Cultural Awareness Core Outcome Assessment
Communication Studies
July 2011

College Core Outcome Cultural Awareness:

> *Use an understanding of the variations in human culture, perspectives and forms of expression to constructively address issues that arise out of cultural differences in the workplace and community.*

The Communication Studies SAC believes that cultural awareness is an integral part of our courses. As the world is now more than ever a global village and communication is the core of understanding others, we need to learn cultural awareness and understand how culture plays the major portion of our behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, worldviews and reactions. Our courses provide students with an opportunity to gain insight into these aspects of our lives.

We believe that students come into our classes with their own level of knowledge of culture and diversity; our job is to provide opportunities to fine-tune their understanding. As is reflected in our CCOGs, we believe we have the responsibility to provide students with assignments that will help them realize skills that are necessary in order to survive successfully within the world.

In Communication Studies Program Review (2009), we stated
Our Program Vision:

> The Communication Studies program at Portland Community College supports the college mission of creating competent communicators, ready to provide leadership in the workplace and in the rapidly changing context of the global village. Our diverse course offerings prepare students to reach their full potential by increasing their knowledge and insight into communication strategies. Students learn to critically listen, reflect, and speak on substantive issues that not only impact their personal lives but their communities at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Our Mission Statement (in part):

> To enhance and enrich students' lives and help them become more competent and effective communicators in all aspects of their lives, PCC's Communication Studies Program will:
>
> - Teach students communication skills, tools, and strategies for interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and differing cultures.

Addressing the college core outcome of Cultural Awareness:

> All of our course outcomes specifically address these issues, especially SP 100: Fundamentals of Communication, SP 101: Oral Communication, SP 140: Intercultural Communication and Sp 237: Gender and Communication. These courses enable students to "Use an understanding of the variations in human

culture, perspectives and forms of expression to constructively address issues that arise out of cultural differences in the workplace and community."

Individual course outcomes also have an impact on how we believe we are dealing with the aspect of cultural awareness. The majority of our course outcomes have some aspect of awareness/cultural understanding within them. Examples of some outcomes are demonstrated below:

SP 100, Introduction to Speech Communication:

- Use the insight into filters created through the framework of culture, society, organizations, family, and self in order to make responsible personal choices in many types of relationships

SP 101, Oral Communication

- Continue to improve intercultural competence through improved cultural awareness

SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- Explore how culturally-based assumptions influence communicative behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes
- Examine historically-based worldviews and the evolution of communication through the filter of cultural ideas, behaviors and issues
- Critically examine the impact of cultural filters on communication in order to become more sensitive toward people with different values and beliefs

SP 227, Nonverbal Communication

- Continue to use an awareness of communicative behaviors in an effective manner in order to interpret and incorporate nonverbal messages as they are filtered through such aspects as culture, perception, and context.

Justification for Assessment Plan:

As our program subject matter is communication and multiple aspects of our courses focus on perceptions of selves and others, we felt we needed to narrow down what we could possibly and reasonably examine over a term in order to assess the college core outcome. The simple answer was to use a pre-developed and tested rubric for cultural awareness. More specifically, we decided to use the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric that was developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). We decided to draw information from courses that taught intercultural communication. This decision was based on the fact that all instructors who taught SP 140 were using the same basic assignment for one portion of student assessment; in no other SP course were instructors using assignments parallel to one another as related to cultural awareness.

Assessment Plan:

Indirect Assessment: For Program Review (2009), we examined the National Communication Association's (NCA) newly developed guidelines for undergraduate programs in communication. We found that we have fulfilled many essential elements of

an effective program. The element that is pertinent to this assessment is that our courses follow the basic curriculum of the NCA's guidelines.

Another aspect of indirect assessment is that our program has three instructors who are working specifically to internationalize their curriculum. We are also lobbying for SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, to be required by instructors wishing to travel on a CIEE grant as well as by those who wish to internationalize their curriculum.

Direct Assessment: Using SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, we incorporated assignment papers required by instructors. This specific term, all instructors were using the same general assignment: reflection journals. We drew from all sections of SP 140 that were offered Spring term, both WEB-based and traditional classroom-based. Our sample consisted of 34 student journals, requesting from instructors the latest journal of the term for the purpose of assessing the main elements of the rubric.

After student permission, all assignments were delivered, names and class/instructor information was deleted, and the assignments were distributed to three people for evaluation. We chose to use three people to assess the assignments because three people volunteered. Each assignment was evaluated using the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric created by the AACU. In this evaluation, no consideration was given to the grade the student received on their assignment, had the evaluator known this information.

We agreed to use the AACU's definition of cultural awareness: Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts."

The Rubric:

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Knowledge *Cultural self-awareness*	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g. seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases (e.g. not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g. with a strong preference for those rules shared with own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g. uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
Knowledge *Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks*	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.

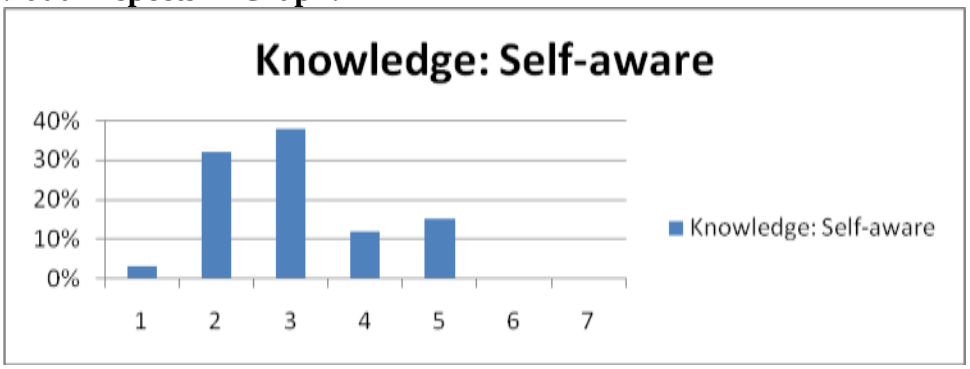
Skills *Empathy*	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
Skills *Verbal and nonverbal communication*	Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings) and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Recognizes and participates in cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and begins to negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Identifies some cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and is aware that misunderstandings can occur based on those differences but is still unable to negotiate a shared understanding.	Has a minimal level of understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication; is unable to negotiate a shared understanding.
Attitudes *Curiosity*	Asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.	Asks deeper questions about other cultures and seeks out answers to these questions.	Asks simple or surface questions about other cultures.	States minimal interest in learning more about other cultures.
Attitudes *Openness*	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change.	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment.

Results—the Raw Data:

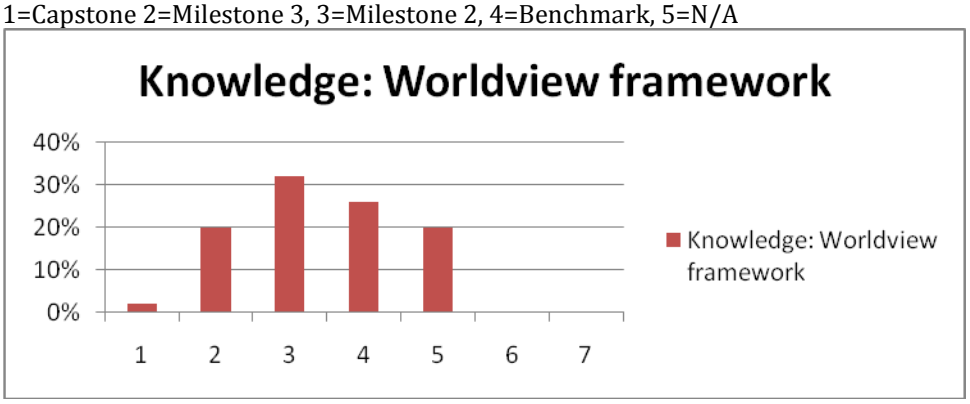
Cultural Awareness Rubric	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**N/A**
Knowledge: Self-aware	3%	32%	38%	12%	15%

Knowledge: Worldview framework	2%	20%	32%	26%	20%
Skills: Empathy	0	17%	28%	23%	32%
Skills: Verbal & Nonverbal	2%	21%	19%	15%	43%
Attitudes: Curosity	1%	21%	35%	15%	28%
Attitudes: Openness	5%	22%	38%	9%	26%

Individual Aspects in Graph:



1=Capstone 2=Milestone 3, 3=Milestone 2, 4=Benchmark, 5=N/A



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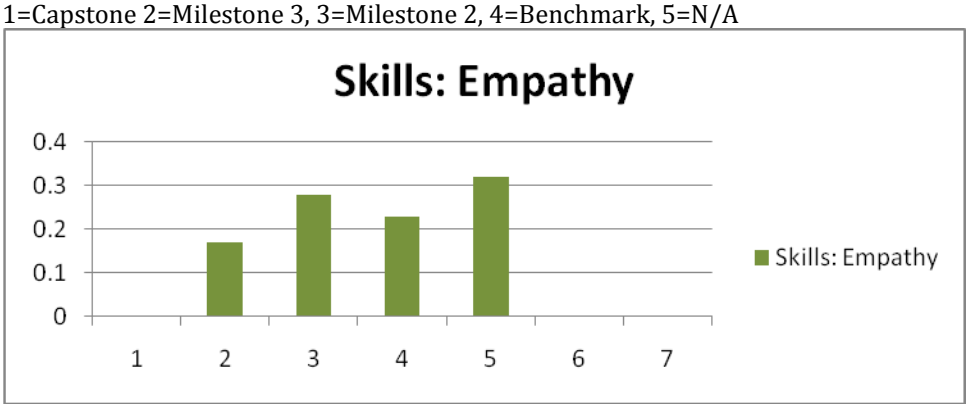

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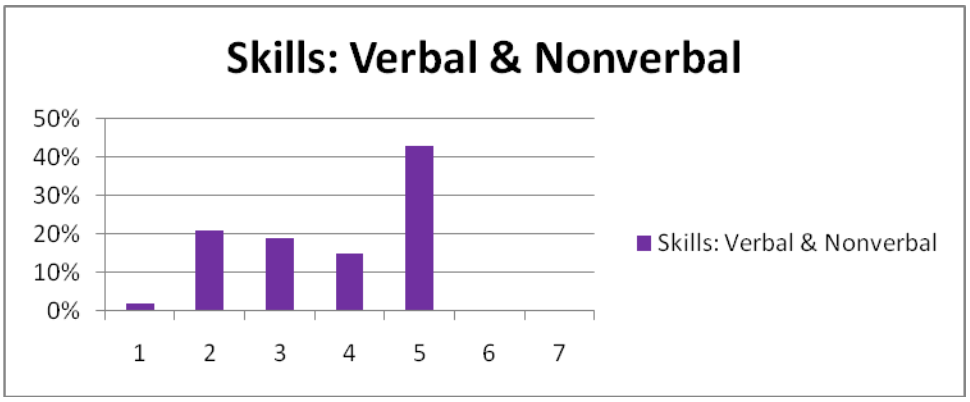

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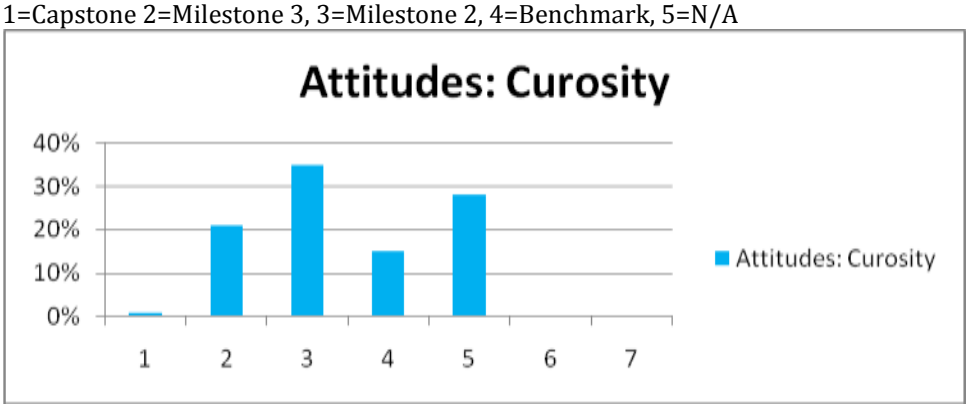

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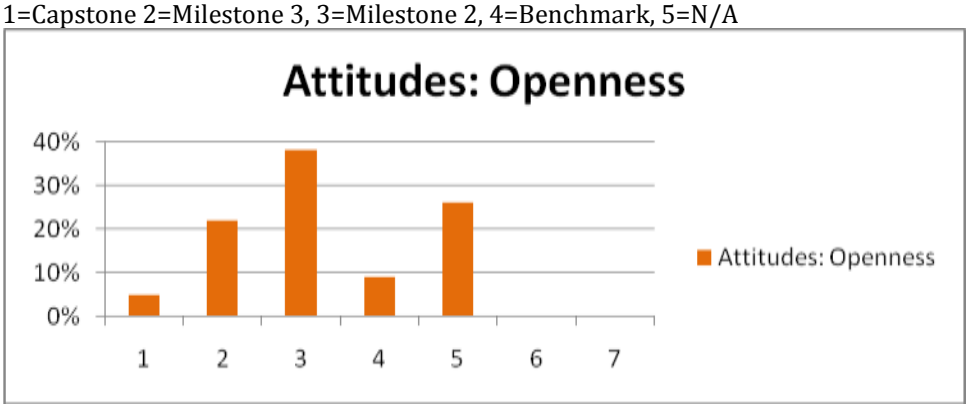

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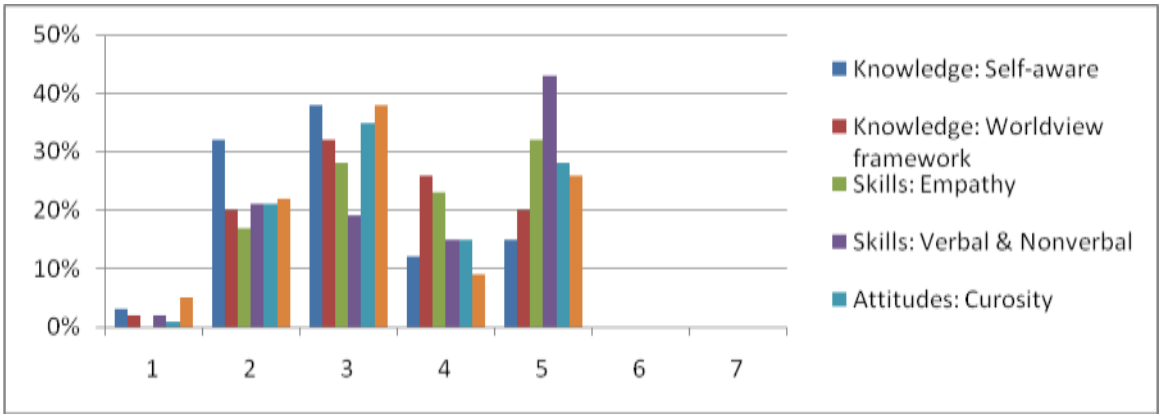
All Questions Together:



Discussion of the Data:

In evaluating the results, we found that on all six measures, we have at least a minimum of 17% of students earning a 3 or 4 (range=17% to 35%) on the rubric scale. The larger percentage is the combination of the 2-3 mid-range, with a minimum of 40% within this range (range=40% to 70%). This means that while fewer students are demonstrating through this assignment their abilities/awareness at the capstone level, most students are demonstrating their awareness at the mid-range, or Milestone, level.

The chart indicates that the Verbal and Nonverbal measure is the weaker of the results, specifically as the majority of the papers these elements were not included (see N/A level). In two other of the six measures, students did not reach level 4 at the same rate as the other measures. One measure, Empathy, had no students at a capstone level, and the others minimally reached capstone. Additionally, the results shows that the Openness measure has more students (5%) showing any proficiency in at the highest level.

Another discovery is that Self Awareness has the highest level of proficiency throughout the papers.

Conclusions:

Given this data, it is not necessarily clear that we are meeting our own outcomes for different aspects of cultural awareness in this course. We strongly believe that it is the assignment that does not reflect these outcomes, not the course material, teaching methods, nor students' level of understanding. Each instructor assigned five journals that students must write. The student could select any aspect of the course material to reflect. They were to incorporate their own experiences, understanding of the concept from the text and lecture, and reflect upon it from the framework of their choice of material; therefore, the papers were an eclectic gathering and relatively few focused on the same subject. Specifically, students' focus centered on these themes: cultural values, affirmative action, and nonverbal and verbal behavior.

One measure stood out: Self Awareness. As these were reflection journals, it makes perfect sense that the measure of Cultural Self Awareness has the highest level of proficiency throughout the papers. This was the crux of the assignment. This reasoning also helps make sense of why so many measures were found not applicable (n/a).

The story this data/rubric/assignment does not show us is how well we are actually teaching students the core value of cultural awareness and diversity. We know we are doing this; these assignments are not necessarily reflecting the students' learning. We also agree that we believe in and ask for instructors to present, and students to learn, all

of the areas of cultural knowledge as presented in the rubric we used from the AACU. We believe we will need to find a different venue, different assignment, perhaps a different class in order to truly evaluate the success of our contribution to students' development of the college's core outcome of Cultural Awareness.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that we examine the assessment tools currently used in SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication. Perhaps a capstone assignment that would allow students to express their knowledge and understanding of the six measures in the rubric would be appropriate. It should be considered to have the faculty members who teach Intercultural Communication gather in order to discuss this rubric with the goal of brainstorming a possible shared assignment to help students reach the measured goals—not because we need to teach to the test, but because we as a SAC agree that these concepts that are measured have merit.

Communication Core Outcome Assessment
Communication Studies
June 2011

College Core Outcome Communication:

> *Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits.*

The Communication Studies SAC believes that communication is an intricate part of our courses. Students need to use communication skills in all aspects of their lives—academically, professionally, and personally. Our courses provide them with an opportunity to learn these specific skills.

We believe that students come into our classes with their own level of knowledge of communication skills; our job is to provide opportunities to hone these skills. As is reflected in our CCOGs, we believe we have the responsibility to provide students with assignments that will help them recognize the skills necessary to survive successfully within the world.

In Communication Studies Program Review (2009), we stated that

> The Communication Studies program at Portland Community College supports the college mission of creating competent communicators, ready to provide leadership in the workplace and in the rapidly changing context of the global village. Our diverse course offerings prepare students to reach their full potential by increasing their knowledge and insight into communication strategies. Students learn to critically listen, reflect, and speak on substantive issues that not only impact their personal lives but their communities at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Specifically addressing the college core outcome of Communication, we stated that

> The purpose of all our course offerings is to teach students to "Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits." It is fair to assume that the college's mission of communication is supported by everything we do.

Individual course outcomes also have an impact on how we believe we are dealing with the aspect of communication. The majority of our course outcomes have some aspect of communication within them. Examples of some outcomes are demonstrated below:

SP 100, Introduction to Speech Communication:

- Use a newly gained understanding of the cause and effect of communication behaviors to begin to reduce miscommunication with others

- Use the insight into filters created through the framework of culture, society, organizations, family, and self in order to make responsible personal choices in many types of relationships
- Continuing to explore different areas of communication in order to expand a broad base of skills and communicative tools when interacting with others.

SP 105, Listening:

- Use gained competent and critical listening skills in order to create a climate that encourages effective communication
- Use listening skills to move beyond the constraints and filters of culture, media, and self-perception in order to make effective personal and professional decisions

SP 111, Public Speaking:

- Use learned public speaking skills in order to present an effective and efficient message

SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- Continue to adjust communicative behavior with others who are different than self in all aspects of life, including business, travel and personal interactions in order to remain sensitive to cultural differences.

Justification for Assessment Plan:

As our program subject matter is communication, we felt we needed to narrow down what we could possibly and reasonably examine over a term in order to assess the college core outcome. The simple answer was to use a rubric for speaking that had already been created. More specifically, we looked at the Oral Communication Rubric that was developed by the AACU. We decided to draw information from courses that taught public speaking.

Assessment Plan:

Indirect Assessment: For Program Review (2009), we examined the National Communication Association's newly developed guidelines for undergraduate programs in communication. We found that we have fulfilled many essential elements of an effective program. The element that is pertinent to this assessment is that our courses follow the basic curriculum of the NCA's guidelines.

Direct Assessment: Using SP 111, Public Speaking, we incorporated persuasive speeches presented in all classes taught by full-time faculty. As the pilot for this assessment, we selected only full-time faculty based on a few considerations. First, each of the faculty has gone through a fairly rigorous process whereas we know and agree on how basics of speeches are evaluated. This process has been accomplished through the initial hiring process as well as has been worked on and thoroughly discussed at SAC meetings. While we have trust in our part-time faculty, we felt there would need to be more training to gain a clear understanding of how each of the part-time faculty evaluated the basics; time was a major consideration. Secondly, we wanted to hold the sample numbers down. PCC offers over 50 sections of SP 111 each term, averaging 22 students a section. If every instructor participated, we would have a sample of over 1100 students. Our sample consisted of 187 students.

We chose to have the in-class instructor observe their own students rather than have a stranger come into a class to observe speeches for assessment while the instructor grades for the class. This decision was made specifically due to time and personnel constraints. There were not enough observers to go around—even with the offer of a few dollars for helping, part-time faculty do not have the time or energy to participate in the mandates for SAC at this level and full-time faculty (we have seven full-time faculty throughout the college) do not have the ability to be everywhere at all times. Secondly, public speaking is stressful enough for students (the number one fear among humans). Having a stranger enter and observe speeches could cause additional stress for the student; therefore, each instructor observed their own students' speeches and evaluated them as usual. After the speeches had been graded, the instructor assessed different aspects of the speeches using the Oral Communication Value Rubric created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).

In this evaluation, no consideration was given to the grade the student received on their speech. Instructors sent their individual speeches to a central person. Then each of the five issues examined (Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Material, Central Meaning) were then averaged among the speeches in order to see if there were any areas stronger than others, if there were any areas that needed improvement.

We agreed to use the AACU's definition of oral communication: oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

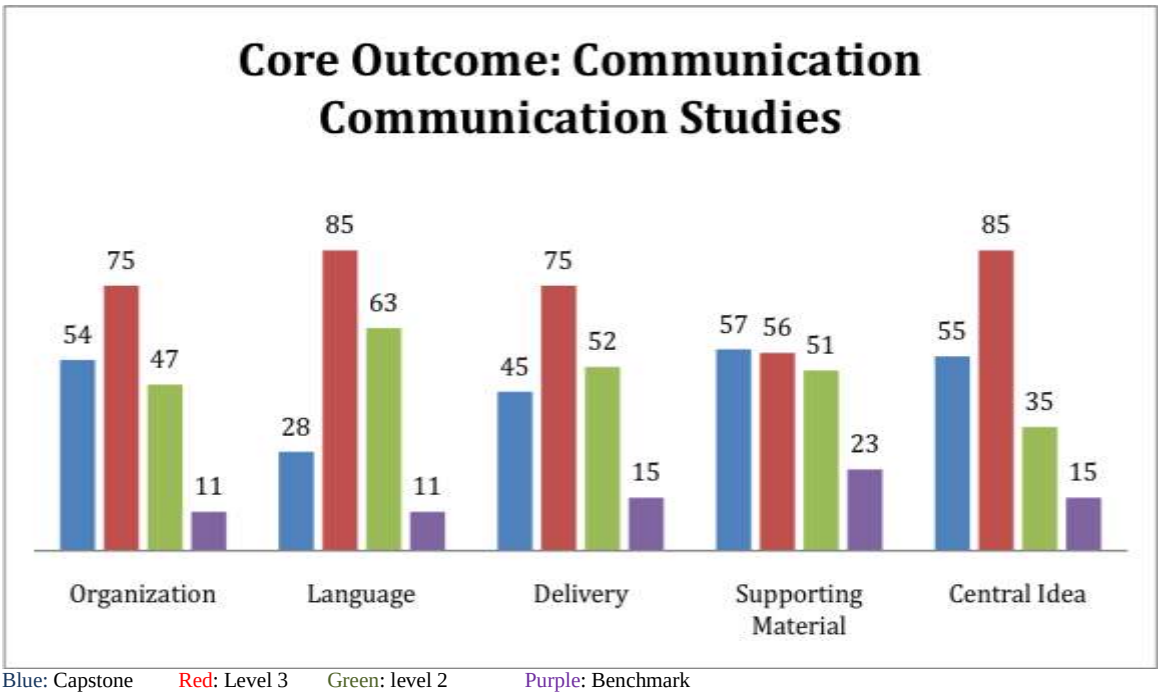
The Rubric:

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	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.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.

	audience.		audience.	
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the 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 the 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 the 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 the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Results—the Raw Data:

187 Students:	**Capstone** 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Organization	29%	40%	25%	6%
Language	15%	45%	34%	6%
Delivery	24%	40%	28%	8%
Supporting Material	30%	30%	27%	12%
Central Message	29%	44%	19%	8%



Blue: Capstone Red: Level 3 Green: level 2 Purple: Benchmark

Discussion of the Data:

In evaluating the results, we found that on all five measures, we have at least a minimum of 60% of students earning a 3 or 4 (range=60% to 73%) on the rubric scale. Thus, most students are demonstrating abilities on the on or near the capstone-level of oral communication skills.

The chart indicates that the Language measure is the weaker of the results. Students are not reaching level 4 at the same rate as the other measures. Additionally, the results shows that the Supporting Material measure has more students (12%) showing the minimum proficiency (level 1) than on any other measure.

Another discovery is with the Central Idea measure. Although overall, it has the highest percentage of students achieving level 3 or 4 (73%), it also has 8% of students only achieving level 1.

Conclusions:

Given this data, it is clear that we are meeting our own outcomes for communication in this course, that the majority of students are responding to instruction and that they are gaining skills in oral communication. We feel we are doing our part to assist students in achieving the college outcome for communication. And as public speaking is a requirement for the majority of degrees and certificates, our contribution is significant.

As the rubric and graph show, we are strong in helping students with such areas as organization and delivery but find students' weaker areas are language choices, using good supporting materials, and presenting the central idea. In the area of central idea, an 8% seems a bit high. When it is realized that our course has a prerequisite of WR 121, it seems to reason that the students would have a previous understanding of how to explicitly communicate a central message. Because of this perception, we focus our time less on teaching students the fundamentals of core message. But perhaps this prerequisite has little bearing on this specific measure. As is pointed out, one course does not fulfill every aspect of any core outcome. It is also true that an instructor has no control over the amount of knowledge and skill in communication that students have as they enter into the class.

One story this data doesn't tell is that there is a significant portion of students who were inconsistent. This means that they excelled at some areas and struggled in others. For example, a student might reach a 3 or 4 in Organization but reach only level 1 in supporting material. Or a student might be average throughout the rubric except excel in delivery. The data as averaged in the rubric doesn't effectively capture this experience and, depending on how you analyze the numbers, they could be misleading in that way.

The first analytical comment from faculty regarding the amount of 3 and 4 levels of the sample students was "grade inflation." We know that students in general fall within the average, bell-shaped curve and the results of this study show a different story. This demonstrates students with a "B" average across the board. Perhaps there is not a grade inflation, for on the other hand it was also noted anecdotally that most instructors had above average presentations the term when data was gathered. The results may have been different given another term, another class.

This leads to the problem of evaluating one speech, once in a term. It is impossible to measure students' growth in communication without assessing each speech, each term for each student. Even then, as we blend together each speech into a rubric, we would not have a clear picture of the individual student's growth. We would have a broad-assessment of what we are possibly doing in our classes.

Recommendations:

There are a few things that we can reasonably do to improve our contribution to the college core outcome of communication.

Specifically we can:
Teaching:

- Work to help students understand and use appropriate language as they address each audience. We need to raise awareness of the use of language as Cicero presented in three styles: Plain (personal, concrete, clear), Middle (personal, poetic, clear), and Grand (imaginative, vivid, clear). We need to help students

speak appropriately to a given audience using language that is not only clear but creative and useful for the audience to grasp ideas and evidence presented.

- Work on helping students with creating and presenting the central idea of the speech. As the central idea is the basis of a speech—sets the supporting materials and organization—we need to help student remain clear on how to create this aspect and then present it clearly to the audience.

Assessment:

- We might consider rating students' level of oral communication as they enter into the course, using the first ungraded introduction speech, and then again at the end, using persuasion. This could show us how well students have gained skills during the term.

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Individual course outcomes also have an impact on how we believe we are dealing with the aspect of cultural awareness. The majority of our course outcomes have some aspect of awareness/cultural understanding within them. Examples of some outcomes are demonstrated below:

SP 100, Introduction to Speech Communication:

- Use the insight into filters created through the framework of culture, society, organizations, family, and self in order to make responsible personal choices in many types of relationships

SP 101, Oral Communication

- Continue to improve intercultural competence through improved cultural awareness

SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- Explore how culturally-based assumptions influence communicative behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes
- Examine historically-based worldviews and the evolution of communication through the filter of cultural ideas, behaviors and issues
- Critically examine the impact of cultural filters on communication in order to become more sensitive toward people with different values and beliefs

SP 227, Nonverbal Communication

- Continue to use an awareness of communicative behaviors in an effective manner in order to interpret and incorporate nonverbal messages as they are filtered through such aspects as culture, perception, and context.

Justification for Assessment Plan:

As our program subject matter is communication and multiple aspects of our courses focus on perceptions of selves and others, we felt we needed to narrow down what we could possibly and reasonably examine over a term in order to assess the college core outcome. The simple answer was to use a pre-developed and tested rubric for cultural awareness. More specifically, we decided to use the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric that was developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). We decided to draw information from courses that taught intercultural communication. This decision was based on the fact that all instructors who taught SP 140 were using the same basic assignment for one portion of student assessment; in no other SP course were instructors using assignments parallel to one another as related to cultural awareness.

Assessment Plan:

Indirect Assessment: For Program Review (2009), we examined the National Communication Association's (NCA) newly developed guidelines for undergraduate programs in communication. We found that we have fulfilled many essential elements of

an effective program. The element that is pertinent to this assessment is that our courses follow the basic curriculum of the NCA's guidelines.

Another aspect of indirect assessment is that our program has three instructors who are working specifically to internationalize their curriculum. We are also lobbying for SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, to be required by instructors wishing to travel on a CIEE grant as well as by those who wish to internationalize their curriculum.

Direct Assessment: Using SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication, we incorporated assignment papers required by instructors. This specific term, all instructors were using the same general assignment: reflection journals. We drew from all sections of SP 140 that were offered Spring term, both WEB-based and traditional classroom-based. Our sample consisted of 34 student journals, requesting from instructors the latest journal of the term for the purpose of assessing the main elements of the rubric.

After student permission, all assignments were delivered, names and class/instructor information was deleted, and the assignments were distributed to three people for evaluation. We chose to use three people to assess the assignments because three people volunteered. Each assignment was evaluated using the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric created by the AACU. In this evaluation, no consideration was given to the grade the student received on their assignment, had the evaluator known this information.

We agreed to use the AACU's definition of cultural awareness: Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts."

The Rubric:

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Knowledge *Cultural self-awareness*	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g. seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases (e.g. not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g. with a strong preference for those rules shared with own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g. uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
Knowledge *Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks*	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Demonstrates surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.

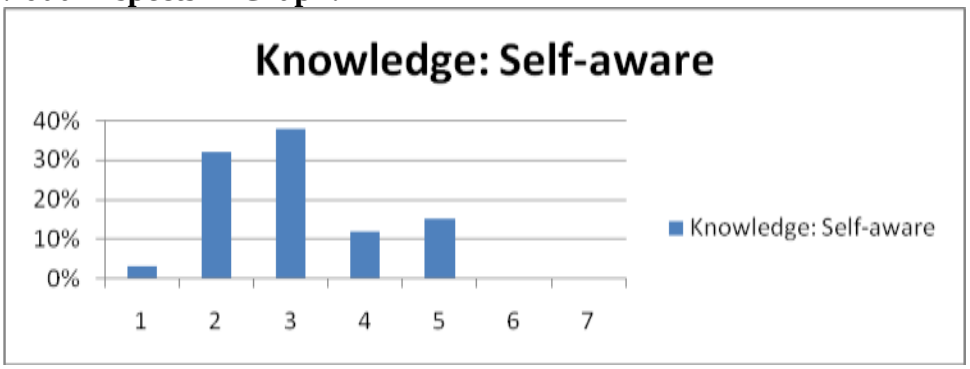
Skills *Empathy*	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
Skills *Verbal and nonverbal communication*	Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication (e.g., demonstrates understanding of the degree to which people use physical contact while communicating in different cultures or use direct/indirect and explicit/implicit meanings) and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Recognizes and participates in cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and begins to negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Identifies some cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication and is aware that misunderstandings can occur based on those differences but is still unable to negotiate a shared understanding.	Has a minimal level of understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication; is unable to negotiate a shared understanding.
Attitudes *Curiosity*	Asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.	Asks deeper questions about other cultures and seeks out answers to these questions.	Asks simple or surface questions about other cultures.	States minimal interest in learning more about other cultures.
Attitudes *Openness*	Initiates and develops interactions with culturally different others. Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Begins to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. Begins to suspend judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.	Expresses openness to most, if not all, interactions with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, and is aware of own judgment and expresses a willingness to change.	Receptive to interacting with culturally different others. Has difficulty suspending any judgment in her/his interactions with culturally different others, but is unaware of own judgment.

Results—the Raw Data:

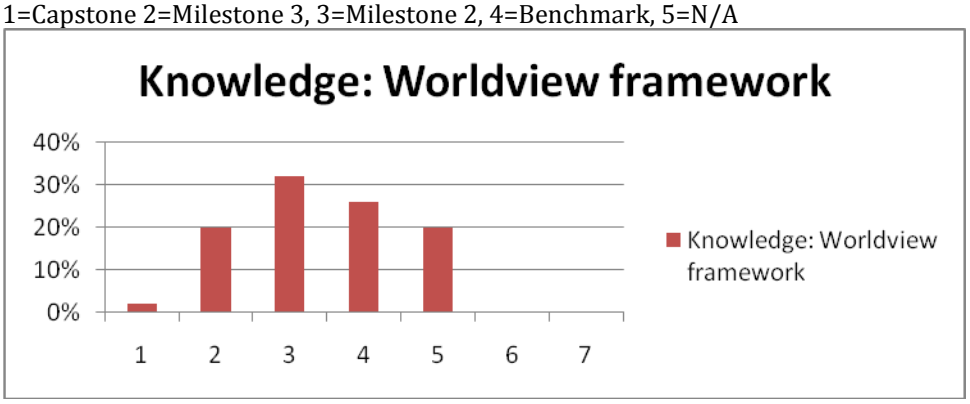
Cultural Awareness Rubric	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**N/A**
Knowledge: Self-aware	3%	32%	38%	12%	15%

Knowledge: Worldview framework	2%	20%	32%	26%	20%
Skills: Empathy	0	17%	28%	23%	32%
Skills: Verbal & Nonverbal	2%	21%	19%	15%	43%
Attitudes: Curosity	1%	21%	35%	15%	28%
Attitudes: Openness	5%	22%	38%	9%	26%

Individual Aspects in Graph:



1=Capstone 2=Milestone 3, 3=Milestone 2, 4=Benchmark, 5=N/A



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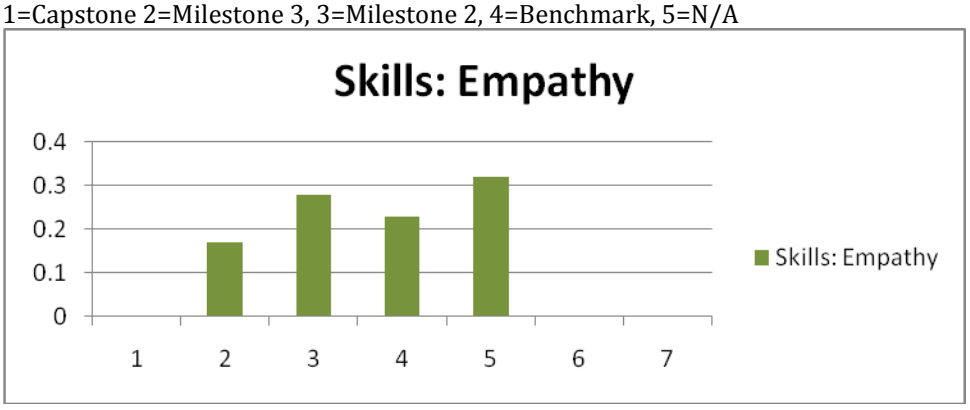

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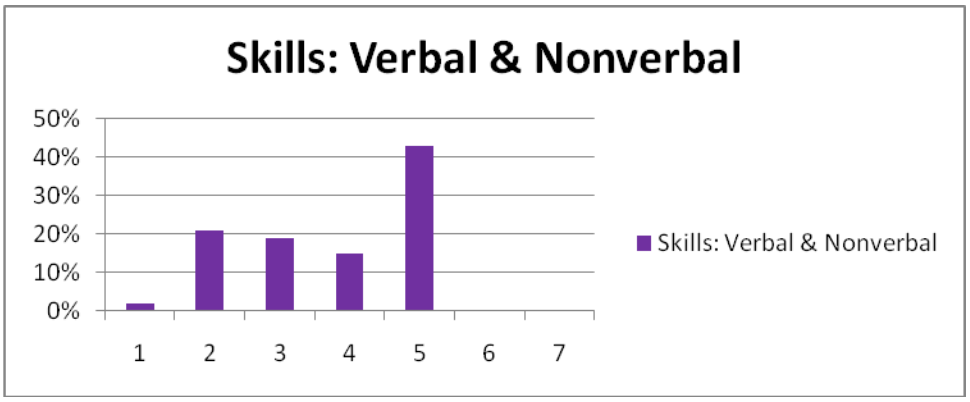

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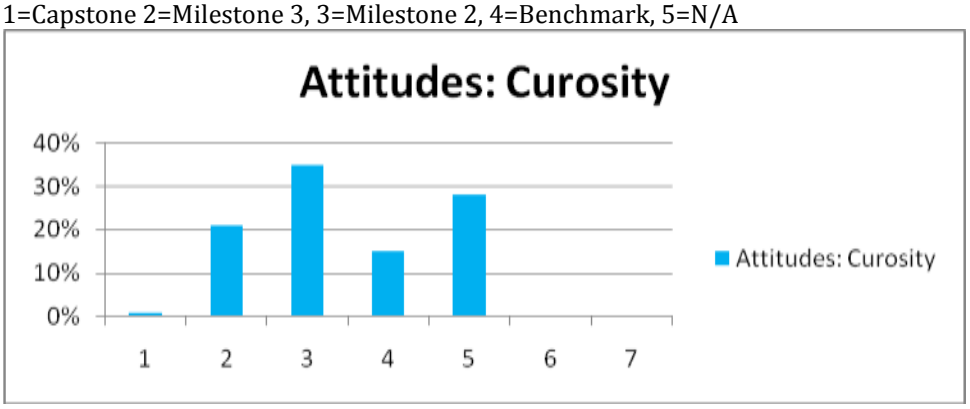

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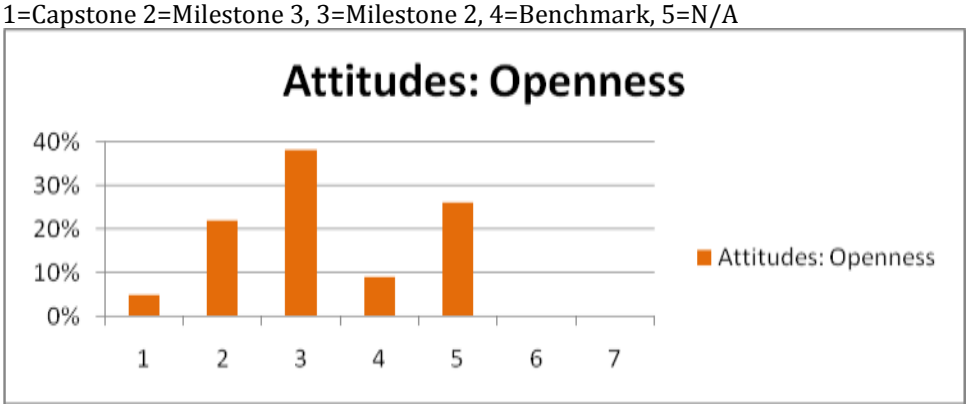

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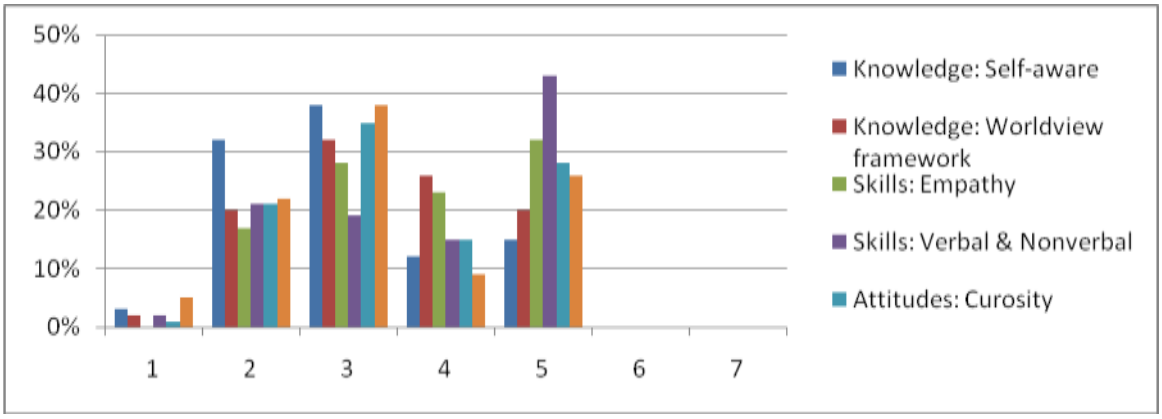
All Questions Together:



Discussion of the Data:

In evaluating the results, we found that on all six measures, we have at least a minimum of 17% of students earning a 3 or 4 (range=17% to 35%) on the rubric scale. The larger percentage is the combination of the 2-3 mid-range, with a minimum of 40% within this range (range=40% to 70%). This means that while fewer students are demonstrating through this assignment their abilities/awareness at the capstone level, most students are demonstrating their awareness at the mid-range, or Milestone, level.

The chart indicates that the Verbal and Nonverbal measure is the weaker of the results, specifically as the majority of the papers these elements were not included (see N/A level). In two other of the six measures, students did not reach level 4 at the same rate as the other measures. One measure, Empathy, had no students at a capstone level, and the others minimally reached capstone. Additionally, the results shows that the Openness measure has more students (5%) showing any proficiency in at the highest level.

Another discovery is that Self Awareness has the highest level of proficiency throughout the papers.

Conclusions:

Given this data, it is not necessarily clear that we are meeting our own outcomes for different aspects of cultural awareness in this course. We strongly believe that it is the assignment that does not reflect these outcomes, not the course material, teaching methods, nor students' level of understanding. Each instructor assigned five journals that students must write. The student could select any aspect of the course material to reflect. They were to incorporate their own experiences, understanding of the concept from the text and lecture, and reflect upon it from the framework of their choice of material; therefore, the papers were an eclectic gathering and relatively few focused on the same subject. Specifically, students' focus centered on these themes: cultural values, affirmative action, and nonverbal and verbal behavior.

One measure stood out: Self Awareness. As these were reflection journals, it makes perfect sense that the measure of Cultural Self Awareness has the highest level of proficiency throughout the papers. This was the crux of the assignment. This reasoning also helps make sense of why so many measures were found not applicable (n/a).

The story this data/rubric/assignment does not show us is how well we are actually teaching students the core value of cultural awareness and diversity. We know we are doing this; these assignments are not necessarily reflecting the students' learning. We also agree that we believe in and ask for instructors to present, and students to learn, all

of the areas of cultural knowledge as presented in the rubric we used from the AACU. We believe we will need to find a different venue, different assignment, perhaps a different class in order to truly evaluate the success of our contribution to students' development of the college's core outcome of Cultural Awareness.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that we examine the assessment tools currently used in SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication. Perhaps a capstone assignment that would allow students to express their knowledge and understanding of the six measures in the rubric would be appropriate. It should be considered to have the faculty members who teach Intercultural Communication gather in order to discuss this rubric with the goal of brainstorming a possible shared assignment to help students reach the measured goals—not because we need to teach to the test, but because we as a SAC agree that these concepts that are measured have merit.

Communication Core Outcome Assessment
Communication Studies
June 2011

College Core Outcome Communication:

> *Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits.*

The Communication Studies SAC believes that communication is an intricate part of our courses. Students need to use communication skills in all aspects of their lives—academically, professionally, and personally. Our courses provide them with an opportunity to learn these specific skills.

We believe that students come into our classes with their own level of knowledge of communication skills; our job is to provide opportunities to hone these skills. As is reflected in our CCOGs, we believe we have the responsibility to provide students with assignments that will help them recognize the skills necessary to survive successfully within the world.

In Communication Studies Program Review (2009), we stated that

> The Communication Studies program at Portland Community College supports the college mission of creating competent communicators, ready to provide leadership in the workplace and in the rapidly changing context of the global village. Our diverse course offerings prepare students to reach their full potential by increasing their knowledge and insight into communication strategies. Students learn to critically listen, reflect, and speak on substantive issues that not only impact their personal lives but their communities at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Specifically addressing the college core outcome of Communication, we stated that

> The purpose of all our course offerings is to teach students to "Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits." It is fair to assume that the college's mission of communication is supported by everything we do.

Individual course outcomes also have an impact on how we believe we are dealing with the aspect of communication. The majority of our course outcomes have some aspect of communication within them. Examples of some outcomes are demonstrated below:

SP 100, Introduction to Speech Communication:

- Use a newly gained understanding of the cause and effect of communication behaviors to begin to reduce miscommunication with others

- Use the insight into filters created through the framework of culture, society, organizations, family, and self in order to make responsible personal choices in many types of relationships
- Continuing to explore different areas of communication in order to expand a broad base of skills and communicative tools when interacting with others.

SP 105, Listening:

- Use gained competent and critical listening skills in order to create a climate that encourages effective communication
- Use listening skills to move beyond the constraints and filters of culture, media, and self-perception in order to make effective personal and professional decisions

SP 111, Public Speaking:

- Use learned public speaking skills in order to present an effective and efficient message

SP 140, Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- Continue to adjust communicative behavior with others who are different than self in all aspects of life, including business, travel and personal interactions in order to remain sensitive to cultural differences.

Justification for Assessment Plan:

As our program subject matter is communication, we felt we needed to narrow down what we could possibly and reasonably examine over a term in order to assess the college core outcome. The simple answer was to use a rubric for speaking that had already been created. More specifically, we looked at the Oral Communication Rubric that was developed by the AACU. We decided to draw information from courses that taught public speaking.

Assessment Plan:

Indirect Assessment: For Program Review (2009), we examined the National Communication Association's newly developed guidelines for undergraduate programs in communication. We found that we have fulfilled many essential elements of an effective program. The element that is pertinent to this assessment is that our courses follow the basic curriculum of the NCA's guidelines.

Direct Assessment: Using SP 111, Public Speaking, we incorporated persuasive speeches presented in all classes taught by full-time faculty. As the pilot for this assessment, we selected only full-time faculty based on a few considerations. First, each of the faculty has gone through a fairly rigorous process whereas we know and agree on how basics of speeches are evaluated. This process has been accomplished through the initial hiring process as well as has been worked on and thoroughly discussed at SAC meetings. While we have trust in our part-time faculty, we felt there would need to be more training to gain a clear understanding of how each of the part-time faculty evaluated the basics; time was a major consideration. Secondly, we wanted to hold the sample numbers down. PCC offers over 50 sections of SP 111 each term, averaging 22 students a section. If every instructor participated, we would have a sample of over 1100 students. Our sample consisted of 187 students.

We chose to have the in-class instructor observe their own students rather than have a stranger come into a class to observe speeches for assessment while the instructor grades for the class. This decision was made specifically due to time and personnel constraints. There were not enough observers to go around—even with the offer of a few dollars for helping, part-time faculty do not have the time or energy to participate in the mandates for SAC at this level and full-time faculty (we have seven full-time faculty throughout the college) do not have the ability to be everywhere at all times. Secondly, public speaking is stressful enough for students (the number one fear among humans). Having a stranger enter and observe speeches could cause additional stress for the student; therefore, each instructor observed their own students' speeches and evaluated them as usual. After the speeches had been graded, the instructor assessed different aspects of the speeches using the Oral Communication Value Rubric created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).

In this evaluation, no consideration was given to the grade the student received on their speech. Instructors sent their individual speeches to a central person. Then each of the five issues examined (Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Material, Central Meaning) were then averaged among the speeches in order to see if there were any areas stronger than others, if there were any areas that needed improvement.

We agreed to use the AACU's definition of oral communication: oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

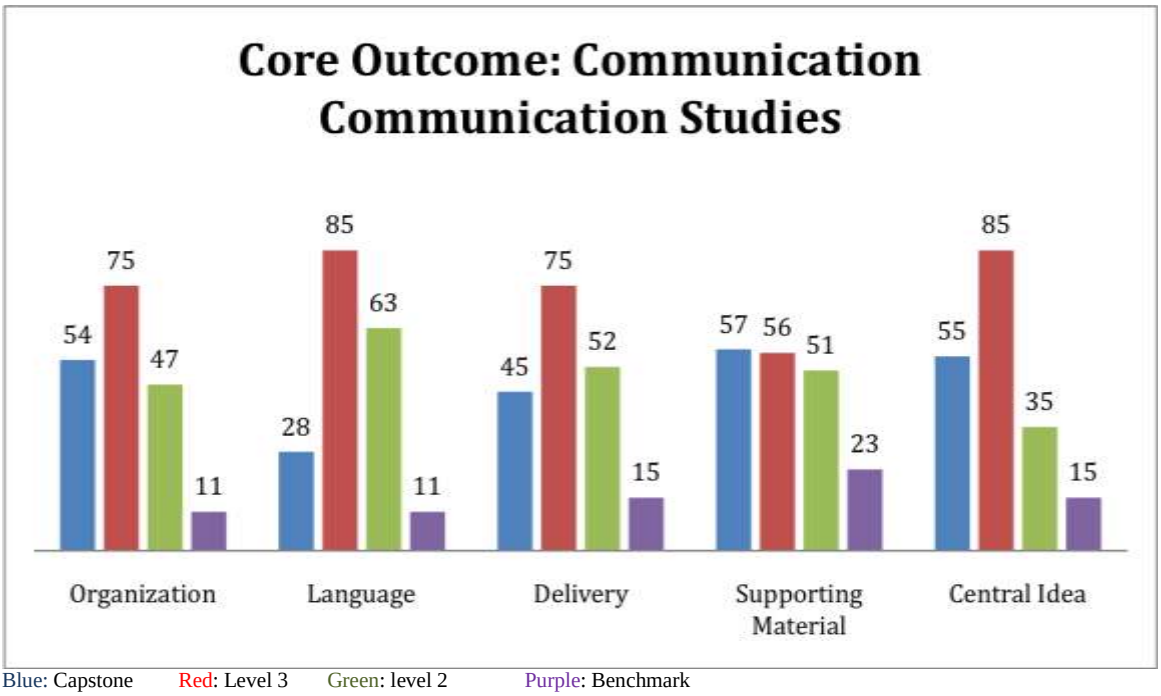
The Rubric:

	Capstone 4	**Milestones** 3	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.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.

	audience.		audience.	
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the 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 the 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 the 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 the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Results—the Raw Data:

187 Students:	**Capstone** 4	**Milestones** 3	2	**Benchmark** 1
Organization	29%	40%	25%	6%
Language	15%	45%	34%	6%
Delivery	24%	40%	28%	8%
Supporting Material	30%	30%	27%	12%
Central Message	29%	44%	19%	8%



Blue: Capstone Red: Level 3 Green: level 2 Purple: Benchmark

Discussion of the Data:

In evaluating the results, we found that on all five measures, we have at least a minimum of 60% of students earning a 3 or 4 (range=60% to 73%) on the rubric scale. Thus, most students are demonstrating abilities on the on or near the capstone-level of oral communication skills.

The chart indicates that the Language measure is the weaker of the results. Students are not reaching level 4 at the same rate as the other measures. Additionally, the results shows that the Supporting Material measure has more students (12%) showing the minimum proficiency (level 1) than on any other measure.

Another discovery is with the Central Idea measure. Although overall, it has the highest percentage of students achieving level 3 or 4 (73%), it also has 8% of students only achieving level 1.

Conclusions:

Given this data, it is clear that we are meeting our own outcomes for communication in this course, that the majority of students are responding to instruction and that they are gaining skills in oral communication. We feel we are doing our part to assist students in achieving the college outcome for communication. And as public speaking is a requirement for the majority of degrees and certificates, our contribution is significant.

As the rubric and graph show, we are strong in helping students with such areas as organization and delivery but find students' weaker areas are language choices, using good supporting materials, and presenting the central idea. In the area of central idea, an 8% seems a bit high. When it is realized that our course has a prerequisite of WR 121, it seems to reason that the students would have a previous understanding of how to explicitly communicate a central message. Because of this perception, we focus our time less on teaching students the fundamentals of core message. But perhaps this prerequisite has little bearing on this specific measure. As is pointed out, one course does not fulfill every aspect of any core outcome. It is also true that an instructor has no control over the amount of knowledge and skill in communication that students have as they enter into the class.

One story this data doesn't tell is that there is a significant portion of students who were inconsistent. This means that they excelled at some areas and struggled in others. For example, a student might reach a 3 or 4 in Organization but reach only level 1 in supporting material. Or a student might be average throughout the rubric except excel in delivery. The data as averaged in the rubric doesn't effectively capture this experience and, depending on how you analyze the numbers, they could be misleading in that way.

The first analytical comment from faculty regarding the amount of 3 and 4 levels of the sample students was "grade inflation." We know that students in general fall within the average, bell-shaped curve and the results of this study show a different story. This demonstrates students with a "B" average across the board. Perhaps there is not a grade inflation, for on the other hand it was also noted anecdotally that most instructors had above average presentations the term when data was gathered. The results may have been different given another term, another class.

This leads to the problem of evaluating one speech, once in a term. It is impossible to measure students' growth in communication without assessing each speech, each term for each student. Even then, as we blend together each speech into a rubric, we would not have a clear picture of the individual student's growth. We would have a broad-assessment of what we are possibly doing in our classes.

Recommendations:

There are a few things that we can reasonably do to improve our contribution to the college core outcome of communication.

Specifically we can:
Teaching:

- Work to help students understand and use appropriate language as they address each audience. We need to raise awareness of the use of language as Cicero presented in three styles: Plain (personal, concrete, clear), Middle (personal, poetic, clear), and Grand (imaginative, vivid, clear). We need to help students

speak appropriately to a given audience using language that is not only clear but creative and useful for the audience to grasp ideas and evidence presented.

- Work on helping students with creating and presenting the central idea of the speech. As the central idea is the basis of a speech—sets the supporting materials and organization—we need to help student remain clear on how to create this aspect and then present it clearly to the audience.

Assessment:

- We might consider rating students' level of oral communication as they enter into the course, using the first ungraded introduction speech, and then again at the end, using persuasion. This could show us how well students have gained skills during the term.