

**Component Area Assessment Annual Report
Oral Communication Component Area
2009-2010 Academic Year**

I. Assessment Activities

A. Component Area Goals

After completing the Oral Communication general education experience, students will be able to:

1. recognize communication as a transactional process by:
 - a. determining audience orientation toward a message
 - b. identifying the supporting material most relevant to the intended receivers
 - c. recognizing and adjusting to nonverbal feedback
2. demonstrate critical thinking in both the production and evaluation of spoken messages by:
 - a. identifying reasoning that links observations to conclusions
 - b. understanding the limitations of different types of evidence
 - c. differentiating between various types of supporting evidence
 - d. identifying weaknesses in reasoning
3. produce organized informative and persuasive messages by:
 - a. demonstrating the ability to capture audience attention
 - b. stating a thesis and previewing oral remarks
 - c. using signposts and transitions to clarify the organization of a message
 - d. concluding with a summary of main ideas or arguments
4. demonstrate effective extemporaneous speaking skills by:
 - a. maintaining eye contact with intended receivers
 - b. using gestures which complement the verbal message
 - c. using varied vocal cues in the oral delivery of a message

B. Learning Outcomes/Data Collection

Outcome 1: *Recognizing communication as a transactional process by a) determining audience orientation toward a message; b) identifying the supporting material most relevant to the intended receivers; and c) recognizing and adjusting to nonverbal feedback.*

This outcome is measured by students' preparation outlines and speech proposals, in which they describe their preparation activities. They discuss their audience analysis activities and relate that analysis to the selection of organizational patterns, arguments, and supporting material. The assessment criteria for examining sample speeches include a set of criteria which focuses on audience adaptation as a basis for determining the competency of the speaker. Results of the videotape review will be reported in Section I.C.

Outcome 2: *Demonstrating critical thinking in both the production and evaluation of spoken messages by a) identifying reasoning that links observations to conclusions; b) understanding the limitations of different types of evidence; c) differentiating between various types of supporting evidence; d) identifying weaknesses in reasoning.*

The focus on critical thinking in the course is reflected in all assignments, especially the outlines, brief speeches, and self-analysis assignments. In addition, exam scores can be used to test students' understanding of evidence and reasoning. Using exam scores on selected test items allows us to account for the performance of every student in the class. Although exam scores do not reflect the specific critical thinking activities associated with student' speeches, exam scores provide a reliable measure.

Outcome 3: *Producing organized informative and persuasive messages by a) demonstrating the ability to capture audience attention; b) stating a thesis and previewing oral remarks; c) using signposts and transitions to clarify the organization of a message; d) concluding with a summary of main ideas or arguments.*

The structural elements of speaking are evident in speech performances. To assess the basic competencies of students, video recordings of student persuasive speeches are collected. Each instructor collects 2-3 randomly selected student videos from each section of the CMM 103 course in the fall and spring semesters. This procedure yields a sample of approximately 10 percent of all final speeches delivered in the course each semester.

This year 94 usable speech recordings were collected. The sample speeches were evaluated using an assessment instrument sanctioned by the National Communication Association. The instrument measures eight basic competencies on a three-point scale (Unsatisfactory=1, Satisfactory=2, Excellent=3). A panel of three reviewers rated the videotaped speeches. Sample speeches were considered minimally competent if rated with a score of 16 out of 24. Where there was a difference between raters' scores, the speech was rated as competent if two of the three reviewers awarded a score of 16 or above. Results of this review will be reported in Section I.C.

Outcome 4: *Demonstrating effective extemporaneous speaking skills by a) maintaining eye contact with intended receivers; b) using gestures which complement the verbal message; c) using varied vocal cues in the oral delivery of a message.*

Students' competency in maintaining eye contact, using gestures and employing vocal variety are directly observable in their speech performances. These competencies were assessed by the instrument described in Section I.B.3. above. Results are reported in the following section.

C. Results

1. *Review of student test scores related to critical thinking.*

Critical thinking results show that students answer critical thinking questions on the exams at a rate of 68% for Fall 2009 and 65% for Spring 2010. That is an improvement from the previous year. *Review of videotaped student speeches. This is the second year for most of the TAs and they have become more comfortable with the argumentation and reasoning material in the course*

2. *Review of recorded student speeches*

94 usable sample recordings were reviewed for this assessment report. This is a decrease over last year's sample of 100. The review resulted in 71% of speeches being rated as minimally competent. This is an improvement but is in keeping with results for previous years. Again the additional teaching experience of the TAs may account for the improvement.

Summary of Results
GER Assessment; Oral Communication Requirement
AY 2009-2010

Outcome	Method of Assessment	Standard	Evaluation	Conclusion/Action
1. Recognize public speaking as a transactional process	Global assessment on 7 of 8 review criteria	Minimum score of 14 on the 7 relevant criteria	71 percent of speeches pass (67 out of 94)	Improvement from previous year. Additional TA experience probably accounts for this number.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking in both the production and evaluation of spoken messages	Review of exam scores on items related to critical thinking	Average score of 75%	Average scores: 68% for Fall 2009 65% for Spring 2010	An improvement over last year. Still a need for greater attention to critical thinking assignments and TA training. More consistency across semesters in terms of exam questions.
3. Produce organized informative and persuasive messages	Review of sample student speeches for minimal competence	Satisfactory performance on 8 evaluation criteria (average score = 16)	71% percent of speeches pass (67 out of 94)	Same. Continued emphasis on basic organizational features of in class presentations.
4. Demonstrate effective extemporaneous speaking skills	Review of sample student speeches for minimal competence	Satisfactory performance on 3 evaluation criteria (average score = 6)	69 percent of speeches pass (65 out of 94)	Improvement from previous year. Continued focus on basic delivery skills.

II. BOT Initiative Compliance

The assessment procedures described in this report are consistent with BOT Initiative 2. In particular, a randomly selected sample of student work in the oral communication component of the general education curriculum is reviewed to determine the level of competency in both oral communication and critical thinking. This year 71% of student speeches reviewed met the minimum standard for competency in the course, 29% failed to meet the standard.

III. Plan for the Current Year

1. *Communication as a transaction.*

Emphasis must continue to be placed on instructor feedback to improve this assessment. In particular, instructors must become more involved in the invention stage of the speaking assignments. TA training in appropriate feedback for the proposal assignment should continue to be emphasized.

2. *Critical thinking.*

Critical thinking has been assessed using selected questions from the final exams. However, the choice of questions to be used has not been consistent. A consistent set of questions from the previous year was used but must be changed for the coming semester because of the new edition of the textbook. TA experience did make a difference in the scores of students.

3 *Organization*

No decline was observed in this measure however, TA training needs to emphasize the importance of appropriate feedback.

4 *Extemporaneous speaking skills.*

Some improvement was noted in this area but more emphasis still needs to be placed on delivery skills. This is difficult to do in the limited amount of time instructors have with students. However, instructors need to use more oral feedback in terms of helping students to recognize and change delivery behaviors which are distracting.

IV. **Assistance needed**

The review of increasing numbers of speeches is labor intensive. We must have continued funding for reviewers to work on the videotape review project in the summer.

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