

**Course Assessment Report**  
**Washtenaw Community College**

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Journalism	210	JRN 210 05/15/2017- Introduction to Copy Editing
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	English/Writing	David Waskin
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

**I. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome**

Outcome 1: Identify and correct sentence-level errors of grammar, style, and punctuation in other journalists' work.

- Assessment Plan
  - Assessment Tool: Exam
  - Assessment Date: Winter 2015
  - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
  - Number students to be assessed: All students enrolled at time of assessment.
  - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key/rubric developed by journalism faculty.
  - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: Seventy percent of students will score 75 percent or higher.
  - Who will score and analyze the data: Journalism faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2016	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
21	21

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students enrolled were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All students enrolled at the time of the assessment were included; this was the complete roster of the course that ran as one section in Winter 2016.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The tool was an exam. A portion of the exam was text from a published newspaper column that included sentence-level errors of grammar, Associated Press style, and punctuation for the test-takers to catch and correct. Students catching and correcting all errors were rated as exceeding expectations. Students catching and correcting all but one or two were rated as meeting expectations; others were rated as below.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Eighteen of 21 students met or exceeded expectations for this outcome, which exceeds a standard of success that seventy percent of students will meet or exceed expectations. (Because this is the first time this course has been assessed, the wording of the standard of success will be revised from that on the master syllabus; future master syllabus updates will reflect this revision.)

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Proofreading is at the core of copy editing and it is exceptionally difficult--particularly when one is tasked, specifically, with doing it. The tendency of "overdetection"--of perceiving the possibility of errors where none exist--runs rampant. It is then with some satisfaction that I see my students made substantial catches and corrections, under time constraints, in the work I placed before them, especially in the area of punctuation.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Because proofreading is so difficult--and so difficult to teach--continuous practice is in order. We spend considerable time examining the most common errors (comma splices, misuse of apostrophes, misuse of Associated Press style) associated with this outcome and will continue to do so.

Outcome 2: Write accurate, engaging headlines for newspaper and web-based stories that observe appropriate conventions of style.

- Assessment Plan
  - Assessment Tool: Exam
  - Assessment Date: Winter 2015
  - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
  - Number students to be assessed: All students enrolled in course at time of assessment.
  - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key/rubric developed by journalism faculty.
  - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: Seventy percent of students will score 75 percent or better.
  - Who will score and analyze the data: Journalism faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2016	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
21	21

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students enrolled were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All students enrolled at the time of the assessment were included; this was the complete roster of the course that ran as one section in Winter 2016.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

The tool was an exam. A portion of the exam required students to write headlines for several brief articles with specified numbers of characters and according to traditional news headline standards. Each headline on the exam was worth 10 points. Students who scored the full 10 points on each headline were rated as exceeding expectations. Students who scored a mix of nines and 10s were rated as meeting expectations. Students who scored eight or below on any of the headlines were rated below expectations.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Nine students met and 12 exceeded expectations for this outcome, an exceptional performance from this group.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Like proofreading, writing headlines is central to copy editing. Unlike proofreading, writing headlines is fun. Along with much in-class practice with on-the-spot feedback provided from the instructor I think this is why the students performed best on this of all the outcomes.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

I plan to continue having students practice writing headlines in class that we can compare to professionally produced story headlines. Most students enjoy this activity and find it somewhat obsessively engrossing, a fact that I hope to continue to capitalize on during the semester.

Outcome 3: Identify and correct potential problems with content in other journalists' written

work, such as continuity errors, inappropriate or lack of sources, and potential legal/ethical concerns.

- Assessment Plan
  - Assessment Tool: Exam
  - Assessment Date: Winter 2015
  - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
  - Number students to be assessed: All students enrolled at time of assessment.
  - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key/rubric developed by journalism faculty.
  - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: Seventy percent of the students will score 75 percent or higher.
  - Who will score and analyze the data: Journalism faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2016	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
21	21

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students enrolled were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All students enrolled at the time of the assessment were included; this was the complete roster of the course that ran as one section in Winter 2016.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Students were asked to write headlines for brief stories involving crime reports. To meet expectations, headlines needed to avoid creating any potential legal

transgression with incorrect wording (e.g. referring to someone who has been arrested for robbery as a robber rather than as someone who has been charged with robbery). This differs from the "identify and correct" language of the outcome, which I will address in the revision of the master syllabus.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Fifteen students met or exceeded expectations for this outcome, which meets the standard of success, though only by a slim margin. I'd like to work on improving these numbers.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

The assessment for this outcome in practice did not match the original description for such in theory; in fact I will be revising the outcome to specify that students will be avoiding potential *legal* problems in text and headlines, which is what we worked on in class and is what I assessed. This is a difficult skill, so I'm pleased that many students met expectations.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Performance on this outcome needs to improve. Although the standard of success was met, I'd prefer the numbers to be better overall; it's a challenge because of the complexities involved in wording and the seeming inconsistencies of some "news" organizations to which students are exposed. As with other aspects of copy editing, much pertains to skill development (i.e. which wordings to use and which to avoid in crime stories) and practice, which I will devote more time to in preparatory assignments and in class.

Outcome 4: Edit other journalists' written work for brevity.

- Assessment Plan
  - Assessment Tool: Exam
  - Assessment Date: Winter 2015
  - Course section(s)/other population: All sections

- Number students to be assessed: All students enrolled at time of assessment.
- How the assessment will be scored: Answer key/rubric developed by journalism faculty.
- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: Seventy percent of students will score 75 percent or higher.
- Who will score and analyze the data: Journalism faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2015	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
14	11

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

Data for this outcome was missing from 2016, so was taken from the previous time the course ran, which was Winter 2015. It included all students who attended class on the day of this particular test.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All students present in the single section of this course that ran in Winter 2015 were assessed.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

Students were given two exceptionally long works of journalism to reduce in length (i.e. trim) within a certain time frame. Those who made choices of material to trim most consistent with best practices in industry for both stories were rated as exceeding expectations. Those who made choices partially or somewhat consistent with best practices were rated as meeting expectations; others were rated below.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this

learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Two students of the nine assessed scored below expectations. The standard was success was met.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Most students met or exceeded expectations for this outcome, which is good to see. In doing so, they were required to read a long article about a topic not all of them showed tremendous enthusiasm for (it was golf), which I enjoyed because one will not always have a choice of that which one finds oneself copy editing.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

If anything, the students who struggled to meet this outcome were actually *too* scrupulous in editing the author's original work, plucking out words in scattershot fashion--rather than excising whole chunks of text toward the ends of the stories. This latter is best practice, which I plan to emphasize more pointedly in future semesters.

Outcome 5: Determine appropriate placement of stories on a news page or web page based on degree of newsworthiness to various audiences.

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  - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: Seventy percent of students will score 75 percent or higher.
  - Who will score and analyze the data: Journalism faculty
  
- 1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.



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3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students enrolled were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

All students enrolled at the time of the assessment were included; this was the complete roster of the course that ran as one section in Winter 2016.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

For this outcome, students were given a budget (list of news story summaries) for all sections of a daily newspaper, including file copies of the art (i.e. photos) to accompany these stories. Based on this information, they made choices as to which stories and art should be placed on a front page according to the newspaper's intended audience. Students whose choices matched nearly or exactly the actual front page of the Detroit News for that day were rated as exceeding expectations; those who matched most or made other reasonable choices were rated as meeting expectations; others were rated below.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes  
 Sixteen students met or exceeded expectations for this outcome, which is a good score. Newsworthiness is a difficult, slow-to-acquire skill that must be practiced over time so I think the students did well on this outcome given the 15-week length of the semester.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Students show exceptional consideration in their choices of front page material; their depth of attention to this task was impressive as were many of the results.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Those who did not meet expectations for this outcome tended to make choices based on their own personal interests rather than the perceived interests of their audience. Emphasizing this distinction will be among my goals when next I teach the course.

## II. Course Summary and Action Plans Based on Assessment Results

1. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

This course emphasizes the development of a handful of skills that manifest in several ways; because I work closely with the students during class time in providing spot feedback to their practice, I was not surprised to see the assessment results tallied here. I do see an ongoing need to coach students toward better performance in proofreading and avoiding potential legal issues in headline and text content.

2. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

I will make certain the information in this report will be shared with any interested instructor who may teach copy editing or anyone else as instructed; of course the report will be posted on the curriculum and assessment office's web pages for public access.

3. Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Outcome Language	Outcome three will be revised to specify avoiding potential <i>legal</i>	Miswording of headlines in crime stories is common-- and a common	2018

	problems in writing headlines for crime stories.	cause of libel suits in journalism, hence the importance of specifying this outcome for the course.	
Course Assignments	I plan to add assignments that ask students to further practice trimming stories and writing headlines for crime stories that avoid committing potential legal transgressions.	Although standards of success were met for outcomes pertaining to these activities, I think students can perform better with just a bit more instruction in these important areas.	2018
Other: Standard of success.	The revised standard of success will be that seventy percent of students meet or exceed expectations for each outcome.	This standard of success language fits the revised rubric (used for this assessment) more accurately and seems more in keeping with common assessment practices.	2017
Other: Rubric.	I intend to use the rubric created for this assessment in the future (with any revisions as a result of review from the assessment committee).	Prior to this assessment there was no rubric.	2017

4. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

5.
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### III. Attached Files

[SummaryOfData](#)

**Faculty/Preparer:**

David Waskin **Date:** 05/18/2017

**Department Chair:** Carrie Krantz **Date:** 05/19/2017  
**Dean:** Kristin Good **Date:** 05/19/2017  
**Assessment Committee Chair:** Michelle Garey **Date:** 09/18/2017