**GEAC 2012-13 Assessment Report**

**December 2013**

**Oral Communication**

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), co-chaired by Charles Wilson and Worth Pickering, developed a process for assessing all goals of the 2010 Revised General Education Curriculum plus critical thinking (a SCHEV requirement) on a four-year cycle. During 2012-13 assessment data were collected for Oral Communication, Literature, and Human Creativity. GEAC convened the second annual Assessment Summit in May 2013 with the goal of training and calibrating raters to assess written artifacts, rating the written artifacts, and drafting reports of what is done well and what may need improvement in Literature and Human Creativity. Oral Communication (OC) was assessed separately within a random sample of classes.

**Methodology**

**Artifacts**

No written or recorded artifacts were collected to assess oral communication. The assessments were completed by two calibrated raters during students’ final speeches in randomly selected classes of Public Speaking (COMM 101R), the course most students take to fulfill their OC general education requirement.

**Rubric**

GEAC developed rubrics for rating each one of the student learning outcomes (SLO) for each of the goals of general education. When possible the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) were used at least as a starting point for developing the ODU rubrics. In the case of OC, the communication faculty use a rubric developed by the National Communication Association (NCA) so that was selected rather than the VALUE Rubric. Members of GEAC worked with the coordinator for the Public Speaking (COMM 101R) course to determine that there was significant correspondence between the ODU outcomes and the competencies defined by the NCA (see Appendix A) with a couple of adjustments. First, the raters and members of GEAC modified the NCA rubric to add research (outcome a) and listening (outcome e). In addition, students making their final speeches on the appointed day were asked to provide printed copies of their speech outline plus peer reviews of the other students who gave their speeches that day.

**Raters**

The Coordinator for COMM 101R worked closely with GEAC members and selected two adjunct faculty to rate the final speeches for COMM 101R. GEAC suggested, and the Coordinator agreed, that the best approach to assessing speeches was for the two raters to attend randomly selected classes and rate the speeches in person rather than recording them. Thus the assessment was embedded in courses providing a more authentic assessment.

**Calibration**

The Coordinator for COMM 101R also worked closely with GEAC to conduct the calibration session for the two raters using YouTube and public speaking training videos as examples. The calibration process was very similar to calibrations conducted by GEAC for other assessments:

1. Review the 2010 Revised General Education Goal and student learning outcomes (SLO) for oral communication.
2. Review the rubric, both each individual SLO and the 1-5 scale.
3. Listen, view, and rate samples.
   1. Both raters and Coordinator of COMM 101R plus a GEAC member listened to and rated a speech. The Coordinator of COMM 101R and GEAC member tallied the ratings and led discussions about why we chose different scores.
   2. We viewed a second and third sample using the same process until the leaders were satisfied that the raters were calibrated.

As in other assessments, the goal was to get to the point where the two raters were scoring the same speech within one point of each other on each SLO.

**Rating**

The Office of Assessment developed a randomized list of all of the class sections of COMM 101R. The Coordinator contacted all of the adjunct faculty to seek their agreement to participating in this type of assessment if their course was selected. The raters were instructed to proceed down the randomized list identifying course sections that fit their schedules and were not taught by the raters. In addition they did not select more than one class per instructor. Eight course sections were chosen and 87 speeches were assessed during the last two weeks preceding final exams in April 2013.

The raters were adjunct faculty who also teach COMM 101R so they were accustomed to using the rubric to score speeches as they are given. After calibration they were rating very closely to each other. And, when the ratings were completed they compared notes and adjusted their ratings as needed.

The two raters worked together to develop a schedule for visiting the eight course sections together with permission of the instructors. The raters sat in the back of the room and rated the speeches as they were presented. They also collected speech outlines and peer ratings of the other speakers that day to assess their listening skills. The students were assured that none of the assessments completed by the raters would count in any way towards their grade in the course. The instructors were similarly informed that none of the assessments would count in their faculty evaluations

**Inter-rater Reliability**

Inter-rater reliability was not calculated because there were only two raters who worked together and compared their notes after the speeches to determine a final score.

**Results for Oral Communication**

**Ratings**

As shown in the table below, the vast majority of speeches were rated as at least Average on five of the seven SLOs: Language (98%), Delivery-Verbal (98%), Delivery-Nonverbal (98%), Content (95%), and Organization (89%). More than half were rated as Above Average or Excellent. Clearly students are performing well on all of these SLOs although making some improvements to move more students from Average to Above Average or Above Average to Excellent is worth considering. Barely half of the speeches were rated at least Average on the remaining two SLOs: Outline (57%) and Research (54%). Clearly these SLOs need some additional focus to improve student learning in theses areas. Interestingly, there seems to be some similarity between the preparation required to develop a good speech and that required to write a good research paper. As noted on the rubric in Appendix B, Research refers to consulting and citing the appropriate number of good resources and Outline refers to organizing the speech and creating a good match between the outline and the speech delivered while not being reliant on a manuscript. Are these issues similar to those that students have writing research papers?

**Oral Communication (87 Speeches)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Excellent**  **5** | **Above Average**  **4** | **Average**  **3** | **Below Average**  **2** | **Unacceptable**  **1** |
| **Content** | 19% | 37% | 39% | 5% | 0% |
| **Organization** | 18% | 39% | 31% | 11% | 1% |
| **Outline** | 0% | 21% | 36% | 25% | 18% |
| **Language** | 24% | 45% | 29% | 2% | 0% |
| **Delivery (Verbal)** | 17% | 44% | 37% | 2% | 0% |
| **Delivery (Non-verbal)** | 7% | 55% | 36% | 2% | 0% |
| **Research** | 1% | 15% | 38% | 23% | 23% |

**Debriefing**

After all of the ratings were completed, the raters were debriefed and asked about (a) the calibration and rating process, in particular how rigorous and accurate they found it to be; (b) student learning, especially the areas of strength and areas that need improvement; and (c) recommendations for other faculty who teach COMM 101R.

**Process.** The raters thought the calibration was rigorous and accurate. It resulted in very good agreement and assessment between the two raters on the ratings of 87 speeches. They also thought that the rubric was good and could be used across the department for scoring speeches in future classes. Further the raters thought that separating the Delivery SLO into verbal and nonverbal SLOs helped. Adding the research section also helped but requires some additional fine-tuning because depending on the instructor it does not always reflect quality, only the presence or absence of research. In addition the classroom visits proved helpful as they were not as intrusive as video taping or audio recording might have been and they helped to gauge audience response to the speeches.

**Student Learning.** The primary observation about student learning in OC was that some of the SLO were not addressed by some faculty and others were inconsistently addressed by different instructors. Neither Nonverbal Delivery nor Listening were emphasized in all courses so they were difficult to assess accurately. In addition, the required format for Outlines varied among instructors. The raters recommended that the department address the inconsistencies to make improvements to student learning as well as their ability to enhance student learning.

The raters noted both Content and Organization as areas of strength in OC. They also identified several areas that need improvement. Once again the raters noted that Nonverbal Delivery, Listening, and Outlines were inconsistently covered by the instructors. Some did not cover these SLOs at all. Further they noted that there was a low level of quality and credibility among the resources that students cited. Thus there are several SLOs that should be the focus of efforts to improve student learning in future courses.

**Recommendations.** Based on their assessment of 87 speeches in eight class sections, the raters recommended that:

* + OC should be taught in smaller classes to allow for more in-class exercises offered by instructors. The in-class exercises would focus on the areas needing improvement based on the assessment.
  + Faculty development workshops be offered to adjunct faculty teaching COMM 101R. The raters learned new techniques from watching other faculty members during the assessment.
    - All instructors should talk and share strategies
    - Adjunct faculty should be offered a workshop
    - The Coordinator of COMM 101R should set up a Blackboard group so faculty can share strategies and upload assignments / exercises (she is currently working on this)
  + Adjunct faculty need feedback form the department on what they should be doing and what the expectations are.

**Summary and Recommendations**

In summary, the assessment of oral communication revealed that 89% or more of the students were rated as at least Average (more that 50% Above Average or Excellent) on the SLOs required to deliver their speech – Language, Delivery-Verbal, Delivery-Nonverbal, Content, and Organization. Only slightly more than half of the students were rated at least Average on the SLOs required to prepare their speech – Outline and Research. While some additional focus on improving the SLO for delivering the speech to Above Average or Excellent is warranted, more work is required to improve the SLOs related to preparing their speech. This will require more communication and consistency among faculty with regards to how they teach Outlines and Research. In order to improve communication and collaboration among adjunct faculty the research team recommends:

* Offering faculty development opportunities to adjunct faculty to engage them in discussions about how best to address Outlines and Research as well as the other SLO in their courses.
* Providing opportunities for adjunct faculty to work together and/or observe each other to share teaching strategies.
* Giving adjunct faculty feedback about their teaching.
* Offering smaller course sections of COMM 101R to allow for more experiential learning activities plus opportunities to practice speaking.

**Questions or More Information**

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**Appendix A**

**Comparison of ODU Outcomes with NCA Competencies**

**ODU Outcomes**

Upon completing the lower division oral communications course(s), students will be

able to:

1. Relate the principles of public speaking to a variety of extemporaneous speech situations
2. Develop skill in researching a topic for a speech or professional presentation
3. Prepare and organize the content for a speech or professional presentation
4. Improve the use of language in conveying messages
5. Develop critical analysis while listening to speeches and professional presentations
6. Deliver appropriate speeches and professional presentations using digital visual software with increased skill and confidence
7. Develop an understanding of the communication styles and strategies of others
8. Enhance the ability to express oneself with empathy and sensitivity, as well as with assertiveness

**NCA Competencies**

The specific competencies, as outlined by the NCA that define good oral communication are shown below.

The students will:

**Content**

1. Select a speech topic that is appropriate for the specific purpose of the speech context and the audience.
2. Demonstrate a unique and original approach in researching the subject.
3. Deliver the content using facts, statistics, examples, experiences, and professional perspectives, as appropriate for the speech type.
4. Differentiate and support the goal(s) and main points of the speech with credible research.

**Organization**

1. Deliver an introduction that attracts the audience’s attention and orients the listeners to the goal of the speech.
2. Include a clearly stated thesis statement that provides an overview of the main points.
3. Include well differentiated and developed main points presented in an appropriate order in the body of the speech.
4. Include a conclusion with a summary of major points and a strategy that leaves an appropriate final impression.

**Wording**

1. Integrate effective wording and imagery to define, elaborate upon, and emphasize key elements of the speech.
2. Include transitions that guide the audience through the speech.
3. Use an audience centered approach where the language is adapted to the listeners.

**Delivery**

1. Use effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills in the spontaneous/extemporaneous delivery of the speech.
2. Use good eye contact, posture, body movements and gestures, and enthusiasm to connect with the audience, and appears at ease.
3. Use visual aids appropriately.
4. Speak clearly and articulately and varies voice for emphasis.
5. Complete the speech in the time allotted.

**Outline**

1. Create and present a complete sentence outline that appropriately develops the speech in a logical format for the speech type

**Appendix B**

**COMM 101 Rubric**

**Persuasive Speech Critique**

NAME: TOPIC:

**GRADE:**

CONTENT: 5 4 3 2 1 X 3

Did the content support the topic with key ideas and good material?

Was the specific purpose appropriate?

Was the specific purpose adapted to the audience?

Did the specific purpose support the proposition statement?

Was the topic challenging?

Did the content contain evidence? Was the evidence cited?

Was the content suitable for the topic/presentation?

Was the content sufficient to support the speaker’s goal?

ORGANIZATION: 5 4 3 2 1 X 3

Did the introduction gain the attention of the audience?

Was the central idea/thesis stated clearly in the introduction?

Were the main points clearly stated in the introduction?

Was the order of the main points appropriate?

Were the main points clearly reviewed in the conclusion?

Was the conclusion effective?

OUTLINE: 5 4 3 2 1 X 3

Was the proper format used? (i.e., complete sentences, headings, etc.)?

Was the outline well organized?

Did the outline contain a works cited/reference page and was it in the proper format?

Did the outline match the delivered speech?

LANGUAGE: 5 4 3 2 1 X 2

Was the language appropriate/unbiased?

Were the transitions used effectively?

Was the language appropriate for understanding for the audience?

DELIVERY (verbal): 5 4 3 2 1 X 3

Did the speaker maintain a spontaneous delivery?

Was the speaker involved/enthusiastic?

Was there vocal variety and emphasis?

Was the volume appropriate?

Were there vocalized pauses?

Was articulation effective?

Was pronunciation effective?

DELIVERY (non-verbal): 5 4 3 2 1 X 3

Did the speaker maintain good eye contact?

Were visual aids used appropriately?

Was nonverbal communication effective/appropriate?

Was posture acceptable?

Did the speaker appear at ease?

RESEARCH:5 4 3 2 1 X 3 \_\_\_\_\_\_

Did the speaker cite his/her sources in his/her speech?

Did the speaker have the minimum number of required sources for the speech?

Were the sources appropriate for the speech?

Comments: