

Using the Communications Rubric

At the associate's degree level, Communications develops and presents cogent, coherent and substantially error-free writing for communication to general and specialized audiences. Students should be able to demonstrate effective interactive communication through discussion i.e., by listening actively and responding constructively and through structured oral presentations to general and specialized audiences. In addition, students should be able to negotiate an action for a practical task and communicate the results either orally or in writing with peers.

Waubonsee's Outcome: Use clear language to communicate meaning appropriate to various contexts and audiences.

To assess a College Learning Outcome in your course, select two applicable criteria to assess communication in your course, you can modify the rubrics to be discipline/program specific.

<p>Oral Communication Organization: Includes the grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. "An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose." (AAC&U, 2009) This criterion is only used for a subjective judgment about how well the student organized her/his presentation to fit a given context or purpose. While a set of descriptors under "organized delivery" mentions delivery, note that the measure is actually about the organization and order of the presentation rather than a quality of the delivery itself (Zane, 2011).</p>
<p>Oral Communication Language: Uses appropriate vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. "Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive. Language "differs from delivery in that it is specifically aimed at word choice and proper enunciation of words." (AAC&U, 2009)</p>
<p>Oral Communication Delivery: Includes posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. "Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers – e.g., "um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc." (AAC&U, 2009).</p>
<p>Oral Communication Supporting Material: Includes explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. "Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speakers credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may</p>

not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.” (AAC&U, 2009)

Oral Communication

Central Message: The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. “A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.” (AAC&U, 2009) This measure should be a single overarching holistic judgment of the impact or quality of the presentation. Many graders use this criterion to offer a holistic (analysis of the whole presentation) score that can be used to bump a score above or below the passing score. If faculty members encounter a presentation from a student whose first language is not English, they may want to use this criterion to express their desire to overlook substantial speaking issues. Similarly, if the presentation met most of the criteria found in the rubric, but just didn’t hold together well enough to communicate the intended message or had some other fatal flaw, then that should be noted in this criterion (Zane, 2011).

Written Communication

Context of and Purpose for Writing:

Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s). This criterion is only used for a subjective judgment about how well the student shaped her/his writing to fit a given context or purpose. For example, a cover letter for a resume should be written to an employer describing how the applicant meets the employer’s needs. A research paper should use a clinical approach to describe exactly what was done and what happened. Each of these examples clearly addresses a different audience and purpose (Zane, 2011).

Written Communication

Content Development: Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to demonstrate an in-depth comprehension of the subject which conveys the writers understanding, and shapes the whole work. Content Development differs from Claims (putting forth a claim, argument, or thesis) and also differs from Credible Evidence (whether the evidence of the claims is relevant and compelling). Rather, Content Development is used for measuring whether the student was able to convince the reader that she/he had a solid understanding of the topic/thesis/facts/etc. Content Development refers to the student's ability to correctly and effectively use the topics, concepts, dates, and/or names required to give an effective response to the writing prompt. For instance, if we ask students to analyze a recent contentious Supreme Court case, their paper should reflect that they understand and can use concepts like majority opinion and dissenting opinion which are highly relevant to a complete response to the assignment (Zane, 2011)

Written Communication

Genre and Disciplinary Conventions:

Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and / or academic fields.

Written Communication

Sources and Evidence: Supports claims/arguments/ideas/thesis/etc. This criterion directly follows a claim in that once a writer makes a claim, it is essential to back it up. Making unsubstantiated generalizations or saying “just because” is not good quality writing. The writer must provide evidence, examples, etc. that provide reasoning for the claims in ways that make sense to the intended audience (Zane, 2011)

Written Communication

Control of Syntax and Mechanics:

Includes grammar, sentence phrasing, idioms, and mechanical errors like misspellings, typos, punctuation, capitalization, etc. Follows conventions of standard edited English or other language suitable to the assignment.

Use this criterion for general rules that would apply to writing across all disciplines. Do not use this criterion for discipline-specific rules, including methods for citations and references (Zane, 2011)

You are welcome to modify the CLO rubric: The AAC&U VALUE rubrics were designed to be modified to increase faculty and student understanding of the criteria so that the resulting assessments will accurately reflect the learning and assessment activity. A Critical Thinking Discipline and Program Modified Rubric is available for use on the College Learning Outcomes web page in the Critical Thinking section. Criteria on the modified rubric were created by faculty at Salt Lake City Community College and are an option for you to use. We would like to build more modified rubrics for our other CLOs. If you would like to customize one of the CLO rubrics and need some assistance, reach out to kgorski@waubonsee.edu.

Resources

How to Create Your Oral/Verbal Communications Scoring Rubrics (This guide provides examples of descriptors you can use to modify your Oral/Verbal Communications rubric criteria for your assignments)

Written Communications Rubric Development Guide

References

- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Oral Communication Value Rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/oral-communication>
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Written Communication Value Rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/WrittenCommunication.pdf>
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