

Running head: MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION

Multimodal Communication Across the Curriculum

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Communication instruction helps students in a variety of ways, including the practical (business communication skills) and philosophical (developing the whole person, engaging in responsible citizenship; Morreale & Pearson, 2008). Although many professional and accrediting organizations, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, recognize the importance of communication skills in graduates, few institutions provide follow-up with upper-division students after they have taken general education courses (Morreale, Worley, & Hugenberg, 2010). With recent changes at the University of Kentucky, we are well positioned to help students become more effective communicators – in class and beyond. A multimodal communication across the curriculum (MCXC) program would help UK students with written, oral, and visual communication skills with a special consideration for digital media. Students benefit not only from communication assignments (e.g., giving a presentation instead of taking an exam), but also from communicating in the classroom (e.g., discussion, group work). These benefits are most fully realized when communication is integrated across the curriculum rather than only at a general education level. In order to integrate communication most effectively, faculty require support in crafting assignments, activities, and grading rubrics. The more that is required of students, the more important it is that students are supported in one-on-one or small group sessions focused specifically on communication. In addition to these broader truths about communication across the curriculum, this proposal responds to several current realities at UK:

- With revisions to the general education requirements – and specifically the introduction of Composition and Communication I and II in place of previous writing and speaking requirements – the university has committed to taking an innovative approach to *preparing students for leading roles in an innovation-driven economy and global society.*

- The change from a graduation writing requirement to a communication requirement in the major (CRM) acknowledges the importance of integrating communication in upper-division courses and the complexity of communication skills required of different disciplines and in different professions.
- The recently launched ThinkUK 2.0 initiative pushes the university to strive for higher education of the future, opening the door for programs such as MCXC to *carry out both dramatic reconfigurations and small innovations of what we do and how we do it.*

The proposed program takes a two-pronged approach to improving students' communication skills. By providing tutoring support to students as they complete class work and providing consulting support to faculty, the program will push UK students into higher levels of communication excellence.

The program would reside at the university level, under the auspices of the provost's office, which will lend credibility to the program and enhance its visibility. The program supplements existing programs at UK by serving faculty and students simultaneously. For students, the program would provide assistance in preparing communication-based assignments, going beyond what is offered at The Study by focusing specifically on multimodal communication skills. For faculty, the program extends existing resources such as orientations and The Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT). The MCXC program would not replace CELT, but would provide an emphasis on how to specifically integrate communication into classes. The program would also offer a proactive approach (e.g., assisting faculty in restructuring a class) rather than a reactive one (e.g., helping faculty "fix" a problem in teaching). As a university-wide program, MCXC would serve the entire UK community.

The MCXC program draws on existing programs elsewhere while also propelling UK forward. Similar programs at institutions such as Louisiana State University provide resources to both students and faculty regarding multiple modes of communication (see Appendix A for summaries of and support from similar programs). UK can learn from these programs while also being on cutting edge of education as one of the few programs to offer multiple modalities of communication while supporting both faculty and students. The program's staff will also engage in research to help drive the running of the center, which will contribute not only to improving our own program, but also to the improving similar programs across the country (for more on the importance of research in such programs, see Dannels & Housley Gaffney, 2009). Put simply, MCXC would make UK a *model for 21st century teaching and learning*.

Activities

For students, the program will provide a central support system as students learn to communicate in multimodal ways. Specifically, students will be able to meet with either a peer tutor or a peer mentor. Peer tutors will be work-study students trained to assist students in lower-division class work. Peer mentors will be upper-division students recruited as interns based on demonstrated success in communication; mentors will be trained to assist in upper-division courses and will specialize in disciplines to provide discipline-specific assistance. During meetings, students will be assisted in the most pressing phase of a project; these meetings may address multiple modes of communication or may center on one mode. The one-on-one aspect of student support was chosen because it allows tutors and mentors to meet students where they are and bring them to where they need to be. Additionally, students will reap the benefits of faculty who will be able to create and utilize effective communication activities in their classes.

For faculty, this program helps to address the goal of developing the *human and physical resources of the university of achieve the Institution's Top 20 goals*, as cited in UK's strategic plan. The program will provide consulting support for faculty as they examine their teaching (Cronin & Grice, 1993) Faculty will be able to:

- Receive one-on-one consultations with trained graduate students regarding developing, utilizing, and/or assessing communication activities (formal or informal) in the classroom
- Participate in workshops (run by program directors and trained graduate students) that address key areas of concern identified by faculty needs assessment
- Join a semester-long learning community in order to focus on the redesign of a specific course to meet the standards for the new CRM; faculty who participate in learning communities will be offered a payroll incentive (\$1,000) to encourage completion of the program
- Attend a two-day workshop at the start of fall semesters, designed to target (a) new faculty, (b) graduate students with instructional duties, (c) faculty who have consistently scored low on teaching evaluations and/or are recommended to the workshop by their unit head; these workshops would be run in conjunction with other campus programs, such as CELT

Outcomes

The major learning outcome for the program mirrors the communication general education learning outcome that *students will be able to demonstrate competent written, oral, and visual communication skills both as producers and consumers of information*. More specifically, we will look at what students learn both in the program and through the integration of communication into classes across campus.

Additionally, the program will provide support for faculty and program staff, which leads to other major outcomes that can be assessed:

- Faculty will learn new techniques for designing, integrating, and assessing multimodal communication into the classroom in both formal and informal assignments.
- Faculty will integrate written, visual, digital, and spoken communication activities (formal and informal assignments) into lower- and upper-division courses in pedagogically sound ways.
- Students who work for the center will employ effective communication that is responsive to clients' needs and provide support grounded in pedagogy and research.

Beyond these outcomes, the program will also produce research based on program outcomes.

This research will be aimed at understanding what happens in the program and how it can be improved. The directors of the program will present this research in appropriate visible venues and publish research to enhance the program's reputation.

Personnel

Personnel involved in this project will include faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students, in addition to staff from various campus constituencies. Similar to other universities with MCXC programs, the program will be overseen by an advisory board comprised of expert faculty and staff.

A director (who will maintain faculty status) will oversee the program. Three associate directors will work under this director. The associate director of faculty services will supervise graduate students who serve as faculty consultants and workshop leaders. The associate director of student services will be responsible for hiring, training, and overseeing the undergraduate students who serve as peer tutors and mentors. The associate director of assessment and

development will design, conduct, analyze, and report assessment results, as well as seek grants and other funding sources to sustain the program beyond the 5-year QEP life cycle. The three associate directors will maintain faculty status in their home units. These positions could be filled by faculty already employed at UK and account for 25% of each director's distribution of effort (DOE). UK faculty with expertise in cross-curricular instruction and communication pedagogy and experience working in similar programs will be tapped to fill these roles.

The program will also employ students in a variety of ways. Graduate students will be hired as consultants for the faculty services portion of the program. These graduate students will each be assigned to a disciplinary area and will be the primary consultant for faculty in that area. We envision 11 areas, divided based on disciplinary content and communicative needs: agriculture, arts (including fine arts), business and economics, communication and information studies, design, education, engineering, health and life sciences, humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences. At full operation, the program should have one master's student and one doctoral student assigned to each area. Undergraduate students will be employed as peer tutors, peer mentors, and office assistants. Peer tutors will serve students in lower-division courses while peer mentors will be focused on specific disciplines in order to assist students in upper-division courses that require a deeper understanding of discipline-specific communication skills.

Finally, an advisory board comprised of UK faculty and staff will provide input on the direction and success of the MCXC program. The board will draw together diverse UK constituents, such as the several faculty and staff members who have already voiced a commitment to such a program: [REDACTED] (Director of the Division of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Media), [REDACTED] (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research, campus libraries), [REDACTED] (Director of Academic Enhancement), [REDACTED]

(Director of CELT), and [REDACTED] (Chair of the Art Department). Much as the university created an interdisciplinary board to oversee re-accreditation, the program would draw on the expertise of colleagues across campus. This board will ensure that all disciplines are equally and fairly represented in the activities of the program.

Timeline & Budget

During the first year, the program will launch its faculty component while conducting targeted needs assessment to determine the finer details of the program implementation. This year will include:

- Hosting faculty workshops (two-day workshop, 1-hour lunch time workshops, and learning communities)
- Networking across campus
- Recruiting and training graduate and undergraduate students
- Applying for grants
- Assessing needs and initial program efforts

The primary costs in year one will be focused on set-up: personnel, graduate students, technology, space, and operating expenses. A small number of graduate students will be employed in the first year, with additional students added each year in order to meet needs.

In the second year, the program will expand to offer services for students as well as a more robust set of resources for faculty (based on needs assessment conducted during year one).

During this year, the program will engage in multiple activities:

- Student assistance through peer tutors/mentors
- One-on-one faculty consultations
- Continued and expanded faculty workshops, grant applications, and assessment

The primary costs during this time will build on what was utilized in year one: personnel, graduate students, undergraduate students, expanded technology, space, and operating expenses.

Based on the first two years of development, recruitment, grant seeking, assessment, and refinement in the program, we expect to use the last three years of the QEP for further expansion:

- Continued student assistance with expansion into multiple locations (e.g. dorm common areas) in order to increase the accessibility of resources. Residence Life at UK has noted the increased desire of students for tutoring and the merits of such tutoring to take place in central locations.
- Expanded workshop and learning community opportunities
- Exploring further grants and additional services, such as the location of centers within specific colleges in order to address those needs. For example, the program at Louisiana State University has tutoring spaces for students located within specific colleges (e.g., engineering) that are financially supported by the dean of that college.

During these years, the budget will reflect the growth and success of the program, but the primary expansion is likely to happen as more undergraduate tutors are hired to meet demand.

Other growth, such as additional graduate students, can be supported by other resources, such as a unit head providing a budget line for a graduate consultant dedicated to that unit.

Specific details of the budget are provided in the appendix. We envision this budget coming from university resources dedicated to undergraduate education and academic services. Similar programs at other institutions are funded through provosts, academic affairs, faculty development funds, and outside grants (both large and small).

The bulk of the budget is for personnel, which will increase each year. We have projected increases, but realize they are flexible based on campus needs. Briefly, we accounted for buying

out 25% of each director's time (based on that person's current salary). For graduate students, we budgeted to support them with a nine-month stipend comparable to what is currently offered for similar roles in the College of Communications and Information Studies. For peer mentors, we budgeted \$10/hour in order to recognize the additional training and expertise they must have; otherwise, we plan to utilize federal work-study students whenever possible. Although we did not budget space into our projected costs, the program will need to be housed in a central location. Similarly, we anticipate being able to receive technical assistance from the university's resources rather than hiring IT staff specifically for the program. Our budget does account for some technology, but as the program grows, more technology may need to be purchased. This portion of the funding is an area where grants are commonly available.

Assessment

The MCXC program assessment will include cognitive, behavioral, and affective data including: 1) usage data that tracks what resources in the program are used, when, and by whom, 2) follow-up surveys asking faculty and students about their experiences in the program, and 3) measures of student MCXC competencies and behavioral intentions (given to students after use of the program to measure the behavior they intend to use). In particular, the following measures will be used to assess each of the learning outcomes associated with this QEP:

- Evaluations by faculty, particularly those who have integrated multimodal communication into their curriculum (used to gauge faculty perceptions of improvement in student multimodal communication and confidence).
- Quarterly evaluation of the MCXC program by student and faculty clients with standing appointments (used to gauge satisfaction and results of appointments)

- Ongoing evaluation of the MCXC program by one-time or walk-in clients (used to gauge client perceptions of improvement in their multimodal communication, confidence, and level of service).
- Follow-up study of selected clients (e.g., students and faculty who have participated in the MCXC program, used to evaluate satisfaction, integration of communication skills, and future needs)
- Evaluations solicited from other clients (e.g., faculty requesting class presentations, workshops, or individual consultations, used to evaluate success in meeting client needs)
- Research projects carried out by MCXC consultants and administrative staff (used to monitor multimodal communication improvement and consultants' progress as multimodal communication tutors)
- Exit interviews with graduating MCXC consultants and studies of consultants' post-MCXC program experience (used to assess the program's impact on student employees)
- Tracking use of program resources (used to assess clients being served and potentials for reaching new clients)

Data from surveys and other regularly scheduled assessment activities will be compiled by the administrative staff at the end of each quarter, with responses from weekly clients sorted according to their MCXC consultant. The program personnel will regularly evaluate the data, looking for both numerical trends and patterns within anecdotal responses. Through these forms of assessment, the program will be able to have a continual feedback loop, connecting outcomes assessment and the running of the program. The MCXC program will provide a substantial and beneficial resource for UK to meet the needs of students and faculty as we continue to meet and exceed our goals as a land-grant, flagship university.

References

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Appendix A

Comparable Programs

The Communication Across the Curriculum program at Louisiana State University is a nationally recognized program. According to assistant director, Rebecca Burdette,

With the creation of the LSU CxC program, in only five short years, we have built a dedicated community of 300+ faculty committed to improving the communication skills of LSU undergraduates in every college. Additionally, the multimodal communication-intensive teaching approach used by our faculty has positively impacted student learning overall, resulting in deeper learning of course content and improved critical thinking and analytical skills.

The CLEAR Program at the University of Utah has led to enhanced communication skills for graduates. According to April Kedrowicz, director of the program,

The CLEAR (Communication, Leadership, Ethics, and Research) Program is an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Colleges of Humanities and Engineering. We offer situated instruction in students' core, required undergraduate classes, student support through consultations, and faculty support through college-wide workshops. Our program has had a positive effect on student learning and communication skill development. Graduates are entering the workforce with above average speaking, writing, and teaming competencies. During our most recent accreditation process, the CLEAR Program received specific commendation for preparing undergraduates for the professional demands of their engineering work.

North Carolina State University's Campus Writing and Speaking Program (CWSP) focuses on faculty development within specific disciplines. Other resources on campus provide tutoring for students. Associate director of CWSP, Deanna Dannels, articulated the advantages of a cross-curricular program:

We have helped faculty across campus, in every discipline from agriculture to zoology. Through our faculty development programs, students are more engaged in both formal and informal writing and speaking. Faculty consistently report back to us that their students' communication skills improve at the same time that students' understanding of course content improves.

Appendix B
Proposed Budget

		Year 1	Year 2*	Year 3*	Year 4*	Year 5*
Personnel	Director (25% of DOE)**	\$ 16,750.00	\$ 17,085.00	\$ 17,426.70	\$ 17,775.23	\$ 18,130.74
	Director benefits (28.858%)	\$ 4,833.72	\$ 4,930.39	\$ 5,029.00	\$ 5,129.58	\$ 5,232.17
	Assoc. Director - Faculty (25% of DOE)	\$ 14,250.00	\$ 14,535.00	\$ 14,825.70	\$ 15,122.21	\$ 15,424.66
	Assoc. Director Benefits (28.858%)	\$ 4,112.27	\$ 4,194.51	\$ 4,278.40	\$ 4,363.97	\$ 4,451.25
	Assoc. Director -Students (25% of DOE)	\$ 11,400.00	\$ 11,628.00	\$ 11,860.56	\$ 12,097.77	\$ 12,339.73
	Assoc. Director Benefits (28.858%)	\$ 3,289.81	\$ 3,355.61	\$ 3,422.72	\$ 3,491.17	\$ 3,561.00
	Assoc. Director - Assessment (25% of DOE)	\$ 14,250.00	\$ 14,535.00	\$ 14,825.70	\$ 15,122.21	\$ 15,424.66
	Assoc. Director Benefits (28.858%)	\$ 4,112.27	\$ 4,194.51	\$ 4,278.40	\$ 4,363.97	\$ 4,451.25
	Ph.D. Students as Consultants (\$15,000 stipend, 11 consultants)	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 165,000.00
	Ph.D. student benefits (2.287%)	\$ 2,058.30	\$ 3,773.55	\$ 3,773.55	\$ 3,773.55	\$ 3,773.55
	Master's Students as Consultants (\$10,000 stipend, 11 consultants)			\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
	Master's student benefits (2.287%)			\$ 2,515.70	\$ 2,515.70	\$ 2,515.70
	Undergraduate peer mentors (hired as interns at \$10/hour, after year 1, allow 40 hours/week of 2 person coverage, 32 weeks)		\$ 25,600.00	\$ 25,600.00	\$ 25,600.00	\$ 25,600.00
	Intern benefits (2.287%)		\$ 385.47	\$ 385.47	\$ 385.47	\$ 385.47
	Undergraduate peer tutors (as work-study, senior pay rate of \$7.85, of which program pays 17%; by year 3, allow 40 hours/week of 2 person coverage, 32 weeks)		\$ 1,708.16	\$ 1,708.16	\$ 3,416.32	\$ 3,416.32
	Undergraduate office workers (as work-study, senior pay rate of \$7.85, of which program pays 17%; allow 10 hours/week, 32 weeks)	\$ 427.04	\$ 427.04	\$ 427.04	\$ 427.04	\$ 427.04
	Personnel Total	\$ 165,483.40	\$ 271,552.24	\$ 385,557.10	\$ 388,784.20	\$ 390,333.53
	Faculty Development	Workshop budgets (meals, etc)	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
	Payroll incentives for faculty in semester-long learning community (30 faculty/year, \$1000 each)	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
General/Other	Computers (estimate at \$2,000 per machine, including appropriate software and peripherals, adding additional computers each year)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
	Operating Expenses	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Faculty Development/Other Total	\$ 38,500.00	\$ 38,500.00	\$ 38,500.00	\$ 38,500.00	\$ 38,500.00	
TOTAL	\$ 203,983.40	\$ 310,052.24	\$ 424,057.10	\$ 427,284.20	\$ 428,833.53	

*budget presumes 2% salary increase per year for faculty

** Director and Associate Director Salaries budgeted based on existing faculty who are likely to fill these roles