Assessment in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

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Wayne State University's Peer-to-Peer Program Assessment Forum Presentation

In the Winter 2016 semester, 31 faculty and staff were invited to share program assessment examples with their peers in open forums to demonstrate the use of data to improve student learning, program curricula, or support for student success and recognize the important work of our Wayne State colleagues. This document is a brief version of one of those examples.

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers four degree programs: The Bachelor of Arts in CSD, the Master of Arts in Speech Language Pathology, the Doctor of Audiology (AuD), and the Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders. We have assessment plans for all of our degree programs, and are annually assessing learning outcomes related to each program.

Sample Learning Outcome for the M.A. Program

The M.A. in Speech Language Pathology is a clinical training program, as the master's degree is required for those seeking careers as speech language pathologists. The assessment learning outcome, results and action plan are based on the assessment plan for 2014/2015.

#LO2: Possess foundation for diagnosis and treatment for basic human communication and swallowing processes.

Assessment measure for the outcome: All of the M.A. students in Speech-Language Pathology are rated on clinical knowledge and skills each semester based upon performance in their clinical practicum experiences. We track this information for each student through a web based program called CALIPSO (created by a speech language pathologist). Students must achieve a minimum rating of "3" (or present) to meet national certification standards for speech language pathology certification after graduation. The evaluation scale is a number rating between 1 and 5. (1= taught, 2= emerging, 3=present, 4=developed, 5=exceptional). This rating system is used by over 100 graduate level Speech Pathology Programs nationally (so this rubric is widely used).

Criterion for assessment: The criterion for acceptable performance is that 80% of the graduating M.A. class will obtain final performance ratings of a "4" or above revealing that their clinical skills are "developed" by the end of their final clinical experience. (27/36 total students would need to meet the criteria)

Results: (2014-2015) The final outcome of the indicated that 94% of the students met the criteria of a 4 or better out of 5 (34/36 students total met the criterion).

Action Plan: We will enhance the monitoring of student's progress through the training program via a confidential faculty discussion of individual student's strengths and weaknesses. We will accomplish this enhancement via a semester clinical meeting and monthly faculty meetings with periodic follow up from the Clinical Coordinator. The Clinical Coordinator for Speech-Language Pathology will coordinate this action plan at faculty meetings and at the semester clinical faculty meeting.

Suggestions for faculty in other departments regarding the assessment process:

-Your departmental assessment coordinator should consider forming a committee to assist in this process. This is a task that has been manageable because of the assistance from my colleagues on the assessment committee.

-Update the faculty in your department about the assessment process regularly. I am able to do this in each faculty meeting once per month.

-When selecting learning outcomes, do not select too many. We began with seven learning outcomes for our B.A. in CSD degree program initially! We have now streamlined to two learning outcomes per degree program, which has been a positive change.

-Designate a person or two to update compliance assist software with your data. This has helped with continuity significantly.