

Seaver College General Education (GE) Assessment – Oral Communication Academic Year 2011-2012

I. Program Learning Outcome

Students communicate effectively in oral form as demonstrated by their ability to structure, deliver and implement critical thinking skills.

II. Institutional Educational Outcomes (IEOs)

The GE Program Learning Outcome aligns with the following IEOs.

Knowledge & Scholarship

Purpose

Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.

Service

Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.

Leadership

Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly and act with integrity.

Faith & Heritage

Purpose

Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning, and practice.

Leadership

Practice responsible conduct and allow decisions and directions to be informed by a value-centered life.

III. Student Learning Outcome(s)

SLO #1	Students will effectively deliver oral presentations through informative and persuasive speeches
SLO #2	Students will demonstrate the ability to critically think by way of implementing an effective persuasive presentation.
SLO #3	Students will demonstrate knowledge of rhetorical theory.

IV. Curriculum Map

For each SLO, indicate the course(s) where the outcome is **I**ntrouced (I), where students will **D**evelop their skills, knowledge, abilities, etc. related to the SLO (D), and where students will demonstrate **M**astery of the SLO (M) by entering I, D or M in the appropriate cell(s) of the following table. You may add or delete columns or rows as required. An exemplar curriculum map is found [here](#).

	SLO #1	SLO #2	SLO #3	
Com 180	(M) Oral Presentations	(I) Critical thinking skills	(I) Rhetorical theory	

V. Assessment Plan

The assessment committee decided that we would assess the aspects of oral presentation and critical thinking in the fall semester of the Com180 classes. There were 22 sections of Com180 taught in the fall of 2012, representing 462 students. We chose to use the rubric pertaining to the persuasive speech (the third

speech of the semester) to assess whether the students were able to effectively deliver an oral presentation. We chose this same rubric to assess whether the students demonstrated the ability to think critically by using an argumentative design, incorporating outside research, properly citing sources, and avoiding the use of faulty logic.

	Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence
SLO #1	Speech Rubric #3: Delivery	Graduating Senior Survey
SLO #2	Speech Rubric #3– Persuasive Design	Graduating Senior Survey
SLO #3	Midterm or Final – Standardized questions	

Narrative Description of Assessment Plan

The assessment committee gathered and evaluated a collection of representative samples of student work produced throughout the com180 courses. Each professor was asked to use the standardized grading rubric to note whether each of their students scored a 70% or higher in the category of “Delivery” and in the category of “Persuasive Design”. In regards to the oral presentation, the following aspects were evaluated: eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, vocal fluctuation and posture. In regards to assessing Persuasive Design, the following components were evaluated: implementing an argumentative design, properly citing sources, the credibility of sources, using the appropriate number of sources, and incorporating the Aristotle’s rhetorical theories of pathos, logos, and ethos. (See Appendix B). The professors recorded each of their student scores, and then submitted photocopies of the rubric along with the total number of students who scored 70% or higher in both of the categories of “delivery” and “persuasive design”. The assessment committee then randomly chose different course sections to read and reviewed the final scores presented by each of the professors. Then, the committee noted and recorded the level of achievement displayed in the sample with respect to each of the SLOs. Ultimately, for each of the SLOs being assessed, the committee noted how many of the samples ranked 5 (highest), 4, 3, 2, and 1 (lowest) for each of the SLOs. These results together comprise the “direct evidence” of the GE’s performance relative to critical thinking.

Additionally, the committee compared the “direct evidence” described above to the “indirect evidence” of the GE’s performance relative to critical thinking. The relevant “indirect evidence” consists in the results of a survey administered by Seaver College to graduating seniors of the Class of 2012. The committee paid special attention to the results of the following question on the aforementioned survey:

“How has the General Education curriculum contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?”

2. Critical thinking: Examination of ideas, evidence, and assumptions before accepting or formulating a conclusion.”

6. Effective speaking: Conveying accurate and compelling content in clear, expressive and audience appropriate oral presentations.

VI. Rubrics

For the assessments identified in the Section V, provide the rubrics that will be used to evaluate the obtained evidence (data). Place the rubrics in Appendix B.

VII. Criteria for Student Achievement / Success

For each assessment SLO, list the criterion or criteria established as an acceptable standard of student achievement. Enter this information in the blank cells of the following table.

	Criterion (Criteria)
SLO #1	80% of students scoring 80% or greater on delivery / oral presentation
SLO #2	80% of students scoring 80% or higher on persuasive argumentation speech
SLO #3	80% of students scoring 80% or higher on rhetorical theory questions on final exam
	We chose this level of achievement based upon what we perceive to be our past numbers from previous assessments. These numbers reflect where we would like to be in the future, with the belief that both percentages (students /scores) would be increased in the future. These numbers have also been increased with the knowledge that the expectation for this class is that the students should be at the Mastery level as this is the only oral communication course for most of our students.

VIII. Evidence / Data

SLO #1

Narrative Description of Results: with respect to SLO #1 (oral presentation), the assessment committee found that number of students who successfully earned a 70% or higher (which equated to a 4/5 or a 5/5 on the rubric) was 125/133 (93.9%). This direct data seems to support the indirect evidence gathered by the graduating senior survey who indicated that 89.6% of the students felt that their GE classes either somewhat (26.9%), sufficiently, (41.0%) or considerably (20.7%) helped foster the skills and knowledge of effective speaking. Given that our set goal was to see that 80% of the students would be able to demonstrate proficiency at the Master level, the assessment committee was satisfied with these results.

SLO #2

Narrative Description of Results: With respect to SLO#2 (critical thinking), the assessment committee found that the number of students who successfully earned an 80% or higher (which equated to a 8/10 or a 10/10 on the rubric) was 120/133 (90%). This direct data also seems to support the indirect evidence gathered by the graduating senior survey who indicated that 91.9% felt that their GE classes either somewhat (29%), sufficiently, (39.7) or considerably (23.2%) assisted them in their ability to examine ideas, evidence and assumptions before accepting or formulating a conclusion. Given that our set goal was to see that 80% of the students would be able to demonstrate proficiency at the Introductory level, the assessment committee was satisfied with these results.

IX. Summary

Based on the evidence and findings reported in the previous section, summarize the findings in narrative form. In the summary, be certain to address the following questions for this area of the GE program.

1. Are the goals being achieved?
2. Are the SLOs achieved at the established standard of achievement?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses?
4. What areas need improvement?
5. What are the future one, three and five year goals for this component of the General Education program?

Narrative Summary of Findings: Based upon the direct evidence and the indirect evidence stated in the above (Section VIII), the assessment committee has determined that the desired goals are being achieved. We are still in need of assessing whether the knowledge of the theory of rhetoric is being accomplished. The strengths of this assessment is that it is helping each of the faculty to have a clear understanding of what the student learning outcomes are for this particular course. Furthermore, it is also helping to establish a clear explanation to the students in regards to what the University hopes that this GE course seeks to accomplish. In regards to the potential areas of weakness, the assessment committee is still seeking to find a way that would prove to be less subjective on the part of the professor who is assessing the performance of their own students and who might feel as though they are merely assessing their own skills as a professor when assessing their students ability at oral presentation and critical thinking. As a division, the assessment committee acknowledges that there is still a great need to ensure that the professors themselves (many who are non-tenured or adjuncts) have the proper resources to teach critical thinking and oral presentation.

X. Closing the Loop & Quality Improvement Program

Based upon your analysis, what actions are necessary to correct weaknesses and improve this area of the General Education program? For each action item, provide the following information.

- **Action Item:** The committee feels that there is a strong need to encourage the continual mentoring, educating and hiring of individuals who can effectively teach in the fields of critical thinking and oral presentations. Specifically, this could consist of a day-long seminar for our new adjuncts or teachers in Com180. Furthermore, requesting that senior professors in the division and other tenured faculty occasionally teach Com180 would be helpful in this matter.
- **Evidence to support this proposed action:** Anecdotal evidence from our upper division professors seems to suggest that there is a slight need for our students to develop stronger critical thinking skills.
- **Expected outcome (if the action item is implemented):** We would expect that our students would be able to engage in serious subjects and issues of debate without merely relying upon opinion and popular news media.
- **Expected timeline:** Very likely, it would take several semesters before this was apparent in our upper division classes.
- **Type of Action:** Resource Neutral Resources Required

XI. Contributors

Assessment of this area of the General Education program was performed by the following individual(s).

Committee Chairperson	Position Title	Academic Division
Ken Waters	Chair	Communication

Committee Members	Position Title	Academic Division
John Jones	Professor	Communication
Greg Daum	Visiting Lecture / Director of Basic Speech Course	Communication
Ken Waters	Chair/Professor	Communication
Gary Selby	Professor	Communication

XII. Educational Effectiveness Indicators

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Assessment Details

The following assessment was used to assess Student Learning Outcome #1 and #2

1. How we will gather the data/evidence
Each professor will be given an identical grading sheet accompanied by the standard rubric detailing the how the scores are determined (using a 5,4,3,2,1 or a 10,8,6,4,2 standard.) Each professor will grade their students' speeches, and then make a photo copy to submit to the Director of the Basic Speech Course.
2. What date/evidence will be collected?
The assessment committee randomly selected ½ of the classes in the basic speech course in the spring of 2012. We will collect this information after the persuasive speech, which is the third speech in the semester. This will take place in early April of the spring semester.
3. How will the data/evidence be analyzed?
We will be using a rubric that National Communication Association is currently using to assess students who are in the basic speech course. The actual numbers that will be analyzed will come from the individual scores from the professors on the grade sheet and rubric that is used in the class grading process.
4. Where will the data be archived?
For the time being, the data will be archived in the office of either Dr. John Jones or Greg Daum.

Appendix B - Rubrics

The following rubric was used to analyze the evidence gathered in assessment of Student Learning Outcome(s) #1, #2

**Com 180 Speech #3
Persuasive Policy Speech**

Name: _____

Time: _____

Introduction (10 pts.)

Grab Audience Interest	1	2	3	4	5
Stated Thesis Clearly & Previewed Main Ideas	1	2	3	4	5

POINTS EARNED: _____ pts.

Argumentative/Persuasive Design (Critical Thinking - 60 pts.)

Organized Effectively Using Persuasive Design	2	4	6	8	10
Clearly Demonstrated Need/Problem	2	4	6	8	10
Appropriate Research and Analysis	2	4	6	8	10
Cited Source Effectively	2	4	6	8	10
Effective use of pathos, logos, ethos	2	4	6	8	10
Clear and Feasible Call to Action (Or Solution)	2	4	6	8	10

POINTS EARNED: _____ pts.

Conclusion (10 pts.)

Transition & Summarization of Major Points	1	2	3	4	5
Ended on a Memorable Note	1	2	3	4	5

POINTS EARNED: _____ pts.

Delivery (Oral Presentation - 20 pts.)

Eye Contact (Minimal reliance upon notes)	1	2	3	4	5
Posture (Weight evenly distributed across body/feet)	1	2	3	4	5
Vocal Delivery (Shows excitement, energy, enthusiasm)	1	2	3	4	5
Facial Expressions and Hand Gestures	1	2	3	4	5

POINTS EARNED: _____ pts.

Outlines and Powerpoint (25 pts.)

Used Key Word Outline	1	2	3	4	5
Formal Sentence Outline with Bibliography	2	4	6	8	10
Use of Powerpoint (Spelling, design, visibility)	2	4	6	8	10

POINTS EARNED: _____ /pts.

TOTAL POINTS /125 pts.

**Public Speaking Competence
Assessment Rubric for Student Speeches**

Performance Outcomes The student....	Assessment Criteria				
	Advanced 5	Proficient 4	Basic 3	Minimal 2	Deficient 1
1. Selects a topic appropriate to the audience and occasion	Topic engages audience; topic is worthwhile, timely, and presents new information to the audience	Topic is appropriate to the audience and provides some useful information to the audience	Topic is untimely or lacks originality; provides scant new information to audience	Topic is too trivial, too complex, or inappropriate for audience; topic not suitable for the situation	A single topic cannot be deduced
2. Formulates an introduction that orients audience to topic and speaker	Excellent attention getter; firmly establishes credibility; sound orientation to topic; clear thesis; preview of main points cogent and memorable	Good attention getter; generally establishes credibility; provides some orientation to topic; discernible thesis; previews main points	Attention getter is mundane; some-what develops credibility; awkwardly composed thesis; provides little direction for audience	Irrelevant opening; little attempt to build credibility; abrupt jump into body of speech; thesis and main points can be deduced but are not explicitly stated	No opening technique; no credibility statement; no background on topic; no thesis; no preview of points
3. Uses an effective organizational pattern	Very well organized; main points clear, mutually exclusive and directly related to thesis; effective transitions and signposts	Organizational pattern is evident, main points are apparent; transitions present between main points; some use of signposts	Organizational pattern is mundane; main points are present but not mutually exclusive; transitions are present but are minimally effective	Speech did not flow well; speech was not logically organized; transitions present but not well formed	No organizational pattern; no transitions; sounded as if information was randomly presented
4. Locates, synthesizes and employs compelling supporting materials	All key points are well supported with a variety of credible materials (e.g. facts, stats, quotes, etc.); sources provide excellent support for thesis; all sources clearly cited	Main points were supported with appropriate material; sources correspond suitably to thesis; nearly all sources cited	Points were generally supported using an adequate mix of materials; some evidence supports thesis; source citations need to be clarified	Some points were not supported; a greater quantity/ quality of material needed; some sources of very poor quality	Supporting materials are non-existent or are not cited
5. Develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure	Provides a clear and memorable summary of points; refers back to thesis / big picture; ends with strong clincher or call to action	Appropriate summary of points; some reference back to thesis; clear clincher or call to action	Provides some summary of points; no clear reference back to thesis; closing technique can be strengthened	Conclusion lacks clarity; trails off; ends in a tone at odds with the rest of the speech	No conclusion; speech ends abruptly and without closure
6. Demonstrates a careful choice of words	Language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid; completely free from bias, grammar errors and inappropriate usage	Language appropriate to the goals of the presentation; no conspicuous errors in grammar; no evidence of bias	Language selection adequate; some errors in grammar; language at times misused (e.g. jargon, slang, awkward structure)	Grammar and syntax need to be improved as can level of language sophistication; occasionally biased	Many errors in grammar and syntax; extensive use of jargon, slang, sexist/racist terms or mispronunciations
7. Effectively uses vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience	Excellent use of vocal variation, intensity and pacing; vocal expression natural and enthusiastic; avoids fillers	Good vocal variation and pace; vocal expression suited to assignment; few if any fillers	Demonstrates some vocal variation; enunciates clearly and speaks audibly; generally avoids fillers (e.g. um, uh, like)	Sometimes uses a voice too soft or articulation too indistinct for listeners to comfortably hear; often uses fillers	Speaks inaudibly; enunciates poorly; speaks in monotone; poor pacing; distracts listeners with fillers
8. Demonstrates nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message	Posture, gestures, facial expression and eye contact well developed, natural, and display high levels of poise and confidence	Postures, gestures and facial expressions are suitable for speech, speaker appears confident	Some reliance on notes, but has adequate eye contact; generally avoids distracting mannerisms	Speaker relies heavily on notes; nonverbal expression stiff and unnatural	Usually looks down and avoids eye contact; nervous gestures and nonverbal behaviors distract from or contradict the message
9. Successfully adapts the presentation to the audience	Speaker shows how information is personally important to audience; speech is skillfully tailored to audience beliefs, values, and attitudes; speaker makes allusions to culturally shared experiences	Speaker implies the importance of the topic to the audience; presentation is adapted to audience beliefs, attitudes and values; an attempt is made to establish common ground	Speaker assumes but does not articulate the importance of topic; presentation was minimally adapted to audience beliefs, attitudes, and values; some ideas in speech are removed from audience's frame of reference or experiences	The importance of topic is not established; very little evidence of audience adaptation; speaker needs to more clearly establish a connection with the audience	Speech is contrary to audience beliefs, values, and attitudes; message is generic or canned; no attempt is made to establish common ground
10. Skillfully makes use of visual aids	Exceptional explanation and presentation of visual aids; visuals provide powerful insight into speech topic; visual aids of high professional quality	Visual aids well presented; use of visual aids enhances understanding; visual aids good quality	Visual aids were generally well displayed and explained; minor errors present in visuals	Speaker did not seem well practiced with visuals; visuals not fully explained; quality of visuals needs improvement	Use of the visual aids distracted from the speech; visual aids not relevant; visual aids poor professional quality
11. Constructs an effectual persuasive message with credible evidence and sound reasoning	Articulates problem and solution in a clear, compelling manner; supports claims with powerful /credible evidence; completely avoids reasoning fallacies; memorable call to action	Problem and solution are clearly presented; claims supported with evidence and examples; sound reasoning evident; clear call to action	Problem and solution are evident; most claims are supported with evidence; generally sound reasoning; recognizable call to action	Problem and/or solution are somewhat unclear; claims not fully supported with evidence; some reasoning fallacies present; call to action vague	Problem and/or solution are not defined; claims not supported with evidence; poor reasoning; no call to action

Insert discipline or course related outcomes here

Appendix C - Evidence /Data

The following evidence was gathered in assessment of Student Learning Outcome #_1__.

Oral Presentation

Com180.01 (Daum) – 13/14

Com180.04 (Lawrence) – 17/17

Com180.05 (Sloan) – 11/13

Com180.06 (Sloan) – 10/12

Com180.11 (Ballard) 15/15

Com180.12 (Ballard) 11/11

Com180.13 (Arnett) 13/14

Com180.14 (Fike) – 18/20

Total – 125/133 (93.9%)

The following evidence was gathered in assessment of Student Learning Outcome #_2__.

Critical Thinking

Com180.01 (Daum) – 13/14

Com180.04 (Lawrence) – 16/17

Com180.05 (Sloan) – 11/13

Com180.06 (Sloan) – 10/12

Com180.11 (Ballard) 15/15

Com180.12 (Ballard) 10/11

Com180.13 (Arnett) 13/14

Com180.14 (Fike) – 16/20

Total – 120/133 (90.1%)

Appendix D - Chronology

The committee met and performed activities in support of this assessment as indicated below. Please add additional rows as necessary.

Date	Members Participating (Initials)	Action
8/14 & 8/23	KW, JJ, GD, GS and all Com.180 adjuncts/visiting professors	Attended University wide discussion on the subject of assessment. Also, at the annual kick off dinner for the Basic Speech Course, we discussed the need to do assessment starting this semester. Explained the methodology of using uniform grade sheets and rubrics to assess student scores.
10/7	JJ, GD	Discussed the idea of using either multiple speeches to assess students learning throughout the semester, or one speech toward the end of the semester to gauge students learning. Also, addressed whether or not the midterm or final should be used to assess students progress in accumulating knowledge of the history of rhetoric.
11/17-11/20	KW, JJ, GD	At the National Communication Association Conference, a number of workshops and seminars were attended in order to discuss how other universities were assessing student learning as well as the rubrics that we being used in the basic speech course.
12/8	KW, JJ, GD	Continued to collect the data from our Com180 professors and began to analyze the results to determine if we were accomplishing our stated desires.