Authentic Assessment in B.A. Speech Communication

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Educators are aware of their goal to ascertain that learning occurs among their students. Personal and institutional resources are spent on teacher training, specifically on pedagogical techniques most applicable to a specific group of learners. The process of effective teaching, however, should not focus only on pedagogical techniques, but also on forms of assessment implemented to measure learning. Traditional pen and paper tests as the sole means of measuring student performance are outdated. However, how do educators identify what needs to be assessed? What assessment methods are more applicable to their students? There have been a number of articles that discuss the mismatch of skills among college graduates and the requirements of the industries dominating the urban sector. This leads to another basic question which educators should be aware of: What career options do their graduates pursue after college? Are the knowledge and skills they develop in college sufficient to the demands of the industries they are in? This is where authentic assessment comes into play. This paper looks into the authentic assessment techniques commonly used among selected faculty members of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, in the core courses that they handle. It seeks to answer the basic question: Are we measuring what needs to be measured among our students? If yes, how are we measuring them?

Keywords:
Speech Communication, Authentic Assessment, Instructional Systems Design, Curricular Change, Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts

The B.A. Speech Communication curriculum of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (DSCTA) of the University of the Philippines (UP) underwent major revisions in 2002, eight years after it evolved from B.A. Speech and Drama. During this period, there was also a marked

increase in its freshmen students, perhaps due to the demand for fluent English speakers in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry, established in the 1990s (BPOC 2013). Since then, no major curricular changes have been made, although several steps were undertaken towards a more in-depth review. Program goals were identified in 2005,[1] suggested revisions were made during a 2007[2] curriculum review, and feedback from alumni were gathered in preparation for the 2011[3] review.

New challenges posed by the implementation of the K-12 program or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (R.A. 10533), the ASEAN Economic Community of 2015, and the changes in types of careers that are considered highly employable (DOLE 2013), would inevitably lead the DSCTA to an evaluation of its objectives, content, pedagogy, instructional materials, and assessment techniques.

Instructional design utilizes a systematic procedure for developing education and training programs. Considered to be among the more popular systems designs are the ADDIE and the Dick and Carey cyclical models (Reiser and Dempsey 2007). The ADDIE model has five components: Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. In the process of evaluation, the following questions may be asked:

1. Analysis: What are the goals of the program? Who are the learners and what are their needs? What is the learning environment?

2. Design: What are the learning objectives? What is the content of the course? What types of assessment should be used? What practice exercises are needed? What instructional strategies are needed to match the learning objectives?

3. Development: What learning resources (books, readings, video, audio, web-based tools, activities, etc.) should be created?

4. Implementation: How should the whole instructional program be delivered to the learners? What kind of support system should be in place?

5. Evaluation: Were the program goals and course objectives met? If not, what revisions need to be made?

Similarly, the Dick and Carey model includes the following components: assessment of needs to identify goals, analysis of learners and instruction, identification of performance objectives, development of assessment measures, instructional strategies and materials, and evaluation of instruction. In comparison to these two models, a linear and backward approach to curriculum design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe constitutes three stages: (1) identify desired outcomes and result; (2) determine the acceptable evidence of competency; and (3) plan learning activities to achieve the competency level (Moore 2005).

All models are reflective of the characteristics of instructional design, that it is learner-centered and focuses on meaningful performance. In the case of the periodic review of the B.A. Speech Communication program, the importance of identifying learning objectives and authentic performance measures that are reflective of the profession in which the graduates will be applying their knowledge and skills is underscored. This paper focuses on assessment as a component of instructional systems design. Particularly, it underlines the value of authentic assessment in the overall program design and in evaluating learning outcomes. Using several required courses in the B.A. Speech Communication program, this paper will illustrate how authentic assessment is applied and recommend improvements in its application.

Starting with the end

In order to design authentic assessment strategies, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes a B.A. Speech Communication graduate should acquire or develop. In 2005, the B.A. Speech Communication faculty members participated in a workshop to formally agree on its program goals. It was decided that at the end of the program, the B.A. Speech Communication graduate should be:

1. Equipped with oral and written communication skills (in English);

2. Grounded in the theories and concepts of speech communication;

3. Research-trained;

4. Computer-literate;

5. Critical and analytical;

6. Creative and adaptive;

7. Ethical (morally responsible); and

8. Responsive to society.

Following the instructional systems design, the specific objectives of all B.A. Speech Communication courses should be congruent with most, if not all of its goals. One way of evaluating this would have been to ask the teachers to rate the courses they handled in relation to the program goals. However, this has yet to be done. It is also unclear whether the teachers design their courses with the goals in mind, since no follow-up discussions were done following the 2005 workshop. However, in preparation for the 2011 program review, the graduating Speech Communication students were asked to rate the courses (using a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest) vis-à-vis the program goals.[4] The results were distributed to the faculty during the curriculum review but interpretation of results was not done. For the purpose of this study, only the mean scores for the core courses were culled from the survey (see Table 1). Said core courses are: Speech 100 (Introduction to Speech Communication), Speech 111 (Elements of Voice and Diction), Speech 115 (Bases of Speech), Speech 121 (Oral Interpretation of Literature), Speech 130 (Introduction to Rhetoric), Speech 160 (Basic Radio Techniques), Speech 183 (Audio-Visual Communication), Speech 195 (Speech Practicum), Speech 199 (Research), and Speech 200 (Undergraduate Thesis).

Designing Assessment

The role of assessment is essential for both teachers and learners. It helps teachers gain insight into the efficacy of their instructional plan. For learners, it measures what they have accomplished or their development in the course or program. Assessment is an effective feedback mechanism vital to learning (Brown et al. 2005). John Mueller (2013) states that while traditional forms of assessment (multiple choice, true or false, fill in the blanks, and others) measure how much of the content the learner is able to recall, these types of assessment, though not at all ineffective, should be complemented with authentic assessment, that is, "a form assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills" (Mueller 2013).

Table 1. Rating of core courses vis-à-vis program goals

Program Goals	Core Speech Courses									
	100	111	115	121	130	160	183	195	199	200
1. Equipped me with oral communication skills in English	3.5	4.63	4	3.75	3.83	4.88	4.5	4.5	4.4	4
2. Equipped me with written communication skills in English	3.25	4.5	4.5	3.38	4.17	4.38	4.33	4.5	4	4.8
3. Introduced me to and grounded me in the theories and concepts of speech communication	4.5	4.25	3.67	4.29	4	4	4.33	3	4.83	4.6
4. Developed my research skills	3.63	3.25	4.67	3.29	4.17	4.25	3.67	4.5	4.8	4.8
5. Helped me become computer-literate	2.25	2.5	3.33	2.29	2.5	4.75	5	3	4.4	4.4
6. Made me critical and analytical	3.75	3.63	4.5	3.5	4.5	4.25	4	3	4.8	4.8
7. Made me become creative and adaptive	3.25	4.38	3.5	4	3.17	4.88	5	4.67	4.4	4.4
8. Taught me how to become ethical	3.13	4.5	4.33	3.71	4.17	4.75	3.83	4.67	4.8	4.8
9. Made me responsive to society	3.0	3.75	2.75	3.43	3.33	4.71	3.8	4.5	4.8	4.8

Characteristics of authentic assessment include: tasks that match both content and expected outcomes; tasks that can be applied in real-life context; emphasis on both process and outcome; opportunities for self-evaluation of learner; and utilization of a scoring procedure or rubric to identify and measure desired outcome. The two types of authentic assessment are performance and portfolio. Performance assessment measure both skill and knowledge of the learner in a natural setting, while portfolio assessment involves a review of the learner's work collected over time.

If the learners are expected to perform real-world or real-life competencies in authentic assessment, how will teachers know what these are? There are influences to the educational environment that affect the decision-making of educators. These can be categorized into external, organizational, and internal influences. External influences include society, government, discipline associations, marketplace, alumni, and sponsors. Organizational influences are program relationships, program resources, governance, and leadership. Internal influences include faculty, students, discipline, program mission, and leadership (Stark and Lattuca 1997). Planning a curriculum should take into

account not only the needs of the students but those of the society as well, however rapidly changing these may be (cf. Moore 2005).

In preparation for the 2011 program review, a survey among B.A. Speech Communication graduates was conducted by the DSCTA.[5] One hundred thirty-one (131) graduates from 2005 to 2010 participated (see Table 2). The survey revealed that twenty-seven percent (27%) of the graduates were engaged in media and advertising while twenty-four percent (24%) were in banking, sales, finance and marketing. Others were in human resources and training (17%) and the academe (15%).

Table 2. B.A. Speech Communication Alumni
in Various Industries/Professions

Industry	Percentage
Media, publishing, advertising	27%
Banking, finance, sales, marketing	24%
Human resource, training	17%
Academe	15%
Government, law	8%
BPO	3%
Others (events, religious activity, entertainment)	6%

Given these data, the teacher, as the designer of the course, should formulate assessment methods that are, at the very least, close to the competencies required of the learners in the industries or fields that are indentified in the survey. As Jean Stark and Lisa Lattuca (1997) suggest, it is vital for educators to look into the characteristics of the learners, their skills, and their career goals, in order to predict how suitable and effective the academic plan may be for them.

To illustrate how authentic assessment is applied in Speech Communication the ten core courses were looked into. Data gathered were based on course syllabi,[6] information from faculty members, and feedback from students who were enrolled in the core courses. The discussion will be divided into written performance assessment, oral performance assessment, a combination of portfolio and performance assessment, and a summary of authentic assessments used.

Written Performance Assessment

To address the Speech Communication program goals, five core courses are designed to assess the learners' ability to conduct research based on the theories discussed and present this through a well written report.[7] This is evident in the following: Speech 100 (Introduction to Speech Communication), Speech 115 (Bases of Speech), Speech 130 (Introduction to Rhetoric), Speech 199 (Research), and Speech 200 (Undergraduate Thesis). Aside from research papers, the learners are also required to submit journal article reviews and research abstracts, to gain awareness of trends in researches done in the field of speech communication and prepare them for a major requirement in their senior year, the undergraduate thesis (Speech 200).

Topics for Speech 100[8] include:

1. The effect of membership in an organization on self-confidence level and self-perception of freshman and transferee students of the University of the Philippines Diliman

2. Communication strategies employed by male and female middle-aged adults involved in heterosexual romantic relationships in resolving their interpersonal conflicts

3. Relationship between high school teachers' use of humor in class and their credibility as perceived by their students

4. The effect of teaching styles used by informal schooling volunteer teachers in a community in Quezon City on their students' information retention levels

The final requirement for Speech 199 is a research proposal which the learners implement for Speech 200. Some examples[9] are:

1. The relationship of self-concept and self-disclosure among cancer patients when communicating with their Families

2. The relationship between the compliance-gaining strategies of political candidates and the voting behavior among the residents of San Juan City during the May 2013 Elections

3. The relationship of communication apprehension, willingness to communicate, and information retention of students in student-teacher communication in a classroom setting

4. Investigating the family communication patterns from the perceptions of gender roles in selected TV ads

A major requirement of Speech 130 is the formulation of a speech plan on a current issue. Each learner is asked to apply rhetorical concepts on Philippine history and Philippine rhetorical field, and formulate a speech plan based on the period of rhetoric he/she was assigned to do an oral report on, earlier in the semester. Another requirement is to research on the history of rhetoric, where learners are to construct their own timeline, and as ethical communicators, cite their sources properly.

In the formulation of research problems and conduct of research, the learners perform a real-life task which requires an application and synthesis of concepts learned. The application of the theories and concepts in speech communication is clearly manifested in the research problems cited above. More importantly, the learners decide on the problem they wanted to focus on, based on their interest, which makes it student-structured and more meaningful to them. Equally important is that these assessment methods meet almost all the goals of the Speech Communication program.

Undeniably, learners view writing research papers as a laborious task. It is important to note, therefore, that prior to assigning research projects, the learners must realize the relevance of the task in their future careers. Alumni feedback indicate the need for emphasis on written communication. In their respective industries, they are expected to write reports that require critical thinking and analysis, similar to what is expected in research papers for the abovementioned courses.

Oral Performance Assessment

Four core courses that are heavy in oral assessment[10] are: Speech 111 (Elements of Voice and Diction), Speech 121 (Oral Interpretation of Literature), Speech 160 (Basic Radio Techniques), and Speech 183 (Audio-Visual Communication). In these courses performances of learners are assessed based on application of theories and concepts, and creativity.

Speech 111 assessment activities include public speaking, performance of children's stories, and hosting in events conceptualized and organized by the class. Evidently, these are all practical applications of concepts learned in class. Other than oral performances, the learners are also asked to critique their own performances (self evaluation) and those of their classmates. More challenging is the radio and television recording, wherein the learners are required to undergo an actual audition process in PTV-4. This is made possible through the assistance of a Speech Communication alumna who works in the said TV station. This is one reason why academic institutions should keep an active network with its alumni. Aside from being able to assist in the implementation of learning activities, alumni also help the learners in determining the career path they may pursue after college. Based on the alumni survey, a quarter of the graduates have careers in media.

Creative performances for Speech 121 include performance of children's literature, personal narrative, disaster narrative, and poetry. Prior to the performances, the learners are asked to submit an analysis of the text and a concept paper used as basis for the performance. The learners also critique each other's presentations and defend performance concept during the critique of the course adviser. Although the Speech Communication graduates rarely pursue a career in performance, feedback on Speech 121 indicate that the course developed the learners' self confidence and creativity through the performances. At the workplace, this enabled them to be more at ease and innovative when presenting in front of their superiors and clients.

Speech 160[11] simulates the authentic tasks performed by disc jockeys, voice talents, scriptwriters, newscasters, and radio advertisement producers in the field of radio broadcast. Group outputs include a report on the technical aspects of radio broadcasting, video of interviews conducted during a radio station tour, and a recorded radio play. Individual output is a fifteen-minute radio program recorded as live. For the radio play, the learners are asked to write a script adapted for radio, of an existing short story of their choice. Although the tasks in the course concentrate on radio broadcast, these may also be applicable to television, whether as writers or voice actors for foreign shows dubbed in Filipino. The syllabus also presents a detailed rubric for grading all activities, which is a requirement for authentic assessment.

The Speech 183 syllabus clearly identifies the communication situations to be concentrated on, as training/instruction and marketing/public relations. To simulate real-life training and instruction, the learners are required to research and facilitate a workshop on the production of the following multimedia technologies: photography, graphic materials, PowerPoint, digital audio, and digital video. The workshop facilitators are graded by the class using a prescribed rubric. An oral assessment activity aimed to promote the learner's degree program is a short speech with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. The course also relies heavily on the skills of learners to use computer programs. Understandably inclined towards creative application, assessment activities also require the learners to demonstrate their understanding of communication concepts, in order to create materials that would effectively deliver their message to their target audience. Examples of these are online graphic materials and short videos that aim to create an awareness of the leaner's degree program. These assessment methods are later on posted online as exhibits and are critiqued by selected students outside the class. This simulates the context of presenting publicity or marketing materials to determine their effectiveness as perceived by the target market.

It is evident that the authentic assessments utilized in Speech 111, 121, 160, and 183 meet most of the goals of the program, most notably those concerned with oral communication, creative, critical and analytical skills, and knowledge of theories in speech communication. Student and alumni feedback indicate the value of these courses in their summer internship and current professions respectively.

Portfolio and Performance Assessment

Speech 195 is the only core course that utilizes portfolio assessment. This internship course is taken by third year students during the summer term. The learners undergo real-life work-related situations that include seeking for a job and being evaluated for work done on the job. Learners are required to render 100 hours of communication-related work in a company of their choice. Assessment is based on the adviser's evaluation of the learner's portfolio, the learner's self evaluation (strengths and weaknesses), and the supervisor's evaluation. Portfolios submitted at the end of the term should contain the learner's communication-related outputs. These usually include written reports,

feature articles, photos and timeline of events handled, and materials for training or advertising. Aside from these, the learners are also required to submit essays on: their job search; the speech communication concepts and theories learned which helped them perform their job well; and suggestions for further improvement on the curriculum, based on their internship experience. Submission of each component that constitute the portfolio are spread throughout the term. The advisers are expected to give feedback after each submission, to give the learners the opportunity to improve succeeding outputs.

Speech 195 is a product of the major revisions to the curriculum done in 2002 based on the assessment of faculty, students, and alumni. Undergraduate theses focusing on the program and its graduates revealed the need for on-the-job training for students.

Summary

Based on the examples of assessment methods mentioned above, it is clear that all the core courses of the undergraduate Speech Communication program utilize authentic assessment. Likewise, these assessment methods correspond with most of the program goals. Five of the core courses (Speech 100, 115, 130, 199, and 200) require performance assessment though written output (research papers, analyses, reviews), which clearly demonstrate how knowledge and skills are applied. The process involved (regular consultations with the course adviser) in writing these papers, emphasize the importance of both process and outcome. To balance knowledge and skill, four courses (Speech 111, 121, 160, and 183) utilize performance assessment through outputs that are oral, aural, and visual. Similarly, these courses correspond with most of the program goals. Combined portfolio and on-the-job performance assessment is used in the Speech Practicum (Speech 195).

It is important to note that traditional assessment like written examinations are also used in some of these courses. Typically, these amount to 20 percent of the grade. Although these are balanced out by authentic assessment methods, it is necessary to ascertain that these tests focus on critical thinking and analysis. Another common activity that may need adjustments in order to have a more authentic approach, is the oral report. Instead of simply repeating information gathered from sources, learners may be asked to provide insights, formulate own examples, or demonstrate application of concepts and

theories. Based on the syllabi, these are being fulfilled in the Speech 100 and Speech 115 courses. Other methods that can be taken into consideration are colloquia, debates, and poster presentations.

Formulating rubrics

Authentic assessment would not be complete without a definite set of criteria, presented to the learners prior to the task, in order to determine how well the learners performed. As explained by Susan A. Ambrose, Michael W. Bridges, Michele DiPietro, Marsha C. Lovett, and Marie K. Norman:

> When students do not know what the performance criteria are, it is difficult for them to practice appropriately and to monitor their progress and understanding. A common approach to communicating performance criteria is through a rubric – a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for a given assignment. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of high-, medium-, and low-quality work associated with each component. (Ambrose et al. 2010, 146)

In most of the assessment activities mentioned above, the faculty disclosed that rubrics were not regularly used in evaluating learner performance, even though a workshop solely devoted to rubric-making was conducted in 2012.[12] Online resources[13] for developing rubrics are available and some contain templates and ready-made rubrics shared by teachers from abroad. In the absence of rubrics that accurately fit the needs of a task, the Speech Communication faculty can always use the templates provided as guide.

One course that has a complete set of rubrics for all activities is Speech 160.[14] The rubrics are distributed at the start of the term and provides detailed bases for actual grades, ranging from 1.0 (Excellent) to 5.0 (Fail). Below is an example rubric used for assessing the workshop facilitation activity in Speech 183 (see Table 3). It provides a breakdown of the categories relevant to the task. As mentioned earlier, the assessment of the group's performance as workshop facilitators is made by the class.[15]

Table 3. Speech 183 Rubric for Workshop Facilitation Activity

Categories	Content	Presentation	Workshop
Excellent (4 points)	All the members of the group provided a clear, accurate, and complete explanation of key concepts and theories. Information shared was very relevant to the objectives of the course. They came from relevant and up-to-date sources.	The level of presentation was very appropriate to the learners. Effective visuals were used to aid understanding. Presentation was well planned and it was evident that all members were highly involved in the preparation. Effective communication skills were demonstrated by all the members of the group.	All the activities were very interactive and elicited interest from the learners. The workshop was well managed. Relevant examples were given. A thorough step by step procedure was demonstrated and the members made sure that the learners were able to follow. Learners experiencing difficulty were willingly assisted by the group. All the group members were able to answer questions from the learners.
Good (3 points)	Most of the group members provided a considerable amount of information. Minor improvements needed in accuracy and completeness. Most information shared was useful. Most sources were up-to-date.	Most of the group seemed to be involved in the preparation. The presentation was fairly organized and the level was appropriate to the learners. Good speaking skills were observed by most of the members of the group.	The workshop activities were relevant. The procedures were fairly explained. The group was able to help some of the learners who needed assistance. The group was able to answer some questions from the learners.
Average (2 points)	Almost all the group members needed to be more accurate and clear in presenting information. Most of the information was useless. Sources could have been more relevant and up-to-date.	Only one group member seemed to have done the planning and preparation. The presentation was disorganized and the level did not fit the learners (either too easy or too technical). Their communication skills needed a lot of improvement.	Only one member of the group was actively demonstrating procedure, answering questions, and assisting the learners. The other members did not contribute much.
Poor (1 point)	None of the group members gave any useful information.	The presentation was disorganized and it was obvious that the members did not work as a group.	The group members did not seem to know what they were doing. They could not help the learners nor answer their questions.

Examining learners' performance gives valuable information about how they respond to instructional activities (Brady and Kennedy 1999). As already stated, it is a feedback mechanism for both teacher and student. Admittedly, rubrics are not easy to formulate and not all teachers go through the trouble of making one. At times, after initial use of a rubric, the teacher realizes flaws in the design and makes the necessary adjustments. Typically, teachers would just give general criteria of how the learners will be evaluated. However, it is difficult, even for the teachers, to ascertain which work merits a perfect score or even a passing grade.

Improving the instructional design

While this paper aimed to look into the authentic assessment methods used in selected B.A. Speech Communication courses, it cannot be denied that it is only one component in the whole instructional design. A change in even just one component eventually leads to revisions in the others. Using the authentic assessment framework, it is assessment that determines the design of the curriculum. The whole curriculum is developed to enable students to reach these goals (cf. Mueller 2013). Following this backward design, the necessary initial step is to determine the tasks that the learners are expected to perform at the end of the program, that is, to demonstrate mastery. As clearly illustrated by Grant Wiggins (1992, 71), "[t]he school is designed 'backwards' around these standard-setting tests to ensure that teachers and students alike understand their obligations and how their own efforts fit in a larger context."

Also, changes in the country's education landscape poses questions that need to be addressed soon. How different will learner profiles be when the first batch of K-12 graduates enter college? What are the effects of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 on the viability of the program? Given the global thrust of education, how will graduates fare against other professionals here and abroad?

Based on observation and feedback from faculty, alumni, and students, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Rethink the goals of the program and ascertain that all courses are designed to match these goals. Authentic assessment strategies are anchored on target outcomes. Given the changes previously mentioned, there is a clear need to adapt and innovate in order to stay relevant. Capitalize on the strengths

of the program that have provided graduates a competitive edge over other communication graduates. The target outcome as stated through the program goals should be reflected in all courses, to encourage teachers to consider the "bigger picture" and not limit themselves within the confines of the courses they teach. This would likewise allow learners to integrate knowledge and skills more easily.

2. Depending on the results of rethinking goals and target outcomes, development of new courses that integrate communication with other disciplines should be considered to keep abreast with other colleges and institutions that have started to reinvent their course offerings. In order to be globally competitive, graduates should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and aptitudes. Collaborate with other colleges and consider an interdisciplinary approach. Based on student and alumni feedback, much needed are courses on business communication, marketing, public relations, and human resource training.

3. Conduct workshops on authentic assessment. The teacher-respondents of this study were unaware of authentic assessment strategies. Consequently, assessment methods used other than those mentioned earlier may not qualify to be authentic like oral reports and conventional pen-and-paper tests that require one correct answer per question. Nevertheless, reformulation of guidelines for oral reports and questions for written tests would be necessary in order to test both knowledge and skill competencies. Authentic assessment activities would include: research papers, discussion of research output, and debate on current issues (as outlined in Wiggins 1990).

4. Design a portfolio assessment for the Speech Communication majors and conduct a yearly evaluation of their progress. Kenneth Moore explains that:

> Portfolios enable students to display their skills and accomplishments for examination by others. Portfolio advocates suggest that portfolios are a more equitable and sensitive portrait of what students know and are able to do. They encourage teachers and schools to focus on important student outcomes. (Moore 2005, 24)

The purpose of this periodic evaluation is for the teachers and learners to find out if there is improvement in the knowledge and skills of the learners,

from their freshman to senior year. Also, it would help the learners identify their strengths and weaknesses and plan for possible career paths after college.

5. Set tracks or areas of concentration for the learners to take. Some graduates feel that the nature of the Speech Communication program is too general. The advantage of having numerous career options can likewise become a disadvantage. One recommendation in a study by Joy Catiis (2001) is to have advisers and mentors capable of guiding the students in deciding which courses to take in relation to their career path. Depending on the area of concentration, a recommended set of electives should be provided. Program advising should be done more meticulously, always taking into consideration the needs and personal goals of each learner.

6. Subject course designs to peer review. This may be a bit difficult to accomplish since teachers are usually protective of their course design. However, this is one way of getting insight into the relevance of the course objectives, content, learning activities, and assessment methods to the program goals and needs of the learners. Rubrics should periodically be reviewed and revised. A course taught by two or more teachers should follow a standardized syllabus (Vinluan 2005).

7. Make the Speech and Theatre Festival a regular activity. Since its inception fifty-five years ago, it has been part of the department to hold a speech and theatre festival, wherein both speech and theatre students are given the chance to test their knowledge and skills through several competitions like oral interpretation, public speaking, thesis proposal presentation, debate, movement, and video production. Through these competitions, speech and theatre majors are able to test how they fare against their peers.

Conducting a thorough curriculum review is unquestionably an arduous process. Interweaving factors such as faculty interests and expertise, learner needs, and societal influence should all be taken into consideration. In its mission statement,[16] the DSCTA aspires "to provide UP students and extended communities distinctly innovative approaches to instruction, research/creative work, and extension service in the areas of speech communication and theatre arts, with the aim of developing highly ethical, critical, and creative communicators and artists." With this mission in mind, immediate and perhaps radical action should be taken to live up to what the department has set to aspire for and avoid obsolescence, given the changing landscape of education.

Notes

1 A workshop to clarify and codify program goals was facilitated by Celia T. Adriano of the Office of the Director for Instruction (University of the Philippines) in 21 September 2005, attended by eleven speech communication faculty.

2 DSCTA curricular review conducted in Antipolo, Rizal.

3 DSCTA curricular review conducted on 21 March 2011 at Alfonso, Cavite.

4 The survey was conducted by Speech Communication faculty who were part of the undergraduate committee. Raw data and respondent profiles are no longer available.

5 The survey was conducted through social media by two Speech Communication faculty.

6 Available syllabi for the following core courses: Speech 100, Speech 111, Speech 115, Speech 160, Speech 183, Speech 195, Speech 199, and Speech 200.

7 Research papers constitute 20 percent to 30 percent of the final grade for Speech 100, Speech 115, Speech 130, and Speech 199. For Speech 200, the completed undergraduate thesis is 80 percent of the final grade.

8 During the first semester of academic year 2013-2014.

9 Proposals submitted in one of three Speech 199 sections during the first semester of academic year 2013-2014.

10 Creative, oral performances constitute 80 percent to 100 percent of the final grade. Written requirements prior to the oral activities, like scripts and analytical papers, are incorporated in the grades for oral performances.

11 xccccxxxxx/Based on the syllabus of one of two faculty members alternately handling the course.

12 DSCTA rubric workshop facilitated by Celia Adriano, held on 19 March 2012 at Bulwagang Rizal, UP Diliman.

13 Some sites are: rubrics4teachers.com, rubistar.4teachers.org, emarkingassistant.com, and rcampus.com.

14 Based on the syllabus of one of two faculty members alternately handling the course.

15 Total scores from all the members of the class are averaged and given the equivalent grade: 12=1.0, 11=1.25, 10=1.5, and so on.)

16 Mission statement reformulated during a DSCTA vision-mission workshop in 2003.

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