New York City College of Technology
Office of Assessment and Institutional Research

Tammie Cumming, Ph.D.  Isana Leshchinskaya
Director  Research Assistant

Yongchao Yimi Zhao, M.A., M.M.  Johnathan Liu, Ph.D.
Assistant Director  Research Assistant

ASSESSMENT LIAISONS AND PARTICIPATING FACULTY

Ralph Alcendor  Eli Neugeboren  Janet Dunson
Daniel Alter  Susan Nilsen-Kupsch  Suzanne Epstein
Lillian Amann  Kara Pasner  Virginia Knight
Aaron Barlow  Susan Phillip  Gail Leinwall
Gulgun Bayaz Ozturk  Robert Polchinski  Eve Maged
Oleg Berman  Margaret Rafferty  Anthony Naake
Malek Brahimi  Rachel Raskin  Godfrey Nwoke
Cailean Cooney  Noemi Rodriguez  Miriam Pardo
L. Jay Deiner  Diana Samaroo  Barbara Parisi
Rebecca Devers  Ashwin Satyanarayana  Michael Pasternack
Mery Diaz  Anthony Sena  Ramon Albino Rodriguez
Jason Ellis  Gerarda Shields  Lina Romasanta
Javiela Evangelista  Sarah Standing  Jill Russell
Katherine Gregory  Ryoya Terao  John Sannuto
Ezra Halleck  Robert Walljasper  Denise Scannell
Nadia Kennedy  Joanne Weinreb  Valerie Small
Jihun Kim  Gail Williams  Terry Stoller
Caner Koca  Andleeb Zameer  Christopher Swift
Mohammed Kouar  Andy Zhang  Shauna Vey
Khalid Lacheb  Barry Antokoletz  Zheng Zhu
David Lee  Jacqueline Berger
Xiaohai Li  Ann Delilkan

Additional Participating Faculty
NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT: ORAL COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

New York City College of Technology (City Tech) believes that a strong assessment program will result in improved student learning outcomes, enabling students to persist and complete their degree program goals. City Tech faculty, along with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, planned the College’s General Education Assessment Cycle through 2022. Each of the fourteen General Education/Institutional competencies is assessed on a staggered, three-year assessment cycle. This report details the evaluation of the assessment efforts for Oral Communication at City Tech since the spring 2013 semester.

CITY TECH GENERAL EDUCATION AND CUNY PATHWAYS

The City Tech College Council passed its updated General Education during the spring 2013 semester. During the fall 2013 semester, CUNY implemented the Pathways initiative across its undergraduate colleges. Pathways established a new system of general education requirements and new transfer guidelines for the University. The CUNY system, including City Tech, utilized the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America’s Promise Essential Learning Outcomes as a framework for general education, which resulted in a clear alignment between City Tech’s newly defined General Education and the CUNY Pathways core courses.

According to the Association of American Colleges and University:

*Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.*

This definition was used in the framing language when reviewing the CUNY Pathways learning outcomes. During the spring 2015 semester, City Tech faculty conducted an evaluation of courses offered at the College and identified the alignment between the CUNY Pathways course requirements and City Tech’s General Education. There was a clear alignment between Oral Communication and the CUNY Pathways outcomes articulated through the required core, as well as the flexible core courses.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT MEASURES

During the spring 2013 semester, faculty assessment liaisons reviewed the AAC&U Valid Assessment of Liberal Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics based on the Liberal Education and America’s Promise Essential Learning Outcomes. The faculty determined the Oral Communication VALUE rubric would serve as a framework for their assessment; however, after the initial pilot of the AAC&U Oral Communication rubric, the faculty consulted with the Communications faculty of the Humanities Department who were considered experts in this area for guidance. As a result, significant modifications were made to serve City Tech’s assessment efforts.
During the spring 2015 semester, the AIR Office staff met with a committee of faculty representatives from the three school (Arts & Sciences, Technology & Design, and Professional Studies) to discuss formally adopting either the AAC&U VALUE rubrics or a modified version for the assessment of general education. The faculty affirmed that the AAC&U rubrics would continue to serve as a framework for general education/institutional outcomes assessment at the College.

The eight performance indicators that were defined as part of the City Tech Oral Communication enabled students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities as follows:

1. **Central Idea** - Clear, memorable and compelling idea that was useful and appropriate for the audience.
2. **Organizational Structure** - Logical, coherent, and effective progression of ideas with a clearly articulated and delineated introduction, main points, and conclusion.
3. **Language** - Easily understood, engaging, appropriate for the specific audience (no unfamiliar terms, fillers, or slang), and free from culturally insensitive, slanderous, inflammatory or offensive language.
4. **Verbal Delivery** - Clear articulation, volume that is audible to the entire audience, and the correct pronunciation of words. However, it should be noted that students should not be evaluated on the basis of the presence of a dialect or accent, but only if a dialect or accent interferes with comprehension.
5. **Non-verbal Delivery** - Maintain eye contact with the audience, use hand and facial gestures that are meaningful and clear, and walk and move with purpose.
6. **Appearance** - Wear clothing that does not distract the listener from the topic of the speech (loud colors/patterns, distracting logos, etc.), wear clothing that is clean, neat, and would gain the respect of an audience from a diverse demographic, and avoid any items that encumber movement or hide expressivity of the eyes and face. Faculty were instructed that they should not penalize students for wearing articles of clothing that conform to religious tenets.
7. **Supporting Material** - Provide explanations, evidence (statistics, quotes and examples) and descriptions that strongly supported the central idea and main points of the presentation, including attribution in the form of citations/sources of information), and help the audience understand concepts and information in their complexity and fullness.
8. **Visual Aids (if applicable)** - Impactful and strongly connected to, and supportive of their points without distracting the audience.

*Oral Communication* takes many forms. This assessment instrument for the College’s assessment was designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. This rubric is most appropriate for presentations of sufficient length such that a central idea was conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials, and included a purposeful organizational structure.
ESTABLISHING VALIDITY

During the spring 2013 semester, faculty involved in the pilot assessment of Oral Communication met as a group within a larger college-wide Content Validity meeting that was scheduled to discuss the assignments that were developed for the college-wide assessments. The Content Validity meeting was facilitated by AIR staff, and required formal preparation by faculty prior to the meeting. This advanced preparation was important as it provided faculty with an opportunity to document the assignment that would be proposed for the assessment of the general education competency with the City Tech Modified version of the AAC&U VALUE rubric (see Appendix A for the rubrics and Content Validity materials). The Content Validity meeting provided an opportunity to obtain peer feedback regarding the assignments developed, prior to finalizing and conducting the assessment, in order to ensure proper alignment with the assignment and the rubric, thereby ensuring content validity. Overall, faculty noted that the Content Validity meeting was helpful in their understanding of the importance of the assessment process, and also reported rich interactions with colleagues from outside of their department regarding City Tech’s General Education. However, as mentioned previously, under the guidance of the Oral Communication expertise from the Humanities department, the rubric was significantly modified for the full-scale data collection that occurred during the spring 2016 semester.

For subsequent data collection cycles, faculty are instructed to utilize the General Education Assessment Workbook and provide the Content Validity documentation to ensure the assignment is appropriate for the assessment. Faculty are also asked to submit their assignments to their respective assessment liaison and save a copy on the College’s designated S-drive where assessment documentation is maintained.

ESTABLISHING RELIABILITY

We have found that inter-rater reliability meetings provide an excellent forum for in-depth conversation among the faculty about student achievement throughout the college. The Humanities Department scheduled a meeting to assess inter-rater reliability and invited faculty who participated in the full-scale assessment. Videotaped student presentations were made available. After viewing each presentation, participants scored the student presentations using the City Tech Oral Communication rubric. In inter-rater reliability working groups throughout the College, we have found that inter-rater reliability coefficients vary from moderate to high. The inter-rater reliability for Oral Communication was notably high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$).

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment of general education is currently conducted on a three-year cycle. As described above, the College undertook a major change in 2013 when the new General Education and CUNY Pathways were introduced. Courses from the three Schools were sampled in a manner to provide generalizable results to the City Tech population of students.
SSESSMENT RESULTS 2016

Courses from the general education common and flexible core, as well as courses from the School of Professional Studies and the School of Technology and Design were sampled in a manner that would provide generalizable results to the City Tech population of students. The sample of students assessed for the data collection consisted of 749 students from throughout the College representing programs within the Architectural Technology, Biological Sciences, Business, Career and Technology Teacher Education, Chemistry, Communication Design, Computer Engineering Technology, Computer Systems Technology, Construction Management & Civil Engineering Technology, Dental Hygiene, Electrical & Telecommunications Engineering Technology, Entertainment Technology, Environmental Control Technology, Health and Human Services, Hospitality Management, Law and Paralegal Studies, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Nursing, Radiologic Technology and Medical Imaging, Restorative Dentistry, and Vision Care Technology departments.

Overall, City Tech students met the faculty target of proficiency with an aggregate average of 80% of the students meeting or exceeding faculty criteria across all performance indicators. The results for individual performance indicators are presented in Figure 1.
When examining the individual performance indicators, students met or exceeded faculty criteria for success for:

- **Appearance**, (89%),
- **Central Idea** (87%),
- **Language** (79%),
- **Non-verbal Delivery** (79%),
- **Organizational Structure** (78%),
- **Verbal Delivery** (77%), and
- **Visual Aids (if applicable)** (79%).

Only one measure failed to meet the 70% target: **Supporting Evidence** (69%).

**EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES 2016-PRESENT**

The results of the full-scale data collection were shared with senior administrators and faculty in order to consider the need for *Improvement Planning and Implementation* of the Continuous Improvement Model. The administration was satisfied with the progress of the City Tech students in this area. However, best practices are maintained on the OpenLab as a resource for faculty that need assistance. Launched in 2015, **L4: Living Lab Learning Library**, is a faculty resource hosted on City Tech’s OpenLab. It serves as a virtual resource exchange of the innovative teaching practices. As an open site, L4 connects faculty from all departments, programs and disciplines at City Tech and beyond, and it offers a platform for sharing their unique and creative projects and assignments. Various student activities, ranging from short in-class or homework assignments to semester-long projects, are categorized in multiple ways, including City Tech’s Institutional/General Education learning outcomes (such as Oral Communication skills) and High Impact Educational Practices (Kuh 2008). This allows visitors to search for specific assignments or projects to achieve their goals and gain insight into strategies that are effective for improving student outcomes.

L4 assists educators to enhance their knowledge of the best assessment practices by connecting them to the City Tech’s Office of Assessment and Institutional Research as well as resources available at the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). It is noteworthy to mention that City Tech’s assessment methods, as reflected in *Enhancing Assessment in Higher Education: Putting Psychometrics to Work* (Cumming and Miller, 2017) has been endorsed by the AAC&U, the Association of Institutional Research, and the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education and highlighted as a best practice by NILOA.
INDIRECT MEASURES AND RESULTS

While the direct assessment results provide the College with the opportunity to observe students’ knowledge, skills and values with respect to general education competencies, the indirect measures also provide an important source of information for faculty and administrators.

The College administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on a three-year cycle. This survey is considered an international “flagship” due to its widespread use. The NSSE was initiated more than two decades ago, with the purpose of inter-institutional comparison for institutional improvement. The current version of the NSSE addresses Oral Communication. The most recent City Tech data collection (spring 2015 semester) indicated that City Tech students were given more course presentation opportunities than students who 1) attended a public college in the Mid East region, 2) students who attended a college within the same Carnegie Classification, and 3) students in the overall NSSE national sample (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Average Frequency of Course Presentations
1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often and 4=Very Often

- City Tech
- Mid Eastern Public Colleges
- Carnegie Classification
- NSSE National Sample

Freshmen: 2.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.3
Seniors: 2.9, 2.7, 2.7, 2.7
The College also administers a survey to its alumni on a three-year cycle. According to the respondents from the 2016 survey administration, more than 95% of the alumni reported that City Tech prepared them to communicate effectively (orally), with 64% reporting preparation as “more than adequate” or very good. The detailed responses are presented in Figure 3. Although this data is not a direct measure of student learning for the current student population, monitoring the effect of preparedness for the workforce with respect to critical general education competencies provides us with useful information.

![Figure 3. Percentage of Alumni Reporting the Adequacy of City Tech Preparation for Communicating Effectively (Orally) in the Workforce](image)

More detailed results for the 2015 NSSE and 2016 Alumni survey administrations can be found on the AIR website at http://air.citytech.cuny.edu/survey-services/.

**REASSESSMENT**

The next college-wide assessment for *Oral Communication*, which is currently on a three-year cycle, will occur during the spring 2019 semester. At that time, there will be another formal review of the assessment instrument’s validity, reliability and fairness.
REFERENCES


Appendix A
**ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC**

**Definition**
Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Capstone 4</th>
<th>Milestones 3</th>
<th>Benchmark 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Language | Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. |

| Delivery | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident. | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable. | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative. |

| Supporting Material | A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. |

| Central Message | Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported). | Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. | Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable. | Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation. |
Assignment Worksheet for Oral Communication

Name: ___________________________ Department: ___________________________

1. Please describe the assignment you plan to use with the General Education assessment.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. Please review the assignment and verify the assignment addresses the performance criteria by checking the box on the right.

   1. Organization ☐
   2. Language ☐
   3. Delivery ☐
   4. Supporting Material ☐
   5. Central Message ☐
Content Validity for Oral Communication

Reviewer Name: ______________________ Reviewer Department: ___________________________

Department Assignment Sample: _________________________________________________________

Instructions: Please read over your assignment carefully and familiarize yourself with the City Tech Oral Communication Rubric. Please document how the assignment (and instructions) will cover each of the following Performance Criteria:

Organization

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Language

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Delivery

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Supporting Material

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

Central Message

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
### Oral Communication Rubric (City Tech V2)
(Modified from AAC&U VALUE Rubric)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEFINITIONS OF TERMS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central idea</td>
<td>Facile or of little value to audience.</td>
<td>Mentioned in introduction and somewhat appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Stated in introduction and useful and appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Clearly stated, memorable, and compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Not apparent. The progression of ideas is difficult to follow.</td>
<td>Somewhat coherent, but contains a number of digressions or ambiguities.</td>
<td>Clearly present, with some digressions or ambiguities.</td>
<td>Effective and logical. The progression of ideas is easy to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Not appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>Generally appropriate to the audience.</td>
<td>Appropriate and effective to the audience.</td>
<td>Appropriate, effective, and compelling to the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Materials</td>
<td>Not incorporated and/or cited.</td>
<td>Only occasionally used and/or cited, may not be credible.</td>
<td>Sufficient and credible. Citations are generally provided.</td>
<td>Highly effective. Sources are consistently credible and compelling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions for City Tech Oral Communication

Please adhere to the following guidelines carefully.

1. Central idea. In the best case (deserving a “4” on the rubric), the central idea of a presentation should be
   a. clearly articulated in the introduction and conclusion of the speech;
   b. appropriate for the specific audience and speech setting; and
   c. engaging, compelling, valuable, interesting, and/or informative to the audience.

2. Organization. Student should score a “4” if they include
   a. clearly articulated and delineated introduction, main points, and conclusion; and
   b. main points that are arranged logically and coherently, following a single principle of organization (time, space, theme, development, etc.)

3. Language. The styles and grammars of oral communication are different than those used in formal writing. With this in mind, a student should score a “4” on the rubric if the language of the presentation is
   a. easily understood;
   b. engaging (interesting, compelling, descriptive);
   c. appropriate for the specific audience (no unfamiliar terms, fillers, or slang); and
   d. ethical (not culturally insensitive, slanderous, inflammatory or offensive language).

4. Verbal communication. Students should not be evaluated on the basis of the presence of a dialect or accent, but only if a dialect or accent interferes with comprehension. In the best cases, students should exhibit
   a. clear articulation (not mumbling);
   b. strong volume (audible to the entire audience); and
   c. correct pronunciation of words.

5. Non-verbal communication. In the best cases, students should
   a. maintain eye contact with the audience approximately 75% of the time;
   b. use hand and facial gestures that are meaningful and clear; and
   c. walk and move with purpose (avoid fidgeting and distracting movements).

6. Appearance. In the best cases, students should
   a. wear clothing that does not distract the listener from the topic of the speech (loud colors/patterns, distracting logos, etc.);
   b. wear clothing that is clean, neat, and would gain the respect of an audience from a diverse demographic;
   c. avoid hats, coats, and other accouterments that encumber movement or hide expressivity of the eyes and face.

7. Supporting material. In the best cases, students should provide explanations, evidence (statistics, quotes and examples) and descriptions that
   a. strongly support the central idea and main points of the presentation;
   b. include attribution in the form of citations (source information); and
   c. help the audience understand concepts and information in their complexity and fullness.

8. Visual aids. The most effective use of visual aids should
   a. be impactful (use fonts, colors, and other design elements that are simple and uncluttered); and
   b. strongly connect to, and support, the speaker’s points without distracting from the main points of the speech.

---

1 These are not “rules” of behavior, only guiding principles. Speakers who wear articles of clothing that conform to religious tenets should not be penalized for their choices.
Assignment Worksheet for Oral Communication V2

Name: ______________________________ Department: _____________________________

1. Please describe the assignment you plan to use with the General Education assessment.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. Please review the assignment and verify the assignment addresses the performance criteria by checking the box on the right.

1. Central Idea
2. Organizational Structure
3. Language
4. Verbal Delivery
5. Non-verbal Delivery
6. Appearance
7. Supporting Materials
8. Visual Aids (if applicable)
Content Validity for Oral Communication V2

Reviewer Name: ______________________ Reviewer Department: ___________________________

Department Assignment Sample: __________________________________________________________

Instructions: Please read over your assignment carefully and familiarize yourself with the City Tech Oral Communication Rubric. Please document how the assignment (and instructions) will cover each of the following Performance Criteria:

Central Idea

_________________________________________________________________________________

Organizational Structure

_________________________________________________________________________________

Language

_________________________________________________________________________________

Verbal Delivery

_________________________________________________________________________________

Non-verbal Delivery

_________________________________________________________________________________

Appearance

_________________________________________________________________________________

Supporting Materials

_________________________________________________________________________________

Visual Aids (if applicable)

_________________________________________________________________________________