

Exercise Science and Sports Studies; 14-15 Annual Report Assessment of Goal 3

Goal #3: A student that graduates from CSB/SJU with a minor degree in Exercise Science and Sport Studies will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate disciplinary information through oral communication.

Summary of assessment results:

Method #1: Student Achievement Data

In the assessment planning processes, the ESSS department recognized that oral communication takes a variety of forms in our courses. So, we allowed the ESSS 308, 310, and 390 course instructors to decide which form of oral communication was most representative of their course and to determine the type of student work that would be included in the assessment of the 'oral communication' learning goal. However, because of the diversity of course assignments, the department also recognized that a single rubric would not be sufficient to capture the various forms of oral communication. Therefore, the department modified and used two existing rubrics to assess the 'oral communication' learning goal: an oral presentation rubric (modified version of the Read, Write, Think rubric; copyright 2004 NCTE/IRA) and a discussion rubric (modified version of the rubric used to assess discussion in FYS at CSB/SJU). Each rubric was modified to place emphasis on communication skills, rather than content, which allowed for evaluation of communication skills across all courses in the department.

Oral presentation skills were assessed in ESSS 308 and ESSS310. In ESSS 308, students worked in groups to summarize in 20 minutes the semester-long research project each group completed. In ESSS 310, individual students presented course specific information obtained through a brief literature review for 8-10 minutes. Student presentations were video recorded and later evaluated using the departmental assessment rubric (see appendix H). Each of the 16 students were evaluated and provided an assessment score for each communication skill. Two students were enrolled in both the ESSS 308 and ESSS 310 courses. Therefore, the two students' assessment scores from the two courses were entered into the data set as averages so as not to skew the results. The averaging of the two students' scores resulted in 14 student data sets that were evaluated for the 'oral communication' assessment.

The oral presentation rubric examined six communication skills (Eye Contact, Body Language, Poise, Enthusiasm, Elocution, and Ability to Answer Questions) in two domains (Verbal Skills and Non-Verbal Skills). The oral presentation video recordings were evaluated independently by the three full-time faculty members in the ESSS department. Each evaluator scored 14 student presentations, for a total 42 scores in each skill area, except Ability to Answer Questions which had 39 scores (one student did not have the opportunity to answer questions).

Means and standard deviations for each of the oral presentation skills:

Non-Verbal Skills:

Eye Contact: 3.0/4 ± 0.7

Body Language: 3.1/4 ± 0.6

Poise: 3.7/4 ± 0.5

Verbal Skills:

Enthusiasm: 3.4/4 ± 0.5

Elocution: 3.6/4 ± 0.5

Ability to Answer Questions: 3.1/4 ± 0.8

The overall reliability of the oral presentation assessment measure was fair (ICC 3, 1 = .0753) with individual item reliability ranging from poor (ICC 3,1 = .576) to good (ICC 3,1 = .863).

Discussion skills were assessed in ESSS 390 Sport Ethics using the departmental rubric (see appendix H). As part of the normal course pedagogy, students were placed into five groups of four students for small group discussions. The

discussion topic was generally “the ethics of applying a business model to college sport” with multiple focused discussion topics provided to students. Two ESSS faculty members observed a small group discussion, which lasted approximately 10 minutes, and evaluated each group member’s contribution to the discussion. After approximately 10 minutes, the course instructor stopped the small group discussion and each group reported back to the rest of the class. The course instructor then assigned the groups a new discussion topic and the two ESSS faculty members evaluated the discussion of a different group. This process continued until all five groups were evaluated.

The discussion rubric examined five communication skills (Relevant Statements, Appropriately Challenge Statements, Respect, Invites Contributions, and Furthers Discussion) in two domains (Content and Discussion Skills). The discussions were evaluated independently by the two full-time faculty members in the ESSS department. Each evaluator scored each of the 17 students on their discussion skills.

Means and standard deviations for each of the discussion skills:

Content Skills:

Relevant Statements: $2.3/3 \pm 0.7$

Appropriately Challenge Statements: $1.4/3 \pm 0.4$

Discussion Skills:

Respect: $2.2/3 \pm 0.5$

Invites Contributions: $1.8/3 \pm 0.7$

Furthers Discussion: $2.0/3 \pm 0.7$

The overall inter-rater reliability of the assessment measure was poor (ICC 3,1 = .625) with individual item reliability ranging from poor (ICC 3,1 = .248) to fair (ICC 3,1 = .769).

Method #2: Students’ Perception of Learning

In the spring of 2014 and 2015, 23 graduating ESSS senior students completed the department’s exit survey. Included in the survey was the following prompt pertaining to developing oral communication skills to which the students responded Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

“ESSS courses helped me develop my oral communication skills.”

Of the 23 senior students, 21 students responded to the survey. Of the 21 respondents, 2 students responded “Strongly Agree”, 14 students responded “Agree”, and 5 students responded “Disagree”.

Method #3: Graduates’ Perception of Learning

ESSS department graduates were not surveyed in 2014-15. Therefore, there are no results to report relative to Method #3. The ESSS department will be undergoing program review in 2019-20. It was decided to postpone surveying graduates until 2018-19.

Method #4: Independent Third Party Evaluation

While a number of ESSS students presented research at professional conferences, the conferences did not have mechanisms in place to evaluate students’ oral presentation skills. Therefore, there are no data to report relative to Method #4.

Analysis:

Students, overall, demonstrated good, but not excellent, oral presentation skills. Some skills in particular rated relatively poorly, such as eye contact and the ability to answer questions regarding the topic. Additionally, while not reflected in the data, a between class difference was noted. This difference may be due to the nature of the oral presentation (literature review versus research findings) and/or the time of day the presentations were given (8:20am versus 2:10pm). Similarly, students demonstrated good, but not excellent, discussion skills. Again, there were a couple of areas where students rated relatively poorly: the ability to appropriately challenge the statements of others and the willingness/ability to invite contributions from others. We, as a department, believe discussion assessment findings to be accurate. Anecdotal data suggest students are typically good at stating what they know or believe, but struggle with conflict (challenging others) and potential conflict (inviting others to contribute who may not be willing to contribute).

Potentially more concerning than the actual assessment results, was the relatively low inter-rater reliability scores and the number of students that disagreed with the statement “ESSS courses helped me develop my oral communication skills.” The relatively low inter-rater reliability scores may indicate a lack of common understanding on the part of the ESSS faculty regarding the criteria that defined the oral presentation and discussion skills. We also believe there are several reasons why a relatively large number of students did not view ESSS courses as developing their oral communication skills. First, because ‘oral communication’ is very broad and involves a number of skills, students may not recognize the diverse methods by which ESSS courses encouraged the practice and development of oral communication skills. Second, ESSS faculty may not be sufficiently intentional or explicit in explaining how assignments or pedagogical methods are intended to develop the students’ oral communication skills and, therefore, students do not make the connection. Third, because of the flexibility of the ESSS curriculum, the courses students complete to fulfill the degree requirement can vary greatly and, therefore, student participation in courses intended to develop oral communication skills will also vary (note: not all ESSS courses emphasize the development of oral communication skills).

Recommendations:

To address the 2015 ‘oral communication’ assessment findings, the ESSS department will:

1. Continue departmental discussions regarding the assessment results, the methods by which communication skills are developed in the department, and the criteria used to evaluate students’ oral presentation skills.
2. Examine individual courses to better identify where and how oral communication skills are being developed within the curriculum and, where appropriate, make pedagogical changes to bolster communication skill development.
3. Examine course syllabi and, potentially, make revisions to more explicitly identify the development of oral presentations skills as an important learning outcome.
4. Examine ways to more effectively make students aware of the various methods by which the ESSS department intentionally develops oral communication skills.
5. Examine methods to encourage and enable students to engage in productive and respectful discussions, even when there are conflicting viewpoints.