Planning on Engagement:
Developing Courses for Active Learning Styles Through Digital Media

Asadeh Nia-Schoenstein, M.S., A.P.R.

Rowan University

Department of Public Relations & Advertising

Instructor

PR-action Student Firm Adviser

201-960-4384

schoenstein@rowan.edu

Alison N. Novak, Ph.D.

Rowan University

Department of Public Relations & Advertising

Assistant Professor

AJF-PRSSA Adviser

860-614-5337

novak@rowan.edu

Description

As learning styles continue to evolve to match the increasingly digital world, courses focusing on matching digital technologies to organizational demands must similarly evolve. Rowan University's Department of Public Relations and Advertising designed senior capstone courses based on important research: "Active Learning Strategies in Face-to-Face Courses" and "Promoting Deep Learning" by Barbara J. Millis (2010, 2012), which illustrates ongoing challenges in student classroom engagement. According to Barbara Millis (2010), students need encouragement to "do" and "reflect," rather than purely "listen." To integrate this scholarship into practice, Rowan students develop public relations campaigns for real organizations through digital technology. This poster examines how digital technologies can aid in four key learning outcomes in senior capstone public relations courses focused on case studies and the planning process: (1) Well-structured knowledge with a focus on concepts, integration of knowledge and a cumulative experience. Students apply all knowledge acquired in previous courses to develop an advertising and public relations campaign. (2) Appropriate motivational level with an emphasis on intrinsic motivation and a sense of "ownership" of the material. Students present "their" plan to the client. (3) Learner activity associated with active, not passive learning. Students learn from each other in team-based discussion and from individual professor feedback; and, (4) Interaction with others, including student-teacher interactions and student-student interactions (McKay and Kember, 1997, p. 65; Rhem, 1995, p.4). The poster provides examples of course projects, activities, and student evaluations/feedback that illustrate how engagement through digital technologies can facilitate 21st century learning.

Rationale for assignments: Integrate active learning styles and expectations into senior capstone classes by developing plans for real clients.
Learning goals: Graduates possess critical thinking skills and are proficient in research and campaign planning.
Assessment strategies: direct assessment, using a department-created and implemented rubric system (see attached)

Referenced works

Berry, W. (2008). Surviving lecture: A pedagogical alternative. College Teaching, 56(3), 149-154.

Bonwell, C.C., & Eison, J. A. (1991). Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No.1. Washington, DC: George Washington University.

McKay, J. & Kember, D. (1997). Spoon feeding leads to regurgitation: A better diet can result in more digestible learning outcomes, Higher Education Research and Development, 6(1), 55-67.

Millis, B. J. (2012). Active learning strategies in face-to-face courses. *IDEA Paper 53*. Manhattan, KS: IDEA Center. Online at http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/paperidea_53.pdf

Millis, B. J. (2010). Promoting Deep Learning. IDEA Paper No. 47. Manhattan, KS: The IDEA Center. Online at http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/IDEA_Paper_47.pdf.

Rhem, J. (1995). Close-up: Going deep. The National Teaching & Learning Forum, 5(1), 4.

Planning Overview

This semester, groups of five or six students will work directly with a client to develop a PR plan that addresses a need or goal. You will conduct primary and secondary research, write a situation analysis, segment audiences, plan objectives, implement tactics, and evaluate your success. In the end, you will develop a digital plan book (see table of contents below) for the client and professors. The plan book may take the form of a PDF, an interactive website (with each page representing individual components), or a multi-part infographic. Students will follow the course schedule outlined in the syllabi to turn in assignments and stay on-track to complete the plan by the end of the semester.

Throughout this process, please use the group functions in Blackboard or work in Google Drive (shared with the professors) so we can monitor group contributions. This helps us give credit for student effort and identify any students who are not engaging. In addition, you'll need to submit two confidential reflections on Blackboard about your group experience. This is an opportunity to explain your responsibilities, give credit to members who go above-and-beyond, or bring up concerns about group dynamics.

Plan Contents

- Coversheet with member names
- Table of contents
- Overview/Executive Summary (if applicable)
- Situation Analysis
  - Global Ambition
  - Brief History
  - Positioning
  - Research Questions and Actions
  - Primary & Secondary Research (with graphs/visuals)
  - Target Audiences (Audience ranking chart)
  - Charts
    - **Remember to list each audience charts in order of audience (Audience 1: Force Field, Change Agent Message Chart, MAC Triad; Audience 2: Force Field, Change Agent Message Chart, MAC Triad; Audience 3: Force Field, Change Agent Message Chart, MAC Triad)
  - Channels & Competition
- Issues and Correlating Objectives
- Plan Outline
- Plan (all objective copy and strategy copy in order)
  - Objective copy 1.0
  - Strategic copy 1.1
  - Carry-outs throughout, as close to strategic copy as possible
- Budget
- Gantt Timeline
- Logs of student work (professor copies only)
- Presentation slides/Prezi downloads/Canva links

*The poster will contain images of student digital plan books, selections from the course packet and links for faculty who would like to see the 75-page course packet (which explains how to create each part of the plan- and use technologies), and reflections from graduates about the digital planning course.

Standards	5-4 Excellent	3-2 Competent	1-0 Needs Improvement
Research	Exhibits superior communication and consulting skills in regard to dialog with the client. Proves to be a proficient team manager and excellent group communicator. Determines and applies <u>all</u> primary and secondary research methods and obtains optimal research findings to help build an effective campaign that support client's strategic goals.	Only takes limited initiative in team dynamics and due processes. Communicates little with client and translates client's needs only few times. Develops and executes some of the primary and secondary research and only receives limited findings thereof. Research findings support some of client's strategic goals as merely some of client's issues are identified correctly.	Takes no initiative to communicate properly with team or client. Research does not support mostly inaccurate and incomplete objectives, strategies and tactics that do not support the case's objectives.
Audience	Correctly determines all audiences important to the client's case and identifies properly their rankings according to levels of influence. Persuasive messages fully support objectives and strategies. All communications channels are properly chosen for maximum audience reach resulting in optimally effective objectives, strategies and tactics.	Identifies audiences and rankings only in part. Few messages help to inform/persuade some audiences. Suitable communication channels are only partially chosen properly and only somewhat help the plan's ambition.	Audiences are not clearly identified and ranked. Channels do not reflect effective, research-based communication. Design does not satisfy client's strategic goal.
Design	All research ties seamlessly into force field analyses, change agent messages, MAC Triad design and resulting objectives, strategies and tactics and fully supports client's global ambition. Performs strong, persuasive presentation complete with clear reasoning and use of professional, formal language.	Research only ties partially into force field analyses, change agent messages, MAC Triad design and only meet 60 percent of plan's objectives, strategies and tactics. Client's global ambition is only minimally satisfied. Presentation is only persuasive in part and does not completely convince.	Minimal research ties into few of the force fields, change agent messages and the MAC Triad elements. Design does not satisfy case's strategic goals. Poor presentation skills make a weak case.
Evaluation	Uses the all primary research methods that help evaluate objectives', strategies' and tactics' effectiveness. Persuades client 100 percent of accurate use of evaluation results which will help identify objectives' strengths and weaknesses and suggest areas that need improvement.	Only 60 percent of suggested summative research helps measure actual effectiveness and applicability of objectives, strategies and tactics. Partial evaluation and recommendation lead to some improvement. Client's ambition is only partially satisfied.	Few suggested research methods measure only some objectives' effectiveness. Does not identify necessary areas of improvement and, hence, does not accurately client's ambition.

Sample Assessment Rubric: Students will conduct a full campaign for a client, from research through execution