

Oral Communication Institutional Assessment Report

2019-2020

Core Competency/Area	Oral Communication
Assessment Project Name	Oral Communication Assessment Project
Assessment Cycle Year	2019-2020
Person Submitting Report	Yasmine Romero
Date Report Submitted	2.24.2021

Overview

The University of Hawai'i -- West O'ahu (UHWO) is committed to improving educational effectiveness through assessment projects that involve the work of faculty, staff, and students. Campus-wide assessment projects target WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Core Competencies, and draw on the protocols, rubrics, and processes outlined by the AAC&U VALUE Institute and other like assessment organizations. Further, these projects take into account national standards and best practices not only for assessment, but also for evaluating how students meet WSCUC core competencies and what professional learning could support faculty and staff in strengthening their teaching praxes.

As a result of this commitment, UHWO has assessed and proposed recommendations for the teaching of Ethical Reasoning in 2017-2018 and Written Communication in 2018-2019. These reports are available on our Assessment Website: <https://westoahu.hawaii.edu/assessment/>. **The present report shares key findings, individual course assessments, and recommendations for the teaching of Oral Communication in 2019-2020.**

Oral Communication

One of the WSCUC Core Competencies is Oral Communication. According to the WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFR) 2.2a, “undergraduate programs must ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.” Further, CFR 2.2a requires that an

institution explain learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies and demonstrate the extent to which those outcomes are achieved.

At UHWO, Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) directly flow from the WSCUC Core Competencies. ILO 1: Effective Communication is defined as the use of relevant information to communicate clearly and effectively to an intended audience through written and spoken language. More specifically, oral communication may include (but is not limited to) narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive discourse, in the context of preparing and delivering a speech, giving a class presentation, engaging in a small group discussion, lecturing or explaining a topic, or debating an issue.

Each degree program at UH West O'ahu has its own Degree Learning Outcomes (DLOs) that flow from the ILOs. Refer to the given division for information regarding their DLOs.

Assessment Cycle

The assessment of student learning is based on the AAC&U VALUE Institute process, starting with the curriculum maps. According to Szymanski and Romine (2018), curriculum maps provide the what and the why for a concentration's curriculum and course sequencing over the degree. Using Maki's terminology, the sequencing of a given learning outcome flows from Introductory (I) to Reinforcement (R) to Mastery (M). Curriculum maps for each degree are posted under the given Division's assessment webpage.

Assessment coordinators identified those classes that offer an I, R, and M for the respective oral communication learning outcome. This list was cross-referenced with the class schedule of offerings, in this case for Fall 2019. Faculty were contacted to provide videos of the embedded student assignments that included oral communication. The need for video documentation did provide a hurdle for some faculty despite reference to support from our IT department. At times, faculty used their own cell phones. And while this did provide evidence of the artifact, the video quality was substandard. Additionally, some faculty recorded all of their student presentations in one long video which complicated the rating process.

While artifacts were collected, the Assessment Committee developed a rubric based on the AAC&U VALUE rubric. Using faculty input, we customized the rubric especially the performance descriptors for UH West O'ahu. Thus, the core expectations articulated in the rubric established a basic framework of progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. Interrater reliability was established with a calibration session among the members of the Assessment Committee. Please refer to the finalized rubric in Appendix 1.

The ratings for each division can be found in their individual assessment reports, which are included in Appendix 2. The expectation is an upward trend from I to R to M. As noted in the

Math, Natural and Health Sciences (MNHS) report, some of the uneven trend can be attributed to the fact that 2019-20 was the first year the BS degree was offered. For Humanities (HUM), the small number of artifacts hampered the analysis. Education stands out due to the conscious adaptation of courses that provide the I foundation.

To summarize the assessment cycle for 2019-2020, Table 1 below provides dates (left column), activities (middle column), and 1-2 sentence descriptions (right column). The Director of Assessment and assessment coordinators for each division during the 2019-2020 assessment cycle are listed after Table 1.

Table 1: 2019-2020 Assessment Cycle

Date(s)	Activities	Description
09/27/2019	Establish Timeline	Discuss assessment website, review 2019-2020 timeline, touch base with coordinators
10/25/2019	Review Rubrics	Discuss AAC&U VALUE Oral Communication Rubric with coordinators
11/22/2019	Calibration of Rubric & Rating Process	Rate 1-2 Oral Communication Samples, discuss ratings, and make any changes to AAC&U VALUE rubric
01/24/2020-04/24/2020	Ratings	Before ratings, coordinators collected artifacts from their respective divisions. Ratings, and their respective reports, were due, at the latest, 04/24/2020
07/24/2020	Report (Draft 1)	Sharon Valente Creates Draft 1 of Oral Communication Report
12/14/2020	Report (Draft 2)	Yasmine Romero Builds on S. Valente's Report, creating a consistent template and including additional information as needed.

2019-2020 Assessment Committee Members

- Olivia George, Math/Science
- Mark Hopper, Social Sciences
- Lisa Spencer, Public Administration
- Michiko Joseph, Information Literacy

- Rebecca Romine, General Education
- Katrina Abes, Director of Advising Services
- Yasmine Romero, Writing Intensive
- Lisa Rosenlee, Humanities
- Jonathan Schwartz, Education
- Eric Wen, Business Administration
- Sharla Hanaoka, Creative Media
- Sharon Valente, Director of Assessment, Evaluation, & Accreditation

To be noted, WSCUC requires an institution to set a specific level of performance expected at graduation. In reference to the rubric, that level of performance is Proficiency (3) at a minimum. Most divisions met this level. Where divisions failed to meet this standard, the corresponding recommendations seek to address this difference.

Key Findings

Across the individual assessment reports, common concerns emerged, namely the need to strengthen courses at the mastery level (i.e., capstone courses) and the scaffolding between reinforcing and mastery level oral communication designated courses. Both concerns involve clarifying the relationship between WSCUC standards for oral communication and the hallmarks for oral communication at UHWO. Revising and updating curriculum maps in tandem with professional development on a regular basis for divisions are the Assessment Committee's suggestions. In addition, concerns for future assessment cycles and practices fall into three categories: **disciplinary expertise**, **process clarity**, and **sampling procedures**.

Across numerous individual course assessments, assessment coordinators highlighted the problem with having raters from other disciplines evaluate oral communication because non-disciplinary raters might not be aware of key terms, what qualifies as supplemental material, and how the discipline in practice uses oral communication within and beyond academia. Furthermore, the teaching and learning of oral communication as a core competency may be different within a division across multiple concentration levels, such as the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Another common concern that emerged in reports, division, and Assessment Committee meetings was how to ensure that the assessment process was transparent and user friendly. The term "process clarity" is used here to speak to the need of establishing a recognizable process; moreover, ensuring that the process is stipulated in a clear, straightforward manner. For instance, faculty must be made aware of the rubric that will be used and be able to provide feedback on said rubric before evaluations proceed. This move aligns with standard norming practices across the nation.

Lastly, sampling procedures were limited to faculty who volunteered in a timely manner; there was also no process for receiving student consent to have their work shared for evaluation. To develop a straightforward way of inviting colleagues to submit, collecting their data, and sharing it with raters to receive feedback was one common concern across the individual assessment reports. As such, the individual course assessments that follow should not be considered comprehensive reports. Rather, they should be considered as a starting point for building more equitable, accessible, and transparent assessment practices at UHWO in the future.

Individual Course Assessments

Assessment reports for each respective division were submitted by each assessment coordinator. Assessment coordinator names follow first initial and last name and year of report. Final revisions and proofreading were completed by the current director of assessment, Sharon Valente. For the purposes of this assessment report, changes have been made for clarity, conciseness, and objectiveness. Please refer to our assessment site for the full reports.

Business Administration

Business administration did not submit a report.

Creative Media

Artifacts (n=59) were gathered from across 4 different Creative Media concentrations. Courses assessed ranged from 100-level to 400-level; they were taught by 7 full-time and/or adjunct faculty. Assessment coordinators found that “objective” and “language” were students’ strongest areas of competency with a range of 2-3.6. “Supporting material” was in the most in need of improvement with a range of 1.9-3.6. “Vocal expressiveness” and “organization” followed the general trend of meeting or exceeding “benchmark competency”, that is, a score within the range of 1 and 3.6 (S. Hanaoka, 2020). Please refer to the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Education

The Division of Education received national accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) in Spring 2020. For the present assessment project on oral communication, artifacts were an assignment from EDEE 490/492, which is a capstone course. This course was selected for review because it is positioned at the very end of the elementary education program and therefore provides information on the overall mastery of skills related to oral language that students would have attained throughout the program. Across all areas of competency, teacher candidates in the Division of Education met or exceeded the “proficient competency”, that is, a score within the range of 3.67-3.83 (J. Schwartz, 2020). Please refer to

the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Humanities

Artifacts (n=79) were gathered from across four different Humanities concentrations and a Music certificate program. Humanities students scored the highest in the “use of language” category with a range of 2.7-2.9 or “high developing”. Meeting the “objective of the presentation” is the next highest scoring category for the Humanities majors. This area is then followed by “vocal expressiveness”, “supporting material”, and “organization” which range from 2.4-2.7. (L. Rosenlee, 2020). Please refer to the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Math, Natural, and Health Sciences

The Math, Natural, and Health Sciences Division was recently established; as such, the BSNS-Applied Mathematics degree program was solely assessed. A total of 16 artifacts were collected, and a small number assessed. The overall results were a mean rating of 2.1 at the introductory level, 3.2 at the reinforced level, and 3.0 at the mastery level. It was noted that the application of the oral communication rubric was problematic for some artifacts that were in the format of panel presentation. Please refer to the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Public Administration

Artifacts (n=20) were gathered across I, R, and M courses. The means for all introductory courses were at 2.3, that is, “developing” levels for each area. R and M courses ranged from 2.5 to 3 across all five areas. For two areas, “organization” and “supporting materials,” there was an increase in mean rates as expected following the I, R, M, curriculum mapping process. For the three other areas--“language”, “vocal expressiveness”, and “objective”--the increase in mean rates did not occur (L. Spencer, 2020). Please refer to the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Social Sciences

Artifacts (n=44) were collected from three courses. The ratings across I, R, and M indicate a developmental trend, that is, from 2.4-2.6 for I courses, 2.7 for R courses, and 3.3-3.4 for M courses. Please refer to the rubric in Appendix 1 for further clarification of these ratings, and refer to our assessment site for a comprehensive report.

Recommendations

The academic year 2019-20 was the first year we implemented this new assessment model. Thus, some quirks were to be expected. Please see “Appendix 1: Assessment Workflow” for detailed information on this model. In conclusion, we note the following recommendations:

- Curriculum maps need to be reviewed and updated.
- Alignment of WSCUC Core Competencies to UH West O’ahu ILOs to DLOs needs to be clarified so that the flow of assessment artifacts and ratings is complementary across the different institutional levels.
- Information regarding the learning outcome artifacts to be collected during a given semester needs to be provided to faculty prior to the beginning of the semester.
- Rubrics customized for UH West O’ahu will only contain a maximum of three categories allowing for up to an additional three categories specific to the given discipline.
- Training and professional development on assessment and how it can benefit a division should be provided on a regular basis.

Appendix 1: Assessment Workflow

1. Review the Assessment Timeline for which learning outcomes are scheduled to be evaluated.
2. Start with the curriculum maps for the concentration(s). Review for any curricular updates.
3. Identify those classes that offer an Introduction (I) for the learning outcome, and the same for Reinforcement (R), and M (Mastery).
 - a. Compare that list to the course offerings for the given academic year.
 - b. Create a list of those classes that fit the curriculum map that are offered during the given semester.
4. Contact the given individual faculty member, preferably in person.
 - a. It will be important to make the initial contact as early as possible in the given semester.
 - b. The individual faculty member will gather the embedded student artifact that addresses the learning outcome.
 - i. They will need to redact any identifying student information.
 - ii. Each student artifact will need to be coded:
The curriculum map level (I, R, M)
The course alpha and number
Online or face-to-face (O or F)
iii. For example, M BUSA 435 O, I HIST 151 F, R PHIL 302 O
 - c. The artifacts – electronic or hard copy – are delivered to the Division Assessment Coordinator.
 - d. The Assessment Coordinator will need to follow up with each faculty member to ensure the artifacts are obtained.
5. Review, develop rubrics for the learning outcomes to be evaluated.
 - a. Calibration training among Assessment Committee members prior to actual rating sessions.
 - b. Calculate [Cohen's kappa](#). If $k = .41 - 0.60$, there is moderate interrater agreement. If $k < .41$,
 - i. Discuss discrepancies to reach consensus
 - c. Revise rubric as needed

6. The Assessment Committee (and as appropriate, the General Education Committee) will conduct rating sessions.
7. The ratings will be captured and delivered to the respective Division Assessment Coordinator and the Gen Ed Assessment Coordinator as appropriate.
 - a. The Assessment Coordinator will compile program-level assessment reports based on I, R, and M.
 - b. The Gen Ed Assessment Coordinator will compile Gen Ed assessment reports.
 - c. KEY to these reports will be the Coordinator's analysis of the ratings and suggested program improvements.
8. Assessment reports will be submitted to the Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Accreditation.
9. Division Assessment Coordinators will discuss the findings at the first Division Meeting following the report, soliciting feedback; for example, the findings will be presented at the August or September Division meeting for those reports prepared in Spring/Summer.

That feedback will be written up as an addendum to the assessment report and submitted to the Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Accreditation the following month.