SLO S2: Communicate Effectively Through Speech – Intermediate GE202x

Semester: FALL 2013

REPORT DATE: 1/8/2014

Effective Speech Communication is assessed at the intermediate level in GE 202x: Research and Technology. As evidenced in the School of General Studies Action & Assessment Plan (Monitoring Report - Appendix 12.7, p. 14), this learning outcome is first introduced in COMM 1402: Speech Communication (GE Foundation Course). It is then reinforced in this course where students build on speech communication skills previously acquired.

In Research and Technology, this learning outcome is assessed based on the student's final oral presentation using the Speaker Evaluation rubric created by the Kean University Communications Department (see Appendix A of this report).   The rubric consists of 10 criteria and student performance is rated on a five point scale (5 = excellent). A score of 3 or higher indicates that students have either met or exceeded expectations at this intermediate level. Since this is an intermediate level course, the expectation was that 80% of students would achieve a score of 3 or higher on each criterion. Why?

The oral presentation assignment (15% of student's final grade) asks students to present their research papers, and while most students choose to use a Power Point, that medium is optional.
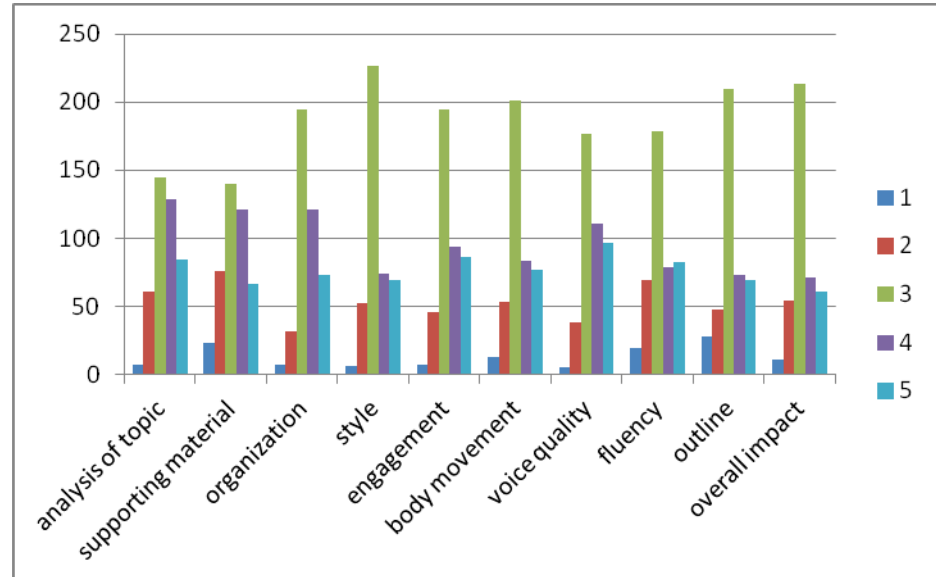
Number of students: 438
Number of courses: 8
Number of sections: 22

Distribution of Scores

Mean scores overall:

Analysis of Topic	3.5
Supporting Material	3.3
Organization	3.5
Style	3.3
Engagement	3.4
Body Movement	3.3
Voice Quality	3.6
Fluency	3.3
Outline	3.2
Overall Impact	3.2

Distribution of Scores:

	analysis of topic	supporting material	organization	style	engagement	body movement	voice quality	fluency	outline	overall impact
1	7	23	7	6	7	13	5	19	28	11
2	61	76	32	52	46	53	38	69	48	54
3	145	140	195	227	195	201	177	179	210	213
4	129	121	121	74	94	83	111	79	73	71
5	84	66	73	69	86	77	97	82	69	61
total	426	426	428	428	428	427	428	428	428	410

Frequency by Percentage

	analysis of topic	supporting material	organization	style	engagement	body movement	voice quality	fluency	outline	overall impact
1	2%	5%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	4%	7%	3%
2	14%	18%	7%	12%	11%	12%	9%	16%	11%	13%
3	34%	33%	46%	53%	46%	47%	41%	42%	49%	52%
4	30%	28%	28%	17%	22%	19%	26%	18%	17%	17%
5	20%	15%	17%	16%	20%	18%	23%	19%	16%	15%
≥3	84%	76%	91%	86%	88%	84%	90%	79%	82%	84%
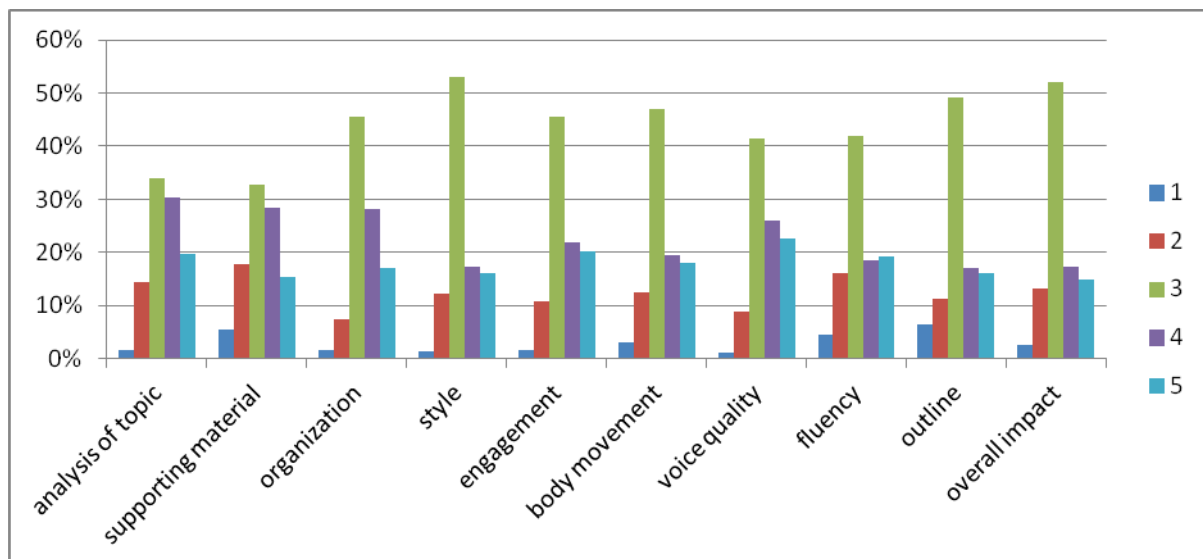
Discussion/Action/Closing the Loop:

The data indicates that a mean score of 3 or higher for each criterion was achieved. With respect to the established target of 80% of students achieving a 3 or higher in each criterion, the results indicate that in 8 out 10 criteria, this target was reached. The two criteria that fell below this target were "supporting material" (76%) and "fluency" (79%).

Although these two areas were close in range to the target (1 to 4% below), it is worth further exploration to determine ways to improve on these communication components.

Implementing a mini-presentation along with the first draft of the paper, with audience (student) feedback, will be a useful step in the process in the formative assessment of students' ability to utilize supporting material and communicate with fluency. Research and Technology colleagues will meet in March 2014 to develop additional activities that target these weak areas.

Appendix A: Speaker Evaluation rubric created by the Kean University Communications Department

Speaker Evaluation Form

Name of Speaker _____   Section _____

Student ID _____   Speech (1or 2)_____

Key: 1=Unacceptable 2=Fair 3= OK/acceptable 4=good/above average 5=excellent

Rating	Item	☑ =Postive,Effective 0=Needs Work	Comments
Content			
	Analysis of Topic	__Clear Purpose __Multi-sided argumentation __Clear central ideas __ Relevant topic	
	Supporting Material	__Credible Sources __Varied Sources __Cited Sources __Sufficient Sources __Appropriate visual aid	
	Organization	__Introduction __Transitions __Main Points Clear	

		__Conclusion	
	Style	__Defined terms __Grammar ___Vivid Terms __Avoids clichés, jargon	
Delivery			
	Engagement	__Audience Awareness __Poise __Eye Contact __Manages Anxiety	
	Body Movement	__Posture __Facial Expression __Gestures	
	Voice Quality	__Volume __Extemporaneous ___Tone __Articulation ___Variety __Vocal Control	
	Fluency	__Freedom from notes __Effective pace __Avoids vocal filters __Effective use of Pauses __Effective rate	
Preparation			
	Outline	__Structure __Bibliography __Annotation	
Impact			

	OVERALL IMPACT	_Speaker is credible __Speech is
		     Memorable
		__Appropriate use of time __Speech
		
		Accomplishes
		     Purpose	

	FINAL GRADE		

Using the Speaker Evaluation Form

The Speaker Evaluation Form was created for the evaluation of speeches for the basic communication course, COMM 1402, Communication as Critical Citizenship. Because the course focuses on public speaking, the form seeks to address all the dimensions of a public speech. In spite of its

comprehensiveness, the rubric is designed to facilitate evaluation. It is divided into 4 major components: Speech Content, Speech delivery, Speech Preparation, and Speech Impact.

Here is a brief explanation of each dimension of these categories:

Speech Content: The message of the speaker

- **Analysis of Topic**: How well does the speaker understand the topic and is able to convey that understanding authoritatively to the listeners.
    - o **Clear purpose**: A standard speech is presented to either inform (relay information/teach) or to persuade (to change the listeners attitude or behavior toward the topic). Does the speaker identify his/her purpose? Does he/she stick to the purpose throughout the speech?
    - o **Clear central idea (thesis statement):** Every speech focuses on a clear statement or claim. It is not the topic but a statement about the topic. Can you clearly identify that idea/thesis?
    - o **Multi-sided argumentation**: An effective speaker represents various perspectives about his topic. Does the speech represent these various perspectives? Has the speaker considered possible objections to the claims the speech is making?
    - o **Relevant topic**: A college-level speech should be about a topic that is consistent with higher learning. Is the topic "college level," i.e. not a demonstration speech or a definitional speech whose only source is an encyclopedia article? Is the topic socially relevant?
- **Supporting Material**: An effective speech is not a repetition of what the listeners already know about the topic. IT should add to their knowledge or offer a new perspective about that knowledge. The speech should reflect preparation and research.
    - o **Credible sources**: Has the speaker cited sources that go beyond what one could learn in a elementary encyclopedia? Are the sources more than just ".com" sources?
    - o **Cited sources:** is the speaker relaying where the information comes from? Is he/she only citing sources in vague ways ("studies show," or "the news reported") or are the citations detailed using the names of authors, names of publications, and dates of these publications.
    - o **Varied sources**: Speeches that are "just the facts" are usually boring. Has the speaker gone beyond the facts to include the "human element" in the forms of anecdotes, narratives, and illustrations?
    - o **Sufficient sources:** Has the speaker cited the minimal number of sources required by the speech assignment?
    - o **Appropriate visual aid:** If a visual aid is required for the speech assignment, is the visual aid used appropriately? Does it complement and not pull attention away from the speaker? Can it be seen clearly from the back of the room?
- **Organization:** As you are listening to a speech, you should be able to discern a progression of ideas that flow out of a clear central idea. These ideas should be clear and concise enough for you to recall the speech's basic content.
    - o **Introduction:** How well do the first statements of the speaker do the following?
        - ▪ Get your attention?
        - ▪ Identify the topic?
        - ▪ Establish the speaker's authority to speak about the topic?
        - ▪ Preview the main points of the speech?

- An effective speech does <u>not</u> begin with "Hello, my name is ___ and I'm going to talk about ___."
  - **Main points clear:** Are the main ideas of the speech sufficiently clear so that they can be remembered?
  - **Transitions:** Does the speaker use connectors (previews and summaries of information, signposts) so that the speech does not sound like a list of facts but a constructed argument?
  - **Conclusion:** Do the final statements of the speaker summarize the thesis statement and review the main points to help you recall them later? Does the final statement provide a sense of closure?
- **Style:** Speeches are crafted with words that are used effectively. Here you are listening for how well the speaker uses language.
  - **Defined terms**: Does the speaker take the time to define or explain terms that may be unclear to the audience? Does the speaker use concrete language instead of words like "thing" and "stuff."
  - **Vivid terms:** Does speaker know how to "turn a phrase" and choose words that engage the imagination? Is alliteration used in main points? How well does the speaker use allegory and metaphor?
  - **Grammar:** Is the speaker careful to observe grammatical rules such as subject-verb agreement and politically correct speech.
  - **Avoids clichés and jargon:** Does the speaker use terms that both recognizable and appreciated? Is the speaker overusing terms such as "like" or "you know"?

Speech Delivery: How does the speaker say the speech? Speeches are not like reports where the focus is simply on the content of the message. Speeches are relational. The speaker thinks about the audience and makes effective use of nonverbal communication and message adaptation to ensure that audience will be affected by the message.

- **Engagement:** How well does the speaker "connect" with the listeners? Does the speaker apply techniques to convey *goodwill* and *charisma* to those listening?
  - **Audience Awareness:** Is the speaker more focused on whom he/she is communicating with the speech itself. From the beginning of the speech, is the speaker working on audience rapport?
  - **Eye contact:** is the speaker spending a majority of the speech looking into the faces of his/her listeners? This is especially important during the introduction and conclusion of the speech. If using a visual aid, is the speaker looking at the audience or the visual aid?
  - **Poise:** Does the speaker demonstrate confidence in himself or herself so as to set the audience at ease? Does his/her manner encourage attentiveness to the message of the speech?
  - **Manages anxiety:** How well does the speaker manage the fear of public speaking? Do you become overly aware of tension in the voice or body so that effectiveness of the words diminished?
- **Body Movement:** An effective speaker uses his or her body movement, gestures, and overall behavior to enhance the speech message.
  - **Posture:** Does the speaker communicate confidence by standing tall? If using a podium, is she or he free from it and not clutching or tapping it? Is the speaker so tied to his or her notes that he or she is bent over or slouched?
  - **Gestures (including body movement):** Are hand and arm movements used to complement the words of the speech rather than express the nervousness of the

speaker. If the speaker moves, does he or she avoid pacing and move naturally to enhance his or her words.

- o **Facial expressions:** Is the speaker's face expressive? Does he or she take the time to smile and convey the emotions that are compatible with the content of the speech.
- **Voice quality:** Here the focus is on the speaker's ability to use his/her voice to embellish and enhance the words of the message.
  - o **Volume:** Can the speaker be heard clearly from any points of the room?
  - o **Tone:** Is the speaker's voice pleasant to listen to? Is their sufficient modulation in the tone so that the speech sounds like the speaker is conversing rather than reading?
  - o **Variety:** Omit
  - o **Extemporaneous:** Does the speaker give you the sense that he or she is talking *to* the audience and not *at* the audience? Is there sufficient freedom from the notes so that speech sounds like a conversation and not a reporting of "the facts"?
  - o **Articulation:** Are the words of the speech clearly identifiable? Has the speaker taken the time to learn the correct pronunciation of key terms, phrases, or names in the speech?
  - o **Vocal control:** How consistently does the speaker use her or his voice? Are there places in the speech where vocal control is lost because of nervousness? (For example, are there drops in volume, continual fumbling over works, or running out of breath?)
- **Fluency:** Like a good storytelling, a public speaker uses variety the pace of the speech to enhance comprehension and retention of the message.
  - o **Freedom from notes:** Is the speaker sufficiently free from the notes so that the audience feels they are the focus of his or her attention? Is the speech frequently interrupted because the speaker is not sufficiently familiar with the material?
  - o **Avoids vocal fillers:** Does the speaker frequently us "uhs" and "ums" to cover for lapses in memory or moments of silence?
  - o **Effective pace (rate):** Does the speaker speak too fast so that the speech is difficult to understand? Or does the speaker speak to slow so that the information gets bogged down? Is there enough variety in the pace to make the delivery interesting?
  - o **Effective use of pauses:** Does the speaker insert pauses for effect allowing the listeners to appreciate the importance of a point or time to process the information? How much are pauses due to memory lapses?

Speech Preparation

- **Outline:** While a speaker once to give a sense of spontaneity when he or she is speaking, an effective speech requires proper planning and orchestration of information. Instructors will teach students proper outlining procedures and will most likely require students to submit an outline to be graded prior to the actual delivery of the speech. This component should reflect the student's outline score.
  - o **Structure:** Does the outline include the basic components of the speech with enough information so that the instructor can evaluate the flow of ideas and the analysis of the topic. Most outlines should include:
    - ▪ **Speech topic**
    - ▪ **Speech purpose**
    - ▪ **Central idea or Thesis Statement**
    - ▪ **Introduction**
    - ▪ **Main points with their supporting subpoints**
    - ▪ **Conclusion**
    - ▪ **Transitions: Connectives between the main points**

- o **Bibliography or References:** Does the outline include the required number of references that *are actually used in the speech*? Are the references in proper APA or MLA format?
  - o **Annotation:** Does the bibliography include a brief statement about the content of each sources (optional).

Impact: The impact is not where you evaluate the speaker but where you evaluate yourself after having heard the speech. If the speech was informative, have you learned something about the topic? If the speech was persuasive, have you been influenced to think or act differently with regard to the topic?

- **Overall impact:** Often an effective speech can be more (or less) the sum of its parts. A speech itself may have some deficiencies, but as you reflect on the speech as a whole, you realize that it has been impactful. On the other hand, a speech may be technically flawless in each component, but the overall effect is not as strong. These are the items to consider:
  - o **Speaker is credible:** Has the speaker demonstrated sufficient mastery of the material so that he or she has spoken authoritatively? At any point in the speech did you feel that the speaker was playing fast and loose with the information or did not care whether or not audience was affected?
  - o **Speech is memorable:** Have you retained the essential information of the speech so that could talk about or share it's content with someone else? If you were given a test on the speech content, could you pass it?
  - o **Appropriate use of time:** Did the speaker stay within the time constraints of the assignment? Neither too long nor too short?
  - o **Speech accomplishes purpose:** Did the speaker accomplish what she or he set out to do? If speech was to inform, have the listeners learned? If the speech was to persuade, have the listeners been influenced attitudinally or behaviorally by the speech?

Scoring the Speech Rubric

The speech rubric was originally designed to assess the public speaking instruction of COMM 1402. Each of the ten categories receives a score of 1-5 (with 5 being the superior score) for both the informative and the persuasive speeches. The means of these scores given to the components on the first speech was compared to the corresponding means of the components on the second speech. Using a statistical measure called a T-test, the comparison should determine if there has been significant improvement in the areas measured. Special instructions are given to COMM 1402 on how to report this data for assessment purposes.

The four column format of the rubric is designed to give a student meaningful and timely feedback for his or her speech. You should be able to evaluate the speech completely while the speech is being given. The first column (Rating) is where you will place the 1-5 score for each component measured, the second names the component that you are evaluating, the third serves as *shorthand* for you to simply indicate the areas where the speaker has been effective or ineffective, and the fourth is an area where you can provide your own verbal feedback to the student about the speech.

For assessment purposes, The Department of General Studies suggests you base your numerical scores in column 1 (Rating) on the number of items checked or unchecked for each dimension in column 3.

If a dimension has 5 indicators, you can simply consider each indicator worth one point. If the student has been successful in all 5 dimensions, the score would be 5. All 4, the score would be 4, etc. (Please note: For the purpose of statistical analysis, the lowest score is a "1" and not a "0")

If a dimension has 4 indicators….4 out of 4 is scored 5, 3 out of 4 can be scored a either as a 4 or 3, 2 out of 4 can be scored as a 3 or 2, and 1 out of 4 can be scored as a 2 or a 1.

If a dimension has 3 indicators…3 out of 3 is scored a 5, 2 out of 3 is scored a 4 or 3, 1 out of 3 is scored a 2 or 1.

It needs to be understood that evaluating a speech is a subjective process and the meaning of the scores need to be interpreted as such. Nonetheless, the rubric is applied so that we can approximate an overall consistency as to how speeches and presentations are evaluated both the COMM 1402 as well as other General Studies courses.