University Learning Goals

Eastern Illinois University Council on Academic Affairs

Revised Speaking and Listening University Learning Goal Adopted

On January 16, 2014, the EIU Council on Academic Affairs adopted revised undergraduate University Learning Goals, which become effective during the Fall 2014 semester. Among the goals is one focused on Speaking and Listening:

EIU graduates prepare, delivery, and critically evaluate presentations and other formal speaking activities by:

- Collecting, comprehending, analyzing, synthesizing, and ethically incorporating source material.

- Adapting formal and informal presentations, debates, and discussions to their audience and purpose.

- Developing and organizing ideas and supporting them with appropriate details and evidence.

- Using effective language skills adapted for oral delivery, including appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.

- Using effective vocal delivery skills, including volume, pitch, rate of speech, articulation, pronunciation, and fluency.

- Employing effective physical delivery skills, including eye contact, gestures, and movement.

- Using active and critical listening skills to understand and evaluate oral communication.

The revision of this learning goal adds ethics as a component of incorporating source material; impromptu, debate, and discussion as types of presentations that require adaptation; and listening and evaluation as components of oral communication. Speaking and writing were combined originally into one objective (Communication). They are now separate learning goals (Writing and Critical Reading; Speaking and Listening).

Learning Goals Workshop Series

Introduction
February 20, 10 am-noon
Arcola-Tuscola Room

Writing and Critical Reading
February 25, 2-4 pm
Arcola-Tuscola Room

Speaking and Listening
March 3, 2-4 pm
Arcola-Tuscola Room

Critical Thinking
March 21, 11 am –1 pm
1103 Buzzard Hall

Responsible Citizenship
March 24, 2-4 pm
Arcola-Tuscola Room

Quantitative Reasoning
April 1, 10 am-noon
Arcola-Tuscola Room

Revised Speaking and Listening Learning Goal

Best Practices and Implications for Curriculum, Instruction, Assignments, and Assessment

Although CMN 1310 – Introduction to Speech Communication is a general education requirement for all students, further instruction and practice in speaking and listening is required as students progress through general education and into major courses in order for students to graduate with the degree of communication skills necessary to be an effective communicator in personal, professional, and civic contexts. Keep in mind that the information that follows is relevant to a wide variety of communication. Aside from formal public speeches, students should also be prepared to speak in informal settings, in small groups, and in interpersonal contexts. The following section overviews challenges for students and instructors related to oral communication, some key components of speaking and listening, and key information related to teaching and assessing oral communication.

Challenges for Students

- Adapting messages for oral delivery
- Over-reliance on notes
- Communication apprehension
- Preparing effectively for presentations (time management, effective practice sessions)
- Meeting expectations for formality/professionalism
- Demonstrating confident and fluent delivery
- Delivering concise and clear messages
- Creating and using effective visual aids

- Giving and receiving constructive criticism

Challenges for Instructors

- Building on skills and knowledge gained in the foundational oral communication course through instruction and assignments
- Balancing attention to and assessment of content and delivery
- Assessing students with a variety of skill levels and backgrounds
- Giving constructive criticism
- Resource referral
- Establishing pedagogical relevance of oral communication
- Communicating the need/relevance of oral communication skills

Key Components of Speaking and Listening:

The traits most commonly assessed in speaking include: organization, language, analysis, material, vocal delivery, and physical delivery. The traits most commonly assessed in listening include: active listening, critical listening, and feedback. Faculty will most likely need and benefit from professional development in the form of resources and workshops related to the instruction and assessment of the following four areas: adapting messages for oral delivery, adapting messages to specific audiences, critical listening, and providing constructive feedback on oral communication.

Audience Adaptation

Audience analysis is key for a speaker to achieve his or her speech goal. One of the first questions a speaker should ask is, "Who is my audience?" While there are some gen-

eralizations one can make about an audience, a competent speaker always assumes there is a diversity of opinion and background among his or her listeners. Speakers can analyze their audience based on demographics, psychological dispositions, and the context/occasion.

Key Points:

- There will be diverse demographics among audience members, so it would be unwise to focus solely on one group over another. Instead, speakers should be aware of diverse demographics in order to tailor and vary examples in order to appeal to different groups of people within one speech or presentation.

- Psychological audience analysis considers an audience's psychological dispositions toward the topic, speaker, and occasion and how their attitudes, beliefs, and values inform those dispositions. Speakers should:

  - Adapt to the knowledge level of the audience.

  - Demonstrate credibility to form favorable impressions.

  - Consider the audience: Are people there voluntarily or are they required to attend? What do they like/dislike, believe/not believe, value/not value?

- Situational audience analysis considers the physical surroundings and setting of a speech. Speakers should:

  - Visit the speaking space ahead of time. Adapt the space as needed/possible.

  - Adapt message or speaking strategies as needed to accommodate a space, time of day, etc.

  - Audience-centered speakers are more likely to interest and engage their audience, therefore audience adaptation is a key part of achieving one's speaking goals.

Assessment/Assignments:

- The fourth item in the "Speaking Assessment Matrix" focuses on analysis and can be added to or adapted to fit your assignment rubric. The Speaking Matrix can be found here: www.eiu.edu/ learninggoals/speaking.php

- Build in a preparation assignment for speeches or presentations that has students address demographic, psychological, and situational audience analysis in a short essay or paragraph. Use the content of the assignment as a post-assessment when grading the speech or presentation to assess how well the student followed through.

Adapting Messages for Oral Delivery

Writing and speaking differ in many important ways. Although we have been taught for many years to write for a reading audience, we have not been taught to write for a listening audience. Listenable messages are orally delivered messages tailored to be comprehended by listeners.

Key Points:

- Practicing aloud is a key part of creating listenable messages. After drafting a section of a speech, the student should read it aloud and notate any places where she/he had difficulty with verbal delivery. Then, edit that section to make it easier to deliver, and therefore more listenable.

- The process of translating written messages into listenable messages is time consuming, so instructors should prepare students to budget time to adapt their messages for oral delivery.

- While readers can review a passage that was confusing or full of new information, listening audiences cannot. Therefore, speakers should include repetition and redundancy in their speeches. Include previews, reviews, transitions, and internal summaries to help make the content digestible.

- Additional tips for creating listenable messages include:

  - Use shorter, actively worded sentences.

  - Use personal pronouns (I, you, we, us, our).

  - Use lists or other organizational constructions like problem-solution or compare-contrast.

  - Use previews, reviews, transitions, and internal summaries that help a listener navigate your message.

  - Use examples relevant to you and your listener's actual experiences.

Assessment/Assignments:

- The second item in the "Speaking Assessment Matrix" focuses on language and can be added to or adapted to fit your assignment rubric. The Speaking Matrix can be found here: www.eiu.edu/ learninggoals/speaking.php

- Show students a sample speech with content relevant to your discipline. Have them evaluate the content based on tips listed above.

Critical Listening

Listening is the learned process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. Critical listening refers to listening with the goal of analyzing or evaluating a message based on information presented verbally and information that can be inferred from context.

Key Points:

- Critical listening skills include the following:

  - Distinguishing between facts and inferences.

  - Evaluating supporting evidence.

  - Discovering your own biases.

  - Listening beyond the message.

- Tips for becoming a better critical listener include:

  - Ask questions to get more information and increase critical awareness. Specifically, ask questions about the source of a speaker's supporting evidence.

  - Be especially critical of speakers who set up "either/or" options, which artificially limit an issue or situation.

  - Be aware of people who over generalize, especially when those generalizations are based on stereotypical or prejudiced views.

  - Evaluate the speaker's message instead of his or her appearance, personality, or other characteristics, and direct criticism to the message rather than the person.

  - Be aware that critical evaluation is seldom quick and easy. Sometimes one must withhold judgment in order to allow time for proper evaluation. Also remember that evaluation may not be final, as it should be open to critical reflection and possible revisions later.

Assessment/Assignments:

- Instructors may assess critical listening ability by evaluating students' ability to post critical questions following a presentation during a question and answer session. Assign a few students to respond to each speaker and assess their questions/ response based on the four critical listening skills listed above. Instructors should offer students guidelines for posing critical questions. Sample guidelines can be found here: www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/ speaking.php

- Show a persuasive message and have students evaluate it based on the four aspects of critical listening listed above.

Revised Speaking and Listening Learning Goal

Giving Constructive Criticism

The ability to give effective feedback benefits self and others. Whether in personal, professional, academic, or civic contexts, positive verbal and nonverbal feedback can boost others' confidence, and negative feedback, when delivered constructively, can provide important perception checking and lead to improvements. Of course, negative feedback that is not delivered competently can lead to communication difficulties that can affect a person's self-esteem and self-efficacy. Constructive criticism consists of comments that are specific and descriptive enough for the receiver to apply them for the purposes of self-improvement. Offering constructive criticism is challenging because one must listen critically in order to offer such criticism.

Key Points:

- Evaluating others' speaking and listening with constructive criticism can be difficult. When giving feedback to others, be specific, descriptive, positive, constructive, realistic, relevant, and set goals for next time.

- Self-evaluation can be difficult because people may think their performance was effective and therefore doesn't need critique or they may become their own worst critic, which can negatively affect self-efficacy. When giving feedback to yourself:, identify strengths and weaknesses, evaluate yourself within the context of the task or assignment guidelines, set goals for next time, Revisit goals and assess progress at regular intervals.

Assessment/Assignments:

- Peer-critique and self-critique are two common ways to assess students' ability to offer constructive criticism to self and others. Sample peer- and self-evaluation forms can be found here: www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/speaking.php

- In order to assess a student's ability to receive and address constructive criticism, provide the opportunity to incorporate feedback into another presentation.

Resources

National Communication Association, Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students
www.natcom.org/Secondary.aspx?id=119

UNCG Communication Across the Curriculum, Tips and Terms for Teaching Speaking,:
www.uncg.edu/cac/faculty/stips.php

UNCG Speaking Center, Faculty Resources, http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/resources/index.php#faculty

University of Southern Mississippi:
Designing Your Speech Assignment, www.usm.edu/speaking-center/designing-your-speech-assignment
Assess Speeches Effectively, www.usm.edu/speaking-center/assessing-speeches-effectively

International Listening Association, http://listen.org/

For More Information

EIU Council on Academic Affairs:
http://castle.eiu.edu/eiucaa/

CAA Learning Goals Website:
http://www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/

CAA Learning Goals Report:
www.eiu.edu/learninggoals/pdfs/CAA_Learning_Goals_Review_Report_Final.pdf

EIU Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL):
http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/caslhome.php

EIU Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:
http://castle.eiu.edu/acaffair/

EIU Strategic Plan:
http://www.eiu.edu/strategicsummary/

EIU NCA Self-Study (Accreditation):
http://www.eiu.edu/nca2014/