PARTICIPANT'S NAME	Dr Paulene Naidoo
INSTITUTION	Durban University of Technology
PROJECT TITLE	An investigation of how Graduate Attributes (GA) are developed through Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the Department of Public Relations Management, Durban University of Technology.
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Abstract

The study proposed herewith concerns itself with the formalising of graduate attributes in teaching, learning and assessment practice within the Department of Public Relations Management. The study will therefore, investigate whether and the extent to which there is evidence in the teaching, learning and assessment of graduate attribute development.

This study aims to investigate whether and how graduate attributes are promoted through the Department of Public Relations (PR) Management first year major subjects. An in-depth interview will be administered to the lecturers for the major subjects at 1st year level to identify teaching and assessment practices that promote graduate attributes within the PR field. An investigation into the evidence of the teaching, learning and assessment practices within the learner guides will also be analysed in comparison to what has been discussed at the in-depth interviews. Finally, the analysis from the learner guide, specifically the assessments will guide the future planning and assessment of graduate attributes within the PR department.

Introduction and Background

With the rising pressure on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to produce graduates that are employable as well as able to contribute significantly to society through engaged citizenship (CHE, 2013; Coetzee, 2014); the ability to demonstrate effective teaching and learning strategies that promote and develop graduate attributes has become essential. The changing landscape of the global higher education sector has placed substantial attention on graduate attributes thereby seeking to revise and express their role and purpose as tertiary institutions. Walker (2010) affirmed that in South Africa, specifically, the role of university on producing graduate attributes for the "public good" has been emphasized. According to (Griesel & Parker, 2009), Higher Education South Africa and South African Qualifications Authority (HESA & SAQA) affirmed that articulation between higher education and employment in the work-place has been a focus of government initiatives globally. There is increasing pressure on higher education institutions within South Africa, from both government and employers to produce employable graduates who possess the attributes, competences and character that are required in the world of work (Griesel & Parker, ibid). Hence, South African universities have been involved in the process of identifying, drafting and revising graduate attributes. The Durban University of Technology (DUT) is no different and as at 2014 sanctioned its list of graduate attributes that it hopes will characterise all its graduates. Given the current backdrop, of high unemployment, poverty and the widening gap between the rich and the poor; the issue of graduate attributes is of utmost importance

and research seeking to better understand how graduate attributes can be transferred to the students, becomes imperative.

This study therefore, sets out to investigate if the current teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) practices promote graduate attributes and identify if and how the department of public relations management has formalised graduate attributes within teaching and assessment practices.

The objectives of the study are to:

1) Determine if graduate attributes exist in the department's teaching, learning and assessment practices.
2) Identify how graduate attributes are formalised or embedded into the department's teaching, learning and assessment practices.
3) Determine whether and the extent to which students involved in the teaching, learning and assessment exhibit the indicators of successful graduate attribute acquisition.

Higher Education within a South African Context

Higher Education globally is undergoing a transformation, specifically with the focus on the role of university adequately preparing graduates for the fluctuating demands from the world of work. South Africa is no different, the higher education (HE) sector is under increasing pressure to address issues of social change and life-long learning required by the government, industry and society at large. However, HE in South Africa still bears the permanent scars of apartheid despite the 20 years of democracy. Hassim (2009:63) affirm that "Apartheid was a system of racial hierarchies in which education played a central role in ensuring that different "population groups" were systematically shepherded into different and unequal roles in society, political life, and the economy". Hassim (ibid) adds that these racial hierarchies of apartheid "intersected with and reinforced class and gender inequalities". While there have been imperatives to address past injustices, the reality is that transformation in the various sectors of education has been slow and tenuous.

Although this investigation is located within the Department of Public Relations Management at the Durban University of Technology, it is set within the wider context of South African higher education. It is becomes evident that South African higher education does not only have to contend with global HE issues identified, but also the history of apartheid of separate, unequal and an unjust education system (Millar, 2014:3). Hence, democratic South African tenure implemented a transformative education policy set out in the White Paper on Education and Training of 1997 (DOE, 1997). Universities are compelled to transform into production communities of knowledge workers by influential global discourses as well as the demands of industry on highly-skilled knowledge workers to meet their mutable requirements (Millar, 2014:3).

Graduate Attributes

Universities both nationally and internationally are increasingly tasked with ensuring that their students develop graduate attributes which aim to better equip them with fundamental skills required for the working world. Hager and Holland (2006:2) confirm that the educational sector has been commissioned by the industry and the department of education, to focus on graduates

'generic skills' ('core skills' or 'basic skills'), more recently branded as 'employability skills' or graduate attributes. Hence, the integration and implementation of graduate attributes into the disciplines at higher education institutions have become imperative. A study by Griesel and Parker (2009:2-3) for the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and Higher Education South Africa (HESA), prioritises the following particular niche areas in as far as graduate attributes are concerned: (1)The interface between higher education and the working world; (2)the imperative skills required for the economy and society in general; and (3)the reality of a 21st century knowledge-driven global society that necessitates higher education to produce graduates who can effectively and productively compete and participate in an increasingly globalised society. Aligned to the above mentioned niche areas set out by SAQA and HESA, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) identified five broad graduate attributes that it hopes will better equip learners with the skills required for the working world as:

1. Critical and creative thinkers who work independently and collaboratively
2. Knowledgeable practitioners
3. Effective Communicators
4. Culturally, environmentally and socially aware within a local and global context
5. Active and reflective learners (Sattar & Cooke, 2014:5)

The attributes identified by DUT aim to include but go beyond discipline specific or technical knowledge which traditionally formed the core responsibility of universities. They aim to adequately prepare graduates as global citizens who aspire to contribute positively to the local and global society.

Aligned to the DUT graduate attributes, the Department of Public Relations Management, a discipline within DUT, has aimed to integrate and implement the five broad graduate attributes outlined by DUT, into the discipline through their teaching and assessment strategies. This study therefore, aims to identify if the graduate attributes exists within the curriculum and evaluate the integration and promotion of graduate attributes into the 1st year National Diploma: Public Relations Management.

Conceptual Framework for Teaching and Learning of Graduate Attributes

Tertiary institutions globally are increasing commission with ensuring that learners develop attributes and skills which will adequately prepare them for the world of work and as good citizens in both their local and global environments. Barrie (2004) affirms that there is literature that assumes a shared understanding on the part of the university-community as the platform for generic outcomes among more familiar discipline-based knowledge outcomes. He further affirms that research has also indicated that academics hold different understandings or ideas of such outcomes. Hence, to assist in the development of a mutual understanding of the generic outcomes, Barrie (2007) provides a conceptual framework for which he aims to explain that there are four complex, qualitatively distinct understandings of generic attributes as outcomes as follows:

1. Precursor Conception;
2. Complement Conception;
3. Translation Conception;
4. Enabling Conception.

At the basic level of the hierarchy, Hager and Holland (2006:155) explain that generic graduate attributes can be conceived of as basic precursory abilities which offer a basis upon which the discipline knowledge of university education can be built. However, Barrie (2007:440) affirms that academics expressed an understanding of graduate attributes that goes beyond the precursor abilities to encompass additional general functional abilities and personal skills that can complement the discipline specific learning outcomes of a university education. Hager and Holland (2006:164) maintain that complementary conceptions of graduate attributes are viewed as atomistic broad technical and personal skills that complement discipline specific learning outcomes. Barrie (2007:440) add that there are specialized variations of skills that academics refer to as being useful additional general skills. He affirms that these general skills are essential in the application of discipline specific knowledge, and the translation of university learning to unfamiliar settings, thereby adapting the products of university learning. Barrie (2007:441) continues to discuss the enabling conception as graduate attributes that encompasses enabling or empowering abilities that infuse university learning and knowledge.

Based on Barrie's conceptual framework, it is therefore evident that there are variations in what academics understand graduate attributes to be (Barrie, 2007: 439). Hence, this conceptual framework will provide a basis of this study. It aims to investigate if the application of the concepts suggested by Barrie are evident in the teaching and learning practices within the PR department as far as 1st year major subjects are concerned.

Methodology

The research will adopt a qualitative methodological approach. Yin (2009:115) asserts that the advantage presented by using various sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of analysis also referred to as a process of triangulation and validation. Hence, for the purpose of this study, data will be collected using in-depth interviews, document analysis and literature review.

- Literature Review – According to Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:29), a literature review refers to an interpretation of a selection of relevant material (either published or unpublished) that is available on a particular subject matter. This type of information can be extracted from documents, talks, observations, drawings, photography and videos that involves either summarization, analysis, evaluation or synthesis of the selected information. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the literature review will be summarized and analysed in conjunction to the findings of this study.

- Interview schedule for lecturers – A schedule comprising mainly of open-ended questions will be administered to with all three lecturers for the major subjects at 1st year level. The questions will focus on teaching, learning and assessment practices that promote graduate attributes within the PR discipline.

- Document analysis: Document analysis is a form of qualitative research where documents are examined in order to obtain facts and information (Pershing, 2002) about a particular subject area being researched. Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:29) add that documents do not stand alone, instead it should be situated within a frame of reference for the content to be understood. For the purpose of this study, the 2015 study guides of the three major 1st year subjects will be analysed to determine whether there is evidence of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) practices that would possibly promote graduate attributes.

Results and Discussions

As part of the study, an interview schedule was issued to the 3 lecturers for the major subjects at 1st year level, teaching in the department of Public Relations Management. To maintain anonymity, each lecturer has been named as L1, L2 and L3 in the study, with their responses included. This section illustrates the document analysis and interviews using themes, tables and graphs. Distinct categories were divided into significant themes into which units of analysis could be placed.

Program Specific Outcomes

With the established standards of excellence set by the university and the Public Relations Management program, DUT graduates are expected to achieve certain skills and attributes set by higher learning institutes. One of the clearest program specific outcomes stated in the first year learner guide for public relations students is that the objectives of the Public Relations program is to develop students who can successfully handle the demands of the working world upon becoming public relations practitioners. This can be achieved through a combination of attributes which students acquire during their studies as a result of planned learning outcomes in each discipline.

Another outcome which the program specifies in its course guide is that through the completion of the Community Engagement Project, students will have the ability to display a commitment to sharing knowledge resources with various communities in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as encourage an ethos of community service within its staff and student body. Interesting enough, L1 indicated that "as far as I know – we have not outlined specific graduate attributes for Public Relations as a discipline per se. We do however have outcomes that are specific to the Public Relations academic programme and I suppose these could be conceived of as PR graduate attributes although we have not necessarily referred to them as such". Although L1 indicated that the program/discipline specific outcomes were not explicitly stated in the document, it was evident during the document analysis, that the program outcomes were discussed in the 'Welcome' section of the course guide.

Subject Outcomes

Subject outcomes hold similar importance in regards to the program and the overall graduate attributes which DUT aspires to for each of its students. For the first year majors in the Public Relations Management program, a number of subject outcomes are stated explicitly. Through attending lectures for the major subjects, students are to learn about various types of media in South Africa, along with their functions and characteristics, in order to understand the best usage of such media as future Public Relations Practitioners.

To communicate with potential target audiences, students will learn and develop written and verbal skills, along with acquiring knowledge in possessing a solid grounding in technical and practical skills to make the student a professional in a public relations work environment.

As PR students, another vital outcome relates to the students exploration of PR history and theories, as well as key practice areas such as internal and external relations, community relations, government relations, issue and crisis management, event management and sponsorship, which is all taught in the 3 major subjects. Students will also learn the theory and practice of PR as part of a media communication process and as a vital management function, so as to learn and understand the communication process and impact of perception on communication and audiences.

Developing nonverbal and verbal communication in PR is another imperative learning outcome, due to the requirement of students being effective communicators with great interpersonal skills, but also to have a broad understanding on group dynamics and leadership skills in working environments.

Similarly, as with the program specific outcomes mentioned earlier, the subject outcomes are outlined in a few paragraphs under the 'Introduction to Major Subject's' section in the first year learner guide and can be detailed more clearly.

Learning Outcomes

At DUT, learning outcomes express the skills, knowledge and attitudes which students are able to attain as a result of their learning activity. Below are a number of outcomes stated in the learner guide after the completion of various sections in the first year subjects.

- Use the library to gather and research relevant material
- Competently write an academic essay
- Compile a public relations programme
- Prepare a media strategy plan
- Prepare a media release
- The students should be able to explain PR concepts.
- Source and supply positive information under supervision.
- Able to practice and apply codes, norms, rules which govern media relations and media practice.
- Apply basic research techniques to solve defined PR problems.
- Plan, prepare and execute a media strategy.
- Plan and conduct an interview.
- Familiar with the structure of the South African Print media, the SABC and new media.
- Able to acquire knowledge of the perception process and its impact on the self and others.

Assessment criteria and methods

It is specified in the course guide that first year students have 2 assignments, 2 tests and a final exam for the year. There are 4 lectures per week which the student needs to attend, and the student needs to attain a Duly Performed (DP) of at least 40% for all 3 subjects. Each test weighs 30% of the students final DP, and each assignment weighs 20%. The final exam written at the end of the year weighs 60% for the students overall mark.

Rubrics for all formal assessments are also provided to alert the students to how they are marked on assignments, stating clear mark allocations for what is expected.

Program Alignment to Outcomes

It can be noted that each learning outcome stated in the learner guide coincides with the course material taught in class for each subject, however, parallels between the program and various outcomes are only partial. Without overt program outcomes, the effects for learning only support the outcomes specified for each academic subject.

Evidence of Learning

Students are able to show an evidence of learning through their performance in formal and informal written assessments. Rubrics stipulate how students are graded, and what subject matter they are assessed on, which provides clear indication to the students on what is expected of them. Through the help of these rubrics, these formal assessments thereafter display the students understanding and whether all subjects were well received. We are also able to understand student responses to social issues, their perspective, experiences, as well as keen insight into their critical thinking through their oral presentations.

Formal assessments comprise of the group assignment, which is the NPO Project, tests and exams, oral and PowerPoint presentations given in class and the Community Engagement Project Informal assessments include class tasks, online exercises and individual assignments.

Assessment Rubrics

There is clear evidence of assessment rubrics in the first year learner guide, which are provided for students to follow in order to assist with completing an assessment of expected impeccable quality on time. Descriptions of what is required are also provided to make the task easily understood and mark allocations are provided to alert the learner of what requires focus within the assessment and how they will be critiqued/assessed.

As part of the study, these assessment rubrics and their alignment to the outcomes and graduate attributes need to be investigated. This can be seen in the table below.

Table 1: Overview of Discipline Specific Outcomes and Assessments of Graduate Attributes.

Program Outcomes	Subject Outcomes	Learning Outcomes	Assessment	Employability Skills	Graduate Attributes
• To develop students who can successfully handle the demands of the working world upon becoming public relations practitioners.	• Learn about various types of media in South Africa.	• Familiar with the structure of the South African Print media, the SABC and new media.	Formal Assessment (Test)	Inquiry & Analysis, Creative Thinking	Critical and creative thinkers
	• The functions and characteristics as well as best uses of the media for future Public Relations Practitioners.	• Able to practice and apply codes, norms, rules which govern media relations and media practice.	Formal Assessment (Test)	Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning	Critical and creative thinkers Knowledgeable practitioners
	• Developing written and verbal skills required to communicate with target audiences.	• Compile a public relations programme • Competently write an academic essay • Prepare a media release • Plan and conduct	Formal Assessment (Community Engagement Group Project) • Plan and execute an event of your choice to help this non-profit organisation by drawing up a public relations programme for the event (a detailed rubric was provided to students. See	Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Research Literacy, Academic Literacy, Flexibility & Adaptability, Positive Attitude,	Knowledgeable practitioners Effective communicators

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		an interview. • Prepare a media strategy plan	Annexure 1) • Students written skills were also assessed. (A detailed rubric was provided. See Annexure 1)	Written and Oral Communication,	
	• A solid grounding in technical and practical skills to make the student a professional.	• Apply basic research techniques to solve defined PR problems.	Formal Assessment (Community Engagement Project)	Digital and Information Literacy, Modern Tool Usage. Ethical reasoning, Intercultural Knowledge & Competence, Social Responsibility.	Culturally, environmentally, and socially aware within a global and cultural context Critical and creative thinkers
• Students to have the ability to display a commitment to sharing knowledge resources with various communities in KwaZulu-Natal. And to encourage	• Exploring the history and theories of PR, as well as key practice areas like internal and external relations, community relations, government relations, issue and	• The students should be able to explain PR concepts.	Formal Assessment (Test)	Reflection & Evaluation, Personal & Intellectual Autonomy, Integrative Learning.	Active and reflective learners

an ethos of community service within its staff and student body.	crisis management, event management and sponsorship.				
	• Students will learn the theory and practice of PR as part of a media communication process and as a vital management function.	• Source and supply positive information under supervision.	Formal Assessment (Community Engagement Project)	Flexibility and Adaptability, Positive Attitude,	
	• Learning about the communication process, impact of perception on communication and audiences.	• Use the library to gather and research relevant material	Formal Assessment (ILT Essay) (See Annexure 1)	Inquiry & Analysis, Creative Thinking	Critical and creative thinkers
	• Developing nonverbal and verbal communication in PR	• Plan, prepare and execute a media strategy.	Formal Assessment (Media Strategy) • Plan and execute an event of your choice to help this non-profit organisation by drawing up a public relations programme for this event (See annexure 1)	Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Relationship Management, Resourceful & Responsible	Knowledgeable practitioners

	• Understanding and developing group dynamics and leadership skills.	• Able to acquire knowledge of the perception process and its impact on the self and others.	Formal Assessment (Presentation) • Clearly and articulately share your experiences as a group throughout the Community Engagement assignment in the form of a presentation. (See Annexure 1)	Teamwork, Leadership, Relationship Management, Resourceful & Responsible, Integrative Learning, Flexibility & Adaptability, Positive Attitude, Written and Oral Communication,	Knowledgeable practitioners Effective communicators

Outcomes aligning to Graduate Attributes

DUT has identified five broad graduate attributes that it hopes will better equip learners with the skills required for the working world as:

1. Critical and creative thinkers who work independently and collaboratively
2. Knowledgeable practitioners
3. Effective Communicators
4. Culturally, environmentally and socially aware within a local and global context
5. Active and reflective learners (Sattar & Cooke, 2014:5)

Following are explanations of what each lecturer indicated as their personal understanding of the DUT graduate attributes within the PR discipline, which aligned to what was specified in the first year learner guide.

L1: "My understanding of graduate attributes is that these are qualities, competencies, knowledge and skills that every DUT graduate should possess upon graduation. In as far as the DUT graduate attributes are promoted or enhanced in the PR academic programme; I believe we have been very active in this area and that the focus of enhancement and effectiveness is with the community engagement projects that we run."

L2: "With the interesting projects that the PR department formulates for the students, it encourages students as well as establishes qualities in them which make them good students and good workers for the future. The graduate attributes help to create students who become beneficial to their communities and brand ambassadors for DUT."

L3: "I would think that these are the skills and qualities students within the PR discipline which would be required [in students] to develop."

While each lecturer prioritised certain attributes as more relevant for a first year student, the common thread amongst their answers concluded that the DUT graduate attributes were favourable qualities to aspire in each PR student at the end of their qualification.

Critical and Creative Thinkers

Students are able to display their critical thinking and creative flair not just when asked to proactively seek out an NPO of their choice for their first year group project, but when they are asked to solve public relations problems for the NPO by designing and implementing media strategies to achieve specific goals that will benefit the community, as well as the organisation during this period.

Students are asked to make decisions independently, as well as to collaborate with their group members and take responsibility for their actions while working with the NPO. Aspects such as leadership, teamwork, flexibility, resourcefulness, and a positive attitude are required to complete the task successfully, which raise awareness to the creativity and critical thinking that DUT students possess in this regard.

Ranking of Graduate Attributes

Lecturers were requested to rank and provide reasons for graduate attributes they felt was most imperative for first year students. Table 2, below are the attributes, ranked in order of

importance, according to each lecturer, along with their justifications for each. (1 being the most important, 5 being the least important)

Table 2: Ranking of Graduate Attributes

Name	Critical Thinkers	Knowledgeable Practitioners	Effective Communicators	Culturally, environmentally, socially aware	Active & Reflective learners
L1	3	4	1	2	5
L2	1	2	3	4	5
L3	1	2	2	1	1

L1: "I have ordered these in terms of what I believe to be reasonably expected after the first year of study. For instance, while I believe that being an active and reflective learner is important even at first year, I believe that one can expect that of slightly more senior students."

L2: "Critical and creative thinkers who work independently and collaboratively have the ability to think fast, which provides students with the opportunity to offer solutions to any problem found. Being knowledgeable practitioners enables students to become experts in their field of Public Relations. A Public Relations Practitioner must be a good communicator.

The attribute of being culturally, environmentally and socially aware within a local and global context provides students with the ability to interact both socially and academically, especially in the intercultural context. Students will be able to work independently with little supervision upon being active and reflective learners."

L3: "Critical and creative thinkers should be encouraged and developed from the very first year if we want learners to achieve their full academic potential. This is a higher level cognitive skill, and at first year students ought to be made aware of the importance of questioning, analysing and reflecting. Over time, such skills will no doubt prove beneficial to the leaners academic career and in life (workplace and elsewhere)." Speaking about the various other attributes, L3 continued: "At first year level, the learner is only encountering the material related to the field of study – expecting the learner to be very proficient at the very outset is not plausible. This [Effective Communicators] is a skill the learner will develop throughout his/her studies. Obviously a level 3 would be required for the learner to engage with peers, lecturers and so on. Being culturally, environmentally and socially aware within a local and global context is very important attribute if we want to encourage well-rounded learners, who are aware of the environment and world around them. University education should not be something placed in an ivory tower - somewhat foreign, removed and displaced from society. The idea is to broaden the student's understanding beyond their field of study. Being active and reflective learners is very important if we want to encourage critical and creative thinkers, and the rest of the graduate attributes listed."

Based on the feedback received from the lecturers are able to assess students and see through their work how the graduate attributes take form. For the attribute of Critical and creative thinkers, it was seen that the Community Engagement Project (Presentation, Media Strategy

and Press Release), a formal assessment for the first year students which is detailed in the learner guide, expresses the qualities of working independently and collaboratively.

It is stated that at the end of the assignment, the students should be able to:
• Plan and execute an event
• Prepare a media strategy plan for the activity they implement for their chosen NPO
• Prepare a media release that they send to the local print media profiling the NPO.
• Write a reflective piece as a group
• Articulately share their experiences in the form of a presentation that incorporates a variety of audio-visual elements.

L1: "This formal assessment requires students to work in groups and assist an NPO of their choice using their knowledge of PR. Doing this kind of assessment compels the students to think critically and creatively because each NPO has a different set of circumstances and it is up to the students to determine what is appropriate and could work and then proceed to implement. There is often a lot of problem-solving and trouble-shooting that is involved along the way."

L2: "It is used to generate a student's keen insight into their critical thinking."

L3: "Students can resubmit a written assignment if the lecturer feels like they have performed badly and have the potential to improve their mark."

Knowledgeable Practitioners

A students knowledge will come into practice when they need to apply theory and their integrated understanding of PR learnt in class when working with their NPO's. They will be able to gain experience by working with modern technology in their work environment, thereby understanding its importance and significant role in getting designated tasks completed. Students will have the unique opportunity to develop professional and work ethics and learn self-discipline, learning how to work collaboratively in a work environment. Students will have the chance to extend their knowledge beyond the classroom through their work tasks, problem solving experience and research, something which not many students in tertiary institutes are exposed to.

100% of participants stated that formal assessments such as tests and writing an academic essay, attributed to students becoming Knowledgeable Practitioners.

L1: "The [NPO] assessment requires that they be knowledgeable about PR and actually compels them to put theory to practice."

L2: "Knowledgeable practitioners can be determined in students through the Formal assessment in Tests and Exams, which helps us to understand whether the subject was well received. At Risk students were identified and were treated separately as well."

L3: "The Knowledgeable practitioners attributes can be seen in Formal assessment like Tests and Exams where students need to competently write an academic essay. At Risk students are identified and provided with online resources to observe and assist in improving their marks."

Effective Communicators

Good communication skills in Public Relations are imperative. Students will be required to develop and possess excellent verbal as well as written communication skills in order to have an effective strategy. They will need to create an understanding within the organisation and to the community by interacting with various stakeholders and learning from one another.

Developing and implementing a media strategy requires a message to be formulated for the organisation and community by the students. The success of the media strategy depends highly on how effectively the students are able to communicate amongst themselves and the various professional groups they interact with.

Effective Communication is a crucial part of any Public Relations graduate, and is explored in the assessment of group presentations for the first year students. However, student's level of communication may differ, and with the specifications in the learner guide, lecturers discussed certain elements that were analysed.

L1: "The students are expected to communicate formally with their respective NPO liaisons and with each other in a clear and co-ordinated fashion. The students are also expected to share their experiences in the form of a presentation."

L2: "Effective Communicators is an attribute that is seen through Formal Class presentations, PowerPoint presentations etc., in order To understand their communication skills."

L3: "Formal assessments like Group Presentations and Written Assignments test effective communication in students. The students should be able to explain PR concepts.   Students can resubmit a written assignment if the lecturer feels like they have performed badly and have the potential to improve their mark."

Culturally, Environmentally, and Socially Aware within a Global and Cultural Context

In an ever changing world, students need to be made aware of problems encountered by their local communities, be it a social, cultural or environmental issue that they address when working with their selected NPO.

With regular interaction and communication, students will understand how diverse work environments can be, the challenges many organisations experience, along with the differences in attitudes relating to gender, race, religion, culture, identity etc.

Students will learn about what kind of behaviour is acceptable and considered responsible in a work environment, and what is seen as misconduct, which will allow students to become more self-aware, reflecting upon their own attitudes and how they ought to conduct themselves in a local or professional environment.

The fourth graduate attribute tests social responsibility and civic engagement in students. Lecturers explained that the formal assessment of the Community engagement Project encouraged exposure to practice and other employability skills associated with this attribute.

L1: "Being immersed in assisting an NPO, exposes the students to a variety of cultural, environmental and social challenges that are faced by many South Africans."

L2: "This attribute is tested in the Formal assessment of the Community Engagement Project, which can be used to access the student's perspective in terms of their social and cultural background."

L3: "Formal assessment like the Community Engagement Project assists in seeing this attribute in students. Tasks like preparing a media strategy plan for the activity and preparing a media release that they will send to the local print media profiling the NPO."

Active and Reflective Learners

The opportunity to work with an NPO allows students to become more dynamic and responsible. Students who are able to display their own thoughts, creativity, initiative and personal motivation while they work can function at a level of integration which is beneficial to them. This can assist with their commitment to a work project, allowing them to opportunity to find how it relates to their personal and career goals. Ultimately, students can reflect on their acquired knowledge, understanding what they have been taught and what they have experienced through the community engagement project.

Lifelong learning encouraged via the attribute of Active and Reflective Learners can be detected via the informal assessments given to students, with lecturers subsequently commenting about these qualities.

L1: "Students are expected to reflect on their experiences, in terms of how the assignment may have affected or influenced them."

L2: "Informal assessments like Class tasks and individual assignments help to understand their responses to issues."

L3: "Active and reflective learners can be seen in Informal/ Formal assessments like Class exercises and Discussion questions in tests. We are Able to acquire knowledge of the perception process and its impact on the self and others. Students can resubmit an exercise if the lecturer feels like they have performed badly and have the potential to improve their mark."

Gaps and Challenges

It is clear that gaps have been identified in the first year learner guide in concern to a few aspects discussed before. The DUT graduate attributes need to be clearly indicated with the learning and program outcomes in order to provide a better understanding of how the Public Relations department aligns with the vision of the university.

Despite the analysis of the graduate attribute information, program, subject and learner outcomes provided in the guide for the learners, lecturers managed to detect definite challenges which were related wholly to student's performance, as compared to any specific shortcomings which were identified in the learner guide analysis.

Lecturers identified the following student challenges.

L1: "Since the assignment is done as a group, it is difficult to gauge whether all the students have actually participated or contributed in an equally distributive manner to the assignment."

L2: "Group Presentations were hectic for some of the students. Their collaborative efforts in some instances were frustrated. Class tests: Some students were not very active or fast enough to respond to class tasks. Some were very slow but achieved eventually."

L3: "Tracking of individual student performances in group projects [was a challenge]. It is unclear how much work each student contributes to the final project."

Through analysing these challenges, it provides a clearer indication of the shortcomings lecturers experience and how these elements can be included in rubrics and assignment guidelines to alert students to monitor their own involvement in group projects, to ensure fairness and responsibility amongst all members that they work with.

Actionable Assessment

The community engagement project at the first year level requires student to work with a Non-Profit Organisation of their choice, whereby they assist in planning an event for publicity. One of the main tasks for the group is developing and implementing a media strategy for the organisation they choose to work with. This activity is engaging for students on multiple levels, as students get to work in groups, experience group dynamics and leadership skills in a real world environment where they are getting authentic work involvement, thereby making these assessments actionable, as well as engaging. This is seen through the group presentations that students are required to give to their fellow classmates and the department.

Conclusion

Annexure 1

Information Literacy Assessment: Essay

Write an essay critically discussing the message contained in the YouTube video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRl8ElhrQjQ. By Prince EA ***in relation to the impact of technological developments on human communication***

Guidelines:
Length: 3-4 pages
Spacing: 1,5pt
Bibliography: minimum of 4 sources
Referencing: Harvard method
Writing style: Formal (academic) – no slang or sms text language and abbreviations

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INTEGRATED INFORMATION LITERACY ESSAY- ASSESSMENT RUBRIC [DUE: 22 MAY 2015] OUTCOMES: At the end of this assessment students would be able to: • Use the library to gather and research relevant material • Competently write an academic essay		
Description of Assessment	Mark Allocation	Student Mark
Introduction - Does your introduction state the purpose of the essay? - Does your introduction provide an overview of the coverage and structure of your essay?	10	
Body - **Quality of argument** - Is your argument statement lucid? - Is your argument valid given the material and evidence which you cite? - Do you substantiate your argument adequately with textual evidence? - **Research** - Does your work reflect adequate engagement in relevant, independent research on the topic? - Does your work demonstrate an adequate understanding of the scholarly research you cite? - **Analysis** - Does your work reflect a deep understanding and analysis of the concepts, ideas, and arguments confronted in the research texts?	20	
Conclusion - Does your conclusion adequately summarise the key points made in the body of the essay and clarify their significance?	5	
Style and presentation - Is the organisation of thought clear, sequential and logical? - Have you consistently observed referencing and citation conventions spelled?	10	
Language • Has your work been proofread and edited for errors before submission? • Does your work demonstrate clarity of expression and the correct use of grammatical conventions?	5	
TOTAL	50	
Lecturer's Comments		

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1. Public Relations One: [Application and Integration]

Plan and execute an event of your choice to help this non-profit organisation by drawing up a public relations programme for this event which will consist of the following:

- Defining the situation

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2. Media Studies One: [Application and Integration]

- Prepare a **media strategy plan** for the activity you are going to implement for your chosen NPO.
- Prepare a **media release** that you will send to the local print media profiling the NPO. [Remember you could profile the project as a whole or you could profile your event]. Attach this media release to your media strategy plan.

Your assessment should be between **4-6 pages** in length.

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3. Communication Science One: [Discovery and Reflection]

After you have worked on the non-profit organisation (NPO) project as a group, complete the following tasks:

Clearly and articulately share your experiences as a group throughout the Community Engagement assignment in the form of a presentation. Your presentation is to be guided by the following:

- Overview of the selected NPO
- Discussion of the executed event/activity
- Evaluation of the project
- Reflection on the learning curve [What did you gain from the experience? What were the challenges? How has this project impacted on your overall learning? Etc.]

NB: Students are to attend lectures during the community engagement

Public Relations One		
Plan and execute an event of your choice to help this non-profit organisation by drawing up a public relations programme for this event which will consist of the following: • Defining the situation • Setting the objectives (Long term & Short term) • Determining the target audience (Primary, Secondary, Special) • Developing the message • 1 major activity • Budget for your activity • Review and Evaluation • Checklist		
PUBLIC RELATIONS – ASSESSMENT TWO: THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMME: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC **[DUE: 28/29 JULY 2015]** **OUTCOME:** At the end of this assessment students would be able to: • Compile a public relations programme		
Description of Assessment	Mark Allocation	Student Mark
Content The following assessment criteria will be used: Students are to put together a PR programme using the following 7 steps:		
- Defining the situation	6	
- Setting the objectives	5	
- Determining the target audience	5	
- Developing the message	3	
- Activity and budget	16	
- Review and evaluation	5	
- Checklist for each activity of the launch	5	
Language In addition students written skills will be assessed. The following criteria will be used:	5	

- Usage of language - Accuracy of grammar - Accuracy of spelling - Sentence construction		
TOTAL	50x2	
Lecturer's Comments		

Media Studies One: Assessment Rubric • Prepare a **media strategy plan** for the activity you are going to implement for your chosen NPO. • Prepare a **media release** that you will send to the local print media profiling the NPO. [Remember you could profile the project as a whole or you could profile your event]. Attach this media release to your media strategy plan.		
MEDIA STUDIES –ASSESSMENT 2: MEDIA STRATEGY/MEDIA RELEASE: [DUE: 28/29 JULY 2015] **OUTCOMES:** At the end of this Assessment students would be able to: • Prepare a media strategy plan • Prepare a media release		
Description of Assessment	**Mark**	**Students**

	Allocation	Marks
MEDIA RELEASE [50]	50	
1. Content/ Layout		
Has the student incorporated the following: • Letterhead • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • Headline (boldface type) • Dateline • Lead Paragraph (5 W's – select an appropriate angle for your release) • -End- • Contact Information • General Layout: Presentation of the release (e.g. font, neatness, margins, spacing)	30	
3. Writing Skills		
Accurate use of the following: • Grammar and Punctuation • Spelling • Sentence and paragraph construction Avoid: • Adding extra words that distract from the meaning of your release • Jargon and clichés	20	
MEDIA STRATEGY [50]	50	
The student is able to use the following steps to formulate a media strategy plan: • *Short introduction (10)* • *Goals [long-term and short-term] (10)* • *Identify partners (10)* • *Time-line (10)* • *Follow-up (10)*		
GRAND TOTAL	100	
Lecturer's Comments:		

Communication Science One: Assessment Rubric

Assessment Task

After you have worked on the non-profit organisation (NPO) project as a group, complete the following tasks:

- Clearly and articulately share your experiences as a group throughout the Community Engagement assignment in the form of a presentation. Your presentation is to be guided by the following:
  - Overview of the selected NPO
  - Discussion of the executed event/activity
  - Evaluation of the project
  - Reflection on the learning curve [What did you gain from the experience? What were the challenges? How has this project impacted on your overall learning? Etc.]

COMMMUNICATION SCIENCE ONE –ASSESSMENT TWO: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
[DUE: 28/29 JULY 2015]
Outcomes:

At the end of this assessment students should be able to:
- Clearly and articulately share their experiences throughout the Community Engagement assignment in the form of a presentation.

Description of Assessment	Mark Allocation	Student Mark
Content • Organisation of information • Coherence (does what you say/present make sense?)	20	
Delivery • Voice: clarity/ audibility/ fluency • Confidence/posture/demeanour • Eye contact/audience engagement	10	
Visual aids • Relevance • Visual appeal (design: easy to read)	10	

• Appropriate		
Creativity • Creative ideas (WOW Factor)	10	
TOTAL	**50**	
Lecturer's Comments:		

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