Building Bridges to Careers: Assignments that Enhance Professional Skills

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Kaplan University
Introduction
Kaplan University General Education
CLA Program Evolution

Part 1: COs
- 2007-2008
- Every course revised
- COs added
- Resume normal course revision schedule (COs revised as needed during each course revision)

Part 2: GELS
- 2008-2009
- Every course revised
- COs reviewed
- GELS added
- Resume normal course revision schedule (COs and GEL assignments revised as needed during each course revision)

Part 3: PCs
- 2014-2015
- Every required course revised
- COs reviewed
- GEL assignments reviewed
- PCs added
- Resume normal course revision schedule (COs, GEL assignments and PC assignments revised as needed during each course revision)

(DeKorte & Hohensee, 2016)
Outcome Norming

Norming sessions

Gather student work

Share data

Examples
General Education Literacies

▪ Focus on core literacies like communication, research, critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and problem-solving.

▪ GEL 1.1: Demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard American English.
Professional Competencies

- These competencies are embedded in courses as a way to connect student outcomes with the skills that employers are seeking.

- Professional Competencies include communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, and critical thinking.

- PC are faculty-driven in that committees review assignments to make sure they align with the PCs.
Professional Competencies

Teamwork • Works in teams to achieve collective goals.
Personal Presentation • Demonstrate professionalism in a variety of situations.
Leadership • Demonstrate leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully lead teams within one’s profession
Multiculturalism & Diversity • Leverage the strengths of multiculturalism and diversity for the benefit of the organization and community.
Graduate Communications • Demonstrate professional written and verbal communication to achieve positive results.
Graduate Problem Solving & Critical Thinking • Apply critical thinking and problem solving behaviors.
Why are good writing and communication skills important in the workplace?

- Writing is a transferable soft skill that employees can use no matter their position
- Effective writers are more persuasive, clear, and formal, which benefits workplace communication (Hill, 2017)
- Effective writing inspires confidence in the author (Hill, 2017)
- Effective communication builds collaboration skills (Hill, 2017)
The cost of poor writing

- Why do businesses care if their employees can write?
- Poor writing leads to inefficiency and frustration
- Poor writing costs businesses up to $400 billion a year (Bernoff, 2016)
Building digital literacy

- As Cole (2015) notes, writing programs cannot ignore the importance of digital literacy if they want to “best engage with the available resources” (p. 206), and Jenkins (2009) emphasizes that fostering digital literacy builds critical thinking skills and helps students network beyond the classroom setting.
Building the bridge

CM 107

CM 220

CS 204 & 210

A foundation for effective professional writing
Questions?
Purpose of CM 107

- CM 107 is designed to enable students to develop basic writing skills to serve as the foundation for a successful education and career. Students are challenged to develop skills necessary to communicate effectively in personal, academic, and professional situations. Assignments scaffold to allow students to apply their newly developed skills as the course progresses, culminating in a professional writing Assignment.
CM 107 GEL 1.1

CM 107 assesses the Communications GEL 1.1 and allows students to demonstrate effective writing skills in preparation for academic and professional success.

Students demonstrate effective writing skills in preparation for academic and professional success.

GEL-1.1: Demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard American English.
CM 107 assesses a Professional Competency as part of the academic essay discussion board, in which students engage in offering feedback.

Students demonstrate originality, recognition of the contributions of team members, and mutual support for teammates.

PC 1.1: Engage in a team setting with professional integrity and respect.
CM 107: Unit 9 assignment

▪ Students write an Executive Summary. This Assignment allows students to apply writing skills in a professional context and demonstrate their ability to express their ideas for a professional audience.
Multigenerational Diversity

- What happens when students from different generations discuss effective communication in the workplace?
- Emails, memos, text messages … what are the best approaches?
- Understanding different approaches to effective communication helps to prepare students for workplace success!
CM 107 Professional Competency

- PC 1.1 Engage in a team setting with professional integrity and respect.
- In CM107, this PC is linked to the Unit 8 Discussion Board with an outcome rubric as part of the gradebook.
Questions?
CM 220: Building writing and communication skills

- Identify aspects of their writing they wish to change and think about how writing skills will benefit them in personal, professional, and academic situations
- Create an “idea for change” that solves a problem in their community or workplace
- Develop logical arguments through the Toulmin Model of Argument
- Learn to identify credible (and not so credible) sources as well as logical fallacies
- Cultivate the ability to use sources effectively through quote, summary, and paraphrase
CM 220: Building business and teamwork skills

- Consider the importance of being able to follow a particular style and layout in business writing
- Develop digital media skills and learn to follow “good design” rules for Power Point and video
- Learn how to find and provide appropriate credit for images that can be used in business settings
- Build teamwork and collaboration skills through the discussion boards and seminar
CM 220 Course outcomes

- CM220-1: Articulate what constitutes effective written communication in personal, professional, and academic contexts.
- CM220-2: Construct logical arguments.
- CM220-3: Conduct research to support assertions made in academic and professional situations.
- CM220-4: Synthesize research and data into a written argument.
GEL 1.1 and PC 1.1

- GEL 1.2: Demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard English.
- PC 1.1: Engage in a team setting with professional integrity and respect.
Assignments: Units 2 and 4

- Write a two-paragraph plan to improve one’s writing in personal, professional, and academic situations and potential idea for change to explore in upcoming assignment.

- Complete a worksheet evaluating a logical thesis statement advocating an “idea for change.”
Assignments: Units 6 and 8

- Create an annotated bibliography citing and discussing 4 sources to support the “idea for change” thesis statement.

- Write a 1000 word academic essay advocating an “idea for change” and citing at least 4 credible sources.
Create a digital media presentation on the "idea for change"
Evaluating PC 1.1 with Unit 9 Discussion (draft of presentation)

- Demonstrates professional integrity by showing respect for classmates (i.e., making the main post and responding to classmates in a timely manner so they have time to make revisions for the Unit 9 Assignment).
- Demonstrates honesty by offering constructive feedback on others’ presentations.
- Provides support for classmates by using a respectful tone.
- Acknowledges contributions of classmates by responding to questions and comments.
- Provides feedback to at least two classmates about their presentations.
- Offers at least two specific recommendations for revision.
- References concepts from the unit reading in the revision recommendations and responds to all of the assigned response questions.
Questions?
CS204 – Professional Presence

- CS204 is designed to introduce students to lifelong career development and professionalism through multidisciplinary techniques and concepts.

- Students have the opportunity to delve into areas such as:
  - Professional communication skills
  - Interpersonal relationships in the workplace
  - Professional behavior
  - Workplace and industry culture
  - Career marketability
Assignment
Students must research the industry culture that comprises their future profession.

The assignment must be at least 400 words and supported with outside research.

The assignment must be formatted as per APA guidelines.

GEL-1.1
Demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard American English.
CS 204 Professional Competency

PC-3.1
- Conduct oneself to reflect the professional characteristics and culture of a given work setting.

Assignment
- The student must complete an essay describing this topic by identifying the different aspects of culture.
CS 210
CS210: Career Strategies

CS210 is specifically designed to introduce students to the lifelong process of career planning and development. The assignments in CS210 help students sync their skill set, abilities, and knowledge in order to fill in gaps and become competitive in their given career field.
CS 210 Course Level Assessments

Course Level Assessment Objectives include:

▪ Compare current qualifications to those required for chosen profession
▪ Compile a career development portfolio
▪ Develop networking and job interview skills
▪ Demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard American English
▪ Solve real-world problems using mathematical skills.
Competency reports

- Competency Reports reflect how effectively a student applies the skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed for success in the workplace.

- Reports are available to students and can be downloaded as a PDF to share with employers or during job interviews.

- Along with the transcript of actual grades, a competency report help reflect the so-called soft skills that a student has acquired as part of his or her course of study.

- Students can review these reports to assist with writing job search documents.

- Reports can be shared with prospective employers as part of a portfolio when interviewing for jobs.
**Competency Report for Sally Q Student**
ID: 1234567
Date: 5/17/2016

**Leadership and Teamwork**
Exhibits the ability to successfully lead teams and work collaboratively to achieve collective goals.

**Professionalism and Ethics**
Navigates the ethical and legal implications of one's role to arrive at high professional standards.

**Communication**
Communicates clearly and effectively to a range of audiences using a variety of methods and styles.

**Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills**
Performs the skills and has the knowledge to succeed in one's chosen career and field.

**Research and Analysis**
Acquires, evaluates, or uses information to support reasoned decision-making and problem solving.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**
Explores issues, ideas, or events in order to design and implement strategic solutions.
Questions?
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References


