

CRGS Assessment Report 2014-15

Executive summary of outcome assessment project.

More than 75% of CRGS majors are meeting or exceeding expectations in relation to the following SLO: students can link theory to practice, as assessed through an oral communication embedded assignment. Discussion of the embedded assessment exercise led to recommendations for pedagogical changes to help increase the number of students who meet or exceed expectations for this SLO.

Statement of outcome(s) assessed during this cycle and the outcome issue or problem being explored. *What kind of student performance were you looking for? What did you hope to glean from assessing this outcome?*

For 2013-2014, CRGS assessed the following student learning outcome:

Student Learning Outcome 5: Students can link theory to practice.

We expected students to give a three minute oral presentation in which they discussed the ways that their curricular and co-curricular activities have prepared them for their post-graduation plans for work or graduate study.

Describe how the outcome(s) was (were) assessed. *Include information about instrument selection and/or design (What kind of assignment or exam did you use to obtain information on student learning?). Where and from whom did you collect your sample and why? Describe scoring methods that were used. What was the process and who participated in collecting, scoring and analyzing the data? Attach to this report any prompts, rubrics, or other assessment tools that were used.*

For the purposes of this assessment project, we chose an embedded oral presentation assignment in the CRGS 485: Senior Portfolio class.

Students were presented with the oral communication rubric at the time they received the prompt. The assessment sub-committee members collectively discussed the SLO and the oral communication value rubric at a department meeting. Students gave their oral presentations to an audience of CRGS majors and minors. Three CRGS faculty were present and used the oral communication rubric to score each presentation. Faculty met immediately following the presentations and discussed individual scoring to come up with a collectively agreed upon score for each student. Faculty then discussed the results of the assessment exercise to reflect on changes needed to improve student performance.

Assessment Rubric: see Oral Communication Value Rubric used for the all university assessment exercise.

Describe the major findings. *Include data table or other means indicating both raw numbers and percentages of student achievement at various levels of mastery. What are probable conclusions and implications which could be drawn from the results?*

	Capstone 4	Milestone 3	Milestone 2	Benchmark 1	Total Not meeting benchmark 0
Organizational	3	9	2	2	0
Language	4	9	2	1	0
Delivery	5	7	2	2	0
Supporting Material	5	7	3	1	0
Central Message	6	6	2	2	0

For the purposes of the assessment, we identified students who scored in level four as exceeding expectations; level 3 as meeting expectations; and levels 0, 1 and 2 as not meeting expectations.

18.75% of students exceeded expectations, 56.25% met expectations, and 25% did not meet expectations for organization of the oral presentation.

25% of students exceeded expectations, 56.25% met expectations, and 18.75% did not meet expectations for use of language in the oral presentation.

31% of students exceeded expectations, 43.75% met expectations, and 25% did not meet expectations for delivery of the oral presentation.

31% of students exceeded expectations, 43.75% met expectations, and 25% did not meet expectations for effective incorporation of supporting material within the oral presentation.

37.5% of students exceeded expectations, 37.5% met expectations, and 25% did not meet expectations for the central message of the oral presentation.

Overall at least 75% of students met or exceeded expectations in all areas. However, a quarter of the students did not meet expectations for core skills of organization, delivery, supporting material and central message. This is the first time we have included such an assignment in the senior portfolio class, and it is also the first time that we have used this assessment rubric for oral communication.

We believe that one of the reasons that students did not provide outstanding supporting material for this assignment is that students were told that their audience was their peers. Students thus assumed their audience had a basic knowledge of key terms and critical frameworks from the major. By transforming the assignment such that students are directed to prepare a speech for an audience of an employer or representative of a graduate program, students will be compelled to explain core concepts and articulate how these concepts are relevant to their future work or study.

The expectation for a well organized presentation was also compromised by the prompt, for some students, knowing that their audience was their peers, incorporated a very personal reflection on their journey through the major and the University. Several students were clearly overwhelmed by the emotional aspect of this reflection (e.g., survivors of trauma, students who experienced numerous macro and micro-aggressions of racism and heterosexism), and they were not able to maintain the focus needed to maintain excellent organization and delivery of the material.

Given the high number of students who did not meet or exceed our expectations, we have committed to a number of initiatives to increase student success in the skill set of effective oral communication as well as the SLO of linking theory to practice.

Describe the impact of the results on the program/department. *Describe how the results for each outcome have been/will be used for program planning and improvement. E.g. What specific changes in the curriculum or pedagogy have been/will be made? How did dialog among the faculty occur (department retreat, meeting, or other collaboration)? Will changes involve collaboration with others, such as librarians or student affairs professionals, to improve results?*

The following are concrete strategies we will implement in CRGS 485 and across the curriculum to further students' ability to meet or exceed expectations in the oral communication assignment linking theory to practice:

1. In our department assessment meeting we shared pedagogical strategies faculty use to help students prepare more effective oral presentations (e.g., letting students know they are graded for staying within time limit, therefore emphasizing need to practice delivery and have a well-organized presentation; engaging students in a class in a collective verbal review of the first presentation given to the class to set a high bar for all subsequent presentations).
2. We will begin using the oral communication rubric with students throughout courses in the major in which oral presentations are required.

3. We will modify the embedded assignment so that students prepare a presentation for an audience of a potential employer (non-profit, government, university, k-12, business) or potential graduate school program.
4. In order to support students in developing more compelling evidence by unpacking terms that are used in the discipline and translating them for a general audience, we will include such reflection throughout the curriculum. Our next faculty retreat will be devoted to identifying ways in which we can model the translation of core terms and critical frameworks for a broader audience (such as perspective employers) and embed this practice within our core major courses.