Communication for the Health Professions: A Program Profile

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Abstract: This program profile describes an initiative to meet the college reading and writing requirement for undergraduate students in a premedical program at St. George's University (SGU) in Grenada, West Indies. Two courses were developed in response to concerns that the existing curriculum was not meeting the specific needs of premedical students. The existing courses were literature-based and provided minimal feedback or other opportunities for development. Additional concerns involved a varied range of abilities among students that was not being addressed, large class sizes, and lack of investment on the part of premedical students. Solutions include the incorporation of a task-based curriculum focused on the medical profession in order to increase engagement, division of students into small cohorts with small teacher/student ratios, integration of skill building into all activities, and implementation of process writing to allow for intensive feedback and student development.

Introduction

This program profile describes a unique initiative developed to meet the college reading and writing requirement for undergraduate students in a premedical program at St. George's University (SGU) in Grenada, West Indies. The two courses, Communication for the Health Professions 1 and 2, are included as part of the premedical curriculum, and were developed to replace the Advanced College Writing and Advanced College Reading courses that had been required for all undergraduate students. We start by setting the stage with the context for these courses, then discuss the previous college reading and writing courses along with reasons for our change. We next explain the process of our change, and describe the new courses. We end with a discussion of the challenges, successes, and lessons learned from the development and implementation of these courses.

Context

St. George's University is an independent, international, private university in [Grenada](#), [West Indies](#). It was founded in 1976 as a US-curriculum-based medical school and has grown into a university offering degrees in [medicine](#), [veterinary medicine](#), [public health](#), arts and sciences, and [business](#).

There are approximately 6,600 students at SGU with 5,200 enrolled in the School of Medicine (SGUSOM), approximately 250 of whom are in the premedical program. SGU has become one of the largest English-speaking medical schools in the world. Despite its growth, the university continues to provide a supportive learning community with the goal of helping each student reach his or her potential. In 2013, students in the SGU School of Medicine who took the United States Medical Licensing Exam 1 for the first time achieved a 98% pass rate, marking the fiftsh consecutive year that SGU's overall first-time pass rate on the examination surpassed 90%. SGUSOM brings together students and faculty from over 140 countries. It is accredited regionally, and its 12,000 graduates are licensed to practice in every US state and in 31 countries around the world. The premedical program at SGU is an extremely important component of the university, feeding approximately 175 students per year into the Medical and Veterinary Programs.

The premedical program curriculum is designed to provide a strong foundation for the advanced studies offered later in the four-year Doctor of Medicine, or four-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree programs. The premedical

program incorporates basic undergraduate courses in reading, writing, and mathematics with the necessary science foundation courses for a well-rounded education. Throughout all years of the premedical program, there is a strong focus on study skills development and academic enhancement. The Committee on Admission places the applicants into the first, second, or third year of the premedical program according to each applicant's academic background.

The third year of the premedical program consists of a set curriculum comprising 32 credits of upper-level biomedical and behavioral science courses designed to strengthen students' premedical sciences foundation, six credits of English (formerly Advanced College Writing and Reading; now Communication for the Health Professions 1 and 2), and a one-credit learning strategies course designed to enhance the opportunity for success in advanced medical studies. This is a high-stakes year because students who complete the third year of the premedical program with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.2 or better and pass the Premedical Science Comprehensive Examination (PMSCE), an in-house entrance examination, are promoted into the first year of the four-year Doctor of Medicine program. Therefore, no deviations from the set curriculum or course load are allowed.

The Former Program and the Impetus for Change

Communication for the Health Professions (CHP) 1 and 2 came about initially in response to concerns that the required Advanced College Writing (ACW) and Advanced College Reading (ACR) courses, mandatory for all undergraduate students, were not able to meet the needs of the English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Grenada is an English-speaking country and very few non-English speakers attend the undergraduate program here. Those who do are almost exclusively pursuing their premedical, preveterinary, medical, or veterinary studies.

ACW and ACR are taught by faculty in the Department of English, which has literature as a focus. Therefore, faculty of the Specialized English Language Program (SELP), who offer English for Specific Purposes coursework to medical students, were asked to assist the ESL students taking ACW and ACR.

In fact, the students taking ACW and ACR differed greatly in the skills they brought to the courses. Some of the students required to take the course have published articles in English in peer-reviewed journals, whereas others have never read an academic journal article. However, because the final-year curriculum is set, there is no option for premedical students to test out of any of the third-year courses. Despite their different backgrounds, most of the students taking the courses lack confidence in their English skills in general, and their writing ability in particular. The majority of our undergraduate students are either English-speaking Caribbean students or Generation 1.5 students from North America who grew up speaking English at school and another language at home. Both groups lack facility with academic English.

The first term that SELP became involved in ACW, it was midterm and SELP assisted by providing extra tutorials for non-native speakers of English taking ACW. Unfortunately, the ESL students were already under greater time pressures than native speakers and therefore they did not give the tutorials the attention necessary to derive benefit from them. The SELP faculty felt that the ESL students' English skills were not improved through the tutorials, though the editing assistance these students received in the tutorials may have helped some students pass the courses.

This experience resulted in the SELP faculty insisting that if they were to continue to assist ESL students in ACW or ACR, they would do so by offering an ESL section of the courses so that students' weaknesses could be addressed within the courses themselves. The SELP sections had far fewer students than the regular sections and so certain components of the course could be condensed, which allowed more class time to be allocated to addressing grammar difficulties and allowed for additional feedback sessions on drafts for all assignments.

Initially, the SELP faculty used all the materials that were developed for the regular versions of the courses and only the pace, emphasis, and provision of additional feedback were different from the regular (non-ESL) sections of the course. However, it quickly became apparent that it was problematic for only one section of the course to focus on process writing and to require students to write and submit drafts of assignments. Some students in the other sections felt that they were disadvantaged compared to the students in the ESL sections because the ESL students had an opportunity to get feedback on an initial draft of each assignment prior to submitting the final draft for grading.

In discussions attempting to resolve the issues of fairness that students raised, a stalemate was reached. The SELP faculty were adamant that a feedback-rich, process-based approach was necessary if reading and writing skills were to be developed (Hyland and Hyland 83), but the English Department faculty felt that they were not able to provide feedback to all students because class size could fluctuate greatly and there were no limits on the teacher-student ratio. Also, the SELP faculty expressed concerns about the organization and content of the two courses. They felt that reading and writing should not be taught separately, but that if there had to be a separation, students should take ACR before they take ACW. By having receptive skills serve as the focus of the first course, SELP faculty felt that

students would be better primed to take advantage of ACW, where production is the focus. Because productive skills are more difficult, they reasoned, receptive skills should be taught first, and readings can serve as models for writing (Hinkel 11).

Finally, given that the ESL students taking the courses were all premedical students, the SELP faculty saw an opportunity to teach reading and writing skills through content that would have obvious relevance to those students. They felt students would benefit greatly from engaging in communicative tasks which reflected those they were likely to encounter in their future studies and career.

In working with the Preprofessional Curriculum Committee, it was determined that it was not possible to make the changes that SELP was proposing and still maintain the same descriptions and titles for the courses. It was also determined that the courses being proposed by SELP had the flexibility to contribute to the development of the reading and writing skills of students with a range of abilities (native speakers of standard English, native speakers of West Indian English, and high-functioning, non-native speakers of English) while also addressing the interests and special needs of students preparing to enter the medical profession. Therefore, two new courses were proposed to replace ACW and ACR for premedical students: Communication for the Health Professions 1 and 2. Although the courses had to meet the objectives that ACW and ACR had met, the SELP faculty were free to make any changes that they felt would enhance the ability of the courses to help the premedical students achieve those objectives. When the proposals for the new courses, CHP 1 and 2, were reviewed by Premedical Curriculum committee, the committee decided to make them the required courses for premedical and preveterinary students in place of ACW and ACR, regardless of the students' native language.

Program Development and Theoretical Bases for the New CHP Courses

The creation of two new courses to meet the objectives of ACW and ACR specifically for premedical students provided an opportunity to address some problems and to enhance many components of the courses to better meet the needs of the premedical students. As previously stated, the SELP faculty insisted that feedback and drafts were crucial if these courses were to result in skill development. In the ACW and ACR courses, students received their grade and, sometimes, feedback in the form of comments and edits on the products or assignments. Since students were not required to produce drafts, there was no requirement for students to process that feedback. Yet in the classroom, feedback is the only way to minimize the gap between objectives and actual performance (Fernandez-Toro and Hurd 112). Therefore, in the new courses, SELP faculty built multiple drafts and an emphasis on feedback and revision directly into the curriculum. Teachers are assigned a cohort of students within the larger class so that all students have a dedicated teacher to help them develop throughout the term. We established a teacher-student ratio designed to include one hour of feedback per student per week in the full-time equivalency (FTE) of each teacher. Thus the time required for feedback and office hours was built directly into the course design from the beginning.

Another concern was the perception of fairness. Given the high-stakes nature of these courses for the students, equivalence of instruction and grading was crucial. ACW and ACR consist of several sections of the same course, with little contact among instructors across the sections. Therefore, it was decided that instead of having separate sections of the course, there would be one large class co-taught in a hybrid format of lectures and workshops. All teachers share responsibility for the teaching of the course, with different teachers delivering different components to the entire class, ensuring that students receive the same instruction. All teachers also attend all class sessions to ensure they have the same information. This helps teachers to be more consistent when they serve as the resource for their own cohort of students during break-out process, collaboration, and feedback sessions. The collaborative nature of the teaching also serves as a source of faculty development and enhances the quality of teaching and feedback. Norming sessions are held for all assignments to calibrate for consistency in amount and style of feedback and in grading of assignments. This creates a more standard experience for students and of grading across cohorts.

A challenge faced by the teachers in the ACR and ACW courses was the diversity of students in terms of program of study. The fact that CHP 1 and 2 were specifically targeting premedical students presented an opportunity to create courses with obvious relevance to them. The previous focus on literature had little face validity for premedical students. These students saw no relationship between their ACR and ACW coursework and their interests or professional goals; indeed, researchers question whether "generic" English composition skills transfer across genre or discipline (Downs and Wardle 552). The lack of buy-in led to diminished opportunities for engagement, as these students in the health sciences often perceived non-science courses as a distraction from their "real" studies. The English for Special Purposes practitioners in SELP made the obvious choice to develop a course that used content from the field the students were preparing to enter.

SELP selected a task-based approach for the syllabi with tasks selected from the medical context. A well-designed

task-based learning curriculum improves student motivation as the material can be explicitly related to their chosen profession. It also provides a much needed context and application for the material that is sometimes overlooked in more traditional methods of instruction (O'Neill and Hung 2). Another important benefit of the task-based curriculum is that it allows students at different skill levels to be challenged. Premedical students have a wide range of reading and writing skill levels, and engaging students at different levels can be a challenge. Feedback on individual areas of difficulty provides opportunity for growth for students with a range of needs to be met through one syllabus (Foster 69).

The application of this approach for reading, writing, and communication purposes can be found in the writing across the curriculum (WAC) method of teaching college English. One implementation of WAC uses writing as a tool for learning and encourages students to participate in active, ungraded writing assignments geared toward getting them to process concepts on paper in order to facilitate understanding. Another, more formal, implementation of WAC gets students to learn to write within a specific discipline, or discourse community (McLeod 3). The focus of this method is to build competence, confidence, and appropriate social behavior within the context of specific academic communities. This is done by helping students master the basic reading and writing conventions expected of undergraduate students, while at the same time adhering to the writing standards of specific disciplines. In order to achieve these goals, the basic expectations of discourse in any given field must be investigated for the purpose of creating writing objectives for the students. Faculty need to identify good examples of writing in a specific academic context, as well as what types of tasks students will be expected to complete in the given field. Once this is accomplished, a course can be created that will introduce students to writing in a specific field of study, provide clear examples of writing in that discipline, and include assignments that help students practice the skills that will be required of them (Peterson 43).

Many of the objectives for ACR and ACW were included in both courses, but different teachers taught the different courses, and the overlap of objectives was not explicitly acknowledged. There was a missed opportunity to have skill development in reading and writing scaffolded across an entire academic year. The principles of scaffolding and time allow students to develop as readers and writers (Goen-Salter and Gillotte-Tropp 96). Further, the course assignments in ACR and ACW appeared to be a series of disconnected assessments, and there was little focus on skill development. By focusing on the building of skills through scaffolding and process writing with opportunities to incorporate feedback into subsequent drafts and other projects, learning outcomes improve (Wingate, Andon, and Cogo 72). Littlewood described task-based learning as taking place along a continuum, in which "every activity that learners engage in furthers the process of learning" (320). Tasks should begin with simple components and build to more complex and lengthy exercises as students work with the concepts. In this way, students are able to receive continuous feedback as their tasks move along the continuum from simple to complex, with the end result being complete integration of the material. The SELP faculty combined the objectives of the two courses and selected tasks which scaffolded the development of skills which could be strengthened through their implementation in other, later tasks. They then assigned the tasks to the two courses based on themes.

A significant problem with ACR and ACW was that there was little collaboration among students in the courses. Students were expected to complete tasks independently and therefore did not benefit from multiple perspectives when learning. The approach used in the CHP 1 and 2 courses relies on a constructivist model that provides a focus on task-based, learner-centered processes that better prepare students for professional practice (Schweitzer and Stephenson 585; Takahashi and Saito 694). Group learning is emphasized, allowing students to see their peers as a resource for knowledge, not relying simply on the instructor alone. Various forms of learning are encouraged that are less didactic in nature than traditional methods, and the needs and current skills of the student "set the tone, pace and content of learning, rather than an independently determined and subject-driven schedule or agenda" (Schweitzer and Stephenson 585). According to Schweitzer and Stephenson, learning in context has transformative capabilities, as students are "held to standards necessary for analytical reasoning, writing and communication capacities they need to succeed in further study or lower level roles in professional fields" (591). Finally, it helps students acquire the necessary skills that will facilitate the transition into their careers by offering learning opportunities that "reflect more deeply on the relationship of their aims to the realities of the contexts in which they are applied" (587).

Description of the New CHP Courses

CHP 1 and 2 meet all the stated objectives of ACW and ACR (English 305 and 306) (see Appendix 1 for a comparison of the objectives), but they are organized very differently and focus on tasks that are directly applicable to students in the health sciences. There is, for example, a strong emphasis on reading research articles. SELP faculty also decided to make connections between the CHP 1 course and another required course, Research Methods, in which students learn to read and understand research and to successfully design and implement

research projects. By making the course a corequisite of CHP 1, students are able to apply what they are learning in the Research Methods class to their writing assignments in CHP 1 and to get more feedback and guidance on the process of writing research for their Research Methods course. Faculty anticipated that this connection would reduce redundant effort in a busy schedule and would reinforce the important concepts and thereby enhance student performance in both classes.

CHP 1 focuses on critically reading scientific research (see Appendix 2 for the syllabus). Students learn about types of research articles, how to identify credible sources, and how to do database research and then become familiar with research design and methodological approaches. Students discuss components of research including samples, statistics, and generalizability, as well as strengths and limitations. In addition, they learn how research articles are organized and how to dissect them. As well, students become familiar with APA format as a guide to style, formatting, and citing. They develop skills in paraphrasing and summarizing and in making an argument and synthesizing ideas.

CHP 1 emphasizes questioning and analyzing, thinking and making connections. This becomes tangible through the major assignments: an annotated bibliography and a literature review. The annotated bibliography demonstrates students' critical understanding of the research, and the literature review demonstrates their skills in synthesis, developing an argument, and appropriately selecting, integrating and citing sources. The literature review also serves as concrete reinforcement of the integration of reading and writing. Students' literature reviews incorporate published literature reviews; the readings serve as models for their own writing, done on a smaller scale.

Online group quizzes add an additional assessment component of the course. There is no midterm or final exam; instead, students take weekly quizzes focused on the course content. These are open-note quizzes, and students work with their peers to apply the content from class lecture to the quiz application. This fosters engagement and creates debate, leading to deeper understanding of the content.

While CHP 1 lays the groundwork for future research, CHP 2 prepares students to be professionals and practitioners (see Appendix 3 for the syllabus). The first unit focuses on professional communication. Toward this end, students learn how to compose professional emails to colleagues and professors. SELP instructors and students discuss the potential pitfalls of using social media and highlight how it may impact students' professional lives in the future. Students learn how to craft polite, professional complaints and responses. They gain an appreciation for the nuances of register and tone. They learn that accuracy in punctuation and capitalization is important to effective and well-received communication. In order to address the practical reality that they will need a professional curriculum vitae and cover letter in the future, students complete a mock application packet for an internship of their choice. Through this assignment, students learn how to tailor an application to a position, how to market themselves appropriately and how to ask for a letter of recommendation. Faculty highlight the importance of doing research or an internship during the basic science years in medical school to set them apart from their peers. By the end of this unit, students have an application package that they can update and use when applying for internships, residencies, and beyond. Many students come back in later terms for feedback on their updated application packages for internships or scholarships.

The second unit in CHP 2 shifts to critical thinking and developing strong arguments. Using case studies and bioethics as a loose framework, students learn to respond to ethical dilemmas and support their opinions with logical arguments. Avoiding logical fallacies, developing strong arguments, and incorporating appropriate support are all heavily emphasized. Students learn how to use data to strengthen their own arguments. This mirrors a component of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), the exam students need to pass to gain entry into the School of Medicine, and also helps prepare them for the demands of their chosen profession. Students write two essays with multiple drafts, building their argument writing skills and learning to incorporate feedback from peers and instructors.

In this unit, there is an effort to take students from being *separate knowers* to *connected knowers* (Belenky et al. 102). Founded in feminist theory and transformative learning theory, *separate knowers* try to find flaws in logic. This is key in forming and assessing arguments, and is a crucial critical thinking skill for medical professionals. Medical professionals need to, for example, evaluate treatment options and choose the most appropriate one for a particular patient. However empathy is even more fundamental. Doctors need to maintain their humanity and listen to their patients. *Connected knowing* involves trying to understand other viewpoints, no matter how much you disagree. The case studies have no right answer and students disagree on the best decision, building their capacity for *connected knowing*, while simultaneously learning how to justify their decisions to peers and patients.

Throughout the program, students engage in peer review and self-reflection. Peer review allows students to get a new perspective on their writing and receive feedback on their work. It also helps students critically reflect on how their peers approach a task and compare it to their own approach. Self-reflection is the other side of peer review, applying the same critical thinking to one's own work. Additionally, self-reflection helps bridge the gap between process writing and timed writing. After teaching students how to engage in the writing process throughout the

program, the final exam and entrance exam requires timed writing. Self-reflection before these exams allows students to explicitly label their strengths and weaknesses in writing and design a plan to capitalize their strengths and focus on areas of weakness, in effect internalizing the feedback process.

Professionals are expected to be able to produce clear, concise, and grammatically accurate written communication, and they may be judged or seen as incompetent if they lack strong writing skills. Therefore, CHP has a grammar component woven throughout each course. Based on common student needs, we have identified the most important grammar topics to include, grouping them into five grammar mini-lessons. The most important, and therefore first, is conciseness, as our student population struggles with this. By introducing it first, students work on conciseness over two terms, allowing time to improve their skills (Goen-Salter and Gillotte-Tropp 96). SOM professors identify wordiness and lack of professionalism in emails as common problems, so this is given special emphasis. In addition, we cover subject-verb agreement, commas and semicolons, consistent verb tenses and modals, formality, parallelism, possessives, and pronoun-antecedent mismatch.

The grammar component follows a flipped classroom model: self-study at home, collaborative application in class, and a quiz to close out each grammar mini-lesson. Students read about the grammar point at home, using resources created in-house that explain the point and provide extensive examples in context. If students want additional assistance, further resources are provided: links to online practice, a writing handbook with exercises, and practice quizzes with extensive feedback. After reviewing the grammar individually outside of class, students work in groups in class and participate in an interactive grammar competition. This allows students to apply the information, forces them to engage with it, and creates a time for questions to be discussed as a class. The final piece of each grammar mini-lesson is a short online quiz. Rotating through the grammar points, each grammar lesson is also assigned special emphasis in one of the writing assignments, allowing students to practice using and editing each of the grammar points in their own authentic communication. This approach allows students who have grammar weaknesses to address them without unduly burdening students for whom grammar is a strength.

Challenges and Successes of CHP

Our students are in the final year of a premedical program transitioning into the SOM, and stakes are high. There is enormous pressure to perform well in their science classes, which is where most students prioritize their time. The rigorous science curriculum keeps even well-organized students extremely busy, causing them to de-prioritize their English coursework, especially if they are having academic difficulty in their science courses. CHP was created to overcome this disconnect between students' needs and the perceived lack of value of the coursework, and it has succeeded, both statistically and anecdotally. Students now see the value of the coursework. End-of-term evaluations are consistently positive, with over 90% of students regularly reporting that they believe the courses are valuable and that they believe the courses prepare them to be professionals in medical school and their careers

While there are no data on premedical student pass rates when they were in ACR and ACW, our pass rate for CHP is above 99%. In part this is due to the ongoing formative assessment, feedback, and opportunities to address weaknesses. Students attend class, complete assignments, engage in in-class activities and out-of class forum discussions, and make use of office hours. This leads students to have increased confidence in their academic and professional English skills, with 96% reporting that their cohort leaders' feedback helped them improve their writing. Additionally, we regularly receive feedback from former students stating that the courses were extremely helpful, often with the side-note that the students are surprised how frequently they rely on the skills they developed in these courses. Finally, student buy-in is aided by the fact that the entrance exam for SOM, which is taken at the end of year three, includes a writing component worth 20% and the CHP curriculum helps students prepare for this.

The curriculum of CHP 1 is designed to help support the development of academic English through scientific reading literacy and CHP 2 is focused on professional communication and argumentation skills, however skills that are addressed continue to be used and developed in later assignments. Throughout both terms, students participate in focused grammar lessons and online forum discussions which are bound by strict professionalism requirements, further honing their standard English and professional writing skills. SOM faculty have gratefully noted the positive effects of this instruction in professional communication, most particularly in student emails. By focusing on relevant professional tasks, students who have strengths in the skills addressed in these courses can still remain engaged and receive feedback targeted at their level.

One challenge we face is instructor turnover. Due to budgetary constraints, some of the positions in the program are bachelor's degree–level positions. Few people with a bachelor's degree have the skills to teach in these courses. Therefore, we often hire people who are more qualified, but are from the relatively transient population of short-term expats who are willing to take a position that is paid below their education grade. Due to the intensive nature of the

norming process, the unusual nature of some of our assignments, and the emphasis on medical content, the learning curve for new instructors is challenging. Training new instructors is a significant time commitment for the course directors and returning instructors. Yet instructor turnover also brings advantages to the program: norming and training builds a cohesive instructor team and creates opportunities for professional development among the entire team, allowing for input and collaboration from many perspectives and constant improvements to the course.

Another challenge is space. For this hybrid lecture/workshop format to work we need a large enough space that is configured to allow for easy transitions between a lecture and a workshop format. On our campus, such space is in high demand and we are challenged to schedule our courses in those spaces at times that work well for our students.

Lessons Learned

CHP is now in its sixth year, and many lessons have been learned along the way. CHP subscribes to process writing, so all assignments are done in drafts. We provide extensive written feedback and one-on-one oral advising during office hours. Students show significant improvement between drafts and throughout the year they spend in CHP. This feedback and these interactions represent a significant time commitment for the instructors. For this model to work, sufficient institutional resources need to be allocated to hire enough instructors to keep the cohort sizes manageable. We limit cohorts to fewer than 30 students, based on the full-time equivalency calculation of one hour of feedback per student per week.

Because the stakes are high for these courses, it is critical that we ensure consistency across all cohorts. Therefore we adopted a team teaching format: all students and instructors are in the same class, but each instructor is assigned to a specific cohort of students. This allows for an identical instructional experience. The other important component of consistency is feedback and grade norming among the instructors. We spend significant time grading the same students' papers and comparing our feedback and grades. This allows the instructors to have a better understanding of the assignment and the expectations, and allows us to be confident that our grading is consistent across cohorts. Since the stakes are high and students share resources from one term to the next, a new set of case studies and supporting materials must be developed each term. The course materials are all created in-house, so sufficient resources need to be allocated to allow for the creation of new materials each term.

Chief among our "lessons learned" is to never underestimate the amount of time that norming, feedback, and material development will take in a tailored, task-based, process-oriented course. In designing a program, get support from the program administrators so that they will understand and support the allocation of the resources necessary for the courses to be successfully implemented.

Conclusion

CHP was developed to replace ACR and ACW for premedical students. It follows a constructivist, task-based, learner-centered approach and successfully meets the objectives of undergraduate reading and writing courses while adhering to a WAC-influenced curriculum. It prepares students for the types of tasks that will be required of them as medical students and professionals. As the courses are focused on the types of real-world tasks that will be required of them in the future, students engage in these courses, despite the general perception that English courses take time away from their "real" science courses. Despite significant institutional and individual challenges, CHP has become a successful component of the premedical curriculum at SGU.

Appendices

1. [Appendix 1: Comparison of Objectives](#)

2. [Appendix 2: Syllabus for PMED 302: Communication for the Health Professions I](#)

3. [Appendix 3: Syllabus for PMED 303: Communication for the Health Professions II](#)

Appendix 1: Comparison of Objectives

Objectives of the four courses (Advanced College Reading (ACR), Advanced College Writing (ACW),

Communication for the Health Professions 1 (CHP1), Communication for the Health Professions 2 (CHP2).

ACR and ACW objectives	CHP objectives
Use library databases to locate articles (ACW)	Locate research articles using library databases and the internet (CHP1)
Choose and evaluate sources (ACW)	Assess the value of sources and choose appropriate articles for specific purposes (CHP1)
Identify purpose of different sections of a journal article (ACW)	List sections of a research report and describe type of information they should contain (CHP1)
Write a journal article critique (ACW)	Analyze, critique and evaluate empirical research reports (CHP1)
Summarize and paraphrase content (ACW)	Summarize and paraphrase content (CHP1)
Document sources using APA (ACW)	Document sources using APA style (CHP1)
Differentiate commonly confused words and homonyms (ACW)	Vocabulary choice is addressed in context. This is not an explicit objective.
	Identify principles which contribute to clarity of academic writing (CHP1)
Identify fact, opinion and inferences (ACW) (ACR)	Identify whether a statement represents opinion, restatement of content or inference (CHP1)
Identify and avoid fallacies and identify bias (ACW) (ACR)	Identify logical fallacies and how the affect argument (CHP2)
Develop critical thinking skills (ACW)	Develop strategies for critical thinking and analysis (CHP2)
Evaluate evidence used to support arguments (ACW) (ACR)	Evaluate evidence used to support arguments or positions (CHP1) Evaluate ethical and empirical arguments (CHP2)
Synthesize sources (ACW)	Integrate and synthesize information from different sources (CHP1)
Write a proposal (ACW)	Make and support an argument (CHP1) Formulate and synthesize arguments in support of a position (CHP2)
	Utilize and give feedback (CHP1) (CHP2)
Use correct punctuation, grammar and mechanics (Parallel structure, sentence fragments, splices, run-ons, dangling and misplaced modifiers; Subject-verb agreement)(ACW)	Use correct grammar and punctuation (CHP 1: conciseness and punctuation) (CHP 2: conciseness, subject-verb agreement, commas and semicolons, consistent verb tenses and modals, formality, parallelism, possessives, and pronoun-antecedent mismatch)
Identify wordiness (ACW)	Evaluate the clarity of academic writing (CHP1)
Write concisely (ACW)	Write concisely (CHP2)
Identify the main idea (ACR)	Identify the main idea as part of writing a summary (CHP 1)

Identifying transitions and structure in text	Understand and identify the structure of a text (CHP 1)
Identify appropriate reading strategy for goal: skimming and scanning) (ACR)	Understand and implement reading strategies including skimming and scanning (CHP 1)
Summarize and paraphrase (ACR)	Summarize and paraphrase content (CHP1)
Recognize and specify tone in writing and identify figurative language (ACR)	Recognize inappropriate levels of formality in writing and produce writing in a formal tone (CHP 1 & 2)
Identify and evaluate techniques of persuasion (logos ethos and pathos) (ACR)	
	Write professional e-mail requests, complaints and responses (CHP2)
	Critically read web information related to internships and employment (CHP2)
Write a successful cover letter/resume (ACW)	Create a cover letter and a resume to apply for an internship (CHP2)
Change register for different audiences (ACW)	Write responses to frequently occurring issues in medical and veterinary practice to other health professionals or lay people (CHP2)

Appendix 2: Syllabus for PMED 302: Communication for the Health Professions 1

PMED 302: Communication for the Health Professional I
St. George's University
Course Syllabus

Course Description:

Practicing professionals need to be able to read, understand, and evaluate research studies. They need to be able to critically evaluate research data and to determine whether research methods and arguments are sound and valid. They are also required to summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize published work (with appropriate documentation) to support their professional decisions, claims, and arguments. This course is designed to support students in developing these skills.

Course Aims:

Students will learn to do the following:

- locate research articles using library databases and the Internet
- choose appropriate articles for specific purposes
- list the sections of a research report and describe the type of information they should contain
- analyze, critique, and evaluate empirical research reports
- summarize content
- paraphrase content
- document sources appropriately in the APA 6th Edition style
- identify principles which contribute to clarity of academic writing
- evaluate the clarity of academic writing
- identify and produce concise writing with correct punctuation
- evaluate evidence used to support arguments or positions
- identify whether a statement represents opinion, restatement of content, or inference

- integrate and synthesize information from different sources
- assess the value of sources
- make and support an argument
- utilize and give feedback

Methods of Instruction:

Students will learn through a variety of methods, including lectures, discussions, reading & writing exercises, collaborative learning, and library and Internet research.

Required Texts and Materials:

There is no required textbook for this class. Key articles, case studies, and supplementary materials will be available on Sakai. You are required to bring a laptop or tablet to every class to access materials and participate in in-class assignments.

Recommended Texts:

1. Aaron, J. E. (2011). *The little, brown compact handbook* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Longman.

2. American Psychological Association (2009). *Concise rules of APA style* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

3. Galvan, J. L. (2009). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (4th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

4. Pyrczak, F. (2008). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation* (4th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

Course Evaluation:

10%	Professionalism = attendance (5%) and participation (5%)
5%	Forum Assignments (2%) and Peer Review (3%)
10%	Sakai Quizzes
5%	In-class Assignments
10%	APA Referencing Assignment - 1st draft 25% - 2nd draft 75%
10%	Paraphrasing and Summarizing Assignment - 1st draft 25% - 2nd draft 75%
35%	Annotated Bibliography - 1st draft 25% - 2nd draft 75%
15%	Final Project

* 1st draft 25%
* 2nd draft 75%

For more information on each of these assignments and assessments, please see the "Assignments Guidelines" folder under the "Resources" tab on Sakai.

Appendix 3: Syllabus for PMED 303: Communication for the Health Professions 2

PMED 302: Communication for the Health Professions II
St. George's University
Course Syllabus

Course Description:

This course utilizes case studies in ethics and communication issues in the professional world as a framework for developing students' argumentative writing skills. Students will complete a variety of practical tasks and prepare a professional portfolio, which will assist them as graduates seeking employment. In addition, students will write responses to ethical cases that they are likely to face as medical/veterinary professionals, which will prepare them for future university coursework and the English component (20%) of the PM/VSCE.

Required Texts and Materials:

There is no required textbook for this class. Key articles, case studies, and supplementary materials will be available on Sakai. You are required to bring a laptop or tablet to every class to access materials and participate in in-class assignments.

Methods of Instruction:

Lecture, lecture/discussion, reading, writing, exercises, collaborative learning, videos, and library and Internet research will be used.

Course Aims:

Students will learn to do the following:

* Develop professional communication skills
* Write professional emails: requests, complaints, and responses
* Create a professional portfolio, including a resume and cover letter for future employment
* Critically read web information related to internships and employment
* Develop techniques which will enhance performance on written critical thinking assessments
* Develop strategies for critical thinking and analysis
* Identify logical fallacies and how they affect arguments
* Evaluate ethical and empirical arguments
* Formulate and synthesize ethical and empirical arguments to support their position
* Formulate sound arguments that do not incorporate logical fallacies
* Write responses to frequently occurring issues in a medical/veterinary practice
* Utilize and give feedback to colleagues
* Write concisely
* Produce formal writing following the grammatical standards of academic English

Students should be comfortable with the following aims CHP I (PMED 302):

* Document sources appropriately, following APA 6th Edition style
* Summarize and paraphrase the content of original research reports
* Use academic English for all course assignments
* Read critically and analyze peer-reviewed research

- Utilize library databases to locate peer-reviewed articles effectively
- Participate actively in class discussions and respectfully engage colleagues, both in class and online

Grading:

25%	Assignment #1: Internship Portfolio
	
	    • Part 1 Draft 1 = 10%
	
	    • Part 2 Draft 1 = 10%
	
	    • Final draft = 80%
		10%	Professionalism
			
			    • Attendance = 50%
			
			    • Participation/Professional Demeanor = 50%

10%	Assignment #2: Ethical Case Study #1
	
	    • 1st draft = 20%
	
	    • Final draft= 80%
		5%	In-class Assignments

		5%	Out-of-class Forum Posts (minimum = 8)

15%	Assignment #3: Ethical Case Study #2
	
	    • 1st draft = 20%
	
	    • Final draft= 80%
		5%	Critical Thinking Project: Article Share and Discussion

5%	Midterm Exam	10%	Quizzes
			
			    • 5 grammar quizzes (16.6% each)
			
			    • 1 fallacious reasoning quiz (16.6%)

10%	Final Exam		

For more information on each of these assignments and assessments, please see the "Assignments Guidelines" folder under the "Resources" tab on Sakai.

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