**OCCCC 2021-22**

**Report on Oral Communication Competency**

**WSCUC Core Competency Assessment, AY 2021-22**

Reported by **Oral Communication Core Competency Committee** (OCCCC)

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

**July 2022**

Fresno State Logo

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report on ***Oral Communication Competency*** (OCC) of undergraduate graduating seniors pursuing either a Bachelor of Art (BA) degree or a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree at California State University, Fresno has been prepared by the Oral Communication Core Competency Committee (OCCCC).

The oral communication competency assessed in AY 2021-22 is one of five core competencies of a Comprehensive Core Competency Assessment Plan of the University. The other competencies include Written Communication (evaluated in 2019-20), Quantitative Reasoning (evaluated in 2017-18), Information Literacy (evaluated in 2018-19), and Critical Thinking (2020-21).

The OCCCC comprised twelve faculty members representing six of the seven colleges that offer UG degrees at the University. In AY 2021-22, the Committee worked on: (i) reviewing a previously developed oral communication rubric, (ii) collecting sample work of graduating seniors from different colleges, (iii) evaluating the oral communication work of the graduating seniors, and (iv) reporting on the findings of the oral communication assessment.

To evaluate students’ ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information via speech, an oral communication rubric, modeled after the Oral Communication Value Rubric of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (or AACU), was developed by the 2015 Oral Communication Sub-Committee. Three specific criteria of the rubric were: (i) ***Delivery***, (ii) ***Content***, and (iii) ***Organization***. Each criterion was rated on a 1-to-5-point scale; with 5 being “accomplished” and 1 being “beginning”. Proficiency was deemed achieved if a criterion was rated 3 or better, with the Committee’s expectation that 90% or more of students’ work would be proficient.

In all, the Committee evaluated 271 papers and concluded:

* ***Delivery***: 91.5% of the presentations were worthy of a rating of 3 or better.
* ***Content***: 97.0% of the presentations were worthy of 3 or better.
* ***Organization***: 98.5% of the presentations were worthy of a rating of 3 or better.

Based on the benchmark established for satisfactory performance, the expectation was met.

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**Chapter 1 – WSCUC Accreditation, Comprehensive Core Competency Assessment Plan, and Oral Communication Core Competency Committee**

* 1. **WSCUC Accreditation**

The ***WASC Senior College and University Commission*** ([WSCUC](about:blank)) is a regional accrediting agency, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, promoting the development of higher education in the Western region (e.g., California, Hawaii, and the Pacific). Through its review processes, WSCUC confirms that an institution has substantially met the Commission’s [Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation](about:blank) and its [thirty-nine Criteria for Review](about:blank) and, thus, possesses the resources, policies, and practices to achieve its educational goals and has provided evidence of the quality of its educational programs.

[California State University, Fresno](about:blank) (CSU Fresno) has been a WSCUC accredited higher education institution since 1954. CSU Fresno’s most recent reaffirmation or reaccreditation review took place in AY 2015-16. CSU Fresno’s next reaffirmation review will begin in spring 2025, with an on-site visit scheduled in the fall 2025. CSU Fresno’s WSCUC accreditation information can be found here: [http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/wscucinfo/index.html](about:blank).

**1.2 CSU Fresno’s Comprehensive Core Competency Assessment Plan**

The WSCUC Commission Action Letter to the University, dated March 2, 2016, required that an Interim Report be submitted in the fall of 2020, for a mid-cycle review in spring 2021. The Interim Report is, among others, to showcase the implementation of a five-year ***Comprehensive Core Competency Assessment Plan***, addressing the assessment and outcomes of the five core competencies per WSCUC’s Standard 2, provision 2.2a, which includes written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.

The full detail of the Plan can be found here: [http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/wasccorecomptencies/index.html](about:blank)

The implementation of the Plan began in AY 2016-17, and the timeline of assessment of the five core competencies is as follows:

* Oral Communication, AY 2021-22
* Quantitative Reasoning, AY 2022-23
* Information Literacy, AY 2023-24
* Written Communication, AY 2024-25
* Critical Thinking, AY 2025-26

**1.3 Oral Communication Core Competency Committee (OCCCC)**

The formulation process of the WASC’s Oral Communication Subcommittee or Oral Communication Core Competency Committee (OCCCC) began in fall 2020, under the leadership of Dr. Douglas Fraleigh, Director of Assessment, CSU Fresno. Working with Assessment Coordinators from all eight colleges and the University Library of the University, Dr. Fraleigh and the team of Assessment Coordinators worked to identify and recruit members from the University community to serve on OCCCC.

The membership of the OCCCC was finalized in spring 2021, and the final roster of the OCCCC comprised of the following twelve faculty members from six colleges:

**Kara Zografos, DrPH[[1]](#footnote-1)**

OCCCC Co-Chair

[kzografos@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Health and Human Services

**Ching Chiaw Choo, Ph.D., PE[[2]](#footnote-2)**

OCCCC Co-Chair

[cchoo@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

Lyles College of Engineering

**Ajith Weersinghe, Ph.D.**

[ajithw@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

Lyles College of Engineering

**Gemunu Happawana, Ph.D.**

[ghappawana@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

Lyles College of Engineering

**Maria Calahorra-Jimenez, Ph.D.**

[mcalahorrajimenez@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

Lyles College of Engineering

**Everett A. Vieria, Ph.D.**

[evieira@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Social Sciences

**Jennier Roos, PT, DPT**

[jroos@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Health and Human Services

**Brooke Findley, Ed.D.**

[brfindley@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Health and Human Services

**Marcus Crawford, Ph.D.**

[marcuscrawford@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Health and Human Services

**Chris Miller, Ph.D.**

[chmiller@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Science and Mathematics

**Yasmin Rodriguez, MFA**

[yasmin@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

College of Arts and Humanities

**Jacquelin Curry, J.D.**

[Jacquelinc@mail.fresnostate.edu](about:blank)

Craig School of Business

***1.3.1 Charge of WCCCC***

The charge of OCCCC in AY 2021-22 was to:

1. Review a rubric for the assessment of Oral Communication skills of graduating seniors,
2. Collect and evaluate work of graduating seniors for Oral Communication competency, and
3. Report findings on Oral Communication assessment.

**Chapter 2 – Oral Communication Core Competency Committee**

**2.1 Rubric for Assessment of Oral Communication Competency**

The Committee met on several occasions throughout AY 2021-22. One of the first accomplishments was the review of the rubric for assessment of oral communication competency – See Table 1. The rubric for Oral Communication Competency was modeled and modified after the [Written Communication VALUE Rubric](about:blank) per Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU).

To evaluate students’ ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information via speech, the following three specific criteria were deemed appropriate by the Committee:

***Criterion 1*** – ***Delivery***. This criterion assessed the speaker’s voice. Questions assessed included: was the speaker’s voice understandable and reasonably fluent?

***Criterion 2 – Content***. This criterion assessed the speaker’s field and the presentation content. Questions assessed included: did the speaker make references to a reasonable number of research sources to support claims? Were appropriate supporting materials included?

***Criterion 3 – Organization***. This criterion assessed if the speech had an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion. Questions assessed included: did the introduction express the speaker’s thesis or topic statement? Was the body of the speech divided into main points, supported with relevant content? Did the conclusion wrap up the presentation?

Each criterion was rated on a 1-to-5-point scale; with 5 being “accomplished” and 1 being “beginning”. To be deemed proficient, students needed to be rated a 3 or better on each criterion.

**2.2 Norming Session for OCCCC**

The committee conducted a norming session in fall of 2021. This session was designed to ensure that members were familiar, consistent, and in agreement with how standards of performance (i.e., rubric) were to be applied to student work. Short video clips of student presentations were included in the norming session and committee members were instructed to evaluate each of the presentations utilizing the rubric. A discussion followed the evaluation, which also included time for questions and answers.

**2.3 Selection of Student Work for Assessment**

The Committee assessed 271 presentations from graduating seniors (i.e., no more than three semesters from graduation) from the following courses:

***CE 180B – Senior Project***. Synthesis of previous coursework into a civil engineering design project under the supervision of a faculty member. Group projects except by special permission.

***CM 193I – Internship/Work Experience.*** Supervised work experience in construction in construction related industries. Periodic consultations with instructor.

***COM 149 – Freedom of Speech.*** Examines the tradition of freedom of speech and expression in the American democracy. Focuses upon the Frist Amendment to the Constitution and major case laws which impact contemporary standards for public discourse, politics, broadcast, and journalism.

***CSDS 105 – Speech and Sound Disorders in Children***. Business communication theory; analysis of communication alternatives; effective business writing and speaking; case studies. Meets the upper-division writing skills requirement for graduation.

***ENGL 174 – Popular Fiction.*** Survey of major types of popular genre fiction (detective, horror, spy, science fiction, Western, fantasy, etc.). Discussion; writing. Examination of works in cultural and historical context and as literary and commercial art.

***PSYCH 133 – Neuropsychology.*** This course provides a detailed study of the brain structure and function from a clinical perspective to understand neurological and psychiatric disorders. Major topics include functional neuroanatomy, neuropathology, and principles of neuropsychological assessment and diagnosis.

***PSYCH 144 – Research Designs and Experimental Methods***.  Basic course in experimental psychology: research design and inferential statistics; introduction to scientific procedures and methods in psychology; participation in research, data analysis, and report writing.

**Table 1 - Oral Communication Rubric**

Students will be able to convey ideas, emotions, and information though **speech**. **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.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion**  (*What is being assessed*) | **SCORE (1-5-point scale; 5 being the best)** | | | | |
| Accomplished  (5) | Advanced  (4) | Proficient  (3) | Developing  (2) | Beginning  (1) |
| **DELIVERY** | The speaker’s voice is fluent, understanding, and engaging. The speaker maintains consistent eye contact with limited reference to notes. The speaker enhances his or her delivery with effective gestures. The presentation is polished and confident. | The speaker’s voice is fluent and understandable. His or her tone is generally varied. The speaker may occasionally refer to notes, but (s)he generally makes eye contact. | The speaker’s **voice** is understandable and reasonably fluent. (S)he attempts **extemporaneous delivery** rather than reading from a manuscript. | The speaker’s voice is understandable, but the speaker is tentative or reads the presentation from notes or a manuscript. At times, the delivery contains verbal tics and filers that detract from the presentation. | The speaker’s voice is difficult to understand, or the speaker is so uncomfortable when presenting that the vocal or nonverbal delivery detracts from the presentation. |
| **CONTENT** | The content is excellent for the speaker’s field and the presentation context. (S)he regularly cites credible research sources to support claims. Supporting materials significantly add to the understandability or persuasiveness of the presentation. | The content is good for the speaker’s field and the presentation context. (S)he cites a number of credible research sources. Supporting materials often add to the understandability or persuasiveness of the presentation. | The **content** is **appropriate** for the speaker’s field and the presentation context. The speaker makes references to a **reasonable** number of research **sources** to support claims. Appropriate **supporting** **materials** are included. | Some content relates to the speaker’s field or presentation context, but other content is inaccurate or inappropriate. Some research is cited, but assertations are made without evidence. There are insufficient supporting materials. | The content contains significant errors or is inappropriate for the presentation context. The speaker does not cite research sources. Supporting materials do not relate well to main ideas. |
| **ORGANIZATION** | The introduction includes an effective attention and clearly indicates the thesis or topic statement. The body of the speech contains main points that are easily identified and consistently supported with ideas. The speaker consistently uses transitions, previews, summaries, or signposts so that listeners can easily follow the topic development. The conclusion effectively summarizes the main ideas and wraps ups the presentation. | The introduction includes an attention-getter and indicates the thesis or topic statement. The body of speech contains main points that are easily identified, and they are generally supported with relevant ideas. The speaker generally uses transitions, previews, summaries, or signposts so that listeners can follow the topic development. The conclusion clearly summaries the main ideas and wraps up the presentation. | The **speech** has an identifiable **introduction**, **body**, and **conclusion**. The **introduction** expresses the speaker’s **thesis** or **topic statement**. The **body** of the speech is divided into **main points**, supported with relevant **content**. The **conclusion** wraps up the presentation. | The speaker appears to have an introduction, body, and conclusion, along with main points. The introduction does not make speaker’s thesis or topic statement explicitly. At times during the presentation, it is difficult to identify the speaker’s organization structure and topic development is unclear. The conclusion does not summarize the main ideas or wrap up the presentation. | The speech does not have a clear division into the introduction, body, and conclusion. The speaker precise topic is uncertain. Main ideas are difficult to identify and it is unclear how the subject is being developed. The conclusion of the speech is abrupt. |

**2.4 Findings of Assessment**

Two-person teams were assigned to review presentations. The results of each criterion listed in the rubric are presented in Figs 1 to 3, respectively.

CRITERION 1: DELIVERY

(1-5 SCALE: 5 = ACCOMPLISHED; 1 = BEGINNING)

**91.5%** students (Or 248 out of 271) were rated **proficient**

Inter-Reliability for Delivery = 97.8%



8.5%

**Fig. 1 – Students’ performance on Criterion 1 of Oral Communication Rubric** (Sample size = 271 presentations of graduating seniors)

CRITERION 2: CONTENT

(1-5 SCALE: 5 = ACCOMPLISHED; 1 = BEGINNING)

Inter-Reliability for Content = 97.0%



2.6%

**97.4%** students (Or 264 out of 271) were rated **proficient**

**Fig. 2 – Students’ performance on Criterion 2 of Oral Communication Rubric** (Sample size = 271 papers of graduating seniors)

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATION

(1-5 SCALE: 5 = ACCOMPLISHED; 1 = BEGINNING)

Inter-Reliability for Organization = 98.5%



1.8%

**98.2%** students (Or 266 out of 271) were rated **proficient**

**Fig. 3 – Students’ performance on Criterion 3 of Oral Communication Rubric** (Sample size = 271 papers of graduating seniors)

**Chapter 3 – Summary and Conclusions**

In AY 2021-22, the Oral Communication Core Competency Committee (OCCCC) was tasked with the assessment of oral communication skills of undergraduate graduating seniors. Oral Communication is one of the five core competencies per WASC Senior Colleges and University Commission’s Standard 2, provision 2.2a.

Twelve faculty members representing six different colleges of the University were instrumental in this endeavor. Collectively in AY 2021-22, members of OCCCC (i) reviewed an oral communication rubric for assessment, (ii) evaluated oral presentations of graduating seniors from different UG degree programs of the University, and (iii) prepared this committee’s report, which included findings of the assessment.

The twelve faculty members worked in a team of two to evaluate a given oral presentation using the established rubric. Specifically, each oral presentation was evaluated on three distinct criteria: (i) ***Delivery***, (ii) ***Content***, (iii), and **Organization**. The criterion was rated on a 1-to-5-point scale; with 5 being “accomplished” and 1 being “beginning”. Proficiency was deemed achieved if a criterion was rated 3 or better. It was expected that 90% or more of students’ presentations would be deemed proficient.

From the 271 oral presentations evaluated in AY2021-22, the Committee

* Awarded 91.5% of the oral presentations a rating of 3 or better for **Criterion 1 –** ***Delivery.***
* Awarded 97.4% of the oral presentations a rating of 3 or better for **Criterion 2 –** ***Content.***
* Awarded 98.2% of the oral presentations a rating of 3 or better for **Criterion 3 –** ***Organization.***

Based on the benchmark established for satisfactory performance, the expectation was met for each criterion.

In each of the three criteria, the inter-reliability score, which defines the agreement of both evaluators that deemed an oral presentation to either be proficient or non-proficient, is high; the lowest inter-reliability score is in ***Content*** at a score of 97%. It should be noted that since oral presentations were performed in real-time, a third reviewer – normally used for proficiency resolution WASC’s core competency assessment when a disagreement exists – was not used here; instead, all cases of disagreement were noted as non-proficient.

A comparison of results of oral communication assessment of prior and current AY is presented in Table 2, as a reference. In general, one can deduce that Fresno State seniors, regardless of AY of evaluations, performed consistently well in oral communication.

**Table 2 – Comparison of oral communication assessment results of prior (AY2016-17) and current (AY2021-22) AY.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Oral Communication’s Criterion** | **Academic Year** | |
| AY2016-17  (Total number of seniors assessed = 285 seniors) | AY2021-22  (Total number of seniors assessed = 271 seniors) |
| **Delivery** – ***Proficient*** means the speaker’s **voice** is understandable and reasonably fluent. (S)he attempts **extemporaneous delivery** rather than reading from a manuscript. | 96.1% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 98%) | 91.5% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 98%) |
| **Content** – ***Proficient*** *means the* ***content*** *is* ***appropriate*** *for the speaker’s field and the presentation context. The speaker makes references to a* ***reasonable*** *number of research* ***sources*** *to support claims. Appropriate* ***supporting******materials*** *are included.* | 93.0% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 94%) | 97.4% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 97%) |
| **Organization** – ***Proficient*** *means the* ***speech*** *has an identifiable* ***introduction****,* ***body****, and* ***conclusion****. The* ***introduction*** *expresses the speaker’s* ***thesis*** *or* ***topic statement****. The* ***body*** *of the speech is divided into* ***main points****, supported with relevant* ***content****. The* ***conclusion*** *wraps up the presentation.* | 91.2% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 96%) | 98.2% proficient  (Inter-reliability = 99%) |

1. Dr. Kara Zografos is also the Assessment Coordinator of the College of Health and Human Services, CSU Fresno [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dr. Ching Chiaw Choo is also the Assessment Coordinator of the Lyles College of Engineering, CSU Fresno [↑](#footnote-ref-2)