

Introduction

The Communication Module assessment program has been successfully piloted during the past year. During this time course goals and competencies were identified, measures for those goals were identified and created and multimedia content was created. In addition, an on-line assessment web page was created. This web page allows students in the courses to be part of the assessment process outside class time. The data provided by the students is captured in a Microsoft Access database, which was developed along with the web site for these courses. The data can be analyzed in Access or SPSS.

Results

Internal Reliability. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for all of the measures employed during the assessment process. The PRCA/Communicative Anxiety measure yielded an overall reliability coefficient of .78 with 109 respondents. The four individual subscales yielded reliability coefficients as follows (Group = .88; Meeting = .87; Interpersonal, .84 & Public Speaking = .86) with totals of 109 subjects.

The self-perceived communicative competence scale yielded Cronbach's an overall alpha reliability coefficient of .871 with 107 respondents. The individual subscales of the self-perceived competency measure were also higher than the .70 Cronbach's alpha typically used as a litmus test for internal reliability. The individual scales yielded reliability coefficients were as follows (Speak to a Group = .84; Speak in a Meeting = .81; Competence in Interviewing = .80; Work in a Small Group = .79) (n = 109 Ss).

The listening skills inventory scale demonstrated sufficient internal reliability to be employed as a measure of listening effectiveness. Calculations of Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of .743 with 369 subjects.

Comparison PRCA. Previous assessment efforts have examined student PRCA scores and this was continued during the AY 2001-2002. Using the scoring procedures recommended by McCroskey (1982), 15.9% of the students reported being somewhat anxious during interpersonal interaction, 21.7% were anxious during group interaction, 26.5% reported being anxious communicating during a meeting, and 48.2% were anxious during public speaking opportunities. Group means are reported in the table below.

PRCA: Communication Anxiety Pilot Data Spring 2002 Semester

		GROUP	MEET	INTERP	SPEAK	PRCATOT
N	Valid	115	113	113	112	109
	Missing	0	2	2	3	6
Mean		14.0348	14.9204	13.9115	17.7589	60.3394
Median		13.0000	14.0000	14.0000	17.0000	60.0000
Mode		12.00	12.00	12.00	16.00	54.00 ^a
Std. Deviation		4.27750	4.36328	3.75014	4.90127	14.33412
Range		22.00	21.00	17.00	22.00	74.00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

This is consistent with the data gathered over the past several years in the Communication 101 course. As you can see in the table below, the average anxiety scores for groups, meetings, interpersonal and public speaking are nearly identical.

AY 98 - 99 CMM 101 PRCA Anxiety Scores

		GROUP	MEET	INTERP	SPEAK	PRCATOT
N	Valid	2397	2393	2389	2380	2340
	Missing	17	21	25	34	74
Mean		13.6300	14.8993	13.5676	17.6723	59.7795
Median		13.0000	14.0000	13.0000	18.0000	59.0000
Mode		12.00	12.00	12.00	18.00	60.00
Std. Deviation		4.24995	4.67697	4.08629	5.15005	15.21756
Range		24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	95.00

Comparison LSI. During the 1999 assessment, the Listening Skills Inventory measure was used. The mean listening skill score on the pretest was 34.9 (n = 240) and the mean on the post-test was 33.9 (n = 128). Differences in these scores were not significant. Differences in the pretest and posttest LSI scores during the 2001-2002 assessment were not observed (n = 115). Mean LSI scores for the pretest was 33.15 and the mean for the posttest was 33.0. Differences between the 1999 and the 2001 groups were not observed.

Comparisons of the self-perceived competency scales, the information search and evaluation components and content specific areas were not possible because they were not gathered in both years.

Instruction

The assessment results have trickled down into the training of the teaching assistants and instructors. More emphasis has been placed on the information search and evaluation component of the course. Students did not score highly on the information search and evaluation instruments in this pilot. In addition, efforts have been made to encourage the instructors to spend more time talking about listening in their courses. Listening seems to be a forgotten element in many classes.

Summary

The module program appears to be about as effective as the more traditional 16 week course in terms of reducing speech anxiety. Student listening effectiveness does not appear to have been impacted significantly in either course format. The modules do appear to increase the complexity of student scheduling. Examination of course satisfaction is an important element of future assessments. In addition, the pilot identified many places measures could be dramatically reduced. A revision of the Communication Module website is under way.

Future Improvements on Assessment

1. **Multimedia Content Development.** The addition of streaming video on the assessment website. Rather than use transcripts of student speeches, audio/video files will stream the speeches for students to evaluate during the assessment.
2. **Measurement Reduction.** The number of items for the scales employed on the website will be dramatically reduced. This will increase student participation and completion of the assignments with minimal loss of measurement precision.
3. **Instruction Changes.** Students will be required to turn in a video or an audio tape of their speech before they give the speech to the class. They will be allowed to do the speech as many times as they want to get it “right.” This will enhance the in class speeches by requiring significant practice in giving the speech and evaluating the quality of their own speech.
4. **Information Search and Evaluation.** Emphasize the importance of information search and evaluation as well as message adaptation during COM 504 and part time instructor meetings.
5. **Com 504** has been changed from no credit to 1 credit course for all teaching assistants.