

**Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes 2011-12**

**Communication Studies SAC**

Submitted June 2012

Outcomes Assessed: **Self-Reflection & Professional Competence**

1. *Describe changes that have been implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes that resulted from outcome assessments carried out in 2010-2011.*

In the 2010-11 academic year the Communication Studies SAC assessed the Core Outcomes of *Communication* and *Cultural Awareness*. On the *Communication* outcome, results were generally very good:

Given this data, it is clear that we are meeting our own outcomes for communication in this course, that the majority of students are responding to instruction and that they are gaining skills in oral communication. We feel we are doing our part to assist students in achieving the college outcome for communication.

No content or material changes were implemented but the results were discussed in our Fall SAC meeting. A few areas that *some* students needed more competence in was selecting appropriate and creative rhetorical language, using effective supporting materials, and presenting the central idea. Therefore we had a roundtable exchange of instructional ideas on how to even more effectively focus on these areas in our SP 111 Public Speaking courses. We determined that we would make use of our Groups website to share and post assignments and exercises that we have found to be of particular value in said areas.

On the *Cultural Awareness* outcome, the assessment method used was found to have problems:

We believe we will need to find a different venue, different assignment, perhaps a different class in order to truly evaluate the success of our contribution to students' development of the college's core outcome of Cultural Awareness.

Faculty members who teach Introduction to Intercultural Communication (SP 140) were asked to gather to discuss and evaluate the rubric used and to brainstorm a possible shared assignment that would use the rubric. As the instructors who teach this course are adjuncts, this has been a slower process.

## Self-Reflection & Professional Competence

### 2. Describe the assessment design (tool and processes) used.

In discussion about how to measure *Self-Reflection*, the SAC first decided to have students write a reflection paper based on a videotaped performance of one speech from our primary course, SP 111 Public Speaking. However, upon further reflection ourselves, we realized this would not actually measure anything about student learning in *our* course but rather might measure learning our students *brought* to our course. Thus it was decided that the best (and most feasible) way to assess *Self-Reflection* would be to use a paper-and-pencil pre/post assessment instrument. This would be the most useful tool because it would actually measure how students themselves reflect on and assess their learning in *our* chosen course.

A review of relevant literature supported the use of a self-assessment instrument in assessing student learning in a public speaking course. (“MIT writing and speaking self-assessment,” 2010), (Schuurman, M., et. al., 2008). Also, a pre/post assessment was used to measure this outcome by the Career Guidance SAC, which was a winner in the design category in the Learning Assessment Council’s 2010-2011 report awards.

In assessing the core outcome of *Self-Reflection*, the SAC chose our core required transfer course, SP 111 Public Speaking, because all full-time faculty teach the course as well as most of our adjunct faculty. To get a wide cross-section of data from both full-time and adjunct faculty from all campuses it was decided that *each instructor* of SP 111 would administer our pre/post assessment instrument to *one section* (many instructors teach multiple sections) during the first and last week of a term.

To develop a useful instrument, we determined areas for reflection from our CCOG. These areas were *creating*, *presenting*, and *critically evaluating* public speeches as well as reflecting on public speaking as a *leadership skill* and as a crucial aspect of *citizenship*. These areas also clearly related to the outcomes noted for *Self-Reflection*, specifically:

- Appraise own skills and abilities.
- Examine personal beliefs and measure them against the beliefs of others.
- Understand self as part of a larger community.
- Respect individual rights and the dignity of others.
- Appreciate and reflect on new ideas in a spirit of open interaction.
- Seek and acquire information and knowledge to achieve academic, career, and personal success as a lifelong learner.
- Respect the beliefs of others.
- Transfer personal skills and imagination to varying settings, including individual and group.

- Apply appropriate techniques for exploring and/or resolving conflicts and dealing with differences in a variety of settings.
- Respond to community issues and contribute to the community.

A questionnaire with 20 questions using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree was developed and pilot-tested in two sections of SP 111 in winter term '12.

The SAC reviewed the pilot-test questionnaire, made a few minor changes to question wording, and also decided to add questions to measure our second core outcome of *Professional Competence*. (This was done because the SAC originally thought our second outcome was *Community & Environmental Responsibility* and to measure this outcome we were going to assess a different course. However, once we learned we were to assess *Professional Competence*, we knew this should be assessed in our SP 111 course as well.) Four questions (21-25) were then added to our questionnaire that specifically related to *Professional Competence*, although many of the other questions related as well. (see Appendix).

The *Professional Competence* outcomes that specifically related were:

- Use available resources to find information.
- Use the methods of inquiry or expression of a discipline or profession, such as observation, experimentation, experience, analysis, diagnosis or creative process.
- Identify and/or recreate concepts, terms, and facts.
- Produce a product, project, or presentation in an academic, professional, or technical setting.
- Use knowledge and skills to increase their understanding of themselves and others, and to expand their abilities.
- Transfer concepts and skills to other fields or new situations creatively.
- Explain concepts and skills to others.
- Identify and use appropriate technology to research, solve, and present solutions to problems.
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

In spring term '12 the pre/post questionnaire was administered. Instructors were asked to give the pre-assessment the first day of class before any distribution of course material and before any discussion of the course. They were then asked to give the post-test the last week of class. Our results are based on 16 sections that took both the pre/post assessment and returned their results in a usable form that met our timeline. Fifty-nine sections of SP 111 were offered across all campuses spring term, thus we sampled 27% of sections offered. As we knew would be the case, more students took the pre-assessment than the post-assessment due to attrition or non-attendance on the post-assessment day. Three hundred and ten students took the pre-assessment while 220 took the post-assessment. For each statement on the questionnaire, we wanted to reach a level of agreement (above 3.0) on the post-test. We analyzed results with this benchmark

in mind. We also wanted to see how much change occurred between pre-and-post tests. Finally, we wanted to see what level of knowledge/skills the students brought into the course.

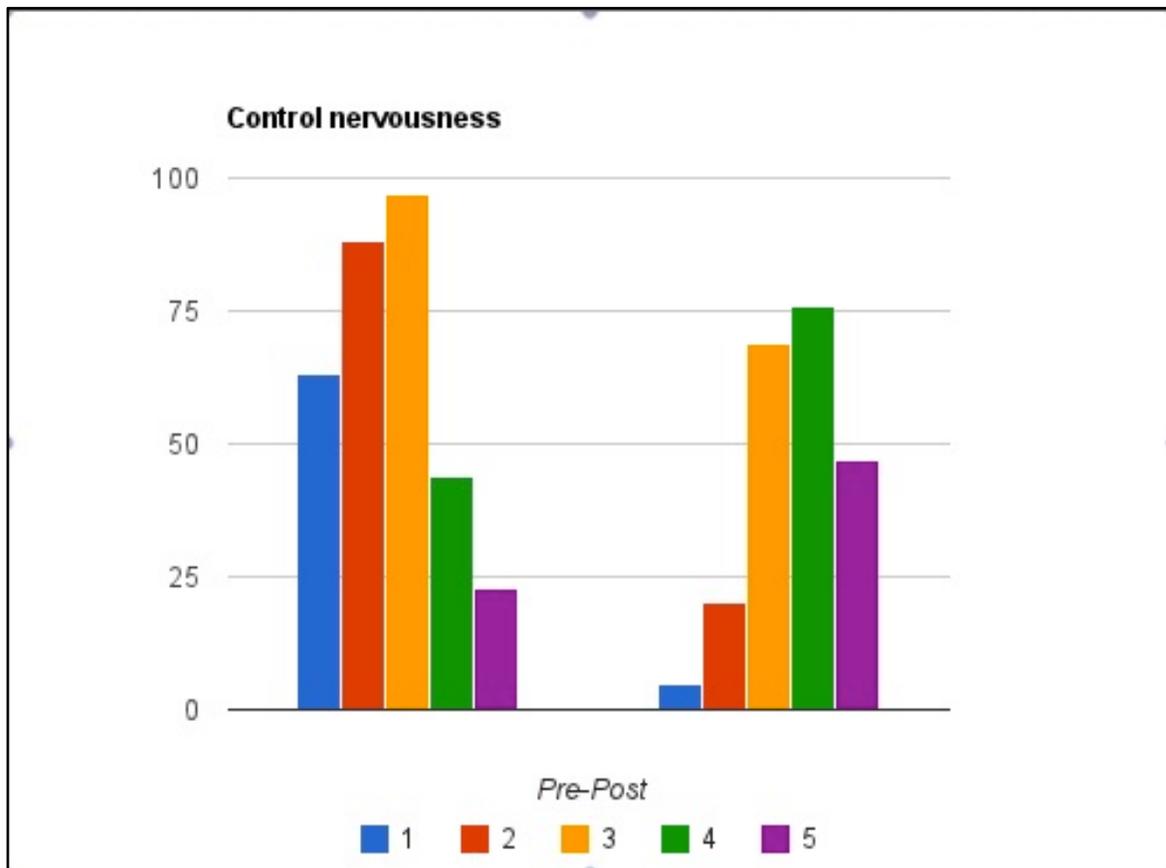
3. Provide information about the results (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

Below are results using descriptive statistics for each question:

<b>Pre/Post Comparison Self-Reflection Outcome/Professional Competence Outcome SP 111 Public Speaking</b>			
<b>Question</b>	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Gain</b>
1. Principles	3.1	4.51	1.41
2. Different audiences	2.93	4.34	1.41
3. Credibility	2.82	4.41	1.59
4. Appropriate topic	2.88	4.41	1.53
5. Org. pattern	2.87	4.29	1.42
6. Outline	3	4.4	1.4
7. Control nervousness	2.61	3.65	1.04
8. Confidence	2.86	3.89	1.03
9. Cite sources	2.66	4.23	1.57
10. Verbal com	3.05	4.3	1.25
11. Nonverbal com	2.69	3.85	1.16
12. Ideas/arguments	2.85	3.98	1.13
13. Critical Listener	3.3	4.12	0.82
14. New info/knowledge	3.28	4.7	1.42
15. Personal beliefs/values	3.26	4.1	0.84
16. Others' beliefs/values	3.92	4.39	0.47
17. Academics	4.03	4.56	0.53
18. Career goals	4.11	4.48	0.37
19. Democratic society	3.91	4.4	0.49
20. Community	4.08	4.3	0.22
21. Resolve differences	3.96	4.25	0.29
22. Presentation aids	3.7	4.53	0.83
23. Inform/persuade	3.29	4.38	1.09
24. Explain concepts/skills	3.46	4.51	1.05
25. Use technology	3.49	4.44	0.95

We were quite pleased to find out we met our benchmark of all post-assessment questions being above 3.0. In fact, most were well above that level with only 4 questions being below 4.0 on the post-assessment; the lowest of those was 3.65. And all post-assessment modes were 4.0 (7 questions) or 5.0 (18 questions), which meant they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the statement (see Appendix). Two of the questions that were below the 4.0 mark (Q 7 & 8) related to speech anxiety, which is not a surprising result as it is widely known that many people

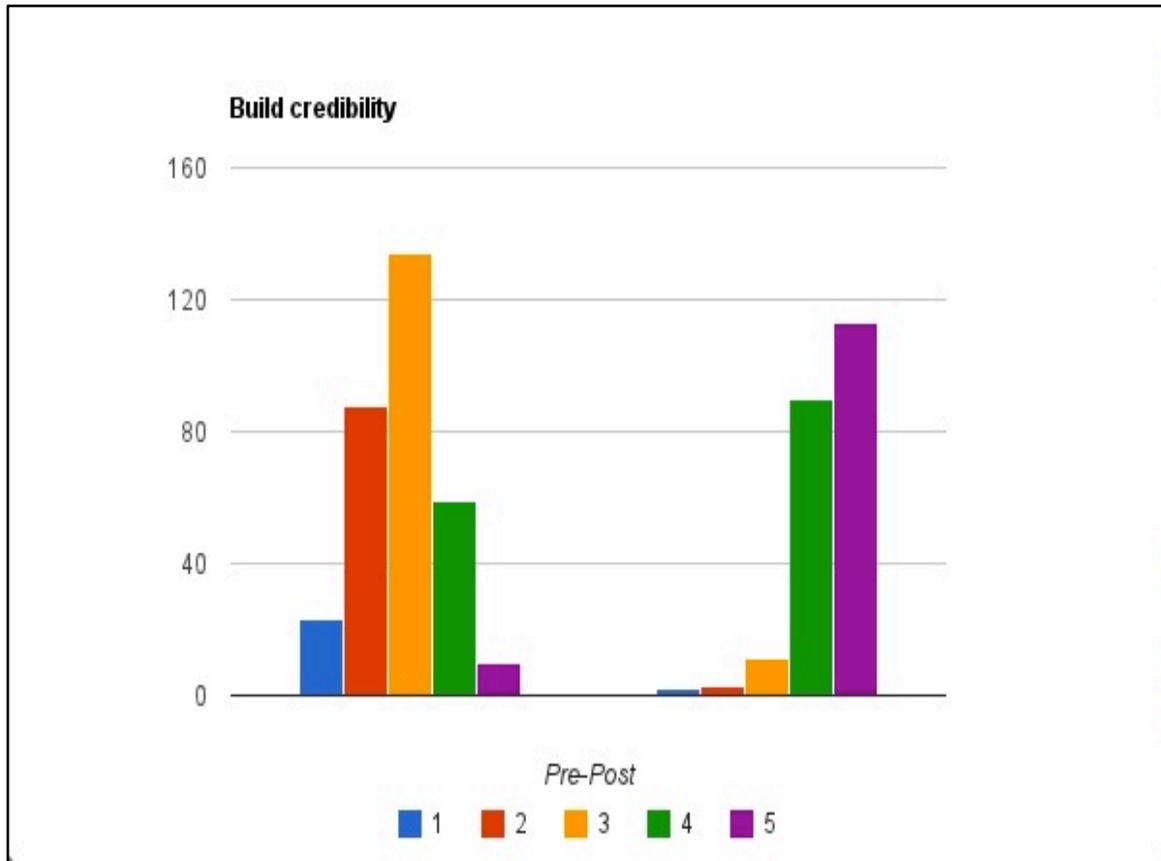
have a fear of public speaking. However, from the pre-to-the-post assessment these two questions each showed a gain of over 1 point on the scale, thus showing students with anxiety made significant progress nonetheless.



1 = Strongly Disagree\_2 = Disagree\_3 = Neutral\_4 = Agree\_5 = Strongly Agree

The other two questions below the 4.0 mark, (Q 11 & 12) also showed significant progress over the term, with gains of more than 1 point. However, these may be areas we can focus on improving. Q 11 states “I can nonverbally communicate my ideas effectively in a speech.” Q12 states “Giving oral presentations helps me to develop strong ideas and arguments.” These questions may be related to Q7 & 8 on nervousness/confidence, but they also more directly relate to course content and therefore may be areas on which we can focus.

The question that showed the biggest gain from pre-to-post was Q3 “I understand how to build credibility as a speaker.” This is a very affirming outcome as building credibility is a foundational speaking skill. In addition, building credibility is also essential in achieving the outcome of *Professional Competence*.



1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

In analyzing the gains made from pre-to-post assessment, it is clear that students perceive they are meeting our course outcomes as well as reaching the outcomes for both *Self-Reflection* and *Professional Competence*. They are gaining the most (all above 1-point gains) in the area of *creating* and *presenting* (Q 1-12). They are also gaining in the areas of *critically evaluating* and *leadership/citizenship* (Q 13-21) although not by as much because they are coming into our course at a level well above 3 and even above 4 on some questions. This makes sense because many other courses focus on these outcomes and students have to have completed WR 121 to take our course.

On the questions that directly related to *Professional Competence* (Q 22-25), students came into the course at a level above 3 and completed the course at a level all well above 4 (see Appendix).

4. *Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented to help improve students' attainment of outcomes. (These may include, but are not limited to, changes in curriculum, content, materials, instruction, pedagogy etc).*

Overall, we are pleased with the results of our assessments of *Self-Reflection* and *Professional Competence*, however there is always room for improvement.

For the outcome of *Self-Reflection* we may want to:

- Help students to further “Examine personal beliefs and measure them against the beliefs of others,” as well as “Apply appropriate techniques for exploring and/or resolving conflicts and dealing with differences in a variety of settings,” by emphasizing this in specific assignments, speeches and activities that focus on persuasion, problem-solving or debate.
- Have students reflect more on the importance of communication and public speaking to their personal and professional lives, and their roles in society and democracy. This can be accomplished through specific assignments, speeches and in-class activities.
- Further emphasize the importance of public speaking to community by offering optional service-learning assignments in which students apply the skills learned in class to community involvement.

For the outcome of *Professional Competence* we may want to:

- Require that students integrate in-classroom technology in at least one of their required speeches.
- In a service-learning or honors section, if offered, require students to make a presentation to or for a community group.

*5. Reflect on the effectiveness of this assessment tool and assessment process. Please describe any changes to assessment methodology that would lead to more meaningful results if this assessment were to be repeated (or adapted to another outcome). Is there a different kind of assessment tool or process that the SAC would like to use for this outcome in the future? If the assessment tool and process does not need to be revised, please indicate this.*

The assessment tool was effective in measuring perceived change based on instruction. In assessing *Self-Reflection*, an indirect method is appropriate as the outcome involves being able to “appraise own skills and abilities.” We consciously did not correlate data as we had a large sample size and we did not want to make students who might be anxious about Public Speaking feel even more anxiety by taking an assessment that was not anonymous. However, if using this tool again, we may want to reduce the sample and correlate data to see if it matches the uncorrelated data. We may also want to reduce the number of questions to focus on just the areas we feel need improvement. If we use the tool again we should also consider assessing just one or two sections from each campus as we had a very large sample, which was cumbersome to administer and labor intensive to compile.

In assessing *Professional Competence*, we could employ direct research methods such as filming a sample of student speeches and evaluating them based on a rubric with benchmarks.

Ideally, assessment would be done during winter term to give the SAC time in our Spring In-Service to analyze the data and discuss our response.

*Due to the time constraints of submitting this report by the deadline, the analysis and suggested changes as a result of this assessment were written by the assessment subcommittee. These suggestions must still be endorsed by the full Communication Studies SAC.*

## References

- MIT student writing and speaking self-assessment.* (2010). Retrieved from [ocw.mit.edu/courses/...fall.../MIT21W\\_732F10\\_selfassess.pdf](http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/...fall.../MIT21W_732F10_selfassess.pdf)
- Schuurman, M., Alley M., Marshall M., & Johnstone C.J. (2008, August). The effect of a targeted speech communication course on the public speaking self-efficacy of engineering undergraduates. *Proceedings of the 2008 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference and Exposition*. Pittsburgh: ASEE.

## Appendix

### Com Studies Core Outcomes

**SP 111 Pre-Assessment**

Please circle the response noting to what degree you *disagree or agree* with these statements.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I understand the principles of public speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I know how to develop an effective message for different audiences.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand how to build credibility as a speaker.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I know how to select an appropriate speech topic.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can select an appropriate organizational pattern to meet my goals as a speaker.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can develop an effective speech outline.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When giving a speech, I can control my nervousness.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can speak confidently when giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I can effectively reference and cite sources orally when giving a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I can verbally communicate my ideas effectively in a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I can nonverbally communicate my ideas effectively in a speech.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Giving oral presentations helps me to develop strong ideas and arguments.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am a critical listener of public speeches.	1	2	3	4	5

Com Studies Core Outcomes

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>
14. Public speaking helps me acquire new information and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Public speaking helps me examine and explore my personal values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Listening to speakers helps me understand the values and beliefs of others.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Public speaking can help me academically.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Public speaking can help me meet my career goals.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I understand the role of public speaking in a democratic society.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Public speaking helps contribute to our community.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Public speaking helps us to explore and/or resolve differences.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I can use presentation aids to enhance my verbal message when I speak.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I can design a speech to inform or persuade an audience.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I can use public speaking to explain concepts and skills to others.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I can use technology to support my message as a speaker.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly D				Strongly A	
a=Pre, b=Post; bold=mode	1	2	3	4	5	
1a. Principles	15	56	<b>141</b>	81	18	311
1b. Principles	0	2	8	83	<b>123</b>	216
2a. Different audiences	16	73	<b>153</b>	64	9	315
2b. Different audiences	2	0	18	<b>100</b>	98	218
3a. Credibility	23	88	<b>134</b>	59	10	314
3b. Credibility	2	3	11	90	<b>113</b>	219
4a. Appropriate topic	11	56	<b>129</b>	91	21	308
4b. Appropriate topic	3	2	10	90	<b>114</b>	219
5a. Org. pattern	19	101	<b>110</b>	66	16	312
5b. Org. pattern	2	4	20	93	<b>97</b>	216
6a. Outline	17	82	<b>116</b>	87	14	316
6b. Outline	2	1	15	88	<b>109</b>	215
7a. Control nervousness	63	88	<b>97</b>	44	23	315
7b. Control nervousness	5	20	69	<b>76</b>	47	217
8a. Confidence	40	79	<b>103</b>	69	23	314
8b. Confidence	3	16	47	<b>86</b>	64	216
9a. Cite sources	40	100	<b>105</b>	57	11	313
9b. Cite sources	1	9	26	81	<b>98</b>	215
10a. Verbal com	16	69	<b>133</b>	78	19	315
10b. Verbal com	0	2	21	<b>104</b>	89	216
11a. Nonverbal com	31	98	<b>124</b>	53	7	313
11b. Nonverbal com	2	14	51	<b>99</b>	52	218
12a. Ideas/arguments	29	82	<b>122</b>	60	20	313
12b. Ideas/arguments	2	11	45	<b>92</b>	68	218
13a. Critical listener	14	62	<b>106</b>	82	51	315
13b. Critical listener	4	4	36	<b>91</b>	82	217
14a. New info/knowledge	13	46	<b>124</b>	99	31	313
14b. New info knowledge	0	4	29	82	<b>104</b>	219
15a. Personal beliefs/values	16	59	<b>101</b>	97	38	311
15b. Personal beliefs/values	2	11	35	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>	220
16a. Others' beliefs/values	4	13	57	<b>165</b>	69	308

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16b. Others' beliefs/values	1	1	20	86	<b>111</b>	219
17a. Academics	7	11	56	<b>126</b>	108	308
17b. Academics	1	1	13	61	<b>139</b>	215
18a. Career goals	5	11	56	110	<b>126</b>	308
18b. Career goals	1	5	18	56	<b>134</b>	214
19a. Democratic society	6	22	69	<b>106</b>	103	306
19b. Democratic society	2	2	22	75	<b>119</b>	220
20a. Community	1	12	60	<b>123</b>	111	307
20b. Community	1	4	29	80	<b>105</b>	219
21a. Resolve differences	0	14	67	<b>142</b>	83	306
21b. Resolve differences	1	3	37	75	<b>99</b>	215
22a. Presentation aids	7	26	84	<b>127</b>	65	309
22b. Presentation aids	1	3	11	67	<b>136</b>	218
23a. Inform/persuade	13	49	<b>123</b>	82	41	308
23b. Inform/persuade	1	0	14	88	<b>112</b>	215
24a. Explain concepts/skills	11	32	<b>112</b>	107	43	305
24b. Explain concepts/skills	1	1	13	92	<b>112</b>	219
25a. Use technology	13	37	<b>101</b>	97	57	305
25b. Use technology	2	2	17	73	<b>122</b>	216