

English, Speech, & Theater Department Unit-Level Assessment Liaison Report Spring 2023

Liaison Project Start Date: August, 2022

Liaison Report prepared by Amy Rosenquist

I. Department Buy-In and Outcome Definition

The 2022-2023 academic year was a time of continuing transition; some faculty returned to teaching on campus, class schedules were reconfigured more than usual due to changing enrollment patterns in recent years, and some aspects of longstanding departmental assessments were modernized, reevaluated, and updated. Two of the issues we confronted were enrollment, particularly in terms of modality, and the rise of artificial intelligence as a means to assist with or entirely compose student writing assignments.

In response to the first issue, an indirect assessment of student perceptions of learning based on course modality was undertaken in Fall 2022; this required only that instructors share a link with their classes. A second direct assessment of student competence in oral communication was piloted in Spring 2023.

II. Assessment Research and Design

Fall 2022

Initially, a Google form was drafted requesting demographic information about course number and modality, as well as a series of questions assessing perception of learning as well as concrete success measures in that course and modality. However, the math department was running a very similar assessment; in consultation with the math liaison, a decision was made for both departments to administer the same indirect assessment to compare student perceptions across both departments. Therefore, a survey was designed that almost entirely mirrored the set of questions administered by the math department, to determine not only departmental but interdepartmental attitudes and perceptions.

Spring 2023

With the rise of AI as an option for writing assignments, oral communication has emerged as a useful tool to validate student learning, even in composition or other writing-based courses. Therefore, it was decided to pursue a department-wide assessment of oral communication in the fall of 2023, with a pilot this spring. This assessment would be based heavily on the practices and measures of the Assessment Committee's 2013 general education assessment.

In consultation with speech faculty, an assessment rubric was selected using the on the oral communication rubric from the 2013 campus-wide general education assessment of oral communication . That rubric was modified in the following ways: the scoring categories were flipped, so that the highest score option appeared first rather than last; the rubric was also converted to a Google form in addition to a longer, more detailed format, so that instructors could use the full rubric for scoring purposes but type their findings into the Google form for reporting purposes.

III. Pilot Assessment Tools and Processes

Spring 2023

Faculty throughout the department were invited to participate in a pilot of the oral communication assessment by recording their students' scores on the assessment rubric, in addition to the grading tool used in their class. They were offered the option to scan or return paper rubrics to me, transfer the paper rubric scores to the Google form, or assess students directly on the Google form, using the assessment rubric categories.

One faculty member initially responded with a willingness to participate. After reaching out to individual faculty members as well as sending a second appeal, two additional faculty members agreed to participate. Including my own classes, the pilot finished with 4 classes participating and a total of 25 recorded responses.

IV. Administer Specific Assessment

Fall 2022

With a few adjustments for the English discipline, a survey link was shared with all faculty in the department, and instructors were encouraged to embed the link in their Brightspace shells, provide extra credit for completion, and/or allow students to complete the survey during class. The response was fairly positive. Several reminders were sent during the semester in addition to following up with individual faculty members; however, in the end, there were only 117 unique responses collected.

V. Data Analysis

Fall 2022

Characteristics of those who responded to the survey included 56.6% part time and 43.4% full time students; 38% were enrolled in English 102, 46.3% were enrolled in either English 101 or English 101/97, 14% were taking Speech 101, and 7% were enrolled in English 96. Half of the respondents (50.38%) were enrolled in synchronous online classes, with 9.92% in fully online classes and 39.69% attending in person on campus classes (hybrid or fully in person). Students who responded to the multiple choice or short answer question asking why they chose to meet in

person on campus had the option to choose that the question wasn't relevant to them because they were meeting via zoom or asynchronous online; however, about half of the short answer responses to this question explained why they had chosen zoom classes or pointed out that they were not, in fact, meeting on campus. Of those students who had chosen in person learning, the answers reflected that face to face classes helped them to focus, learn, and engage better, with higher motivation and accountability also mentioned as factors. The two highest-scoring responses in the English department were chosen almost equally often (within 2 percentage points) by students in the math department: "I feel I have better focus when I am in a traditional classroom setting" (76.92%) and "I prefer to be in a physical classroom where the instructor presents material in person" (82.69).

Less than 25% of students reported using software other than Brightspace, but of those students, there was high satisfaction with the ease of use and availability of /knowledge of their options if they had questions or difficulties with the learning software. Another technology question asked students what device they were using to complete coursework; most had a satisfactory device, but 4 students answered that they used a cell phone to complete their assignments.

Interestingly, 36% of students would choose on-campus classes whereas 30% said they would continue to choose Zoom meetings and 17% were not sure. This represents 20% fewer students saying they would choose synchronous online classes in the future compared to those who were currently enrolled in synchronous online classes, and 4% fewer would choose an on-campus class in comparison to current on-campus numbers. Additionally, only 3 students chose on-campus classes for reasons other than the benefits of in-person learning (the class time worked better for their schedule, they mistakenly registered for an in-person class, or they chose a particular professor). This suggests that students in the Fall 22 semester chose in-person classes based on the perception that their learning would be optimal in that setting; an additional 20% of synchronous and asynchronous online students determined that in-person learning would be optimal in subsequent semesters.

Spring 2023

As of Week 16, 20 responses have been recorded on the oral communication pilot, with at least 5 more pending. The most significant data thus far is the lack of participation among faculty members for this pilot, with additional data to be included in future reports as it is collected and analyzed.

VI. Supporting Evidence-Based Change

Fall 2022

Students appear to be increasingly choosing modalities based on their learning needs, rather than for convenience or health reasons. Almost half (46%) of the students surveyed responded that they don't feel they learn well in a fully online environment; 36.4% plan to choose in-person

learning going forward, with 17% unsure of the best modality. In future semesters, course planning should continue to move toward accommodating all learning styles, so that students have choices that reflect their preferred modality. It will be important to note enrollment, success and retention trends as students are increasingly able to make explicit choices about class modality, and respond accordingly with future course offerings. If students continue to choose and succeed in electronic modalities, the department should continue to emphasize these offerings; however, if student demand changes such that not enough courses are available in the modality of their choice, the department should consider whether changes to future faculty scheduling options or policies are needed.

In addition, the department might consider a blended model for ESTJ courses, where a percentage of the course meetings occur on campus with additional class meetings held synchronously online. This would allow students who need an in-person experience to be accommodated while providing commuting and scheduling flexibility for both instructors and enrolled students on alternate class days.

Spring 2023

Although full scoring data is not yet available on the pilot, preliminary results are positive, particularly in the areas of organization and supporting material. Notably, participation is low.

VII. Recommendations

Fall 2022

Continuing to monitor enrollment and success based on course modality, and considering revisiting a student survey to elicit more detailed feedback about scheduling and learning styles, are recommended for future semesters. Although virtual options offer tremendous flexibility for students and faculty alike, prioritization of learning, success, and retention is equally important in all aspects of what we do, including class scheduling.

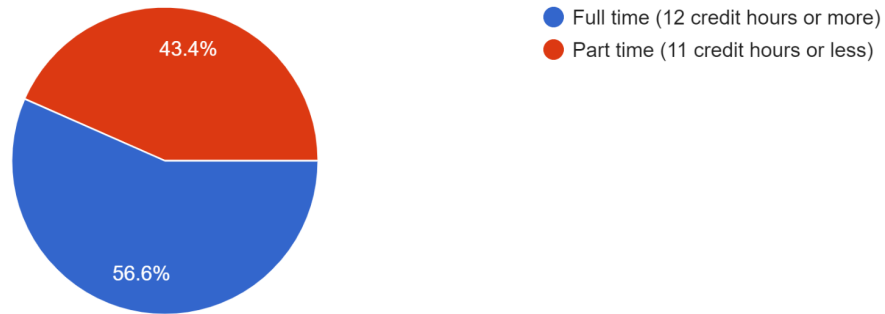
Spring 2023

More awareness of and support for departmental assessments is the most pressing recommendation at this time. In the fall of 2023, the department chairs and speech faculty will be asked to support recruitment efforts for the department-wide oral communication assessment. Reminders of the difference between evaluating students or faculty vs. assessing student learning, as well as norming sessions and/or rubric instruction videos, will be offered frequently throughout the early weeks of the semester. It may be advisable to seek a new department member to fill the liaison position if efforts of the current liaison in cooperation with the new department administration are not successful in increasing faculty participation.

Appendix 1: Selected Course Modality Survey Results

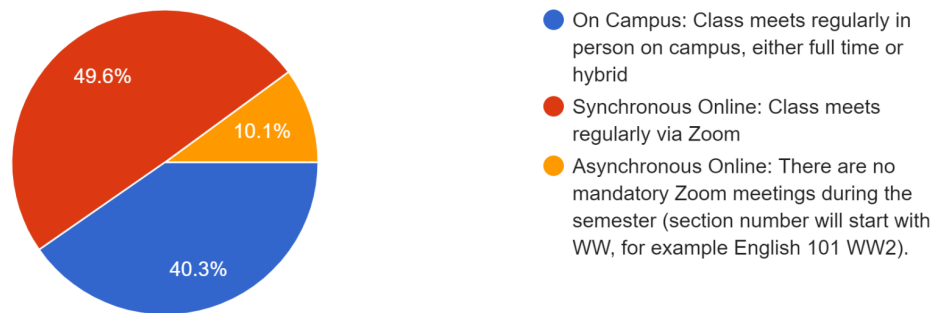
How many credit hours in total you are taking course at HWC or across all CCC campus?

129 responses



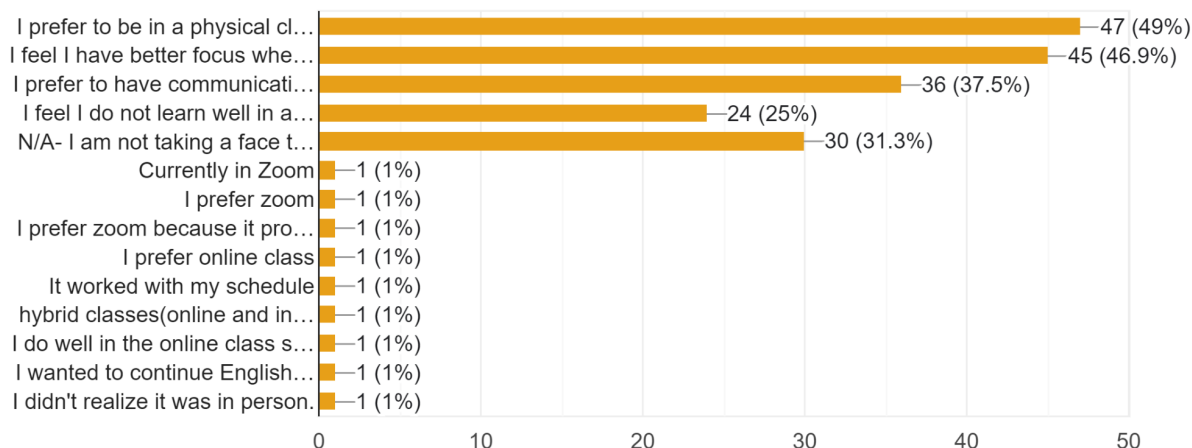
Please the modality of this class. (A 'modality' refers to the manner of instruction).

129 responses



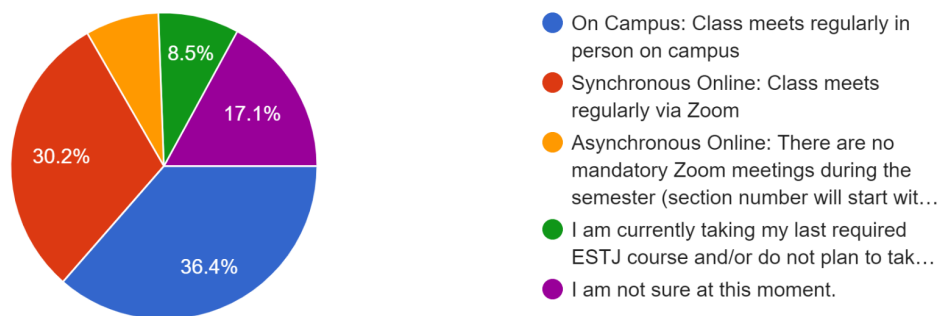
I chose a face to face class (meets regularly in person on campus) class because... (Please select all answers that apply to you.)

96 responses



Please indicate which modality you would choose for your next course in the ESTJ (English, speech, theater, journalism, and literature) department.

129 responses



Appendix 2: Oral Communication Rubric

Instructor Name: _____ Student Code: _____

Class: _____ Assessment Date: _____

INSTRUCTOR: Please circle ONE rubric column (0-4) for each of the FIVE Oral Presentation assessment categories

	Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Progressing (2)	Beginning (1)	No Evidence (0)
Content (Subject Knowledge)	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported). Depth of content reflects thorough understanding of topic. Broad and pertinent content	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. Accurate explanation of key concepts and points of note. Differentiated content is obvious	Central message and some key points are basically understandable but are not often repeated and are not memorable. There are some distinctions in content sections	Explanation of concepts is inaccurate or incomplete. Key points and message can be deduced, but are not explicitly stated in the presentation.	Missed the point, no connection with expected subject.
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.	Techniques not evident (too much reading, no eye contact.)
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience and context.	Inappropriate to audience, language choices demonstrate lack of awareness.
<i>... if applicable to context</i>	The power of language choices is acknowledged and inclusive words, labels and names are used with care throughout	Uses inclusive words and chooses labels and names with care.	Limited awareness of discriminatory power of words	No awareness of discriminatory power of words.	Discriminatory words used and detracts from oratory
Organization	Effective organization well suited to purpose. Main points are clearly distinct from supporting details. Graceful transitions create coherent progress toward conclusion	Clear organizational pattern. Main points are distinct from supporting details. Smooth transitions differentiate key points.	General structure/ organization seems adequate. Difference between main points and supporting details is blurred. Logical flow, but no clear signposts for transitions	Lack of structure. Ideas are not coherent. No transitions. Difficult to identify introduction, body, and conclusion.	No structure evident

	Exemplary (4)	Competent (3)	Progressing (2)	Beginning (1)	No Evidence (0)
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.	No discernible evidence of supporting materials in use. No credibility or authority to speak on the topic.
<i>If applicable to context...</i>	Presentation is accompanied by strong use of supportive visual aids	Visual aids and/or other materials provided for audience to accompany & support oratory	Limited visual aids to assist in oral presentation.	No visual aids used to support oral presentation.	Lack of visual aids detracts from oratory.