

*Institutional Effectiveness Report
Academic Year (2014-2015)
(Speech)*

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Mission and Goals

The Speech program resides within the Department of Mass Communication. There are currently four Speech courses listed in the university catalogue. Only two of the courses are ever offered as the other two are in the process of being removed from the catalogue. No major, minor or collateral is offered in Speech at this time. However, proficiency in oral communication is recognized as a vital aspect of education.

Two courses that are taught within the Speech program are required by the university and/or individual departments. Speech101, Basics of Oral Communication (Public Speaking), is a general education requirement, and Speech 203 Voice and Diction is a core requirement for Theater Arts majors.

The goal of the Speech program is to equip students with the skills needed to formulate and deliver a wide variety of messages. Such skills include message structure, audience analysis, researching and supporting ideas and arguments, using language effectively, and effective delivery. The speech program is designed to prepare students for success in a world in which oral proficiency is often rated as one of the most important skills one can possess.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.

Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.

Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.

Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.

Students will learn effective delivery skills.

Assessment Activities

All student outcomes are assessed using the same assessment tool. To assess the extent to which the Speech 101 course helps FMU students become orally competent, the program in Speech Communication administered its assessment method during the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters.

Under this method, which was implemented in the 2006-2007 academic year, we measured student ability two times during the course. The first assessment was given at the beginning of the course when students delivered their informative speeches, and the second was given at the end of the course when students presented their persuasive speeches. Through this process we were able to more accurately measure the impact of the course on student ability than we were with the previous assessment procedure.

Before each semester began, all Speech 101 instructors were given a randomly generated set of five numbers, each under twenty. By applying these five numbers to their rosters, instructors identified the random list of five students to assess in each of their sections.

During the first major speech, the informative speech, all Speech 101 instructors used the *Competent Speaker* evaluation form to assess these five students in each of their sections. Designed by the National Communication Association, the *Competent Speaker* form includes eight measures as follows:

- 1) *Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion.*
- 2) *Communicates thesis/purpose in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion.*

- 3) *Provides supporting material (including electronic and non-electronic presentational aids) appropriate for the audience and occasion.*
- 4) *Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion, and purpose.*
- 5) *Uses language appropriate for the audience and occasion.*
- 6) *Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity (volume) to heighten and maintain interest appropriate for the audience and occasion.*
- 7) *Uses pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate for the audience and occasion.*
- 8) *Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message.*

Students received either a 1 (unsatisfactory), a 2 (satisfactory), or a 3 (excellent) in each of the eight measures. Thus the total score received is between eight and twenty-four.

These same five students in each section were then evaluated using the same form and guidelines during their presentations of their persuasive speeches near the end of the semester. Their performances on each evaluation were then compared.

The *Competent Speaker* assessment tool directly measures each of the desired student learning outcomes.

Outcome 1: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.

Addressed by measures 1, 4

Outcome 2: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.

Addressed by measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Outcome 3: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.

Addressed by measure 3

Outcome 4: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.

Addressed by measures 5, 7

Outcome 5: Students will learn effective delivery skills.

Addressed by measures 6, 7, 8

Results

(Summary of ongoing assessment activities and comparative data)

Performance	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Improved	69.1%	75.4%	67.5%	79.5%
Stayed the same	21%	18.9%	14.2%	13.9%
Went Down	6.7%	5.7%	17.5%	6.6%

Further breakdown of results:

During the Fall 2014 semester, 90 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 18 sections). The percentages below are based on 84 as 6 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The results are as follows:

Improved: 66 or 78.6%
Stayed the same: 12 or 13.1%
Went down: 7 or 8.3%

During the Spring 2015 semester, 85 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 17 sections). The percentages below are based on 67 rather than 85 as 8 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 10 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved: 54 or 80.6%
Stayed the same: 10 or 14.9%
Went down: 3 or 4.4%

Total for the 2014-2015 year:

Improved: 120 or 79.5%
Stayed the same: 21 or 13.9%
Went down: 10 or 6.6%

Comparison with previous years

During the Fall 2013 semester, 105 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 21 sections). The percentages below are based on 87 as 3 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 15 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	56 or 64.3%
Stayed the same:	12 or 13.7%
Went down:	19 or 21.8%

During the Spring 2014 semester, 80 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 16 sections). The percentages below are based on 67 rather than 85 as 3 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 10 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	49 or 73.3%
Stayed the same:	10 or 14.9%
Went down:	8 or 11.9%

Total for the 2013-2014 year:

Improved:	104 or 67.5%
Stayed the same:	22 or 14.2%
Went down:	27 or 17.5%

During the Fall 2012 semester, 100 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 20 sections). The percentages below are based on 92 as 3 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 5 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	67 or 72.8%
Stayed the same:	22 or 23.9%
Went down:	3 or 3.3%

During the Spring 2013 semester, 85 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 17 sections). The percentages below are based on 67 rather than 85 as 3 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 15 as

some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	53 or 79.1%
Stayed the same:	8 or 11.9%
Went down:	6 or 9.0%

Total for the 2012-2013 year:

Improved:	120 or 75.4%
Stayed the same:	30 or 18.9%
Went down:	9 or 5.7%

During the Fall 2011 semester, 105 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 21 sections). The percentages below are based on 81 as 9 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 15 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	53 or 65.4%
Stayed the same:	18 or 22.2%
Went down:	6 or 7.4%

During the Spring 2012 semester, 80 students were supposed to have been evaluated (5 per section, 16 sections). The percentages below are based on 52 rather than 80 as 3 students dropped the course after the informative speech evaluation and before they were evaluated during the persuasive speech. The total number was further decreased by 25 as some faculty continue to fail to administer the evaluation. The results are as follows:

Improved:	39 or 75%
Stayed the same:	10 or 19.2%
Went down:	3 or 5.7%

Total for the 2011-2012 year:

Improved:	92 or 69.1%
Stayed the same:	28 or 21%
Went down:	9 or 6.7%

Interpretation of results

Our current benchmark is currently set at 70%. That is, we expect at least 7 in 10 students to improve in performance from their first and last speeches. Our assessment instrument gives us a clear lens through which to look for this improvement. The data seem to indicate that the vast majority of Francis Marion University students are improving in their oral competence as a result of taking Speech 101. In fact, in the current year, we exceeded our benchmark by 9%. In reviewing data from the previous four years, our benchmark was exceeded or nearly met. The variability in the results from year to year may be due in part to the high turnover of instructors teaching the course.

If we find that we are not meeting or exceeding our benchmark, we can look more closely at the individual sections of our assessment tool for areas of weakness. We can then alter and improve our instruction in those areas to address the weaknesses. Currently, however, it appears that our basic speech course is accomplishing its task of improving our students' communication skills.