THE CHALLENGE
Community preceptors, CLM advisory board members, and CLM faculty identified a weakness in student competency as it related to communication.

THE SOLUTION
Create a sophomore-level class that focused primarily on “real-life” communication scenarios that would both prepare students for the professional world AND to be more successful in their coursework in upper-division courses.

MODULE 1: PROFESSIONAL WRITING

EMAIL:
Goals of the assignment: Be reader-centered, use plain language, include appropriate parts of a professional email, introduce students to the skills necessary to deliver difficult information, and meet length requirements.

You are the leader of a small team in the healthcare planning office at Regional Hospital. Your hospital has a policy about discussing hospital business on social media. You hear through the grapevine that one of your team members, Ron, has posted about how frustrated he is with the lack of support he feels in his job and the fact that he feels like he isn’t valued or compensated appropriately. Compose an email to your team members, Ron, has posted about how frustrated he is with the lack of support he feels in his job and the fact that he feels like he isn’t valued or compensated appropriately. Compose an email addressing this situation in an appropriate manner.

MODULE 2: ONBOARDING TRAINING MODULE

Goals of the assignment: Develop an onboarding training module focused on an topic that new employees typically encounter (i.e., dress code, professionalism, break policy, etc.) from the perspective of the healthcare clinic leader or employer to help a new employee get acclimated in a cost-effective manner. Create this module using multimedia so that it could be delivered in an online environment. Encourage critical thinking and creativity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND MEMO:

Goals of the assignments: Read and accurately distill a complex report type that could be encountered in the workplace, understand the different purposes between an executive summary & a memo, be reader-centered, use plain language, include appropriate parts of each professional writing type, and meet length requirements.

For the memo, there were additional instructions: Prepare an (approximately) 500-word memo to the VP of Community Engagement at your organization with the recommendations of your committee about two specific action items you would suggest your organization undertake in the next 6 months related to your role in youth violence prevention.

MODULE 3: HEALTHCARE TRENDS VIA WRITING & SPEAKING

Goals of the assignments: Research & explain for a lay audience a healthcare trend, practice writing a more traditional research paper, discuss the same topic in written and oral communication.

Step 1: Search for healthcare trends in NY Times, Modern Healthcare, Health Affairs, etc. Identify 2 that are of interest and share on the discussion board.

Step 2: The next week, share the topic you picked (and why) on the discussion board.

Step 3: Find 5 sources and write a 1-sentence summary and 1-sentence analysis of each source. Apply the CRAAP (currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose) test to each source and discuss overall trustworthiness of source.

Step 4: Complete the APA practice packet, including creating a draft title page, abstract, and sample sources.

Step 5: Submit a draft for review & then update the paper and submit a final draft.

Step 6: Transition the topic from a written paper to a brief oral presentation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Grammarly, or similar grammar software, is very helpful in this assignment and should be used when possible.
- It is important to take intentional time on finding the strongest sources to make an argument.
- If there’s one thing I wish I learned more about in CLM, it is healthcare trends.
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- Repeatedly talking with students about the importance of translating information for a lay audience, and then providing opportunities for them to practice the skill is key to growth.
- Scaffolding the healthcare trends assignment gave students time to try out ideas before committing to them and to spend intentional time on finding the strongest sources to make an argument.