

Assessing an Online Master of Science in Management Degree

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Abstract

This paper reports on the results of a two year assessment of a new online Master of Science in Management (MSM) program. The process included developing a framework for assessment, refining existing learning outcomes, setting assessment levels for the learning outcomes, determining how the outcomes might be met by the six MSM Foundations courses, and developing the assessment instruments. Assessment measures included voluntary business competencies pre- and post-tests, mid-program self assessments, and assessment of a written project completed in the Capstone course. Assessment recommendations include increasing communication and timely feedback of students' work, more rigorously structuring the Capstone experience to meet the program learning outcomes, and creating a portfolio of the students' work to get a broader picture of student learning.

Introduction

The Master of Science in Management (MSM) is a 36 credit hour, distance-delivered degree program designed to provide quality, flexible graduate business education with a focus upon specific industry, organizational, or business functional knowledge. It provides an 18 credit-hour general business foundation and 15 credit-hours of specialized emphasis area training outside the business school. The degree was designed for mid-career professionals. A Capstone experience allows students to individualize the program through analysis of business processes, strategies, and tactics focused on his/her current place of employment, business partnerships, or a related industry.

The MSM began in January 2000 and grew out of a failed part-time MBA program delivered to distant students. Originally, the mandate to serve statewide students with a business graduate program was filled by the part-time MBA in two rural cities via interactive television. The rigor of the program and the small pool of qualified applicants forced the MBA's closure in December 1999. The MSM was designed to have less prerequisites and more flexibility. It was originally offered in three rural cities via interactive television. In Fall 2001, a dedicated Director was appointed to oversee the program's move into purely online delivery. The quarter-time

Director and a half-time Program Coordinator built MSM enrollment to approximately 150 students by Spring 2004.

At the time the MSM was being created, professors in management and marketing were tasked with trying to get the content of both areas into a single course to shorten the foundation knowledge coursework for working students. Other combinations were soon formed to reduce the foundation courses (the list of content was drawn originally from the MBA's 30 hours of foundation knowledge courses to 18 total credit-hours. The combinations were created without much faculty involvement and mostly by convenience. Management Information Systems was the MSM version of the same undergraduate course. Quantitative Analysis and Planning, combined undergraduate statistics with undergraduate operations management content. Economic Analysis took the place of sophomore-level macro and micro economics. The final course, Accounting for Managers, took the place of the two sophomore-level accounting courses. Finance and Business Law was perhaps the oddest pairing, putting sophomore business law content together with financial management material.

The only prior thought given to assessment as the MSM Program was developed was whether it met the NAU administration's mandate for business graduate programs provided statewide and whether it was safely within AACSB (the leading business school accrediting body) requirements for accreditation.

E-Learning Grant

The development of the assessment plan was the result of a university-sponsored E-Learning grant, and included:

1. developing a framework for assessment
2. refining existing learning outcomes

3. setting assessment levels for each learning outcomes
4. collecting and evaluating assessment data, and
5. making recommendations for curriculum revision and program improvement

The assessment plan and framework was developed from the assessment literature (Angelo 1999, Angelo and Cross 2001, Chun 2002, Maki 2002). The purpose of the assessment program was to provide information that could enhance student learning and improve distance learning curriculum delivery to students. The initial phase of the assessment project was to evaluate the current curriculum for which no formal assessment program was in place. Learning outcomes were established from prior experience with undergraduate and MBA business programs. Assessment opportunities were evaluated and it was decided to install three assessment tools: voluntary pre- and post objective tests of general business competencies; surveys of students' self-perception of learning outcomes and objectives, and; evaluation of the MSM Capstone projects. Planning for the initial assessment phase occurred in June 2003 and data collection took place during the 2003-04 academic year.

Pre- and post test objective tests were developed by faculty in their fields. These tests were administered on a voluntary basis with students in their first semester in both Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 semesters. As students completed each foundation course, they were given a post-test over that course's content. Student perceptions of learning were collected by surveys that combined instructor evaluations with assessment of learning outcomes in both semesters. The Capstone papers that were assessed were from MSM students who graduated during the academic year.

The second stage of the assessment process involved evaluation of the data collected. This included quantitative analysis of the pre- and post tests and student self-perceptions of learning. Assessment rubrics were developed for evaluating the Capstone projects for business

competencies and general assessment of learning outcomes. Seventeen Capstone projects that included business plans, feasibility studies, and narrow research topics were assessed by five faculty members. In addition, a business communications specialist evaluated writing competency using a writing assessment rubric. Finally, two faculty involved as advisors on the Capstone projects evaluated the self-management skills of the Capstone students through recollection and use of a self-management assessment rubric.

The final stage of the assessment process involved developing the implications of the assessment data and making recommendations for curriculum/program improvement. This process resulted in four revised syllabi, suggested changes for project requirements and class processes, and a revised assessment framework and plan.

Assessment Results

General Business Competencies

In nearly every category, overall student performance on post-tests improved over pre-test scores. Small sample sizes make the findings difficult to rely on, however. It was quickly proposed that pre- and post-tests be made mandatory for students, perhaps as graded assignments within the courses. Without this, volunteering will not yield sufficient participation.

Student self-reports of perceived learning: Since this was the first time students self-reported their learning, our idea here was to establish a baseline. More semesters and more student responses are needed to begin working on improvement.

One clear finding from the six courses measured during the year was that student feedback as to what they learned in a particular class is highly correlated with how well they liked the instructor of the class. The adult learners in the MSM degree were quite critical of

teachers that merely presented book materials without adding value. Since they are busy people, MSM students expected timely and high-quality feedback of their work and questions.

Analyzing the Capstone Reports - Content Analysis

Seventeen total Capstone project reports were read by five faculty members, one of whom read strictly for demonstrated communications skills. The Capstone assessment followed a rubric developed to measure business competencies in marketing, management, management information systems, finance, accounting, operations management, business law, and economics. The rubric also assessed the program learning outcomes of the business school, which include global measures of problem solving, communication, self management, ethics/social responsibility, and global/environmental awareness.

There was general agreement among the assessment faculty that business plans represented an excellent assessment tool for evaluating business competencies. The business plan is naturally an integrative exercise that requires use of all the major skills in business competency areas of accounting, information systems, economics, finance, marketing and management. The business plan structure also provides a natural problem solving format.

Capstone reports which reported on narrow topic projects did not allow adequate demonstration of the business competencies. The specific nature of the topics was often not conducive to integrative use of all of the business skills. The problem solving learning outcome became the only way of assessing quality the narrow topic Capstone reports.

There was a small problem with inappropriate topics such as personal explorations and narrow computer programming assignments. In the case of the computer programming project, a narrow topic Capstone project might only demonstrate one business competency. In summary,

the assessment rubric did not work well for narrow topic assessment. Table 1 presents the summary data for the Capstone projects.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

When Capstone business plan reports were separated out (six total papers in this category) and it was decided that they would be given an overall score based on the global measure of core business competencies. This resulted in the following finding: seven ratings of "exceeded expectations," ten ratings "met expectations" and one rating of "below expectations." Exhibit 1 presents the Capstone project assessment rubric for business competencies.

(Insert Exhibit 1 about here)

Eight narrow topic Capstone reports given an overall score based on the problem solving learning outcome. This resulted in the following finding: five ratings "of exceeded expectations," nine ratings of "met expectations," and six ratings of "below expectations." For narrow topics it is clear that some other assessment tool would be needed to evaluate the business competencies of these students.

Three Capstone reports were separated out as being so idiosyncratic as to defy categorization. All of these projects were deemed below expectations in business competencies as well as problem solving. Low performance in these projects was perceived by faculty assessors to be due to poor structuring of the projects.

Analyzing the Capstone Reports - Communication Skills

This section draws from the report of a communications specialist tasked with assessing the seventeen Capstone reports. Table 2 presents the writing assessment rubric used to evaluate each of the 17 Capstone projects and Table 3 summarizes results of the writing assessment. It was concluded that, except for the "Citation & Documentation" category, students were by and large meeting or exceeding expectations. There is plenty of room for improvement, but this baseline is quite helpful. The rubric currently being used to assess undergraduate writing includes eight significant components and evaluates each component according to three levels: exceeds, meets, or falls below expectations.

(Insert Table 2 about here)

(Insert Table 3 about here)

The assessment revealed that some of the writing in the Capstone projects was either below or only marginally met the expectations required of undergraduate writing using this rubric. Citation and documentation was the biggest problem with the Capstone reports. In nearly 50% of the papers reviewed, there was no reference of source material when there was primary or secondary data presented. In several cases, there was a bibliography at the end of the paper, but no accompanying in-text citations.

Many of the reports had supplementary material, but this material was not labeled or cited in the text. Also, a number of the papers had tables, charts, and graphs at the end of the paper with the appendices (which is not the correct placement), or made reference to supplementary material not included in the paper. In addition, there were papers that had visuals

that were not cited anywhere in the text. With one exception, all the papers reviewed had at least several grammar errors, which were primarily punctuation. Numerous papers used slang and clichés, both of which are not appropriate in analytical writing, particularly at this academic level.

The business communications specialist recommended the following things, at a minimum, to improve Capstone outputs: It is suggested that students be required to purchase and use a style manual (preferably APA) and that no submitted paper be awarded a passing grade until all the necessary documentation has been reviewed and approved. This review would also address the problem with visuals such as appendices, tables, charts, and graphs; It is also recommended students be required to purchase and use a grammar reference book. There are a number of such books available and many of them are fairly inexpensive. A module addressing documentation and formatting in analytical writing as part of the Capstone requirement is also recommended.

Analyzing the Capstone Reports - Self-Management Skills

The two professors that sponsored the majority of the Capstone projects were asked to think about each project in terms of student self-management skills. Self-management was defined as having the following characteristics: a high level of energy; perseverance; creativity; interdependent operation; assertiveness, and; a desire to learn and improve self.

Capstone Advisor One made the following observations and recommendations: the self-management outcome expectations are based on dimensions primarily relating to the students' personality types (i.e., assertiveness, level of energy, creativity). However, mechanisms can be included in the Capstone experience that encourages professionalism in all these dimensions. It would appear that students who are not demonstrating some of the outcome expectations on high

levels may be due to poor time management or related reasons. Having the students build a timeline for the semester, especially including due dates for components of the project, would encourage students to perform better on the outcome expectations.

Make the submission requirements more stringent for the component parts of the Capstone project should also help to get the students into the “habit of professionalism” which would contribute to their future career success. This would also encourage a better deliverable at the end of the semester.

The best projects provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the outcome expectation components of self management. If this outcome expectation is important, it should be kept in mind as students design their Capstone projects, and the self-management components should be represented in the students’ proposals for the course project.

Capstone Advisor Two made the following observations and recommendations: the Capstone project is not a good a tool in developing self-management skills. Students bring to the table much of what they present in their final projects and in their interactions with the professor.

The students that were easier to evaluate were the ones that scheduled meetings or communicated well by telephone or email. Evaluations were more difficult with students who had meager contact prior to turning in the final project. Students’ personal lives and personalities became part of the evaluation of their work for me. Student entrepreneurs tended to be graded higher because they were taking such great risk. The project focus was on their ability to use the report to make decisions. Where less was at stake, evaluation tended to be more critical of scientific method and writing style issues.

Faculty Reader Interaction

The process of going through the Capstone reports, and then having faculty meet to discuss them one-by-one, produced the beginnings of how to "fix" the problem that appears in many students' papers - in particular how to solve the fact that students do not adequately bring knowledge from the program into their final Capstone work. Also, that certain types of projects need to be re-structured so that they meet learning outcome criteria.

Another outcome of these faculty meetings also emerged. The dialog focused a great deal on curriculum improvement. Synergies emerged with what the faculty were doing in other programs they were involved with; and Capstone faculty and assessors both revealed they had a vested interest in making things improve. An atmosphere of trust in the meeting allowed these findings to become evident.

Capstone Project Recommendations

The assessment of the Capstone projects resulted in the following recommendations:

- Implement a stronger proposal process, including outlines, timelines, and checklists
- Require an annotated bibliography early in the process
- Require that projects include primary data collection and analysis
- A strengthened proposal process that discourages reports that are more a "collection of thoughts" than a research report
- Require structuring of the topic such that it demonstrates mastery of business competencies
- Limit the acceptance of narrow topics unless they can be tied to business competency measures

- Require intermediate, graded deliverables and scheduled progress reports in an effort to improve student self-management skills
- Implement a financial statement module to demonstrate what the project does to contribute to the organization
- Require revision and resubmission of work to enhance accountability
- Make a communications expert available where writing is poor
- To increase faculty involvement and commitment, increase Capstone faculty payment from \$250 to \$400, \$100 of which may be paid to a communications expert, at the faculty's option
- Require a reflection section in the final report, stating what the student learned and how they would apply it
- Minimize the impact of business planning software. Although providing structure, this software artificially constrains creative thinking and problem solving because of the “cookie cutter” template it provides
- Do not rely on a single piece of student work to make an assessment of the program. A portfolio of student work throughout the program would allow for a better assessment
- Assign a module on properly referencing materials and creating bibliographies

Revision of the Curriculum

Upon completion of the assessment task, a Business Policy Professor replaced one of the assessment faculty to engage in discussion about curriculum revision of the MSM program. The first stage involved review of the assessment findings, an analysis of major projects and assignments for the entire program, and a review of existing course syllabi. Following this

review and analysis, the faculty engaged in brainstorming about how to create a better curriculum that fit with the learning expectations of the working professional target market. The second stage was used to revise the master syllabi of the core courses.

Midway through this two year assessment project, the university decided to move the MSM program to the Graduate School as a Masters in Administration. The College of Business Administration would not have supervision over the Capstone project class, and the business content in the new degree would be reduced from six classes to four. This change dovetailed with the assessment evaluation to create increased motivation for curriculum revision.

A review of project-type assignments in all current syllabi revealed the following: some classes required no projects or applications; one class was deemed to have too many projects, and perhaps too much material, and; one class required a large project covering a minor part of class's content, and no project over the major content area of the class. It became clear that requiring consistent, assessable assignments was necessary

Constraints on the curriculum revision process were reviewed for the faculty group, as follows:

- Because of fiscal and accreditation issues, the MSM is to become the Masters in Administration, effective July 2004
- The new program will have only four Business Administration courses in it, a reduction from six in the MSM
- The target student market for the degree will continue to be working managers with non-business undergraduate degrees
- There has historically been no sequencing of the business administration classes
- MSM students (and their successors) will present a wide variation in undergraduate preparation, ability, and general maturity
- The program should remain project-based and applications-oriented

- Because of the change in housing of the degree to the Graduate College, College of Business Administration will experience a loss of control over the Capstone course. This means that assessment of the business administration content will have to happen earlier in the program, probably as part of the BA courses themselves

As the first stage of curriculum revision came to a close, an early consensus formed around the following general content areas of business that would best contribute to a graduate degree in administration for working managers: Management Information Systems; Accounting and Finance; Management; and Marketing.

The second stage of curriculum revision began with a brainstorming session to see all the possibilities of what might be included in 12 hours of Business Administration education and to create drafts of the course content and projects.

The master syllabi for the six original courses were again reviewed. There was vigorous debate on what could be consolidated from the large amount of business content in the degree. The participants came to a consensus that the four courses should be the following: Management Information Systems, Accounting and Finance for Managers; Organizational Strategy I; and Organizational Strategy II. The MIS class remained unchanged from the previous program. Finance was combined with Accounting instead of Business Law. Business law concepts moved to the two Organizational Strategy classes. The original combined Marketing and Management class was expanded to six units to create a more integrated business policy format.

Organizational Strategy I would contain the following content:

- Strategic Management Process
 - § Where are we?
 - § Where do we want to go?
 - § How do we get there?

- Environmental Scanning (where are we?)
 - § Internal to the organization (Strengths and Weaknesses)
 - Organizational structure
 - Human resource systems
 - Leadership in the organization
 - § External to the organization (Opportunities and Threats)
 - Mapping buyer behavior
 - Marketing research and statistical applications
 - Market segmentation, target markets, and positioning the offering

Organizational Strategy II would contain the following content:

- Review of Environmental Scanning from OS-I
- Supply Chain
- Performance Measurement/analysis
- Marketing Management
- Managing People

The course would have as its major assignment a project titled "Leading the Organization Into the Future," which would be tied to above topics and preferably relate to the student's work environment. Organizational Strategy I would include a major industry and environmental analysis project. Organizational Strategy II would extend the industry analysis to a related project, feasibility study, or business plan. Per the review of the Capstone reports, it was decided to include a set of intermediate deliverables in each of the sub areas listed - namely, supply chain management, performance measurement, marketing, and managing people.

Revised Assessment Plan

Given the assessment results of the project and the proposed curriculum revision, the last task was to revise the assessment plan. Exhibit 2 presents the revised assessment framework, which will be recommended to those who oversee the new Master of Administration program.

The assessment relies on a portfolio of four projects, one from each of the remaining business courses to assess the business learning outcomes.

Conclusions and Implications for Assessment

The assessment process for the MSM degree began as a funded grant activity in the summer of 2003. From May 2003 through June 2004, data gathering and assessment took place in an effort to determine whether MSM students were learning what was desired. In summer 2003, the data gathering process began. In summer 2004, the quantitative findings were reviewed. The findings of the various assessment activities, namely objective content test improvements, developing baselines for self-reports of student mastery of learning outcomes, and the review of Capstone reports, are intended to be used to improve future assessment processes and to improve future student learning performance.

The data gathering presented a few challenges that we must deal with in future iterations of assessment. The main problem related to data gathering was lack of participation by students. This limited the ability to rely on the improved scores in the content tests.

Probably the most successful assessment activity was the review of the Capstone reports in May 2004. The authors, along with three other professors, read and assessed all the Capstone reports that were turned in over the 2003-2004 academic year. Each was read and graded according to the Capstone rubric. It became clear early on that some types of papers were not adequate at demonstrating skills sought in the rubric. The group worked to find ways to allow students topic flexibility while imposing more structure on the Capstone process to force a better demonstration of skills and knowledge related to the desired content and rubrics.

The interaction was a great eye-opener. Three of the five professors had directed at least one Capstone project before, and seeing how the papers "stacked up" (or didn't "stack up") was revealing, even a bit threatening. But an atmosphere of trust allowed individual professors to learn from what they heard without feeling uneasy about the critiques. Additionally, the meeting released some untapped creativity on the part of those present - as new thoughts were presented and challenged in an open format.

This one-day, plus homework activity paid big dividends as the group moved forward to revise the program syllabi. Interim feedback was critical to successfully getting students to apply program concepts into their written work. The qualitative findings were actually better than the quantitative findings of the assessment in the first year. Earlier and more frequent assessment opportunities were obviously necessary. This knowledge led to a redesign of the four remaining business courses, a requirement as the MSM made way for the new Master of Administration degree.

All in all, this process has paid big dividends to those involved and will pay additional dividends to students as the findings and recommendations are implemented into future assessment activities. Perhaps the biggest outstanding concern, one that is probably not institution-specific, is that assigning specific faculty or administrators to oversee further assessment efforts might get lost as the university changes directions and continues to under fund certain types of activities. Also, as the degree moves to the Graduate College, oversight is likely to be further diluted. But to be valuable and competitive, learning and program assessment are likely to continue to be key ingredients to the institution's accountability process to its various stakeholders.

References

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Table 1
 Capstone Project (BA 510) Assessment Results
 (n=17, 2 to 4 raters for each, aggregated data)

	Exceeds	Meets	Below Expect.	N/A
Demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities in basic foundations of business	8	17	27	
Accounting	5	8	9	23
Business Law	2	12	12	18
Information Systems	4	8	12	22
Economics		10	14	20
Finance	4	8	15	18
Management	16	8	13	2
Marketing	10	13	12	8
Problem Identification, analysis process, solution	11	18	15	
Communication	6	17	15	
Environmental awareness	2	9	3	24
Ethics	4	3	6	28
Social Responsibility	6	9	2	24
Global Issues		1	2	38

The raw numbers are not encouraging, but it should be remembered that one of the purposes of this assessment exercise was to establish a baseline, to figure out where the program is at present.

In this table, the ratings are combined. But as the rating process took place, all raters agreed that certain types of Capstone reports did not "fit" well with the rubric for assessing them. On the next page, papers are put into categories and then rated differently.

Exhibit 1
Capstone Project (BA 510) Assessment Rubric

Learning Outcome	Expectations	Comments/Rationale for Rating
Core Competencies in Business: Demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities in the basic foundations of business	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Overall Evaluation:
Accounting Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Business Law Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Info. Systems Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Economics Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Finance Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Management Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Marketing Concepts/Skills	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

Learning Outcome	Expectations				Comments/Rationale for Rating
Problem Solving: Problem Identification Analysis Process Solution	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Communication: Writing effectively communicates project to the reader	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental Awareness Student completed an appropriate environmental analysis for the project.	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Ethics Student detected and integrated ethical issues into the project	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Social Responsibility Student detected and integrated issues of social responsibility into the project	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Global Issues. Student integrated global concepts into the project	Exceeds <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets <input type="checkbox"/>	Below <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	

Learning Outcome	Expectations	Comments/Rationale for Rating
Communication Specialist Evaluation (from separate evaluation)	Exceeds Meets Below N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Comments Brainstorming Suggestions for Curricular Improvement		

Table 2
Writing Assessment Rubric

Performance Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Content	Accomplished purpose of assignment directly and completely in an exceptional manner. All major topics thoroughly supported by specific, accurate, relevant data.	Accomplished assignment in a capable manner. Major topics covered but supporting detail somewhat lacking in specificity, accuracy, or reference.	Accomplished purpose of assignment only partially or indirectly. Little or no supporting data or data presented was not relevant, specific, or accurate
Organization	Exceptionally clear sense of unity and order, logical transitions, highly effective opening and closing	Adequate sense of unity and order, most transitions effective, clear opening and closing.	Lacked sense of unity and order, ineffective/lack of transitions, ineffective opening and closing.
Style (Clarity and Conciseness)	Used smooth, clear, readable prose in a superior way throughout, no clichés or wordiness, consistently effective word choice.	Used smooth, clear, readable prose throughout most of paper, few clichés, occasional wordiness, generally appropriate word choice.	Lacked smooth, clear, readable prose, contains clichés and wordiness, generally ineffective word choice.
Grammar and Mechanics	Few, if any, errors throughout in use of Standard English rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage.	Not more than a few errors per page in use of Standard English rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage but did not affect overall clarity	More than a few errors per page in use of Standard English rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage that made the paper unclear or difficult to read.
Citation and Documentation	Correctly and clearly incorporated source material into the paper, documented sources accurately and correctly.	No more than a few clarity problems incorporating source material or in documenting sources accurately and correctly.	Frequently incorporated source material unclearly or documented sources inaccurately or incorrectly.
Professionalism	Writing was exceptionally reader- centered and valid, used positive language, and lacked sexist language and non-relevant references to age, gender, or race.	Writing was consistently reader-centered and valid, used positive language, and lacked sexist language and non-relevant references to age, gender, or race.	Writing was not reader-centered and valid, used negative or sexist language, or made non-relevant references to age, gender, or race.
Format	Paper had an extremely professional , balanced appearance, pages were numbered, and any headings were descriptive, in parallel form, and extremely helpful to the reader.	Paper had a professional, reasonably well-balanced appearance, pages were numbered, and any headings were generally descriptive, in parallel form, and helpful to the reader.	Paper did not have a professional, balanced appearance, pages were not numbered, and/or any headings were not generally descriptive, in parallel form, or helpful to the reader.
Visual Aids (if any)	Used visuals extremely effectively to clarify, simplify, or emphasize numerical data or main points. Visuals were appropriately numbered, labeled, had sources noted, and were mentioned in the text.	Used visuals fairly effectively to clarify, simplify, or emphasize numerical data or main points. Most visuals were appropriately numbered, labeled, had sources noted, and were mentioned in the text.	Used visuals ineffectively. Many visuals did not clarify, simplify, or emphasize numerical data or main points. Many visuals were not numbered, fully labeled, had sources noted, or were not mentioned in the text.

Table 3
 Captstone Project (BA 510) Writing Assessment Results

Performance Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Content		15	2
Organization	1	13	3
Style	2	10	5
Grammar & Mechanics	2	11	4
Citation & Documentation		6	11
Professionalism	2	12	3
Format	1	14	2
Visual Aids	9	4	4

Exhibit 2
MSM Revised Assessment Framework



