Assessing Public Relations Student Learning and Performance in Real World Client Campaigns and Projects

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Assessing Public Relations Student Learning and Performance in *Real World* Client Campaigns and Projects

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Abstract

Extensive research affirms the benefits of engaging public relations undergraduates in campaigns and projects for real world clients. At the same time, instructors often have difficulty evaluating student learning and performance in such work, for three reasons: (1.) In order for the work to truly be real world, instructors must allow students a high level of autonomy. (2.) Clients are often poor judges of appropriate public relations practice. (3.) Students often hesitate to inform instructors of strategic challenges or team member negligence or malfeasance. This poster session presents a brief overview of assessment concepts affirming why it is important to know what PR students have learned and can demonstrate. The poster then illustrates a learning assessment program used successfully for four years in an undergraduate student-run advertising and public relations agency. The assessment program uses formative and summative evaluations by students, graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and clients to assess students’ individual and collective learning and performance. In the student-run agency, the assessments allow the instructors to have a much greater understanding of what students learned and how students demonstrated that learning in different for-profit and nonprofit campaigns. The assessment program could easily be adapted to any high-impact PR classroom situation involving students in real world client campaigns or projects.
Introduction

More than a decade ago, James Axtell noted the disheartening environment in higher education – too many students, too many curricular and institutional demands, and grossly insufficient resources to help support it all (2003). This assessment could still be made today. Higher education faculty members are still strained to provide students the best possible learning experience as resources continue to diminish.

This is especially true in the mass communication disciplines. Although there has been a recent slight decline in undergraduate enrollments, a consistent upward trend has been seen in U.S. undergraduate enrollment in mass communication programs since the mid-1990s (Vlad, Becker, Simpson, & Kalpen, 2013).

Although employers recognize that development of skilled workers is a key outcome of the higher education experience (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002), employers continue to be unhappy with the knowledge and skills of new graduates. In 2008, a survey found many employers believed undergraduates were underprepared for the realities of the workplace (Kuh, 2008). A recent study focusing on communication educators reached the conclusion that educators are not as proactive as they need to be in finding out about the realities of the workplace and how undergraduates need to prepared (Moody & Bates, 2013). In the workplace, many professional communicators “are not convinced that educators are teaching students the communication skills they need to effectively work in today's industry” (Todd, 2009, p. 80).

At the same time, undergraduates are increasingly interested in higher education for its career benefits more so than for learning and personal growth. A recent study showed undergraduates' main reason for attending college is “to get a better job” (Grasser, 2013, p. 88).

It is conceivable that academic programs will always need to find ways to educate greater numbers of students to higher levels of performance, using fewer faculty and institutional resources. It is also conceivable that there will always be some level of disconnect between academics and workplace professionals.

One method for educating Communication students to real-world realities and easing the professional disconnect is to establish a student-run media agency. Typically, such agencies serve students in advertising, integrated media communications, or public
relations by allowing a place where students can develop hands-on work that is based on concepts taught in the classroom. Student-run agencies also “fill a void in the curriculum by exposing students to disciplined business practices that may be missing in campaigns or service learning courses” (Bush, 2009, p. 35).

Student agencies require interaction “with an authentic audience” – something Lent identified as an ideal culmination of the undergraduate learning experience (2012, p. 105). Student agencies are consistent with a recommendation of Todd (2009) in that they “merge writing skills, higher order cognitive skills, and new media technology capabilities in a single course” (2009, p. 83) to maximize student learning and career preparation.

Swanson (2008) and Bush (2009) previously pointed out that little scholarly research focuses on student-run agencies, and that more study is needed to understand how students are motivated to perform in them. In particular, more attention needs to be given to assessment of student learning within student-run agencies and other high-impact practice learning environments. Educators need to know how much students are gaining in conceptual knowledge and hands-on skills. Often, it is difficult to verify this growth because of challenges associated with asking students in an academic (learning) environment to carry out real world campaigns and projects.

This poster illustrates assessment methods and instruments used successfully to in one student-run agency to verify that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are most valued in the workplace. Although the examples offered here are not the only ways to conduct learning assessment, their successful use makes them worthy of consideration by faculty who oversee similar high-impact practice programs.

Assessment of Student Learning

The purpose of assessment is to make a conscious effort to support student learning, measure that learning, gauge the impact of learning, and initiate program changes to improve future learning (Accreditation standards, 2012). Although many faculty members and academic programs claim to be assessing student learning, assessment is often confused with teacher evaluation. Student like or dislike of a particular instructor is not a measure of what a student has learned or the relevance of that learning to workplace expectations any more than a grade awarded to a student is an objective measure of growth in knowledge.
Many faculty members in Communication and other disciplines resist learning assessment for a variety of reasons. Some are not interested in inquiring about student learning, do not want colleagues to know what’s happening in their classrooms, or simply shun collaboration (Banta & Associates, 2002). Other faculty members are insufficiently invested in their work to care whether students are professionally prepared (Bresciani, 2006). Other faculty members hold to outmoded ideas that those in academe bear no accountability for their actions (Suskie, 2009). Still others approach their work from a perspective of delivery of knowledge, rather than from a perspective where student learning is the focus and the organizing principle (Tagg, 2003).

The ideal assessment plan is faculty-driven and linked to an ongoing research agenda. It is built around the regular work of faculty – teaching – and involves a conversation with colleagues, students, and workplace employers (Hutchings, 2010). It is “authentic assessment” if it involves students in “real-world activities that professionals in the discipline encounter” (Allen, 2004, p. 8). It should measure student performance with established real-world rubrics and evaluate with standards consistent with those used by working professionals (Stassen, Doherty & Poe, 2001). The assessment plan described in the following sections builds on these concepts.

Agency Profile and Learning Outcomes

The agency upon which this case study focuses is housed in one of the largest Communications departments in the United States. The department has about 2,400 undergraduates in five subject concentrations. The agency serves students in the two concentrations of Advertising and Public Relations, which, combined, make up about half of the department’s undergraduate enrollment. The department is ACEJMC-accredited (ACEJMC Accredited programs, 2013) and is one of 34 academic units that has earned PRSA’s CEPR certification for its public relations program (Commission on public relations education, 2012).

The student-run agency was initiated by the dean in 2011 to bring together students from the two different subject concentrations in a single capstone course experience to blend knowledge of scholarship gained in the classroom with a demonstration of professional skills (See Rodrick & Dickmeyer, 2002). The agency was and remains student-
driven; first class of students created the agency name and logo, wrote the mission statement and policy manual, and developed much of the agency’s operating structure.

The department’s large enrollment makes it impossible to offer all students the agency capstone experience. Therefore, faculty approved learning outcomes for the agency that are general, so as to be nearly identical to those for non-agency capstone course sections. The agency course learning outcomes are shown below:

By the completion of the course, students will be able to:

• Use analytical and research strategies to develop an integrated communications campaign for a client.
• Utilize basic processes, tools and techniques of writing common to advertising, marketing and public relations professions.
• Apply appropriate management strategies to execute an integrated communications campaign.
• Draw on a variety of measurement and evaluation strategies to assess the effectiveness of an integrated communications campaign.
• Recognize and strive for excellence in the ethical practice of communication.
• Recognize the value and impact of personal and professional engagement in community service.

The agency operates as two separate course sections that meet together and are team-taught by two faculty members, one in Advertising and the other in Public Relations. The agency has at least one graduate teaching assistant each semester to supplement the instructors with additional hands-on guidance to students. A non-enrolled student lab assistant is employed to provide clerical assistance. Enrolled students are required to take one semester of the course for capstone credit and may take a second semester for elective credit.

The agency is operated as a ‘real’ business in almost every way. Students are senior-level undergraduates, assigned in teams to multiple clients. Each team has a student account executive. Within the first three weeks of the semester, each team must perform a consultation and present a campaign proposal for approval by the client and instructors. Teams collaborate to produce a strategically sound, successful campaign for each by the
end of the 16-week semester. Even though clients are not billed, teams keep track of billable hours, with a performance expectation of 80% billable by the end of the semester. At the end of the term, students make final campaign presentations to instructors, their peers, and clients.

The course meets twice a week and has dedicated lab space available to students by passcode lock any time the building is open. A successful campaign requires student investment of many hours above and beyond what they spend in class each week.

Agency financial support comes mostly from university activity funds granted through a competitive award process. The agency does not seek funding from nonprofits with which it works. The agency solicits donations from for-profit clients. These funds, totaling about $4,000 per year on average, come as philanthropic donations to the college and support long-term equipment and infrastructure needs. In its first three years of operation, the agency produced 65 campaigns for businesses and nonprofits, and enrolled 243 students.

Assessment of Student Learning and Performance

The assessment program for the agency was designed to result in quantitative and qualitative measures of student knowledge gain and performance using data from a variety of sources. The end result of the evaluations is the computation of a point score that determines a final grade for each student. More importantly, though, the measures allow the instructors to determine whether student learning and performance is in line with professional expectations. Changes in curriculum and pedagogy to improve future student learning can be made from an educated standpoint, rather than from guesses or conjecture.

This section will offer a brief description of assessment methods and instruments. Instruments are shown in figures at the end of the manuscript.

- The rubric

A simple, one-page rubric is used as a general evaluation guideline for all work completed by students in the agency (Figure 1). At the very first class meeting, students are provided with a copy of the evaluation guide and know what the instructors expect.
• Student evaluations and reflections
Much of the evaluation in the agency comes from the students themselves, as they judge the performance of their fellow team members. Students complete a team member evaluation on Survey Monkey. With identical questions at midterm and at the end of the semester, the instrument allows students to evaluate in five areas: Preparation, dependability, quality of work, attitude, and contribution to morale (Figure 2). Students also complete a Survey Monkey reflection survey (Figure 3). This gives students an opportunity to reflect on the class and consider that they learned or may not have learned. Students are asked to offer suggestions for change. Over the years, many of the student suggestions were adopted in the following semester to make the agency more efficient and help it better meet student needs.

• Graduate teaching assistant evaluations
The graduate teaching assistants primarily serve to support the instructors, although the TAs provide an important listening ear to guide the student teams. As students themselves, TAs are less threatening to undergraduates. As a result, teams will sometimes share information with a TA that they would otherwise hesitate to share with an instructor. As needed, TAs will deliver class lectures on topics they’re experienced with. TAs also oversee the Time Fox time management software, making sure student teams are using Time Fox regularly and correctly. TAs view all student presentations and provide informal feedback to the instructors that contributes to student grades and helps with overall assessment of the agency program.

• Instructor evaluations
The instructors provide extensive feedback to students to document performance in the class. An evaluation is provided of the student proposal presentation (Figure 4). In addition, the proposal itself is red-pencilled by instructors and returned to the team. A similar process is undertaken at the end of the semester for the final client presentations (Figure 5) and final campaign book (Figure 6). All of these evaluations are consistent with the course rubric, which is grounded in the course learning outcomes.
Client evaluation

At the end of the semester, one of the instructors directs each client to the Survey Monkey link to perform the evaluation of the team (Figure 7). Clients are urged to complete the evaluation form and make any comments that will help the students understand their performance, as well as help the instructors see what happened from the client’s perspective. The client evaluation of a student team’s work is critical to students knowing whether they demonstrated proficiency in concept knowledge and demonstration of skills. At the same time, experience has shown that clients may not accurately gauge the level of performance of the students or professionalism of the campaign. Sometimes a client will give high marks based more on personal affinity with students than on professional quality of the completed campaign. Other times, a client will give low marks for student performance when students were unable to control problems caused by the client that hampered the project.

Measures of Success

Assessment in this student-run agency is a constantly evolving process. Initially, the instruments shown in Figures 2, 3, and 7 were all offered in hard copy form. As a result, data collection – particularly of student and client evaluations – was a cumbersome process. Storage of data and reporting of conclusions generated was difficult. Transitioning to Survey Monkey for much of the assessment not only made the process easier, but also eliminated confidentiality and storage issues associated with collecting paper forms.

The department’s public relations concentration maintains a professional advisory panel made up of three working professionals in public relations. That panel meets every three years to review samples of student work. The panel met in spring 2012 and reviewed 19 campaign books selected at random from the agency and other sections of the capstone course. The panel concluded that none of the work was substandard in quality.

- Number / proportion of portfolios considered “excellent” in quality: 5, or 26%
- Number / proportion of portfolios considered “very good” in quality: 7, or 36%
- Number / proportion of portfolios considered “satisfactory” in quality: 7, or 36%
- Number / proportion of portfolios considered “substandard” in quality: 0
Because the books from the agency were not isolated from the books produced for other sections, it was not possible to determine differences. This issue will be addressed in future assessments so faculty can explore how student learning in the agency does or does not compare to learning in the other capstone sections.

Overall, the advisory panel made these positive comments about student work:

- Some excellent research and very impressive presentation.
- Some of the hours spent on activities, fundraisers and materials were impressive.
- Some very impressive media presentations. Broad problem-solving skills.
- I was impressed by the presentation of many of the campaign books.
- Creativity and persistence in obtaining measurable goals was noteworthy.

The panel found shortcomings in student work, primarily in research methods and writing and organizational skill, as noted here:

- Relied too much on basic social media tactics – couldn’t quantify results. Too much unnecessary research.
- Well organized but a little short on real substance.
- Well organized and written, lots of good work, a little short on creativity.
- Well written, but no discussion of campaign strategy or tactics.
- Not enough detail on campaign strategy or tactics.
- Good organization and strategy – could have devoted more effort to tactics.
- Numerous spelling and grammar errors. Incorrect AP style.
- Not correctly formatted according to directions and table of contents.
- Lacking a few important dates.

Administrators and faculty responsible for the establishment of the agency are pleased with the documentation of success. Student concept knowledge and demonstration of professional skills has met learning outcome goals.

Throughout its existence, the student-run agency profiled here has operated consistent with current thinking in the disciplines of advertising and public relations. It offers students the best possible agency experience before they are graduated from the university. It allows students to adjust their expectations about the realities of the
workplace while they are still students – before it’s too late for them to make changes in career direction (See Crawford, Fudge, Hubbard, & Filak, 2013).

The assessment tools offered here could be used in a variety of real world high-impact practice courses. The tools offer the potential for faculty to do “a more careful assessment of what students actually know and how they acquired their knowledge” (Moody & Bates, 2013, p. 169). This assessment happens when faculty close the loop in the assessment process (Allen, 2004) by using the information gained to improve the academic program.
References


Insert Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 here.
Evaluation Guideline for Written Work

Assignments are reviewed holistically and a point score applied. Suggestions for improvement will be offered.

- **Excellent work** – (Generally, 90 – 100% of points earned, or a letter grade of A)

  The work reflects student **mastery in understanding and applying the concepts of the assignment.** All content instructions were followed. All relevant concepts are presented and explained. The work reflects critical thinking and reflection. Different perspectives are acknowledged, when relevant and appropriate. The work offers the reader an imaginative presentation of ideas. Appropriate reference support is offered correctly, as requested by instructions. All technical instructions are followed. Copy errors, if any, are insignificant in relation to the work's overall quality. The presentation reflects the level of quality one would expect in a professional workplace. (*'Excellent' works have no more than four copy errors.*)

- **Very good work** – (Generally, 80 – 90% of points earned, or a letter grade of B)

  The work reflects student **proficiency in understanding and applying the concepts of the assignment.** Most content instructions were followed. A strong effort was made to communicate understanding of the concepts and relevance of the assignment. The work is easy for the reader to review and understand. Some content errors or omissions are evident, but the overall high quality of the work is not seriously devalued by these errors or omissions. (*'Very good' works have no more than ten copy errors or omissions.*)

- **Satisfactory work** – (Generally, 70 – 80% of points earned, or a letter grade of C)

  The work reflects a **developing knowledge of the assignment and concepts.** An effort was made to follow the instructions, but some important elements of those instructions were misunderstood or disregarded. There are numerous content errors or omissions. Although the work is satisfactory for a classroom assignment, the effort would fall well below professional expectations in the professional workplace. (*'Satisfactory' works have no more than 12 copy errors or omissions.*)

- **Poor work** – (Generally, 70% or fewer, letter grade of D or F)

  The work reflects **insufficient understanding of the assignment and concepts.** It’s possible that the work was assembled hastily, without sufficient attention to the instructions or concern for the learning outcome. There are extensive problems in structure and content. The errors or omissions in the work are so significant that they overwhelm the reader and distract from the objective of the assignment. This work would be dramatically unacceptable in any professional workplace.

Assignments graded down on content commonly present one or more of these problems:

- Failure to follow assignment instructions, all or in part. (*This is the most frequently occurring problem.*)
- Poorly organized work with no clearly defined focus or key points identified for discussion.
- Work not targeted to the specific interests and concerns of the reader.
- Awkward, passive sentence construction – resulting in wordy, redundant written copy.
- Incorrect strategy/inappropriate conclusions, often because conclusions were based on assumptions, not fact.
- Questionable claims made without valid research support, or with incorrect citation of research support.
- APA research format (when required) applied incorrectly – or not applied at all.
- Associated Press Style (when required for media communications) incorrect – or not applied at all.
- Late assignment submission, beyond the point the work was due (often, these papers appear ‘thrown together’ and have numerous other errors) and/ or submitted in wrong format, and/ or without student name.

Repetitive errors in subsequent assignments result in bigger penalties. **Plagiarism earns a score of -0-.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Excellent Mastery</th>
<th>Very Good Proficiency</th>
<th>Satisfactory Developing</th>
<th>Poor Insufficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All content instructions are followed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All relevant concepts are clearly presented and explained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work is creative and articulate in its expression of ideas.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The work appropriately acknowledges different perspectives.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work is professional in its structure, focus, and written quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ideas contained are easy for the reader to follow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work is free of errors and omissions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate reference support (if requested) is offered correctly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All technical instructions are followed.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This is your opportunity to give CONFIDENTIAL feedback to the instructor(s) on the attitude and professionalism of your team members. Please reflect on the totality of work done over the semester, and rank each member of your team(s) by answering the questions that follow. Do not rank yourself. Do not rate students who are not on your team(s). If you are a member of two teams, you may use this one form to rank both teams. Be aware that we will be highly suspicious of any evaluation or set of evaluations in which each team-member is ranked with a "5." This situation seems like evaluation and more like collusion. There will be an opportunity for open-ended comments at the end. Client and team member evaluation scores contribute to an overall assessment of performance and will have an impact on the final letter grade earned by each student.

1. Fill out these item fields so we can confirm that you participated in the team evaluation.

   Name: ____________________________
   If you are an Account Executive, list your team name here: ____________________________
   If you are a subordinate team member, list your subordinate team name here, separated by a comma: ____________________________

2. Below is the list of students enrolled in the agency. For each student on your team, rank your agreement to each of the five statements: Was the student prepared? Was the student accountable? Did the student make significant contributions in quantity and quality? Did the student have a positive attitude? Did the student contribute to morale on your team?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Prepared</th>
<th>Accountable</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
<th>Positive Attitude</th>
<th>Morale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T. Wagner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Soto</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Bauta</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Belknap</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Hernandez</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Soto</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Delgado</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Gotor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Soto</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Hernandez</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y. Hernandez</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Soto</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Wright</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Martí</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Wright</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Grade</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If you have other comments or suggestions about specific team members or issues, you may insert comments here.

   [Comments]
PR AD COMM STUDENT REFLECTION

Your opinions needed

This is your opportunity to give us feedback on your experience in PRactical Advantage Communications. This is an anonymous survey, so nothing you write here will have any impact on your final grade. The survey has ten questions, and you should answer them to the best of your ability. You must provide your name. At the end of the survey you will receive a code word that you must provide to your instructor to verify survey completion.

1. In which courses are you enrolled?
   - Publicity with PR: Concepts
   - COMP 2010 with Prof. Ervino
   - COM 2000
   - COM 2010

2. What were the three reasons you enrolled in the course? Rank the top three reasons (1, 2, 3) as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1 reason</th>
<th>#2 reason</th>
<th>#3 reason</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to take this course in Iowa.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to take this course because of the instructor.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This course was the best option for my schedule.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another course conflicts with this one.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a friend who also enrolled in the course.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   (Other reason please specify)  

3. What are your plans after graduation?
   - Plan to work in Advertising
   - Plan to work in Public Relations
   - Plan to work in another communications field
   - Plan to work in the entertainment industry
   - Plan to go to graduate school
   - Other (please specify)  

4. Identify two relevant professional concepts you learned in PRactical Advantage Communications.

   (Please specify)

5. Identify two relevant professional hands-on skills you acquired in PRactical Advantage Communications.

   (Please specify)

6. Are you more prepared now for the workplace than you were when you entered PRactical Advantage Communications? Describe briefly.

   (Please specify)

7. We hope your PRactical Advantage Communications experience showed you the importance of ongoing “professional development.” After your college preparation comes to an end, what specific concepts or skills do you still need to work on?

   (Please specify)

8. Please complete the sentence: “One thing PRactical Advantage Communications should never change is ________.”

   (Please specify)

9. Please complete the sentence: “One thing PRactical Advantage Communications needs to change is ________.”

   (Please specify)

10. If you were to do the PRactical Advantage Communications experience again, what would you do differently?

    (Please specify)
## Instructor evaluation – campaign proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>CLIENT TEAM ________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Chapter 1) Background, situation analysis, core problem/opportunity</strong> - Describe the client and the client's communication needs. Tell what you learned through your client consultation and research. Offer the results of a SWOT analysis or similar to show that you really understand what's happening here. How will a small, focused communications campaign help this client improve the communication situation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Chapter 2) Goals and objectives</strong> - Identify a small set of goals and objectives that are realistic and can be reached during a semester-long effort. Supportive research is essential to document how you know that what you propose is realistic and appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Chapter 3) Key audiences/publics and messages</strong> - Key audiences/publics are identified, including profile information, motivating self-interests, demographics/psychographics, etc. Research support is needed here, too.</td>
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<td><strong>(Chapter 4) Strategy, tactics, tools</strong> - Strategies (overall plan of attack), tactics (action steps), tools (communication outreach) are clearly identified and professionally appropriate. All are simply explained to identify the concept structure underlying the campaign.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Chapter 5) Calendar and budget</strong> - Make your best projection as to how your campaign will unfold. You may not have a budget to work with. Explain what challenges that might present. It's essential that you include a complete Time Fox report.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Ch.6) Campaign outcomes</strong> - What will be the outcomes of this campaign? Focus on the communications, because that's what it's all about.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Ch.7) Measurement, assessment and evaluation of success</strong> - How will you know &quot;success&quot; when you get to it? Is this your idea, or the client's, or both?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Appendix) References</strong> – List, in APA format, all references consulted as you prepared your proposal.</td>
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**Comments:**

- **Excellent**
- **Very Good**
- **Satisfactory**
- **Poor**
### Final project presentation – critique form

**Client team:** ________________  
**Presentation date:** ____________

### Overall presentation
- Presenters appeared confident and articulate
- Presenters talked **to the audience**, not to the visual aid
- Presentation was credible and authoritative
- All relevant issues were addressed

### Comments:

### Introduction
- Professionally introduced presentation, including student names & relevant client information
- Gained audience attention quickly
- Built a rapport with the audience
- Explained client basics without being simplistic
- Transitioned effortlessly into facts of the situation

### Knowledge of client
- Superior knowledge of the client & related issues
- Portrayed a ‘helping’ not ‘dictating’ attitude/ client
- Showed how the work has/ will benefit client

### Presentation of campaign
- ‘Basic’ enough for those unfamiliar with client, yet ‘advanced’ enough those who are familiar
- Persuasive – this is **the answer** for the client
- Put all the situational facts in perspective and context
- **Claims supported with appropriate research**
- Organized and understandable

### PowerPoint and/ or other visuals
- Professional in design and appearance
- Text was limited and easy to read
- Minimal use of appropriate illustrations
- Minimal use of ‘flying graphics’ and other distractions
- **No typographical errors**

### Conclusions
- Conclusions appear sound, based on evidence shown
- It’s clear what the campaign did for the client and why
- “Success” of the effort was defined and explained
- **Client has been given a road map for future success**
- Conclusions all focused around **communication**

### Communication skills
- **Professional dress & appearance**, enthusiastic attitude
- Articulate, understandable verbal communication
- Minimal use of vocalized pauses (“um,” “uh,” etc.)
- Professional, responsible nonverbal skills
- Technology was handled with ease
- Presentation pacing ok **(20 min. time limit)**

**SEE REVERSE SIDE**
Please make additional comments here:

✓ Overall quality of the presentation:

___ Excellent work - The presentation was organized well, and transitioned easily between points. It was consistent with what one would expect in an advertising/PR agency presentation. The quality of the verbal presentation was excellent, and the PowerPoint offered a pleasing visual support. The presentation took a clear point of view and documented all facts and claims. Very little could be added to improve the team's work.

___ Very good work – The presentation was organized appropriately. Major concerns of the client were addressed. However, one or more issues appear to not have been fully developed. There are areas where improvement could be made, to allow a greater understanding of the issues faced by the client or the campaign developed on the client's behalf.

___ Good work – The presentation was targeted at the concerns of the client. But the presentation did not clearly explain important elements that relate to the campaign. Perhaps the PowerPoint presentation was not sufficient in its content, or the inclusion of the PowerPoint in the presentation was problematic. The student presenters did not appear prepared to make certain claims, or made claims with little or no substantiation. While acceptable in the classroom, this presentation would be insufficient for an agency situation.

___ Poor work – Poorly prepared, grossly unacceptable – even for entry-level public relations practitioners.
### TOTAL HOURS/ TIME FOX: __________

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<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLIENT TEAM ____________________</td>
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| Comments | CLIENT TEAM ____________________ |
|------------------|
| Comments |
| Excellent | Very Good | Satisfactory | Poor |

### (Ch.1) Background, situation analysis, core problem/ opportunity

Offers background on the client and the communication situation your campaign addressed. Briefly reviews research that provides background on industry, external environment, product or program, market situation, and current trends in opinion and attitudes. Identifies a communications theory under which your project was developed. Includes an analysis such as a SWOT that discusses the current situation and describes challenges or opportunities. Presents a statement identifying the prospect for success, or potential consequences for harm if the campaign had not been undertaken.

### (Ch.2) Goals and objectives

A clear distinction is made between goals and objectives, and a rationale is offered. The end goals of campaign are clearly identified and explained simply and clearly. In-process objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, time-bound and mission-driven. Supportive research is identified. Narrative uses past tense (campaign is complete).

### (Ch.3) Key audiences/ publics and messages

Key audiences/ publics are identified, including profile information, motivating self-interests, status of current relationship with client, third party influencers and opinion leaders, and achievable objectives. Extensive research separates fact from guesswork and address not only ‘what’ the messages were but ‘why.’ All messages are clearly identified and reasonable for the campaign and situation.

### (Ch.4) Strategy, tactics, tools

Strategies (overall plan of attack), tactics (action steps), tools (communication outreach) are clearly identified and professionally appropriate. All are simply explained and fully detailed.

### (Ch.5) Calendar and budget

Illustration of how campaign elements were strategically planned over time, and appropriately accounted for in a campaign budget. The chapter includes full TimeFox documentation of billable and non-billable hours. All hours are reported in summary (for the team) and for each individual member of the team.

### (Ch.6) Campaign outcomes

All intended and unintended outcomes of the campaign are fully documented, so that the evaluation of success of these outcomes can be shown in the chapter that follows. (All relevant work samples referred to here or elsewhere in the book will be shown in the Appendix as separate files from the narrative.)

### (Ch.7) Measurement, assessment and evaluation of success

This chapter offers ‘multiple measures of success’ (both quantitative and qualitative) The chapter can end with a brief discussion of ‘where the client goes from here’ based on the success of this campaign.

- References (APA format), Appendix

Print and electronic copies provided?

Comments:
Client Evaluation Form

In order to fully assess the success of our student teams, we need to receive some feedback from you regarding the campaign conducted by our student team. This evaluation form will allow for that feedback. We hope you will take a few minutes to answer the set questions that follow. Please have only "true" staff person from your organization complete the survey. During completion, feel free to add any additional comments or suggestions for the future. Your evaluation will be confidential; students will not see your ratings or your comments unless you want them shared with the students. (Just us known in the comment box if you do.) Thank you for letting our students work with your organization.

1. Please type the name of your organization and your name in the spaces provided here.

   Organization name: [Name]

2. Please read each statement below, and then select the appropriate rating that will allow us to gauge the performance of the student team as a whole. The ratings are as follows: [5] Excellent/consistent demonstration of professionalism; [4] Very good/some improvement would have been warranted; [3] satisfactory/improve; [2] overall acceptable performance; [1] Poor/ student team's work was consistently unsatisfactory.

   a. The students conducted the necessary preliminary research to gain a better understanding of the tasks involved in this assignment.
   b. The students were able to communicate their ideas and concepts effectively.
   c. The students were able to work cooperatively with each other.
   d. The students demonstrated initiative in identifying and solving problems opportunities.
   e. The students kept you informed of project status and deadlines.
   f. Overall, the work of the student team was consistent and on-target.


   [5] Yes, please share with students.
   [1] No, thank you.

4. Do you have any suggestions that would help us improve the performance of the student-run agency for future clients? If so, please offer them here.