Campus Use of Oral Communication VALUE Rubric

Submitted by Anne Lowery

Which rubrics are you currently working with?

The VALUE rubric for oral communication

To what degree have the rubrics currently being used on your campus been adapted or modified from the original online templates?

The rubric has not been modified, except to put it onto one page for ease in assessing students as they speak.

How are you using the rubrics? Are the rubrics being used to assess General Education? If so, in what classes? How are you developing samples of student work? Who is conducting or leading the assessment? How often is data being gathered?

As part of the general education requirements of the University of Mobile, students are expected to demonstrate competency in oral communication. Prior to the fall of 2011, students demonstrated the oral communication competency by completing a 100-level course designated as “OC” with a grade of C or higher. Members of the university’s general education committee felt that students’ attainment of oral communication skills should not rest solely with the completion of one freshman-level course, and that oral communication skills should continue to build throughout the college experience. As a result, the committee decided to adopt the VALUE rubric for oral communication and apply it to student presentations in selected senior-level courses in which students are expected to deliver oral presentations. Several faculty members across the campus agreed to pilot the use of the rubric in the fall of 2011. As students made presentations in class, faculty members in the following courses recorded their assessments of the individual students’ presentations on the rubric:
Using the VALUE Rubrics for Improvement of Learning and Authentic Assessment

CASE STUDY: University of Mobile

- School of Business, Administrative Policy (BA 454), seven students
- School of Nursing, Health Care Financing/Delivery Systems (NU 419), sixteen students
- College of Arts and Sciences, Faith and Doubt (PY 411) and Interdisciplinary Seminar (EN 488), thirteen students

A total of thirty-six senior students were assessed, or approximately 10 percent of the 2012 graduating class. The faculty forwarded their raw data to the associate vice president for academic affairs, who serves as chair of the general education assessment committee, for compilation of data. The plan is to conduct this assessment every fall semester.

Are the rubrics being used in the majors? If so, in which majors? What courses?

The School of Business has adopted the oral communication rubric for use school-wide.

Are the rubrics being used in conjunction with student portfolios?

No.

Are the rubrics being used for cocurricular assessment?

No.

Who is primarily working with the VALUE rubrics on your campus?

- Faculty? (If yes, in what departments or colleges?) Yes, interdisciplinary.
- Student affairs professionals? No.
- Campus committees? Yes, the general education assessment committee.
- Other campus administrators (including deans, department/division chairs, institutional research)? No.

What have the data you’ve collected from the VALUE rubrics told you about student learning on your campus? What have you done with the results from assessment? Have you shared or
discussed findings? If so, with whom? What actions to improve teaching and learning have occurred as a result? If you have not collected data yet or do not yet have results, how soon will your campus have findings based on analyses of student work samples using the rubrics?

Results were tallied for all thirty-six students, using the values of 1 through 4 as defined by the rubric. The rubric measures five dimensions of a presentation: organization, language, delivery, supporting material, and central message. The committee felt that a mean overall score of 3.00 or better on each of the five dimensions would be a desirable outcome. The fall 2011 results are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Material</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Message</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While mean scores of 3.0 or higher were achieved for all dimensions, the committee noted that “language” and “delivery” had the lowest means and, thus, represent areas for potential improvement. It appears that improvements in “language” can best be attained by placing greater attention on the specific language of each discipline, whereas the components that make up “delivery” can best be addressed in both the freshman-level oral communication course and upper-level courses in the majors.

Our assessment cycle runs from July 1 through June 30. After June 30, all academic areas begin preparing evaluations of their assessment plans and developing recommendations for improvement. In addition to assessment plans for each major on campus, there are also student learning outcome plans for general education and for spiritual development. The latter two plans will be evaluated, and results will be posted on the campus intranet. During the summer months, results will also be shared with the members of the academic affairs committee, which is composed of all the deans across campus. It is expected that the deans will utilize this
information to make necessary changes in their individual disciplines in order to address areas that need improvement.

The general education assessment committee would like to increase the sample size by recruiting additional faculty who teach senior-level courses to administer the rubric in the coming year. It will also be helpful to have an additional year or two of assessment in order to ascertain whether the data reveal any trends for improvement.

*What else should we know about your current or future plans for the direct assessment of student work and learning outcomes on your campus?*

Several areas utilize ETS major field tests; we also utilize the ETS Proficiency Profile to measure reading, writing, critical thinking, and math in the general education program. A few areas are using portfolios.