Expected Outcomes: Oral Communication Skills

Students will demonstrate appropriate oral communication skills in the graduate classroom and for research presentations in professional settings.

Assessment methods

Method: Evaluation of oral presentations of proposals

Oral presentations of first term graduate students in CAHS 7050, Research Methods in Consumer and Textile Sciences were evaluated. One doctoral and nine MS students gave oral presentations of their research proposals using Powerpoint slides. The AACU Oral Communication rubric was used for the evaluations. Five attributes were scored on a four point scale (1=benchmark to 4=capstone). The attributes were Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Material, and Central Message. Four faculty (none of whom were the faculty of record) evaluated the presentations.

Findings:

Scores on all attributes ranged from 1-4, but the majority of scores were 3 or 4. Organization and language had the highest mean score of 3.41 (each), demonstrating a high level of attention to clear and logical sequencing of content, as well as the effectiveness of verbalization. The second and third criteria, Supporting Material (3.30) and Central Message (3.22) were not much lower. The lowest mean score was 3.13 for Delivery, suggesting a lower level of success on professional expectations for eye contact, presenting slides without reading, comfort in front of an audience, and making the presentation interesting for the audience.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The AACU Oral Communication rubric was chosen because it complemented the previous use of the AACU writing rubric (used in 2009) as well as use of a modified AACU rubric for assessment of 2010 first term students' Powerpoint slides for their research proposal assignment (Written Communication Learning Outcome). The latter was the same assignment as the one evaluated here for the Oral Communication Learning Outcome. Together, these assessments provide a benchmark for (a) consideration of how to foster improvement in the weakest components, and (b) focus on assessment of written and oral graduate student output past the first term of their programs. In Fall 2011, the assessed 2010 Powerpoint presentations (minus names) were used as teaching tools in an introductory course prior to the students’ development of their own presentations, a practice to be continued in Fall 2012. Added to that will be discussion of the spoken part of the presentation.

Additional comments:

For 2012-13, the Graduate Committee can assess this year's first term students in the same course, and will decide whether to focus on assessing completing students in their thesis or dissertation defenses, midway students in other courses, or both.

Expected Outcomes: Written Communication Skills
Students will demonstrate appropriate written communication skills in thesis/dissertation presentations and other scholarly work.

**Assessment methods**

**Method** : Evaluation of power point presentations

Students' power point presentations of research papers, proposals and dissertations will be assessed using the AACU writing rubric.

**Findings:**

Written communication skills were assessed in Fall 2009 and Fall 2010, but were not assessed in 2011-12.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

N/A

**Additional comments:**

Written communication skills will be assessed again in a subsequent year.

**Expected Outcomes : Inquiry and Analysis Skills**

Ph.D. students will be able to assess, integrate, and apply theoretical and empirical information to identify and address current issues and/or problems relevant to their focal area.

**Assessment methods**

**Method** : Development of a research paper

Students will be able to develop a research paper that meets established standards.

**Findings:**

N/A

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

N/A

**Additional comments:**

A rubric will be developed to assess Ph.D. students' ability to meet this learning outcome. Students' achievement of this learning objective will be assessed in a subsequent academic year.

**Expected Outcomes : Critical Analysis Skills**

Students will demonstrate critical analysis skills in analysis of text, data, or issues developing new knowledge and placing it within the broader environment of established theoretical and empirical knowledge.

**Assessment methods**

**Method** : Analysis of Research

A rubric will be developed to assess students' ability to analyze text, data, and issues as presented in the research methods class. A sample of student projects and assignments from the research methods class will be analyzed by two graduate faculty using this rubric to determine students'
ability to meet this learning objective.

Findings:
   N/A

How did you use findings for improvement?
   N/A

Additional comments:
   This learning outcome will be assessed in a subsequent year.