<.001	.001
Su 08	.184	.230	Su 08	NA	NA	Su 08	NA	NA
Fa 08			Fa 08			Fa 08		

The above charts show that there is an improvement in grammar test scores each semester except the summer of 2008. This may be because it is an 8 week course instead of a 16 week course. Further tests should be performed and offering the course in the summer may need to be reconsidered.

See appendix A for entire t-test and a further breakdown of data. Appendix B includes Fall 2007 data compared with ACT scores.

RESULTS: TECHNOLOGY TEST

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The School of Journalism recognizes that students in all specializations need to graduate with technology skills. A series of pre and post test have been designed for the following course:

JRNL 310 Writing for the Mass Media
JRNL 311 Reporting and News Writing
JRNL 312
JRNL 419 Online Journalism

A description of these tests and their objectives can be found on pages 19-24 of the assessment plan.

The results of these tests were first analyzed beginning in Spring 2008. Test results are gathered by department staff. The results are statistically analyzed by a hired outside source.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

- Students know that their performance on the test has no effect on their grade. This may cause students to not do as well.
- The tests were not the same for all the courses. Some data was not used for this reason. This is a new assessment area and is a work in progress. It will be more consistent in the coming semesters.

INTERPRETING AND REPORTING RESULTS

The diagnostic tests had two learning objectives:

- to be articulate when communicating the concepts of media technologies
- to apply theory when selecting images and processing images for media technologies

A paired t-test with a 95% confidence level is used to show if the pre-test scores are less than the post-test scores. A p-value less than .05 means that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and post tests implying that there was an improvement.

FINAL RESULTS

JRNL 310		JRNL 311		JRNL 312		JRNL 419	
year	p-value	year	p-value	year	p-value	year	p-value
Sp 08	<.001	Sp 08		Sp 08	<.001	Sp 08	<.001
Su 08		Su 08	NA	Su 08	NA	Su 08	NA
Fa 08		Fa 08		Fa 08		Fa 08	

The above charts show that there was an improvement in the post test scores for every course.

See appendix C for entire t-test and a further breakdown of the data.

RESULTS: LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The students in the following course are given a diagnostic pretest and post-test to show if they have increased their knowledge of the 1st Amendment. The test is given at the beginning and the end of each semester in the following writing classes:

JRNL 310 Writing for the Mass Media
JRNL 332 Journalism Law
JRNL 407 Social Issues and Advertising/IMC

The tests are administered with different criteria in each of the courses. A description of the tests and the desired goals can be found on pages 14-17 in the assessment plan for JRNL 310 and JRNL 332 and on page 40 for JRNL 407.

The law tests results are gathered by department staff for all the courses. The results are statistically analyzed by a hired outside source for JRNL 310 and 332. The results for JRNL 407 are analyzed by the instructor.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE LAW TESTS

- Students know that their performance on the test has no effect on their grade. This may cause students to not do as well.
- A student who does not take one of the pre or post exams is not included in the analysis of the data.

INTERPRETING AND REPORTING RESULTS

The diagnostic test will show instructors what preconceptions students have regarding libel claims and what rights students believe are outlined in the First Amendment. By repeating the diagnostic test the school hopes to quantify whether students increased their knowledge of the First Amendment.

A paired t-test with a 95% confidence level is used to show if the pre-test scores are less than the post-test scores. A p-value less than .05 means that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre and post tests implying that there was an improvement.

FINAL RESULTS

JRNL 310		JRNL 332		JRNL 407	
year	P-value	Year	P-value	year	P-value
Sp 07		Sp 07	<.001	Sp 07	<.001
Fa 08		Fa 08		Fa 08	
Sp 08		Sp 08		Sp 08	<.001

The above charts show that there is an improvement in the scores each semester.

See appendix D for entire t-test and a further breakdown of data.

RESULTS: TERM PAPER JRNL 407

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Term papers are assessed against nine criteria, including five ACEJMC values – writing clearly, thinking critically, conducting research, using technology and critically evaluating for accuracy, fairness and grammar. This is done in the following course:

JRNL 407 Social Issues and Advertising/IMC

The assessment instrument, in its various forms, has been successfully field tested for more than a decade. This instrument and further description of the goals can be found on pages 35-39 of the assessment plan. The results are gathered by department staff for all the courses. All term papers are double-graded, first by an experienced graduate assistant and then by the course instructor. The instructor also performs the statistical analysis.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT JRNL 407 RESULTS

- This assessment has been used and improved for over a decade. The only factor that could affect these results are that the final analysis is performed by the instructor.

INTERPRETING AND REPORTING RESULTS

On the individual level, a score of 140 points (70%) is the minimum score that is considered satisfactory on the term paper assignment. On the course level, it is expected that 80 percent of the students will pass with scores of 70 percent or higher.

FINAL RESULTS

Criterion*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sp 08	95%	90%	89%	86%	85%	77%	71%	41%	79%
Fa 08									
Sp 09									

* See appendix D for description of Criterion.

The failing grade in “appropriate college-level use of the English language” has been a continuing problem in this senior-level course over the years, and it seems to be getting worse, not better. This is especially troubling, given that good writing skills are one of the most commonly required entry-level job skills in our discipline.

See appendix D for copies of the data dating back to 1999.

RESULTS: JRNL 406 CAMPAIGNS

TOOL DESCRIPTION

This course requires the development by student teams of a complete written integrated marketing communications campaign applying the knowledge and skills learned in all the previous sequence courses to a specific, real world marketing communications situation, and presentation of the campaign proposal to faculty and/or client representatives. Several measures are used to assess the teams and individuals. These include:

- The final presentations of teams are reviewed on videotape and critiqued.
- At the end of the final presentation, a Question and Answer session is used to evaluate individual knowledge as well.
- To assess individual team member performance and contribution, each member is asked to evaluate the other members of the team on several points.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT JRNL 407 RESULTS:

- Attendance of the final presentation does not always include the same faculty. Some students may have tougher questions than others.
- The assessment of the presentations is subjective.
- This is a new process and will need to be further developed

HOW TO INTERPRET THE DATA

At this point it has not been determined what the best way is to analyze this data. Currently the raw data in the form of assessment sheets from instructors, faculty, the client, and peers.

RESULTS

Graduates currently in the field have indicated that this was a positive and impressive element in their interviews for entry level jobs.

To quantify this exit surveys should be considered in the future.

Appendix E contains copies of the assessment reports used in this course.