

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Colonnade Assessment Report (Video)

2021-2022

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Course Prefix, Number, & Title: COMM 145: Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Communication

Colonnade Category: Foundations – Human Communication (OC)

Colonnade Human Communication Goal(s):

Student Learning Objective 1: (Not applicable)

Student Learning Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, which may include public, interpersonal, and/or small-group settings.

Student Learning Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to find, analyze, evaluate, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts.

Student Learning Objective 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view, and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response.

Student Learning Objective 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas.

(NOTE: This assessment effort included video artifacts from academic year 2021-22 [both semesters]. This report serves as the **second assessment based upon the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) rubric** (see Appendix 1) adapted from the AAC&U LEAP VALUE Rubric for oral communication by Dr. Doug McElroy and more recently approved by Dr. Molly Kerby. This assessment is the first since the emergency procedures implemented by WKU during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Masking procedures were still being observed for most of the face-to-face classroom speeches.)

Method for Assessing Student Progress

The Department of Communication collected speech videos from randomly selected students across sections of Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Communication (COMM 145) for the 2021-2022 academic year (AY). Videos included recordings of students taught through online instructional delivery as well as those taught in the classroom setting.

A team of nine faculty members rated the speeches for the Problem-Solution/Persuasive Speech assignment (5-6 minute persuasive speech using an appropriate organizational pattern for the selected topic) using the Oral Communication SLO Assessment Rubric adapted from the AAC&U LEAP VALUE Rubric for Oral Communication and recently approved by the current Colonnade Assessment coordinators. This rubric includes five observed competencies mapped to the four Colonnade student learning objectives required of any course meeting the OC requirements of the Foundations category of the Colonnade program (see Appendices 1 and 2).

Procedures

Student speech videos from each section of COMM 145 were selected for the assessment pool using a randomly generated number sequence from which the first four numbers in that sequence were used. Videos of the student speeches at those four numbered positions on each class roster were downloaded to the network drive share for the Department of Communication. Those videos were then distributed to folders on the department network drive share assigned to each assessor. The rating team evaluated a total sample of $N = 101$ speeches for AY2021-2022 ($N = 72$ under face-to-face instruction and $N = 29$ under online instruction).

Nine fulltime faculty members who primarily teach COMM 145 and with experience ranging from 2 to 24 years participated in the assessment. Each rater received a web link for an anonymous Qualtrics survey (see Appendix 2) which allowed the rater to use the link multiple times (once for each recording assessed). The survey included five possible responses for each of the five item stems: Capstone (4), Milestone (3), Milestone (2), Benchmark (1) and Not Present (0). The first two items (“Delivery” and “Language”) measured the first Student Learning Outcome of the four statewide SLOs for oral communication (OC), the third item (“Supporting Materials”) measured the second SLO for OC from the statewide SLOs, the fourth item (“Evidence”) measured the third SLO for OC from the statewide SLOs, and the fourth item (“Organization”) measured the fifth SLO for OC of the statewide SLOs. Statistical analysis of the final dataset was completed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28. For statistical analysis reports included means, frequency tables, and histograms for all five items in the Qualtrics survey. Percentages of recordings scored at the Milestone (2) level and above for each item were

calculated by use of a calculator. The target for each of the percentages reported for each item for both presentation modes was 70 percent.

Assessment Results

Table 1 (below) provides the mean scores for each of the five assessment items and the percentages of those scoring at the Milestone (2) level or above on each assessment item for AY2021-22 for the combined presentation modes. According to the data, a two thirds majority of students (more than 68.3 percent) scored at the Milestone level or higher across all five categories in the academic year assessed, and 75.2 percent of the students met or exceeded the target of 70 percent scoring at the Milestone (2) level or higher on four of the five items (“Delivery,” “Language,” “Supporting Materials,” and “Organization”). On two of the items (“Language” and “Organization”), 89.2 percent of the students scored at the Milestone (2) level or higher with “Language” being the highest (92 percent).

Table 1: Score Means and Percentages at Milestone or above for COMM 145 combined for both the Face-to-Face and Online Settings for AY2021-22

Colonnade Student Learning Objectives Students will demonstrate the ability...	Mean (2021- 22) N = 101	Percent at Milestone or above (2021-22)
1. to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts... (DELIVERY)	2.81	75.2
2. to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts... (LANGUAGE)	2.52	92
3. to find, analyze, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources... (SUPPORTING MATERIAL)	2.55	78.2
4. to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions... (EVIDENCE)	2.87	68.3
5. to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve development and clarity of ideas. (ORGANIZATION)	2.42	89.2

Table 2 provides the means scores and percentages of those scoring at the Milestone (2) level or above on each item for AY2021-22 based upon presentation in the face-to-face setting and online separated. According to the data, a majority of students (more than 62.1 percent) in either presentation mode scored at the Milestone level or higher across all five categories in the academic year assessed, and 72.3 percent of the students scored at the Milestone (2) level or higher on four of the five items (“Delivery,” “Language,” “Supporting Materials,” and “Organization”) thus meeting or exceeding the target of 70 percent for those four. On two of the items (“Language” and “Organization”), 88.9 percent of the students in either mode scored at the

Milestone (2) level or higher with “Language” in the face-to-face presentation mode achieving the highest percentage (93 percent).

Table 2: Separate Score Means and Percentages at Milestone or above for COMM 145 for the Face-to-Face and Online Settings for AY2021-22

Colonnade Student Learning Objectives Students will demonstrate the ability...	Mean: Face-to-Face N = 72	Mean: Online N = 29	Percent at Milestone or above: Face-to-Face	Percent at Milestone or above: Online
1. to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts... (DELIVERY)	2.81	2.83	76.4	72.3
2. to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts... (LANGUAGE)	2.57	2.41	93	89.7
3. to find, analyze, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources... (SUPPORTING MATERIAL)	2.54	2.59	77.8	79.2
4. to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions... (EVIDENCE)	2.86	2.90	70.8	62.1
5. to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve development and clarity of ideas. (ORGANIZATION)	2.40	2.45	88.9	89.6

Interpretation

AY2017-2018 and AY 2021-2022 Comparison (Combined Modes)

Due to some reevaluations of the assessment process by Academic Affairs staff since the last assessment was completed for AY2017-2018, in the spring of 2019 the word was received that assessments were not required every year but should be done at least every third year. Thus, AY2018-2019 was not assessed. The following year, the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic struck, presenting a hiatus to the assessment process for all programs. This hiatus lasted unofficially through AY2019-2020 and AY2020-2021. Therefore, the last results of an assessment to which the current assessment can be compared are those from AY2017-2018.

The results between AY2017-2018 and AY2021-2020 found an increase in the means measured for two of the five items (“Language” and “Supporting Materials”). Three of the five items (“Delivery,” “Evidence,” “Organization”) declined. Four of the five saw only marginal changes from AY2017-2018 to AY2021-2022. “Language” rose 2.4 percentage points, “Supporting Materials” rose 1.8 percentage points, “Evidence” declined 0.6 percentage points, and “Organization” declined 1.4 percentage points. On the other hand, “Delivery” saw a

precipitous decline of 13.5 percentage points. Still, the target of at least 70 percent of the students at or above the Milestone (2) level was achieved.

One item for which some needed action is still indicated is item 4 (“Evidence”). The percentage (68.3%) for AY2021-2022 was still below the 70 percent target. Fortunately, the decline from AY2017-2018 was only 0.6 percentage points, and although the target was not achieved, the results did not miss the target by large amount. In addition, it should be noted that the full text in the rubric for the Milestone (2) level states *“Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.”* As was pointed out by assessors in the past, the time allotted for the delivery of the speech (5-6 minutes) does not lend itself to allowing analysis of sources and questioning/assessing the factuality of the evidence during the speech. As a result, many assessors follow the exact wording of the rubric in assessment of the item and scored artifacts lower accordingly (and by inference, others who have not commented are believed to have done the same). As was stated by these two assessors, this analysis of the sources and student assessment of the viewpoints of experts would have been expected to have taken place as a part of the process of the student developing the speech and possibly evident by the credibility of the sources and the quality of the evidence, but not explicitly expounded upon by the student during the speech due to the time constraints.

Two items that need to be watched are “Delivery” and “Supporting Materials”. Although both the means (“Delivery” = 2.81 and “Supporting Materials” = 2.55) and the percentages at or above the Milestone (2) level (“Delivery” = 75.2% and “Supporting Materials” = 78.2%) are above target, additional instructional efforts should not only improve the results for these items but possibly have some positive effect upon item 4 (“Evidence”) as these subjects are taught as part of the same corpus of materials in the course.

AY2021-2022 Online and Face-to-Face Instructional Modes Comparison

Overall, the results for AY2021-2022 comparing the final statistics from students delivering speeches online vs. those delivered in the face-to-face classroom setting were a bit surprising compared to past results (AY2017-2018). In AY2017-18 four of the five items (“Language,” “Supporting Material,” “Evidence,” and “Organization”) had higher means and percentages at or above the Milestone (2) level for the sample from online presentation sections than for the face-to-face sections, and some by significant percentage points (Item 3 “Supporting Materials” means difference of 0.23 and different in percentages of 11.4 points). The lone item with higher statistics for face-to-face presentation mode vs. online was item 1 (“Delivery”) with the face-to-face sample being 3.3 percentage points higher and a mean higher by 0.07. By comparison, for AY2021-2022 four of the five items had higher means for the online modality, but only two of the five items had a higher percentage of the students attaining the Milestone (2) level or higher. Of special note are the results for “Evidence”: Although the means are higher for the online mode, the percentage of students attaining the Milestone (2) level or higher was significantly lower with only 62.1 percent of the students performing at that level or above compared to 70.8 percent of those in the face-to-face setting. In fact, when broken out between the online and classroom modes, the “Evidence” item in the online mode was the only cell failing to reach the 70 percent target. As for the reversed results, inspection of the histogram

indicates a higher number of students in the online group not only scored in the Benchmark (1) level but also at the Capstone (4) level compared to the face-to-face students. Thus, the mean was skewed for the online presentations as a result of the distribution of the assessed levels.

When comparing means for each of the five items between the two modes, for the most part the differences are unremarkable. Those differences were as follows: “Delivery” = 0.02, “Language” = 0.16, “Supporting Material” = 0.05, “Evidence” = 0.04 and “Organization” = 0.05. The only means difference of any note would be that for “Language,” the one item for which the means favored the face-to-face presentation mode.

Analysis

In analyzing these results, there are undoubtedly confounding factors involved. Numerous possible explanations might be given for the results, although none of the explanations can be empirically demonstrated from the current data alone. Observations and possible explanations concerning the results of this assessment project include the following:

- Given the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic beginning in March 2020 and the numerous changes that took place in the remainder of AY2019-20 through AY2021-2022, it is convenient to place responsibility for outcomes on the impact of the pandemic. Unfortunately, without periodic assessment having been completed during the pandemic itself, there is no means by which a determination can be made as to the true effects the pandemic and the changing and various teaching modes have had. To attempt to do so with complete confidence would only be conjecture.
- One impact of the pandemic which is known is that there were multiple modalities of instruction used during the pandemic period, including in AY2021-2022. Some classes were asynchronous online, some were a hybrid of face-to-face instruction with online presentations, some were entirely face-to-face, some were entirely remote synchronous online, and even others were face-to-face with students given the option of presenting in the classroom or doing so through online submission due to student risk aversion to the virus. Thus, a cause and effect relationship between modalities of either the instruction or the student presentation cannot be established.
- The results may have been a statistical abnormality due to the smaller sample size for the online sample (“Online” N = 29, “Face-to-Face” N = 72). Good statistical practice would normally call for a sample size that is randomly drawn and has no systemic selectivity of cases to be at least N = 30 if no further subdividing of the sample is to occur.
- Finally, there is the possibility that overall the face-to-face instruction regarding the evaluation and use of “Evidence” was superior to the online instruction.

It cannot be stressed enough that each of the above may be little more than conjecture. Results from future assessments may bear one or more of these explanations out, but the data is insufficient to make any firm determination at the present time without additional years to establish overall trends.

Future Directions (i.e. “Closing the Loop”)

A comparisons between the two assessments’ data (AY2017-2018 vs. AY2021-2022) or the comparison between online and face-to-face instruction for the last academic year serve as snapshots and provide interesting data. This assessment provides some interesting results that future assessments may provide answers to the questions of “Why?” and “Is this a trend?” To this effect, additional data should be collected concerning the number of students initially selected and the number of those selected who had no artifact available for use in the assessment whether the presentation mode was online or face-to-face. In addition, although the selection of additional artifacts from the online presentations will require an expanded selection method (i.e. more than 4 from each section), more artifacts should be gathered from the online sections of the course to more closely approximate the number of artifacts in the sample for face-to-face sections.

With regard to implications of the scores of each of the five items assessed, since two of these (Item 2 “Language,” and Item 5 “Organization”) demonstrated achievement well above the target (70% at the Milestone (2) level or above), instructors should be encouraged to continue with the emphases that they have already been making in these areas. For the remaining three items (Item 1 “Delivery,” Item 3 “Supporting Material” and Item 4 “Evidence”) they will need some additional attention. First, results from this report may be disseminated among the instructors, pointing out the deficiencies in Item 4 “Evidence” and the lower scoring of Item 1 “Delivery” and Item 3 “Supporting Materials.” Second, in consultation with Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, changes might be made to the wording in the rubric with regard to Item 4 “Evidence” in order to more accurately reflect the limitations created by the time constraints of a 5-6 minute speech and the impact upon how the student learning object (SLO) might be observed in the speech. Finally, additional emphasis on the use and choices of evidence will be encouraged through the distribution of additional instructional resources to the instructors for their use in their instruction.

The COMM 145 “Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Communication” faculty are very capable and willing. All those involved in teaching the course provide evidence of a desire to see their students succeed, and are ready to take the necessary actions to help their students improve. I am confident that improvement will be seen in future results that proceed from the above suggestions.


ORAL COMMUNICATION (OC)
SLO ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
Adapted from AAC&U LEAP VALUE Rubrics

Students will demonstrate the ability to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, which may include public, interpersonal, and/or small-group settings.				
	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make presentation compelling; speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make presentation interesting; speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make presentation understandable; speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of presentation; speaker appears uncomfortable.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in the presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is not appropriate to audience.
Students will demonstrate the ability to find, analyze, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts.				
	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanation, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view; and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response.				
	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Evidence	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.	Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, with out question.
Students will demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas.				
	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work that does not meet the benchmark-level performance.

Figure 1: Rubric Used by Assessors

Appendix 2



Please use the Oral Communication (OC) SLO Assessment Rubric provided by Dr. Doug McElroy and distributed to you via email from Gary Hughes for further descriptions of each choice.

	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Not Present (0)
Delivery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting Material	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Was this speech delivered in a face-to-face class or online?

Face-to-face classroom	Online
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Figure 2: Screenshot of Qualtrics Survey Used by Assessors