Charting New Directions for COM1100: Creating a Multimedia CD-ROM

Norman Clark
Dept. of Communication
Appalachian State University

March 8, 2002
# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary .......................................................... 3
- Statement of Problem / Need .................................................. 3
- Goal / Plan of Action ......................................................... 4
- Benefits & Beneficiaries ...................................................... 4
- Evaluation Plan .............................................................. 6
- Time Line .................................................................. 6
- Budget Estimate ............................................................. 7
- Evaluation Tools ........................................................... 8-10


Executive Summary

This request for a Teaching Enhancement Grant is for the creation of a multimedia CD-ROM textbook to be used in the COM1100 course. This CD-ROM would satisfy an urgent need of the department, given the lack of an appropriate textbook for the course. It will allow the department to offer an innovative, cutting-edge introduction to the field of communication. A wide range of other benefits can be expected.

Statement of Problem / Need

In the past years, the introductory course for the Department of Communication, COM 1100, has been taught as what is traditionally called a “hybrid” course. In communication, the hybrid course typically combines an introduction to general communication principles, as well as specific contexts including public speaking, interpersonal, and group communication.

However, the department recently decided to make a major change in the introductory course. Rather than focusing on what is traditionally known as “applied” communication, the new course will cover concepts common to all aspects of communication, including mass mediated. To allow for this additional content, the course will no longer have a public speaking component—instead, students in the department will be required to take COM 2101, Public Speaking.

In addition, the faculty agreed that the new course ought to include many other content areas that the old course did not, including an introduction to the faculty in the department, the field of communication, the history of communication technologies, career opportunities in communication, portfolio development, and much more. Given these new emphases, as well as other trends both in the university and in the country, the following problems and needs emerged:

- **Lack of an Appropriate Textbook**: Currently, most introductory textbooks for communication take a “hybrid” approach, including a public speaking component but lacking mass media components. Given the department’s desire to create a course that emphasizes what the various aspects of our discipline share in common, we need course materials that also integrate our concentration areas (Advertising, Public Relations, Organizational/Public, Electronic Media/Broadcasting, and Journalism).

- **Desire for Technology in Teaching**: Administrators at various levels within the university encourage departments to integrate technology into instruction and have...
made funds available for this. Additionally, students increasingly are expecting exciting and innovative teaching methods and content.

Desire for Cross-Section Consistency: Recently, faculty in our department have expressed concern over a perceived disparity in the content that students receive in our many sections of the introductory course. While the problem may not be as severe as some believe, it is obvious that increasing consistency across sections is a sound pedagogical goal.

Goal / Plan of Action

The goal of this instructional materials development project is to produce a multimedia CD-ROM textbook for COM 1100, the Foundations of Human Communication course. The exact content of this CD-ROM is being finalized, but at this point the following materials are expected to be included:

- video “lectures” by various faculty members, as well as alumni
- readings written by this faculty member, and pulled from other sources
- video segments to explain and/or exemplify various communication principles
- interactive multimedia simulations and exercises

This goal will be met by the following plan:

- securing support from within the University, a process that has already begun
- the lead faculty member has already secured 6 hours of release time from the department for the 2002-2003 academic year to create this CD-ROM
- the lead faculty member has applied for a grant to purchase necessary equipment (including a digital video camera), which is under review
- work with ITC services to contract out certain portions of the project
- taping and digitizing lectures
- collecting and securing permission for readings, video segments, and other multimedia content
- writing content not otherwise available
- creating a Flash-based interface for the content
- creating Flash-based simulations and exercises
- burning the completed content to CD-ROMs

Benefits & Beneficiaries
This CD-ROM would benefit a significant portion of the department, as well as the university community in general. The COM 1100 course is taken by approximately 250 students per semester, and starting Fall of 2002 will be taught only by **full-time, tenure track faculty**. In the fall of 2002, COM 1100 is being taught by seven full-time faculty, including this faculty member. Additionally, in the past this course has been linked to Freshman Seminar classes in Learning Communities, and we fully expect to continue and even expand on this tradition.

Obviously, this project will attempt to meet the needs that drive the project. However, we can expect additional benefits to result.

- **Provide Appropriate Course Material:** The proposed CD-ROM will give students a sound introduction to our discipline, and most importantly ground them in an integrated view of communication. Including short video “lecturette” featuring all full-time faculty will introduce students to all areas of the department, as well as to faculty members that they currently may not encounter. Multimedia exercises and simulations will bring the content alive in new and interesting ways. Presentations from alumni of the department will show students the benefits of a degree in communication.

- **Demonstrate the Department’s Commitment to Curriculum Development:** By producing this CD-ROM, we will show various university audiences that we are committed to curriculum development and to the integration of technology in teaching.

- **Increase Student Interest in the Department:** Students also will appreciate the multimedia content, although their appreciation may not be immediate. However, it is hoped that by providing a cutting-edge introduction to the field of communication, these materials will enhance our reputation with our students as well.

- **Ensure Cross-Section Consistency:** Obviously, if all of the students use the same textbook (whether it is multimedia or not), some cross-section consistency will exist. However, we can increase that consistency through the use of technology. Multimedia content, including interactive examples, current event stories, and other such content will further increase the similarity between sections.

- **Provide a Source of Income:** If this project is supported and produced at the university level, most of the initial income from the sale of the CD-ROMs will be used to cover the cost of the production. However, once that cost is recuperated, profits from the sale of the CD-ROM could be returned to the department.

- **Increase Our National Reputation:** This faculty member plans to make presentations about the integration of technology into the introductory course at several conventions. This project would demonstrate that we are on the forefront of our field, pushing the boundaries of what is possible at the introductory level. Additionally, a textbook publisher has already expressed interest in acquiring this textbook with some modifications, which would result in increased visibility for the
department.
## Evaluation Plan

As the primary “textbook” for the Foundations of Communication course, this CD-ROM will be the students’ main source of course readings, exercises, simulations, and examples. Evaluation of how well the CD-ROM meets these needs will be carried out at three levels:

- Students will evaluate the CD-ROM, with an emphasis on their use of it (see attached)
- Faculty teaching the course will also evaluate the CD-ROM, with an emphasis on its effectiveness in supplementing their teaching (see attached)
- Peers at this university and potentially at other schools will evaluate the CD-ROM, with an emphasis on the quality of the content and design (see attached)

## Time Line

The expected completion date of this project would be Summer 2003, in time for use in the Fall Semester of 2003. The following is a tentative projected time line for the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solidify content plans for CD-ROM, work with ITC to determine a budget for the project, solicit content suggestions from faculty</td>
<td>Spring, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete content gathering, preliminary interface designs, begin permission securing</td>
<td>Summer, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotaping of faculty, digitization of video, digitization/integration of content, creation of interface</td>
<td>Fall, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing/preliminary evaluation <em>(by peers)</em> of CD-ROM content, finalize permissions</td>
<td>Spring, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM mastering/duplicating</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student &amp; instructor evaluations each semester, peer evaluations in the Spring</td>
<td>Fall, Spring 2003/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Budget Estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Est. Cost</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 hours release time</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>Department of Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Video camera/ editing equipment</td>
<td>$2400</td>
<td>Research &amp; Sponsored Programs Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissions (textbook chapters, video clips)</td>
<td>$1500</td>
<td>Hubbard Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulations Design/Construction (contracted to ITC)</td>
<td>$2000</td>
<td>Hubbard Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/Duplication of 1000 copies CD-ROM (contracted to ITC)</td>
<td>$2000</td>
<td>Hubbard Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Request for this Grant** $5500
## Evaluation Tools

### Student Evaluation of COM 1100 CD-ROM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The CD-ROM helped me understand communication theories.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CD-ROM helped me understand communication practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CD-ROM helped me understand the field of communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The texts included in the CD-ROM were helpful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The images/pictures included in the CD-ROM were helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The audio/video examples included in the CD-ROM were helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exercises/simulations included in the CD-ROM were helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could find what I was looking for on the CD-ROM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The links helped me understand the relationships among course concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed using this CD-ROM more than reading a traditional textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During this semester, I used the CD-ROM:

- ___ Daily
- ___ At least 3 times/week
- ___ Weekly
- ___ Monthly
- ___ Less than Monthly

Any other Comments?
Instructor Evaluation

How did the CD-ROM facilitate in-class instruction?

How did the CD-ROM facilitate student review and integration?

Which aspects of the CD-ROM were the most valuable?

How can the CD-ROM be improved?

Any technical problems with the CD-ROM?

Any other observations?
Peer-Review

Please comment on the following:

1. Instructional Content
   a. Is the information presented accurate and/or consistent with current understanding of the topics presented?
   b. Is the information of adequate depth and breadth for an introductory survey course?
   c. Are appropriate numbers and types of multi-media features included?
      i. Graphics/still images?
      ii. Video?
      iii. Audio?
   d. Are the exercises appropriately designed to facilitate learning?
   e. Are the simulations helpful?

2. Organization
   a. Are the content units organized in a logical fashion?
   b. Does the navigational system help illustrate the relationships among concepts?
   c. Is the navigational system consistent and clear?
   d. Do the hyperlinks work appropriately?

3. Design
   a. Are the pages visually pleasing? (e.g., consider the color scheme, layout, font, etc.)
   b. Is the amount of information on each page appropriate for both viewing and/or organizational soundness?

4. Other
   a. What other features/components would you recommend be added to this tool?
   b. Would you recommend any features/components be deleted?
   c. Would you use a CD-ROM like this as a textbook for your course?