Name of Program/Department: *Speech Program*
Year: 2020-2021
Name of Preparer: *Dr. Bryan Fisher*

Program Mission Statement

The Mission 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.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Demonstrate and advance academic integrity in all interactions.

2. Demonstrate the ability to use tools and technologies appropriate for the communication professions.

3. Demonstrate the ability to think independently, critically, and creatively.

4. Demonstrate the ability to speak correctly and clearly in forms and style appropriate for specific audiences and purposes they serve.

5. Demonstrate the ability to gain the required skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively communicate with audiences and purposes they serve.

Executive Summary

In the 2020-2021 academic year, students in Speech 101 were assessed to determine the extent to which the course equipped them to demonstrate the competencies necessary for effective public speaking. The instruments used for the assessment included one direct assessment and one indirect assessment.
The benchmark for the direct assessment was set at a 5% improvement from their first speech to their last speech in all eight of the speech competencies measured. Results

show that the benchmark was surpassed when measuring an aggregate of the eight competencies. Results further showed that the benchmark was surpassed in each of the eight areas.

The benchmark for the indirect assessment was set as follows: 80% of responding students will offer a positive endorsement (indicate *agree* or *strongly agree*) on each of the five questions on the Likert-styled survey. Results show that this benchmark was surpassed and a vast majority of students feel more confident in their speaking abilities.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to recognize quality research and offer support for the content of the message.

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.

SLO 5.0: Students will learn effective delivery skills.

Assessment Methods

DIRECT:

All five SLOs were assessed using the *Competent Speaker* form designed by the National Communication Association. With this instrument, 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 measure the impact of the course on student ability.

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.

For the first major 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 competencies 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 competencies. The total score received was between eight and twenty-four.

These same five students in each section were then evaluated using the same form and guidelines for their last major 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 SLOs.

SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.
          Addressed by competencies 1, 4

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.
          Addressed by competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.
          Addressed by competency 3

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke
            emotion.
                    Addressed by competencies 5, 7

SLO 5.0: Students will learn effective delivery skills.
                    Addressed by competencies 6, 7, 8

Statistical analysis of the results of the *Competent Speaker* assessments will allow us to measure the improvement between the pretest (first speech) and the posttest (last speech) for each of the each of the eight competencies and the five SLOs.

> BASELINE: The baseline for each of the eight competencies as well as for the total of the eight competencies was established from last year's results as shown below.

	Group (2019-2020)	Competency One	Competency Two	Competency Three	Competency Four	Competency Five	Competency Six	Competency Seven	Competency Eight	Average Total 8 Comp	%
1	Mean	2.43	2.15	1.98	2.1	2.25	1.89	2.23	1.94	2.12	70.71
	Average %	81.00	71.67	66.00	70.00	75.00	63.00	74.33	64.67		
	N	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93		
2	Mean	2.52	2.56	2.31	2.41	2.27	2.12	2.37	2.08	2.33	77.67
	Average %	84.00	85.33	77.00	80.33	75.67	70.67	79.00	69.33		
	N	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93		
	Diff %	3.00	13.67	11.00	10.33	0.67	7.67	4.67	4.67		6.96

> BENCHMARK: Assessed students will improve their score on each of the eight competencies from their first major speech to the last major speech by an average of 5%.

> TARGET: In the next three to five years assessed students will increase their score by an average of 10% on each of the eight competencies from their first major speech to their last major speech.

INDIRECT:

At the end of each semester, all Speech 101 students are asked to complete an online self-report survey that measures the extent to which they perceive they have improved. It is a five-question survey using a Likert-style scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

The self-report survey asks the extent to which, after taking the course, they feel more confident in their ability to:

choose and narrow a topic for a given audience and a given amount of speaking time.

gather quality research material to support thesis and main points.

organize material into a clear message and easy-to-follow progression.

use appropriate and effective language for a given audience and speaking situation.

offer a clear and smooth delivery of the message.

Statistical analysis of the results of the self-assessment allowed us to measure the extent to which students feel they improved for each of the five SLOs.

SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.
                    Addressed by measures 1, 3

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.
                    Addressed by measures 1, 4

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.
                    Addressed by measure 2

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.
                    Addressed by measure 4

SLO 5.0: Students will learn effective delivery skills.
                    Addressed by measure 5

        BASELINE: The results from the 2019-2020 indirect assessment and newly established baseline are as follows:

The self-report survey asks the extent to which, after taking the course, they feel more confident in their ability to:

choose and narrow a topic for a given audience and a given amount of speaking time. **90%**

gather quality research material to support thesis and main points. **90%**

organize material into a clear message and easy-to-follow progression. **90%**

use appropriate and effective language for a given audience and speaking situation. **89%**

offer a clear and smooth delivery of the message. **84%**

BENCHMARK: 80% of responding students will offer a positive endorsement (indicate *agree* or *strongly agree*) on each of the five questions on the Likert-styled survey.

TARGET: In the next three to five years, 85% of students will offer a positive endorsement (indicate *agree* or *strongly agree*) on each of the five questions on the Likert-styled survey.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Applicable General Education Goals:

Goal 1. The ability to compose effectively with rhetorical awareness, integrate relevant research when appropriate, and produce developed, insightful arguments.

Goal 2. The ability to demonstrate comprehension of different forms of communication.

Goal 7. The ability to recognize diverse social and cultural practices and to articulate connections between individual behavior and sociocultural processes.

Goal 9. The ability to apply critical thinking skills to assess arguments and solve problems.
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SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.
Addresses General Education goals 1, 9

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.
Addresses General Education goal 7

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.
Addresses General Education goals 2, 9

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.
Addresses General Education goal 1

Assessment Results

DIRECT:

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 62 students were assessed using the direct measure. As indicated in the table below, the benchmark of a 5% improvement from the first major speech (Informative Speech) to the last major speech (Persuasive Speech) was achieved for the aggregate of all 8 competencies. Additionally, the benchmark was achieved for all 8 individual competencies. In fact, there was over 10% improvement in each of the 8 competencies. This marks a significant improvement over last year during which 4 of the 8 competencies did not reach the 5% benchmark.

Type of Speech (2020-2021)		Competency								Average Total 8 Comp	%
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight		
Informative Speech	Informative	2.18	2.03	1.91	2.14	2.23	1.67	2.14	1.78	2.01	66.99
	Average %	72.65	67.52	63.68	71.37	74.36	55.56	71.37	59.40		
	N	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78		
Persuasive Speech	Persuasive	2.59	2.73	2.44	2.48	2.45	2.23	2.53	2.26	2.46	82.06
	Average %	86.34	90.86	81.18	82.51	81.72	74.19	84.41	75.27		
	N	61	62	62	61	62	62	62	62		

As the extent to which the five SLOs are achieved is determined by student performance in each of the eight competencies, the results suggest that all 5 SLOs were met this academic year.

SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.
>>> Addressed by competencies 1, 4

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.
>>> Addressed by competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.
>>> Addressed by competency 3

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.
>>> Addressed by competencies 5, 7

SLO 5.0: Students will learn effective delivery skills.
>>> Addressed by competencies 6, 7, 8

INDIRECT:

In the 2020-2021 academic year 117 students completed the indirect measure. The benchmark of 80% of assessed students offering a positive endorsement (indicate *agree* or *strongly agree*) on each of the five questions on the Likert-styled survey was surpassed. Results:

The self-report survey asks the extent to which, after taking the course, they feel more confident in their ability to:

choose and narrow a topic for a given audience and a given amount of speaking time. **85%**

gather quality research material to support thesis and main points. **85%**

organize material into a clear message and easy-to-follow progression. **86%**

use appropriate and effective language for a given audience and speaking situation. **88%**

offer a clear and smooth delivery of the message. **83%**

As the extent to which the five SLOs are achieved is determined by student performance in each of the eight competencies, the results suggest that all five SLOs were achieved.

SLO 1.0: Students will learn to create a clearly structured message for a given amount of presentation time.
>> Addressed by measures 1, 3

SLO 2.0: Students will learn to analyze the needs and interests of a given audience.
>> Addressed by measures 1, 4

SLO 3.0: Students will learn to research and offer support for the content of the message.
>> Addressed by measure 2

SLO 4.0: Students will learn to use language effectively to convey content and evoke emotion.
>> Addressed by measure 4

SLO 5.0: Students will learn effective delivery skills.
>> Addressed by measure 5

Action Items

DIRECT:

The results of the direct measure indicate that our action items from last year have had a positive effect on student performance. Our attention to the 4 competencies that did not reach our benchmark last year appears to have had an impact as as the benchmark for all 8 competencies was achieved this year. We plan to continue emphasizing those areas to ensure the competencies continue to be met. A summary of those action items can be found in the appendix.

Additionally, we recognize the anomalous nature of this past year and despite rather impressive numbers, we will not be changing our benchmarks. With numbers down considerably and students attending classes in a variety of ways (in person, online, hybrid…etc), we look forward to more data with which to draw more definitive conclusions.

INDIRECT:

The results of the indirect assessment indicate that Speech 101 instruction has been successful in building student confidence in regard to all five SLOs. All measures greatly surpassed our benchmark of 80%, and the lowest result was measure five at 83%. Measure 5 ask students 'confidence in their ability to *offer a clear and smooth delivery of the message.* This likely results from the unwarranted weight students tend to give delivery over other aspects of the speech process. It is also the aspect that make them the most anxious. It follows that this measure would show the lowest result. As mentioned in the previous section, in order to address this in our classes, we can spend more time stressing the importance of the other aspects of the speech process while explaining that delivery is only one part. Further, we can help build their confidence by giving them more in-class opportunities to practice, showing them examples of great speeches that didn't have perfect deliveries (focusing on the unattainability of perfection), and providing more focused on feedback on individual aspects of delivery.

APPENDIX

Link to direct measure instrument:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Speech_Evaluation_Form

Link to indirect measure instrument:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPE101_ENDOFCOUR_TEST

Summary of 2019-2020 Action items:

We plan to better serve the affected SLOs in the following ways:

SLO 1.0: We will spend more time explaining the importance of practice. Time problems are solely a lack of effective practice techniques. We will provide students with more practice strategies and emphasize the need to approximate the actual speech stetting as much as possible when practicing.

SLO 2.0: Audience analysis is critical. The current cultural climate in the US provides many onramps to discuss the importance of perspective taking. We can do activities in class than show how the same words can affect different audiences in vastly different ways. We can discuss various approaches for speaking to specific audiences.

SLO 3.0: Not affected.

SLO 4.0: Our approach here will be similar to what we will do for SLO 1.0. The effectiveness of one's language is entirely dependent on the audience. In addition, we can spend more time emphasizing the significance of word choice. We can demonstrate how fragile and malleable language can be and that great care must be given to this part of the speech process.

SLO 5.0: Much like time management addressed in SLO 1.0, delivery skills are improved with practice. Students know what delivery problems look like, but they are often hard to avoid because they are unconscious. More opportunities to practice would be very helpful. Specifically, giving students more chances to practice in class and receive feedback is essential. We currently record the major speeches they do in class. The ability to see themselves is invaluable. To utilize recording further, we can urge/require students to record their practice sessions at home.