

**Faculty Information Literacy Stipend
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Course: CCPA 4395, Boulevard Consulting
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Introduction

With the encouragement of my department Chair, Dr. Sandra Duhe', I added a new information literacy component into the strategic communication capstone course: Boulevard Consulting. This addition was designed to enhance the rigor of the course, and also provide our students with a competitive advantage during the job interview process. As future corporate communicators and 21st century media makers, it is essential that our CCPA students learn to question and evaluate media content, understand how information is manufactured, embrace ethics and develop strong research and analytic skills.

Description of the information literacy assignment or activities

Information literacy was incorporated throughout the curriculum and aligned nicely with the core course content. Students were required to deliver a "Literacy Portfolio" at the culmination of the course, which included five key sections along with an addendum presenting the client campaign developed throughout the course. While the course curriculum presented its own set of research and literacy assignments, activities unique this term and developed in support of information literacy included:

View: Zhang, R. (2017). What is a good Central Research Question? [Video File].

Objective: Understand difference between exploratory, descriptive and causal research questions. Apply learnings to client project. *Portfolio requirement:* Define three question types. Present examples of client research questions by question type.

View: Advanced Internet Research Presentation [M. Heuer creation]. *Objective:*

Demonstrate understanding of advanced research, and how to adjust search strategy to find data. *Portfolio requirement:* Demonstrate ability to match research questions and information sources. Demonstrate use of advanced search strategies.

Attend lecture: Competitive analysis [K. Commerato/new content]. *Objective:* Teach students a methodology for researching and evaluating a client using content analysis. Embrace ethics and understanding of information literacy to evaluate content. *Portfolio requirement:* Incorporate client competitive analysis grid.

View: Evaluating Survey Information Presentation [K. Commerato/new content].

Objective: Understand "who" is behind survey research and learn to discern the validity and strength of survey content, which is often used to generate news coverage. *Portfolio requirement:* Analyze a climate change survey.

Review: PRSA Code of Ethics. *Objective:* Demonstrate concrete and applied knowledge of ethics, in particular *as it concerns the use of data and information in communication.* *Portfolio requirement:* Write an ethics reflection and relate this to client / course project experience.

Method of assessment

I was quite impressed with the end-product delivered by the students this term. Not only was the client project extraordinarily strong, but I also found that the process of completing the assigned literacy portfolio required the students to individually reflect on their course output, and connect it to very important research and analysis concepts. The literacy portfolio represented 10% of the overall grade, and all students (12) submitted work that earned a B or higher. To evaluate the work, I used the below guide that I utilize for all of my objective grading:

A = EXCEPTIONAL

This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary and analysis. Includes skillful use of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, and fluent verbal/written expression. "A" work is coherent, thorough, and shows some creative flair.

B = GOOD

This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presenting a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source material, along with examples and illustrations, are used appropriately and articulation/writing is clear. "B" work is reasonable, clear, appropriate and complete.

C = ADEQUATE/FAIR

This work demonstrates understanding that covers most of the basics, but remains incomplete, superficial or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Source material may be used inadequately or somewhat inappropriately. The work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations, articulation/writing may be hard to follow or vague.

The students were satisfied with their learning, although I must say it was a challenging semester to introduce a heavier course load. I do have some feedback that I will incorporate next semester, when I will again incorporate literacy.

Results and impact on student learning

As stated, it is my assessment that this enhanced literacy work positively impacted the students' final client work, as evidenced by more structured research and analysis.

Summary and next steps

In summary, I will incorporate an information literacy component into Boulevard Consulting next term. I believe we might even work towards being recognized as a Certificate course, in which students completing all requirements will be granted a certificate in "Advanced Research and Information Literacy." That is very exciting! Next term, I will be a bit clearer in my instructions pertaining to the survey analysis requirement. I also stood back this term, and allowed the students to self-manage the

portfolio deliverable. Next term, I will have a mid-point milestone review to ensure students are tracking appropriately, and I plan to make this component worth 15% of the total grade to give it more weight.

Appendix

Please see three attachments (.PDFs) in support of this project:

- Boulevard Consulting, CCPA 4395, syllabus. The final column in the “Course Schedule” details the literacy portfolio component.
- Student work product (Abby Davidson, senior): Literacy Portfolio.
- Client campaign plan: Group project / full class.

Thank you for your review of this report and support of this project.