Reducing Uncertainty: A Student Perspective on an Introductory Communication Course

A Senior Project Presented to
The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfilment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

By

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Needs Assessment: Cal Poly Communication Studies Department

Executive Summary

This assessment examines the Cal Poly Communication Studies (COMS) Department’s organizational needs and obstacles to effectively educating students in the major. We also propose a research question and method in order to provide the COMS department with insight into their organizational needs. Specifically, we have identified issues in overall educational effectiveness in correspondence with the needs and perspectives of their students. We will look into this issue through interviews, surveying, and analyzing the current COMS curriculum.

Background

In 1969, the College of Liberal Arts at California Polytechnic State University, formally introduced the standalone Speech Department and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech along with an academic minor. In 2005, the university approved the change in the name of the department to Communication Studies, to capture the increasingly more diverse nature of the discipline, and now includes over forty different courses and now has over 1,200 applicants applying for about fifty admissions slots. The Cal Poly Communication Studies general mission statement is outlined as, “facilitating students in developing their ability to reason critically, to speak and write effectively, and to understand and appreciate the influences of culture upon their lives.” The specific mission of the curriculum is to “enhance understanding of the nature, processes and effects of human communication (interpersonal, intercultural, instructional, organizational, political, in dyads, in small groups, and in the mass media).” Cal Poly is
consistently ranked in the top 20 universities for Return on Investment in California and is ranked Best in the West by U.S. News for 26 years and counting (U.S. News).

**Business Needs**

We have identified the primary business need of the communication studies department to be effectively educating communication studies majors at Cal Poly. In a personal statement from a fourth year communication studies major, a student states, “there is so much I wish I knew before, during, and now approaching life post graduation with my major. I love my major, but sometimes I feel so lost.” The Cal Poly COMS department seems to be at a crux, where the resources, expertise, and ideas from the faculty and the university are not in accordance with the direct needs of the students or in properly reflecting their mission. In order for the department to successfully recruit and retain students in the major, there needs to be more concise information about what the major entails, and how best to use this major in the future.

Already there have been strides made by faculty within the department to address this gap. The curriculum committee has been created to address where the COMS curriculum is succeeding and where there are lapses in understanding or teaching. Assessing the entirety of the COMS curriculum due to the broadness of the discipline and diversity of faculty members, will help streamline the studies to be more effective. Faculty meetings have also encouraged discussions at length about how best to address some of these issues. However, little has been done to communicate these ideas with students. Student’s are feeling confused and misled, similar to the student mentioned above, and are unaware about all the major has to offer. Cal Poly is becoming one of the strongest universities in the west coast, and year to year acceptance
rates are getting lower and lower, resulting in classes full of high achieving students, who have chosen this university to better prepare them, through a learn by doing approach, to enter the postgraduate world.

Stronger emphasis on student perspectives and wants are crucial in bridging this gap and becoming a more well rounded major. As stated by the Academy of Management, as a business with higher levels of motivation from their mission statement, are in turn, rewarded with higher levels of organizational performance (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2017 pg 1). For example, the Communication Studies purpose statement, identifies three main communication contexts as “personal, professional, and civic life” as well as, four different communication approaches (historical, critical, humanistic, and social scientific). Asserting these contexts and approaches in the curriculum would in turn, lead to higher levels of motivation. If there is a stronger connection and understanding from both students and faculty to the mission of the department, there will exist a higher level of performance and success, greatly benefiting both parties.

**Performance Needs**

To address these needs effectively, it is crucial that faculty and staff acquire the behaviors needed to effectively educate students in the department. Our professors are extremely diverse and have unique skills that tailor to very specific aspects of the discipline; however, because they all have specialties in the field, gaps in performance are more common due to a lack of consistency in knowledge and ways of teaching.

If students do not know where a professor’s education lies, they may not feel as connected or keen to their perspective. Since communication studies is a broad discipline, there
can be a lot of uncertainty amongst students about how the major will be beneficial to them in their future career endeavors. However, “many students enter the workplace with underdeveloped communication skills, which then influences their ability to succeed in life after college and advance in their respective careers” (Morreale & Valenzano, 2017, pg. 403). If the Communication Studies Department could reduce this uncertainty by showcasing each professor's specialty and offering more insight into possible career paths for students in the major, the student experience could be positively enhanced.

**Learning Needs**

To properly implement an introductory level course into the major, it is important that the faculty member who teaches this course has an understanding of the variance of topics covered in our mission statement. This class should reflect the COMS Department’s values and build skills that complement the goals outlined in the statement. “Instructors can facilitate classroom climates and activities that allow students to establish relationships with one another and work interdependently to achieve their academic goals” and for this particular course idea, it is imperative that the professor teaching this course can cover the wide breadth of topics that an introductory course attempts to introduce (Sollito, Brott, Cole, Gil & Selim; 2018 pg.75). The mission statement of the Cal Poly COMS Department claims that the communication studies major will teach students how to “reason critically, to speak and write effectively, and to understand and appreciate the influences of culture upon their lives” because of this, the professor who ends up teaching the course must bring value to these main goals. Behaviors that must be changed in order to meet these goals include creating a curriculum that encompasses a
wide range of topics, but is specific enough to give communication studies majors an in-depth look into what the major has to offer.

**Learner Needs**

The learner needs in this assessment include the creation of an entire new course in our curriculum and everything that would entail, such as resources and materials needed for the curriculum, the time it would take to create the course, and the cost to add a new course in the curriculum. The department would also need to find a professor who is willing to adapt their teaching schedule and has a wide range of knowledge to teach the different topics an introductory course would require, as well as the skills to effectively educate the students in the class. Other learner needs include the enrollment of students who are willing to pay fees to take this class and any course materials they may need. To achieve all of this, it is important to find a subject matter expert (SME) with the appropriate education to fulfill the role of teaching this class.

**External Organizational Scan**

For our external organizational scan, we have researched two other universities in California and looked into their Communication Studies department and curriculum choices. University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) both offer a version of an introductory level course to their communication studies students. We chose to look at both of these organizations because they have similar student populations to Cal Poly, they are both in California, and they recruit high school students with similar GPA’s and criteria that Cal Poly looks for in its students. However, through our research
we also noticed that their departments are very different from ours. UCSD has a comprehensive Communication Studies program that covers a wide range of topics that are not similar to our department. UCSB’s program is mainly social science focused and lacks the focus on humanities that our department highlights. We recognize that our Communication Studies Department is unique in its expertise and direction, and any introductory level course that is introduced to our curriculum should reflect those values.

**Research Question**

After discussing the Cal Poly COMS department’s overall organizational needs, we produced a research question based off of the business needs. This research question is reactive and aims to tackle how the department can better effectively educate its students. It is as follows: Do communication studies students perceive an introductory level course as beneficial in preparing them for their other communication classes?

**Data Collection Method**

We plan to focus on two main methods, interviews and surveys, for our data collection. We will be conducting interviews of the faculty in the Cal Poly Communication Studies Department to listen and learn about their perspectives on introducing an introductory level course into the major. These perspectives are important because the professors in the COMS Department are in charge of creating and teaching the curriculum in the major. We value the expertise from all the professors in our department and interviewing them will give us an in-depth perspective into how each person would like to see the department grow.
We will also be sending out a survey to all students in the department. This survey is specifically asking students why they decided to choose Communication Studies as their major, what they feel their major is useful for, and hear their opinions on introducing an introductory level course into the major. Student perspectives are critical because the success of the COMS Department is contingent on the enrollment and retention of students in the major.
Client Training Proposal

Needs Assessment Tools

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/153VkA-5ehNmBnkuxcJXaun7JAd-zAA9xty4u7vPSwOk/edit#responses

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tHkJf9j2B4OG9Gudw1L56ik94x7EUWgr_9LhF8D5Hg/edit?usp=sharing

Results from Needs Assessment

Research Question: Do communication studies students perceive an introductory level course as beneficial in preparing them for their other communication classes?

Beginning our research we found it crucial to ensure the responses gained focused on the diverse perspectives from students about their communication studies experience, and where they saw opportunities for improvement. We surveyed 93 Cal Poly Communication Studies students via a snowball and convenience sample method. We had the largest response rate from 3rd year students (61%) but ensured representation from other years (4th years: 21%; 2nd years: 8%; 5+ years: 3%). Students were asked a range of questions about their communication studies experience and found a few responses particularly noteworthy. We asked students if they felt Communication Studies was the right major for them, and 20% of respondents responded no. When asked why they chose to be a Communication Studies major 91% of students said it was because they found it to be a broad discipline. We then asked students if they felt an Introduction to Communication Studies class would benefit our department and 81% responded yes.
The survey also allowed respondents to justify their responses to the questions asked and most notably students expressed both their admiration and disdain for the broadness of the major. One student expressed, “I feel that Communication Studies at Cal Poly is a very broad major. I think that with the broad nature of the major there are benefits and drawbacks. There are many paths that a student could follow: interpersonal, mass media, organizational, etc. However, I feel that there is potential for a student to lose their focus in a certain area and get too broad of an education. I have had to be careful and intentional with the classes I take to make sure that I have a rich understanding of the area of communication I want to work with post-graduation.”

Another student shared, “Sometimes I feel like the degree is too theoretical and broad for what I want to do and that I should have focused on something more business oriented, but overall I like what I learn and as I take more upper division courses, they become more applicable to my goals.” We found these responses important as they expressed an underlying feeling of uncertainty many students feel and highlight many of the key issues that drove our research question. One student also mentioned, “Our major is very theoretically based and I find that there are few classes that allow us to really incorporate our "learn by doing" motto. I have very limited physical evidence to show for my time here, besides papers.” Learning by doing is perhaps the greatest selling point of the overall Cal Poly curriculum and a guaranteed learning experience when you are accepted into this university, yet if COMS students are not feeling like they are able to take away skills from this major in a tangible way, this increases the sense of uncertainty about the major, the university, and potential career paths.

We also found the career paths that students are most intrigued by, are topics that students do not realize are being covered in specific upper division classes they can take.
Through our survey, the most popular career paths chosen were: human resources, marketing, sales, events, and graduate school. Of our respondents 80% stated they wish they had known the different career pathways they could take with the major and 75% of respondents say they wish they knew more about all of the possible tracks and courses this major actually entails.

In order to gain a well-rounded perspective on the idea of introducing an introductory level course into the major, it was essential to hear faculty perspectives on the subject; thus, we conducted 6 interviews of tenured professors in the Communication Studies Department at Cal Poly. We began the interviews by asking if the professors received a degree in Communication Studies for their undergrad and we learned that only 2 of the 6 professors interviewed in our department received their Bachelor’s in Communication Studies. We also asked why the professors in the department chose to study and then teach Communication Studies. It was interesting to find that each professor had a very niche reason for choosing to pursue either their undergraduate or graduate degree in communication studies. One professor found an interest in marketing, another enjoyed their classes that focused on the rhetoric side of communication studies, and another found intercultural communication and human interaction to be the most intriguing aspects of the major; despite the differences in interests, all of these professors ended up teaching in the Communication Studies Department because of their love for the major.

In the next part of our interview, we included two different course descriptions for an introductory level communication studies course from UCSB and UCSD. We asked the faculty about their thoughts regarding these two descriptions, acknowledging that both of these universities have communication studies departments that are very different from Cal Poly’s Communication Studies program. The overwhelming response to the course descriptions was
that they have potential to be great courses if they are tailored to their specific communication studies department and the skill sets in the department; however, there was a lot of variety in the responses from faculty about what part of the descriptions they liked and disliked. A majority of the faculty believed that the UCSD introductory level course in the communication studies major was trying to accomplish too much in one class; they felt that it was too vague and did not resonate with the goal of our program. The response to UCSB’s introductory course was more positive, however it became clear from our interviews that for this introductory course to be successful from a faculty perspective, it is important that it is tailored to the special interests and skill sets that the faculty in the department have to offer.

Finally, we asked the faculty about what they would like to see in an introductory level course for the communication studies major specifically at Cal Poly. Ideas that came about in our interviews included helping students understand why it is important to study communication studies, giving a curriculum overview, orienting students to resources and programs that will assist them in the major, introductions to the faculty, and fundamental knowledge of the major that all students should know, such as the history of the field.

Interpretation of Results
Beginning with the student survey, we first broke down each question individually and detailed coded each response. We wanted to be sure that we were capturing COMS students at different levels of their communication studies experience as well as those who have transferred into this major. Our main objective was to gain direct quotes and perspectives about the from students and see where the greatest sense of uncertainty lay. Our data shows that a majority of students (91%) are choosing the major because it is so broad, yet 20% of those students do not feel like COMS is actually the right major for them. 75% of students wish they had an overview of all of the classes offered in the major before they began and 80% wish they knew the different career pathways they could take with the major. When asked if students felt like an Introduction to Communication Studies course would benefit the department, 81% respondent yes and one student noted, I think {Introduction to Communication Studies course} is a great idea! we take coms 101 but it's definitely not related that well to what coms is actually like. In fact it makes other people think our major is only public speaking which it's definitely not.” Therefore we see it as imperative for the COMS department to begin adjusting their educational plans to be sure to capture the perspectives and needs of students who are feeling like they are not connected or not being informed by the major. One student stated, “Communication Studies majors receive a lot of judgement, and people always ask me ‘what are you going to do with that degree?’ I wish I knew earlier on how to respond to that question, because I feel like I didn't have a great explanation.” This has really inspired us to continue to answer this question as best we can to ensure the major benefits of our department are getting highlighted early on during your time at Cal Poly. It is important to note our data did not include perspectives of 1st year students, and the study was limited by time, therefore our data is somewhat limited. We recommend the COMS
department continue to gather more data about the needs and perspectives of students in the major to decrease uncertainty within the students.

While we know the faculty of the Cal Poly Communication Studies Department are eager to hear student perspectives, we also felt like the faculty perspective on the idea of introducing an introductory level course is integral to our research because the faculty are the ones teaching the courses and driving the curriculum to help students achieve their academic and professional goals. Our data collected from the interviews shows that the faculty believe there is a clear need for direction in our major, and an introductory level course could possibly solve the issue. We consistently heard throughout the interviews that the faculty are interested in the student perspective because at the end of the day, the students are the consumers of the curriculum and they need to benefit from the chosen curriculum. The responses we received about what purpose an introductory course should fill varied somewhat, but a majority of the responses focused on how the course needs to orient students so they are better equipped to understand their major and the resources available to them that will help them succeed in the major. These opinions make it clear that the professors in the major want to help reduce uncertainty in communication studies students. In order to do this, there will need to be a process in which the faculty chooses who will teach the introductory level course to make sure all students are receiving the same information.

**Description of Communication Lens**

After analyzing the results from our faculty interviews and student survey, we have decided to look at our training proposal through an uncertainty reduction theory lens. The Uncertainty Reduction Theory, proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese, argues that
“Uncertainty exists to the degree that situations are unpredictable or cannot be adequately understood” (Kramer, 1999, p. 1). When uncertainty is present in a situation, it can lead to low motivation in an individual or a group setting and can also increase information-seeking to compensate for the uncertainty that one is experiencing in an organization.

To solidify that our training proposal meets the business needs of the Cal Poly Communication Department, we will also look at the mission statement of the department as a knowledge structure to facilitate the learning objectives of our presentation to the faculty. According to Desmidt and Prinzie (2017), a mission statement

“shapes how people who work in (or with) the organization, perceive, remember, and think about the organization and its tasks, and [...] develops more widely shared schemas about the agency, and creates focus and a shared sense of priorities (Weiss & Piderit, 1999)” (p. 3).

Ideally, an introductory level course will reflect the mission statement of the department and help bring clarity to the focus of the department and its priorities. By connecting the training program back to the mission statement of the department, this will ensure that the faculty’s interests are being met when introducing the student perspectives on an introductory course.

Proposal

We will be presenting this proposal to the Communication Studies Department faculty at their faculty meeting at Cal Poly on March 12, 2020. Our proposal consists of a proposal of an Introduction to Communication Studies class that will in turn establish a stronger sense of certainty and overall education effectiveness in both students and faculty of the COMS
department at Cal Poly. We will be presenting these findings to the faculty to show the student perspective in a need the faculty has been working to address. We will also look at the introduction to communication studies courses from universities like UC Santa Barbara and UC San Diego and present the logistical needs of this class. A class involves money, time, education, and resources which are crucial assets to the department, they will need to know if they are able to provide. From there this proposal should enable the COMS department faculty to recognize the uncertainty students are presented with and how best to reduce this. This will entail introducing this class to the course curriculum, finding a professor to teach this class, and ensuring student needs are being met.

It is crucial the COMS faculty members implement these uncertainty reduction strategies in order to establish a stronger sense of understanding and certainty, because there is a strong correlation between the perception of the potential of the COMS department from faculty and the perceptions of the major from students. According to the results of our needs assessment, the majority of the students we surveyed would like to see an introduction to communication studies class that includes an introduction to the courses offered and possible career paths faculty or alumni have taken. Our interviews with faculty noted the need for student perspectives is crucial and a resounding consensus of need for direction within the major was noted.

The timeline of these changes is adaptable. Immediate changes include, continuous data collection from students and faculty about their communication studies experience, as well as an update to the mission and vision statements. Once this is completed, the COMS department can begin the class creation process, because they will have a more clear idea of what should be covered and how best to make it applicable to students.
The training session will take place on the Cal Poly campus on March 12, 2020 at the Communication Studies Department faculty meeting. The training session is 45 minutes long with a 10 minute question and answer. The curriculum committee is responsible for addressing curriculum changes and needs in the COMS department. Therefore, continuous meetings and conversation within that committee as well as the faculty as a whole, including student perspectives as the center is crucial. The College of Liberal Arts and the Communication Studies Department chair have the final say on the implementation of a new class.
### Course Design Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module #1</th>
<th>Learner</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Content Covered</th>
<th>Instructor Materials</th>
<th>Delivery Method</th>
<th>Evaluation Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cal Poly Communication Studies Faculty / Curriculum Committee</td>
<td>1. At the conclusion of the training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will identify the core criteria students find crucial in reducing their uncertainty. (Knowledge) 2. At the conclusion of the training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will reflect on how to integrate student perspectives to an introductory level communication course. (Knowledge + Skill)</td>
<td>Strategies tailored to reduce uncertainty to Cal Poly Communication Studies students.</td>
<td>PowerPoint, Students as SMEs</td>
<td>F2F, Conference Room Style Seating</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correspondence with Client

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tHkJf9j2B4OYG9Gudw1L56ik94x7EUWgr_9LhF8D5Hg/edit?usp=sharing

Curriculum Committee Meeting

Lauren Renee Kolodziejski
Sun 1/26/2020 9:23 AM
Hannah Williams, Campbell Elizabeth Warren, Megan M. Lambertz-Berndt
[Images]

19-20 Communication Studies

Study Guide

Show all 4 attachments (541 KB)  Download all  Save all to OneDrive - California Polytechnic State University

Fantastic! We will be meeting in Dr. Adams office on hallway 36. I plan to start the meeting by allowing you to briefly describe your senior project to the committee and then ask any questions you want to gather information from us.

The second part of the meeting will be geared toward reviewing the existing COMS major curriculum and as I mentioned when we met, you are welcome to stay for that part of the meeting as well. I am attaching some COMS major requirement lists and flow charts for the 2017-2018 catalog and for the 2019-2020 catalog. These are the main documents used in advising to explain the current COMS curriculum and it might be helpful to look over them, if you have time, to identify any questions you might have about the current curriculum.

See you tomorrow,
Dr. K

Campbell Elizabeth Warren
Mon 1/3/2020 3:33 PM
Lauren Renee Kolodziejski

Good afternoon Dr. K,

I hope your winter quarter and 2020 is off to an amazing start! I am so sad I don’t have a class with you this quarter!

As part of our senior project Hannah Williams and I will be conducting a training program for COMS professors focusing on student and faculty perspectives on an “introductory level communication studies course”. In order to this, our advisor Dr. Lambertz-Berndt, encouraged us to reach out to you to find a time we could meet and to discuss adding this to the quarter schedule as you are chair of the Curriculum Committee. This could look like us coming to your office hours, the meeting itself, or any other time that works for you. We understand this time of year is so busy, so we are hoping to do this as soon as we can. Hannah and I both are very flexible with our time schedule so any time that works for you, works for us!

We SO appreciate you!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Campbell Warren
Handouts

Reducing Uncertainty: A Student Perspective on an Introductory Communication Course

March 12th, 2020
11:00am-12:00pm

Length of Presentation: ~35 minutes

Learning Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of the training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will identify the core criteria students find crucial in reducing their uncertainty. (Knowledge)

2. At the conclusion of the training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will reflect on how to integrate student perspectives to an introductory level communication course. (Knowledge + Skill)

Agenda:

- Introduction
- Learning Objectives
- Needs Assessment
- Student Survey Results
- Faculty Interview Results
- Connection to Communication Research
- Activity
- Debrief
- Next Steps
- Q & A
Results from Student Survey

**Do you think Communication Studies is the right major for you?**
- Definitely yes: 37.6%
- Probably yes: 41.9%
- Might or might not: 16.1%
- Probably not: 4.3%

**Do you think an introduction to Communication Studies course would benefit our department?**
- Definitely yes: 43.3%
- Probably yes: 37.8%
- Might or might not: 7.8%
- Probably not: 11.1%

**What would you like to see from an Introduction to Communication Studies Class?**
- Increased use of course materials: 79%
- Improved communication: 79%
- Better learning tools and practice: 50%
- More active classroom engagement: 29%
COMS: The Student Perspective on Reducing Uncertainty

Career Pathways:
The number one concern for students when pursuing the major is understanding and exploring the career paths they can pursue with their Communication Studies degree. Professors, alumni, and community members have a wealth of knowledge about the communication studies field that students are eager to learn more about.

Overview:
The communication studies field is extremely broad and our department greatly benefits from the diversity of our classes and professors. Students would benefit from receiving an overview of what the field entails, learning how to talk about the major to others, and learning how to showcase the value of their degree to employers, early on in their time at Cal Poly.

Maximize Opportunities:
Students want to maximize opportunities that will help them succeed in the major and in their future career endeavors. Career services, alumni connections, the Communication Studies Club, and the Communication Studies Honors Society are just a few examples of resources students wish they were introduced to sooner.

Student-centered:
The key to making an introductory level communication course effective is focusing on the students, their perspectives, and prioritizing their feedback. An introductory course in the major should include constant reflection on student feedback to tailor the course design and reduce uncertainty.
Presentation Slides

CAL POLY COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Reducing Uncertainty: A Student Perspective on an Introductory Communication Course

Campbell Warren and Hannah Williams

Today's Presentation

Introduction
Learning Objectives
Needs Assessment
Faculty Interview Results
Student Survey Results
Connection to Communication Research
Activity
Debrief
Next Steps
Hello!
CAMPBELL WARREN
HANNAH WILLIAMS

Learning Objectives

• At the conclusion of this training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will identify the core criteria students find crucial in reducing their uncertainty. (Knowledge)
• At the conclusion of the training program, Cal Poly COMS Faculty will reflect on how to integrate student perspectives to an introductory communication course. (Knowledge +Skill)
Needs Assessment

Business Needs
Performance Needs
Learning Needs
Learner Needs

Research Question

DO COMMUNICATION STUDIES STUDENTS PERCEIVE AN INTRODUCTORY LEVEL COMMUNICATION COURSE BENEFICIAL IN PREPARING THEM FOR THEIR OTHER COMMUNICATION CLASSES?
Faculty Interviews

"Other classes in the major explain the WHAT, there is not enough emphasis on the WHY."
"I think {An introductory coms course} is a great idea! we take coms 101 but it's definitely not related that well to what coms is actually like. In fact it makes other people think our major is only public speaking which it's definitely not!"

"Please incorporate a class like this. I feel like even a couple years in, some peers (myself included) are still weary about what Communication Studies is, what you can do with it, and how it can apply outside of the classroom."
"I honestly feel like I could have gained a lot more applicable knowledge within the business world if I chose a different major. I am seriously a senior and I wish so badly I got my BS in Business."
"Our major is very theoretically based and I find that there are few classes that allow for us to really incorporate our "learn by doing" motto. I have very limited physical evidence to show for my time here, besides papers."

What would you like to see from an Introduction to Communication Studies Class?
"I wish I knew how to choose classes that would best fit the career path I want to follow."

"Communication Studies majors receive a lot of judgement, and people always ask me 'what are you going to do with that degree?' I wish I knew earlier on how to respond to that question, because I feel like I didn't have a great explanation."
COMMUNICATION LENS -
UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION THEORY

"Uncertainty exists to the degree that situations are unpredictable or cannot be adequately understood.

KRAMER

Purpose Statement

The Communication Studies program at Cal Poly offers a comprehensive curriculum, focusing broadly on the composition and influence of messages across the contexts of personal, professional, and civic life. Graduates of the program gain knowledge and skills to effectively engage in and change the world around them. Students learn foundational theories and study human communication from historical, critical, humanistic, and social scientific approaches to uncover how, why, and with what effects people communicate. Upon completing this program, students possess a robust facility for creating ethical, culturally aware, and inclusive communication as citizens of a dynamically mediated world.
COMMUNICATION LENS - MISSION STATEMENTS

Mission Statements: "...shapes how people who work in (or with) the organization, perceive, remember, and think about the organization and its tasks and [...] develops more widely shared schemas about the agency, and creates focus and a shared sense of priorities.

WEISS & PIDERIT, 1999

What now?
REDUCING UNCERTAINTY: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

C O M S

CAREER PATHWAYS  OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR  MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES  STUDENT-CENTERED

C O M S

CAREER PATHWAYS  OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR  MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES  STUDENT-CENTERED
Activity Debrief

**Think about the following:**

Given this activity, how might this class help reduce uncertainty within the communication studies major?

Do you think anything is missing from the COMS acronym that should be included in the class?

Next Steps?

- Curriculum, Units, Professor, Student Enrollment
- COMS Acronym Implementation
- Student Feedback Should Be Imperative
What are your questions?

Thank you!
References


