

GRC FINAL REPORT

INSTRUCTIONS: GRCs should fill out the following form and email it to cur@ku.edu by **Friday, May 23rd, 2014**. Keep in mind that the intended audience for this document will be future GRCs and/or instructors wanting to do similar projects, so keep your comments brief and focused on what will be most useful for other GRCs and instructors.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- a. **Your name: Natalie Pennington**
- b. **Course number & name: COMS 555 (Family Communication)**

2. OVERVIEW: *Provide a one-sentence summary of your GRC project.*

Complete a semester long quantitative research project analyzing sibling communication and technology use.

3. BACKGROUND: *This section should give the reader just enough context to understand your project.*

- a. **Course description:** *Provide 1-3 sentences describing the course overall.*

This course is intended to expose students to research trends and theory in the scientific study of the family. Research and theories from communication, sociological and psychological perspectives will be examined. We will discuss numerous topics such as courtship, marriage, divorce, sibling relationships, the impact of the family on its children (and vice versa), and the nature of family interaction as it is associated with family dysfunctions (e.g., family violence, mental health problems, and marital distress).

- b. **Typical students:** *Provide 1-3 sentences describing the typical student and their experience level doing research.*

Most students enrolled in the course are either juniors or seniors and communication studies majors. The expectation is that they have completed or are currently enrolled in the methods course (COMS 356) for the department, a required class on research for the major. Otherwise, experience with research is limited to reading communication journal articles rather than participating in the process of completing a study.

4. GOALS & OUTCOMES:

- a. **Need for project:** *Provide 2-4 sentences describing the need for the research project in the class. What were students not learning before that you would like them to learn with this project? Where were students struggling?*

Students will have the opportunity to experience survey research first hand. By the end of the semester, they will be able to enhance their research skills by 1) learning how to synthesize existing literature and creating research questions and hypotheses, 2) gaining a deeper understanding of research ethics by completing the Human Subjects Compliance Training (CITI program) and collecting empirical data, 3) learning how to interpret basic statistics and draw conclusions, and 4) engaging in critical thinking by drawing conclusions as well as practical and theoretical implications of the findings.

- b. **Learning goals & outcomes:** *List the learning goals and outcomes for your GRC project. Add more rows if needed.*

LEARNING GOALS	CORRESPONDING LEARNING OUTCOMES
LG: Understanding how to read and report on research articles in the discipline.	LO: Identify the best sources to support claim(s) from list provided. LO: Identify the appropriate parts of a research article to report from in a literature review. LO: Utilize research to support claims in a literature review in a consistent manner. LO: Cites and documents sources correctly in the required style (APA).
LG: Understanding the importance of ethical research practices for data collection.	LO: Show awareness of ethical data collection practices. LO: Be able to identify ethical data collection practices.
LG: Understanding what a good research question and/or hypothesis look like.	LO: Pose clear, arguable, and significant research questions and/or hypotheses based on the variables and articles provided.
LG: Understanding how to report results and tie together research in a discussion and conclusion section of a paper.	LO: Employ primary evidence (research) as support for the argument or findings. LO: Explain the significance of the argument/findings. LO: Identify implications of the findings. LO: Acknowledge and respond to significant counter-arguments and/or limitations of the research. LO: Cite and document sources correctly in the required style.
LG: Will know how to discuss the project cohesively and consistently, with the assistance of a visual representation (poster presentation).	LO: Order poster in a logical flow. LO: Present findings with clarity, thoroughness, and confidence at a poster presentation on campus. LO: Cite and

document sources correctly in the required style (APA).

5. IMPLEMENTATION:

a. **Activities:** *Describe the activities you designed for the class. What did you have students do? Please include any materials (slides, worksheets, etc.) that others might find useful as attachments.*

1. **Video on Reading Research Articles/Worksheet (GRC):** This video and worksheet were used to prepare the class for writing the literature review. Student's first sat through a 45 minute lecture from the GRC (Natalie) and then had 2 days to complete the video and worksheet on an article related to the course material.
 2. **Videos/Examples of Ethical Research:** The GRC (Natalie) led an in-class 30 minute lecture about research ethics and then had an open discussion generated by examples and questions from students with regard to ethical research practices. Handouts provided for responsible recruitment practices (see: attached handout).
 3. **In-Class Activity/Analyzing Results:** The GRC (Natalie) led a 45 minute lecture about how to interpret the results, draw implications, and make conclusions from literature base on research results. She provided a handout complete with sample results and literature and walked them through the document while fielding questions and practicing drawing implications (see: attached handout).
 4. **In-Class Discussion—Poster Presentations:** The GRC (Natalie) led a 30 minute lecture/Q&A about building a poster presentation. Natalie brought in an example poster from a past presentation at KU along with poster boards provided by the Center for Undergraduate Research for handing out to students. The class went over the rubric for presentations and posters for grading (see: attached rubrics).
 5. **Poster Presentations (2 days):** The GRC (Natalie) helped host and circulate the poster presentations at the end of the semester (which were the final two class periods, May 6th and May 8th). Student's presented on one day and critiqued on the other day. Students were required to give a 4-5 minute "elevator" speech (7 times) about their research project and answer 2-3 questions from their audience members.
- b. **Activity log:** *Fill out the following table to give a general sense of how your 30 GRC hours were spent.*

ACTIVITY	# HOURS (estimate; leave blank if not applicable)
1. Facilitating activities in class.	6 hours
2. Meeting with students individually.	10 hours
3. Facilitating group activities outside of class.	0 hours
4. Developing activities & assessments.	4 hours
5. Providing written feedback to students (through email or written comments).	4 hours
6. Developing online content for students.	0 hours
7. Evaluating student final products.	0 hours
8. Coordinating instruction from other KU units (libraries, CUR, etc.).	0 hours
9. Meeting/planning with main instructor of course.	6 hours
10. Other (please list).	0 hours
TOTAL HOURS: 30	

c. **Assessment (can combine with “activities” if that makes more sense):** *Describe how you assessed student learning (a final paper, presentation, etc.). Please include any assignments or rubrics as attachments.*

1. **Literature Review:** Write a 3-4 page literature review based on 5 research articles that includes a total of 3 RQs/Hypotheses related to the variables provided (See: attached).
2. **RQs/Hypotheses:** Additional focus placed on RQs/Hypotheses for re-writing (See: attached).
3. **Results/Discussion Section:** Write a 3-4 page results and discussion section for a paper, interpreting the data in relation to the previous research read and offering implications and future research (See: attached).
4. **Final Poster Presentation:** Present a completed version of the entire project in poster form along with a 4-5 minute speech discussing the study (See: attached).

6. STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

- a. **Narrative description of student learning:** *Provide a short paragraph summarizing student learning on the project.*

We believe the class got a great deal out of participating in this project. One of their final assignments in the overall course was a short reflection asking for their opinions and suggestions for the future use of this assignment in the class and many discussed how they would be able to apply what they learned outside of this class to other areas. The hardest part for them to grasp (writing a literature review) they believe to be their greatest asset by the end of the semester, many discussed the importance of being able to read and report on research from others, and using that to back up their claims whether that be in other classes or in the workforce. Many also felt they learned a lot from going through the research process and had a new respect for the time commitment and thought-process that goes into planning and executing research, they spoke of the sense of accomplishment they felt when creating their posters to present and sharing that with friends and family. Although virtually every student reported this to be a challenging experience (some mentioned it was the most challenging they've had in their college career), we believe they learned a lot from conducting this research study and felt a sense a pride and accomplishment upon completion.

- b. **Visual representation of student learning:** *If possible, provide a visual representation of student learning as a whole, such as a chart that includes student performance on different levels of a rubric (can ask Nikki for examples).*

Part of Project	Advanced	Intermediate	Novice
Lit Review	5	20	1
RQs/Hypotheses	25	1	0
Results/Discussion	8	18	0
Final Poster	20	6	0

****Key: Advanced = A, Intermediate = B and C, Novice = D or F

7. DISCUSSION:

- a. **Effectiveness of research project:** *Provide a short paragraph reflecting on the results presented above. How effective was the project in achieving the desired learning outcomes? Were there unexpected benefits or logistical problems that you encountered?*

As you can see above, with the progression of the semester student's ability to grasp material and receive "advanced" or an "A" on the assignment increased. We believe that in terms of the learning outcomes described above that many students achieved at least a basic understanding of the different parts of the project. For those goals that had multiple learning outcomes (literature review, results and discussion) a future project might devote

more time and separate out those outcomes more to increase the probability that student's performance is higher. Overall we believe that the goals achieved the outcomes set forth.

- b. Plans for revision:** *Provide 1-3 sentences describing what changes, if any, you will make the next time you do this project with a class.*

Overall this was a great experience! According to Dr. Alesia Wozidlo, it is imperative to have a GRC or graduate student dedicated to help with the implementation of a research project (such as the one used for COMS 555). If we were to make changes to the project for the class, the recommendation would be to decrease the scope of the assignment: in our desire for each student to be able to have some variance in what they wrote about/learned, it created some confusion at times with such a large number of potential variables (e.g., submitting RQs and/or Hypotheses that were not testable or beyond their statistical knowledge). A smaller scope would likely make the project more manageable. Additionally, we would spend more time on the literature review. Students appeared to struggle with this the most. We think more practice and perhaps another worksheet would have helped them grasp the idea behind writing a literature review. Finally, although the GRC (Natalie) led mini lectures on all major components of the research project, students needed more. Dr. Alesia Wozidlo would spend a good portion of the next class going over things again and fielding questions. This was not a reflection of Natalie's capability of teaching but rather an indication of how difficult teaching students how to conduct research is. Therefore, more in-class time should be dedicated to the class research project. We would also like to point out that this is really a big project for undergraduate students to undertake and the professor should plan accordingly. Dr. Alesia Wozidlo noted how she had to decrease at least 25% of her class material to accommodate for the project. This is not a complaint (she knew that this was a consequence of including such a big project (i.e., a complete research study)), but more of a heads up for future professors who are interested in implementing a research project such as this and having a GRC.

- 8. PERMISSION:** Please indicate in which of the following ways, if any, that you would be comfortable with the Center for Undergraduate Research sharing this report with others.
- a.** I am willing to have this report shared with others in print (for GRC trainings, etc.).
 - b.** I am willing to have this report shared with others online (on CUR website, etc.). The Center would contact you and the instructor of the course for final approval before publishing content online. *Note: if you are willing to share this report on our website and have any photos of class activities, please email us those photos along with this report.*