Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students

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Basic and Advanced Skills

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Overview

This document summarizes two sets of competencies for college students, as developed by various communication scholars, federal government agencies, and research centers. The competencies primarily represent speaking and

listening skills that could help undergraduates communicate more effectively at school, in the workplace, and in society. The two sets of competencies and a brief explanation of each set are presented first. The reader also is directed to the end of the document for a description of how the two sets of competencies were separately developed. The competencies have been edited for consistency of language and formatting across the two sets.

The competencies presented here primarily relate to speaking and listening skills in a variety of situations. Speaking and listening do comprise much of what is often referred to as communication competence. However, other communication skills and behaviors are also important to educational and career success. For example, competent communicators need to be able to discern and understand values and ethics, develop cultural awareness and sensitivity to diversity, receive and understand mediated messages, seek and send information via computerized media, and think critically. These very important skills were not part of the projects described here. However, they are essential to communication competence. Such skills should be included in any communication education program for a college student and in any basic course in communication.

The two sets of competencies in this document represent appropriate expectations for speaking and listening skills, however communication competence is even more multi-faceted and complex. It includes knowledge (what a student should know), motivation (how a student should feel about communicating), and skills (what a student should be able to do). The expectations of students summarized in this document are mostly about what a student should be able to do, i.e., skills.

The first set of competencies (Table 1) addresses communication skills outcomes that are often required by accrediting agencies. Because these competencies are usually met through a general education requirement, this list could be read as expected communication outcomes for undergraduate general education. They could also be used to formulate some of the outcome statements for students completing an undergraduate communication course (public speaking, hybrid, or interpersonal). Work on these competencies began with an NCA Task Force on Sophomore Level Exit Competencies, which was the direct result of the association's 1982 El Pomar Conference. This set of competencies was developed by that NCA task force, then reviewed by NCA's Educational Policies Board, Publications Board, and Administrative Committee. Those competencies are distributed in more detail in another NCA publication, *Communication is Life* (Quianthy, 1990).

The second set of competencies (Tables 2,3,4) describes possible expectations for students upon graduation. This set of competencies includes both basic and advanced communication skills. These competencies were identified through projects of NCA's Committee on Assessment and Testing and other national research projects (Jones, 1994, 1995a), where over 600 faculty, employers, and

policy makers evaluated the importance of specific skills. These projects resulted in the lists of competencies deemed essential by researchers, educators, employers, and government policy makers. This set of competencies, developed by NCA members, has been reviewed by NCA's Educational Policies Board and a description of how the competencies were developed is published in *New Directions for Higher Education* (Jones, 1996).

The publication by NCA of these two sets of competencies does not constitute the association's endorsement of them as the only or primary expectations for communication skills for college students. NCA publishes multiple products of value to NCA members, not all of which are associationally endorsed.

Development of the Competencies: A Brief History

Developing the Expected Student Outcomes for Speaking and Listening for the Basic Communication Course and General Education.

In the late 1970s, NCA (then SCA, the Speech Communication Association) developed a Task Force on Assessment and Testing to examine current projects and efforts by NCA members to assess basic skills of both high school and college students. This task force conducted research studies and generated products such as a compilation of assessment instruments, and agreed-upon lists of speaking and listening skills for high school graduates, skills necessary for elementary students, and skills businesses expected their new employees to have. The task force grew in size and became the Committee on Assessment and Testing in the 1980s. Interest remained on K-12, college, and college graduate assessment and skills.

Another group, the NCA Task Force on Sophomore Exit Level Competencies, developed a list of speaking and listening competencies for college sophomores. This group was given direction as a result of the 1982 NCA El Pomar Conference. After developing the competencies, they were reviewed by over 500 university, college, and community college educators. They were then given to a group of selected participants who met at the 1987 NCA Wingspread Conference. This group expanded the competencies, which were then published in *Communication Is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies* (Quianthy, 1990). These competencies are considered essential or basic skills for college sophomores at the end of their general education requirements.

Developing the Expectations for Speaking and Listening for College Graduates

In 1990, the state governors and President of the United States declared that "by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (U.S. Department of Education,

1991). One objective of this goal identified the importance of communication: "The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially." [A comprehensive summary of the development of these goals can be found in Rosenbaum, 1994.]

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) held study design workshops--composed of policy makers, college faculty, content specialists, and measurement experts--to determine how best to implement such an objective. In the first year, John Daly and Rebecca Rubin represented the communication discipline at these NCES workshops. Also participating was Barbara Lieb of the Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, who made sure that the next workshop would have increased participation by this discipline, once the decision was made to go forward with such a national assessment program (Corrallo & Fischer, 1992).

In 1992, John Daly wrote one of the position papers for the second NCES workshop, "Assessing Speaking and Listening: Preliminary Considerations for a National Assessment" (see Greenwood, 1994). Daly reviewed basic concerns and issues in assessment and identified important communication skills and criteria. Rebecca Rubin, Gustav Friedrich, Don Lumsden, and Andrew Wolvin were invited by NCES to participate in discussions that were supposed to result in a list of indisputable competencies in speaking and listening. They used Daly's proposed categories--Informing, Persuading, and Relating--to structure basic speaking and listening skills for college students. Skills that had previously been identified in the communication literature and in NCA Committee on Assessment and Testing projects were used to inform the categories. Also attending this session was Elizabeth Jones from the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (NCTLA), who was later charged with conducting a study to refine lists of essential skills further.

Consequently, Elizabeth Jones (at NCTLA) spearheaded an effort to identify essential communication skills and determine if there was a consensus or agreement about the importance of specific competencies among college faculty, employers who hire college graduates, and policy makers who represent accrediting associations or state-level higher education coordinating boards (Corrallo, 1994; Jones, 1994). An extensive literature review provided the foundation for the development of a goals inventory. Numerous frameworks and research studies were reviewed. Samples of key skills under each major component of the communication process were included in the inventory and reflected those particular skills most frequently cited by different authors. An advisory board and focus groups of content specialists reviewed draft versions of these instruments. Ultimately, through an iterative survey process, over 600 faculty, employers, and policy makers rated the importance of specific speech communication and listening skills. These individuals agreed about the importance of 87 percent of the specific skills.

Concurrently, NCA sponsored a summer conference on assessment, which helped integrate government, NCTLA, and NCA-based conclusions (Morreale & Brooks, 1994). In addition, an entire program on the NCTLA report was presented at the NCA convention in 1995. On that program, Jones (1995b) explained the study design and results and Lieb, Daly, Rubin, Friedrich, and Wolvin responded and discussed the implications. At the same convention, Morreale (1995) and Rubin (1995) participated in a roundtable discussion of the undergraduate canon. Their papers focused on the skills issues already explicated by the NCTLA project.

It is from all of these efforts that the sets of basic and advanced skills contained in this document have evolved. Some of the skills are very basic (e.g., structure messages with introductions, main points, useful transitions, and conclusions), whereas others are more advanced. The rationale for this work and some of the findings were recently published in Jones's (1996), *Preparing Competent College Graduates: Setting New and Higher Expectations for Student Learning.* The detailed lists of skills were not included in that volume; however, interested readers are urged to examine the works that were used to prepare the present document.

Part One

Expected Student Outcomes for Speaking and Listening:

Basic Communication Course and General Education

The following student outcomes represent some of the expectations for students taking a basic communication course and/or participating in the general education requirements of a school. Basic course or general education students need speaking and listening skills that will help them succeed in future courses and on the job. They need to be able to construct and deliver messages and listen with literal and critical comprehension. The basic course can provide knowledge of effective communication techniques, an arena for developing and practicing skills, and positive feelings about communicating in the future. Instructors and administrators could use some or all of the expected student outcomes to inform the design of a basic communication course. Academic institutions could use some or all of the outcomes to describe campus expectations for students in regard to the general education curriculum (Rosenbaum, 1994).

Note: The content of this table was originally published by NCA in 1990 as *Communication Is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies.* **Some definitions have been updated from the original publication and editing changes have been made to achieve more consistency among the tables contained in this document.**
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Table 1: Expected Student Outcomes for Speaking and Listening: Basic Communication Course and General Education

I. SPEAKING COMPETENCIES   (Quianthy, 1990)

Speaking is the process of transmitting ideas and information orally in a variety of situations. Effective oral communication involves generating messages and delivering them with attention to vocal variety, articulation, and nonverbal signals.

In order to be a COMPETENT SPEAKER, a person must be able to compose a message and provide ideas and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience. Specifically, the competent speaker should exhibit the following competencies by demonstrating the abilities included under each statement.

A. DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF ORAL DISCOURSE.

1. Identify the various purposes for discourse.
2. Identify the similarities and differences among various purposes.
3. Understand that different contexts require differing purposes.
4. Generate a specific purpose relevant to the context when given a general purpose.

B. CHOOSE A TOPIC AND RESTRICT IT ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE AND THE AUDIENCE.

1. Identify a subject that is relevant to the speaker's role, knowledge, concerns, and interests.
2. Narrow the topic adapting it to the purpose and time constraints for communicating.
3. Adapt the treatment of the topic to the context for communication.

C. FULFILL THE PURPOSE OF ORAL DISCOURSE BY:

Formulating a thesis statement.

1. Use a thesis as a planning tool.
2. Summarize the central message in a manner consistent with the purpose.

Providing adequate support material.

1. Demonstrate awareness of available types of support.
2. Locate appropriate support materials.
3. Select appropriate support based on the topic, audience, setting, and purpose.

Selecting a suitable organizational pattern.

1. Demonstrate awareness of alternative organizational patterns.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the functions of organizational patterns including:

    a. clarification of information
    b. facilitation of listener comprehension
    c. attitude change
    d. relational interaction.

1. Select organizational patterns that are appropriate to the topic, audience, context, and purpose.

Demonstrating careful choice of words.

1. Demonstrate understanding of the power of language.
2. Select words that are appropriate to the topic, audience, purpose, context, and speaker.
3. Use word choice in order to express ideas clearly, to create and maintain interest, and to enhance the speaker's credibility.
4. Select words that avoid sexism, racism, and other forms of prejudice.

Providing effective transitions.

1. Demonstrate understanding of the types and functions of transitions.
2. Use transitions to:

    a. establish connectedness
    b. signal movement from one idea to another
    c. clarify relationships among ideas

The COMPETENT SPEAKER must also be able to transmit the message by using delivery skills suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience. Specifically, the competent speaker should exhibit the following competencies by demonstrating the abilities included under each statement.

A. EMPLOY VOCAL VARIETY IN RATE, PITCH, AND INTENSITY.

1. Use vocal variety to heighten and maintain interest.
2. Use a rate that is suitable to the message, occasion, and receiver.
3. Use pitch (within the speaker's optimum range) to clarify and to emphasize.
4. Use intensity appropriate for the message and audible to the audience.

B. ARTICULATE CLEARLY.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the sounds of the American English language.

2. Use the sounds of the American English language.

C. EMPLOY LANGUAGE APPROPRIATE TO THE DESIGNATED AUDIENCE.

1. Employ language that enhances the speaker's credibility, promotes the purpose, and the receiver's understanding.
2. Demonstrate that the use of technical vocabularies, slang, idiomatic language, and regionalisms may facilitate understanding when communicating with others who share meanings for those terms, but can hinder understanding in those situations where meanings are not shared.
3. Use standard pronunciation.
4. Use standard grammar.
5. Use language at the appropriate level of abstraction or generality.

D. DEMONSTRATE NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR THAT SUPPORTS THE VERBAL MESSAGE.

1. Use appropriate paralanguage (extraverbal elements of voice such as emphasis, pause, tone, etc.) that
2. achieves congruence and enhances the verbal intent.
3. Use appropriate kinesic elements (posture, gesture, and facial expression) that achieve congruence and enhance the verbal intent.
4. Use appropriate proxemic elements (interpersonal distance and spatial arrangement) that
5. achieve congruence and enhance the verbal intent.
6. Use appropriate clothing and ornamentation that achieve congruence and enhance the verbal intent.

The COMPETENT SPEAKER must also be able to transmit messages using interpersonal skills suitable to the context and the audience. Specifically, the competent speaker should exhibit interpersonal competence by demonstrating the following abilities.

1. Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills for various contexts.
2. Display self-awareness as a communicator.
3. Select from a repertoire of interpersonal skills those strategies that enhance relationships.
4. Use a conversational mode through self-presentation and response to feedback.

II. LISTENING COMPETENCIES

Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and or nonverbal messages. People listen in order to comprehend information, critique and evaluate a message, show empathy for the feelings

expressed by others, or appreciate a performance. Effective listening includes both literal and critical comprehension of ideas and information transmitted in oral language

In order to be a COMPETENT LISTENER, a person must be able to listen with literal comprehension. Specifically, the competent listener should be able to exhibit the following competencies by demonstrating the abilities included under each statement.

A. RECOGNIZE MAIN IDEAS.

1. Distinguish ideas fundamental to the thesis from material that supports those ideas.
2. Identify transitional, organizational, and nonverbal cues that direct the listener to the main ideas.
3. Identify the main ideas in structured and unstructured discourse.

B. IDENTIFY SUPPORTING DETAILS.

1. Identify supporting details in spoken messages.
2. Distinguish between those ideas that support the main ideas and those that do not.
3. Determine whether the number of supporting details adequately develops each main idea.

C. RECOGNIZE EXPLICIT RELATIONSHIPS AMONG IDEAS.

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the types of organizational or logical relationships.
2. Identify transitions that suggest relationships.
3. Determine whether the asserted relationship exists.

D. RECALL BASIC IDEAS AND DETAILS.

1. Determine the goal for listening.
2. State the basic cognitive and affective contents, after listening.

The COMPETENT LISTENER must also listen with critical comprehension. Specifically, the competent listener should exhibit the following competencies by demonstrating the abilities included under each statement.

A. ATTEND WITH AN OPEN MIND.

1. Demonstrate an awareness of personal, ideological, and emotional biases.
2. Demonstrate awareness that each person has a unique perspective.
3. Demonstrate awareness that one's knowledge, experience, and emotions affect listening.
4. Use verbal and nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate willingness to listen to messages when variables such as setting, speaker, or topic may not be conducive to listening.

B. PERCEIVE THE SPEAKER'S PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION.

1. Identify the speaker's purpose.
2. Identify the organization of the speaker's ideas and information.

C. DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN STATEMENTS OF FACT AND STATEMENTS OF OPINION.

1. Distinguish between assertions that are verifiable and those that are not.

D. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN EMOTIONAL AND LOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

1. Demonstrate an understanding that arguments have both emotional and logical dimensions.
2. Identify the logical characteristics of an argument.
3. Identify the emotional characteristics of an argument.
4. Identify whether the argument is predominantly emotional or logical.

E. DETECT BIAS AND PREJUDICE.

1. Identify instances of bias and prejudice in a spoken message.
2. Specify how bias and prejudice may affect the impact of a spoken message.

F. RECOGNIZE THE SPEAKER'S ATTITUDE.

1. Identify the direction, intensity, and salience of the speaker's attitude as reflected by the verbal messages.
2. Identify the direction, intensity, and salience of the speaker's attitude as reflected by the nonverbal messages.

G. SYNTHESIZE AND EVALUATE BY DRAWING LOGICAL INFERENCES AND CONCLUSIONS.

1. Draw relationships between prior knowledge and the information provided by the speaker.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of inference.
3. Identify the types of verbal and nonverbal information.
4. Draw valid inferences from the information.
5. Identify the information as evidence to support views.
6. Assess the acceptability of evidence.
7. Identify patterns of reasoning and judge the validity of arguments.
8. Analyze the information and inferences in order to draw conclusions.

H. RECALL THE IMPLICATIONS AND ARGUMENTS.

1. Identify the arguments used to justify the speaker's position.
2. State both the overt and implied arguments.
3. Specify the implications of these arguments for the speaker, audience, and society at large.

I. RECOGNIZE DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE SPEAKER'S VERBAL AND NONVERBAL MESSAGES.

1. Identify when the nonverbal signals contradict the verbal message.
2. Identify when the nonverbal signals understate or exaggerate the verbal message.
3. Identify when the nonverbal message is irrelevant to the verbal message.

J. EMPLOY ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES WHEN APPROPRIATE.

1. Identify the cognitive and affective dimensions of a message.
2. Demonstrate comprehension by formulating questions that clarify or qualify the speaker's content and affective intent.
3. Demonstrate comprehension by paraphrasing the speaker's message.

Part Two

Expectations for Speaking and Listening for College Graduates

Basic skills are minimal expectations necessary for effective functioning in society and in the workplace. These skills must result in effective outcomes and be seen as appropriate (a) by the audience, (b) in the context enacted, and (c) for the purpose specified.

The first list of essential communication skills (Table 2) are for graduates to use in various communication contexts. Part I of this list contains general basic skills related to developing and sending messages (A, B). It includes skills for adapting messages to a situation, supporting messages, and types of messages (C,D, and E). Part II of the basic skills list relates to communicating interpersonally (one-on-one) and in small groups. Part III relates to encoding a message, and Part IV relates to evaluating oral messages.

The second list of basic communication skills relate to three different purposes or reasons for communicating (Table 3): to persuade, to inform, and to relate. Daly (1994) has suggested that communication has these three general goals or purposes: persuading, informing, and relating. College graduates should be able to construct persuasive messages adapted to the audience, present the messages, and achieve their goals. They should be able to present and solicit information and understand when they're understood. And they should be able to develop healthy interpersonal relations with others, managing conflicts that might arise along the way. Part I of this list describes general skills that would be valuable when persuading, informing, or relating. The skills specific to each of the three purposes are described.

The basic skills might be helpful for those interested in designing outcomes assessment programs for college graduates. Instructors of advanced communication courses might consider including some or all of these expected basic skills in their instructional plans. Capstone course instructors might assess students in regard to these skills and students might include the results in their personal portfolios. Thus the institution would be assured of the students' achievement of the basic skills and students would be able to clearly communicate their abilities to prospective employers (Rosenbaum, 1994).

Advanced skills are more than just knowing, doing, or feeling (Rubin & Morreale, 1996). They are blends of knowledge, skill, and attitude; they require greater levels of behavioral flexibility/adaptability. For instance, a basic skill such as "Identify communication goals" at an advanced level becomes "Manage multiple communication goals." This advanced skill requires both identification of the goals and the behavioral component of managing the goals, both of which require adaptability. Such advanced skills were identified by the survey of faculty, employers, and policy makers (Jones, 1994). The following list of advanced skills represents what might be expected of a college graduate in a variety of different communication situations. Advanced skills specifically for public speaking and for interpersonal (one-on-one) communication are also included.

Advanced skills also require reasoning and audience analysis. Examples of advanced skills include being able to understand people from other cultures, organizations, or groups, and adapting messages to the demands of the situation or context (Jones, 1994). Both require greater emphasis on creating appropriate and effective messages, two main components of competence. College graduates also need to refine their listening skills; they need to identify important issues or problems, draw conclusions, and understand others to manage conflict better and empathize with their colleagues. Jones concluded that "advanced skills in both writing and speech communication require the development of reasoning skills" (p. 38). Speech communication educators have long been teaching reasoning skills because they realized that even basic communication skills require sound reasoning.

The advanced skills (Table 4) could be used to describe expectations for graduates from any academic discipline. So each discipline could examine these skills and determine applications for their graduates. Faculty and alumni groups could identify examples of how the skills could be utilized by their graduates. In capstone courses and before graduation, students' skills could be assessed through observation and testing. The department and the institution could use the assessment results to inform their accountability and program review efforts (Rosenbaum, 1994). Students could use the results in their personal portfolios to inform potential employers of their advanced communication skills.

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Table 2: Essential Communication Skills (Jones, 1994)

College graduates should be able to:

I. BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A. GENERAL

1. state ideas clearly.

2. be aware of language indicating bias on gender, age, ethnic, or sexual/affectional orientation.

3. communicate ethically.

4. accept responsibility for their own communication behavior.

5. recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.

6. communicate candidly (in an open and direct manner).

B. MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION

1. structure a message for effectiveness with an introduction, main points, useful transitions, and a conclusion.

2. choose appropriate and effective organizing methods for message.

3. identify their communication goals.

4. use summary statement(s) in appropriate contexts.

5. outline the key points and sub-points of their spoken message.

6. accomplish their communication goals.

7. select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating.

II. SPEECH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A. CONTEXT AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

1. adapt to changes in audience characteristics.

2. choose and narrow a topic as appropriate according to the occasion.

3. choose and broaden a topic according to the needs of the audience.

B. MESSAGE SUPPORT

1. recognize and be able to use basic reasoning.

2. support arguments with relevant and adequate evidence.

3. identify facts, issues, and problems relevant to the topic.

4. research effectively information required for message preparation.

5. demonstrate credibility.

6. demonstrate competence and comfort with information.

7. state intentions and purposes when appropriate.

C. MESSAGE TYPE

1. develop messages that influence attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

2. describe or express feelings to others when appropriate.

III. INTERPERSONAL AND GROUP COMMUNICATION SKILLS

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

1. recognize when another does not understand their message.

2. identify and manage misunderstandings.

3. recognize when it is inappropriate to speak.

B. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

1. manage conflict.

2. allow others to express different views.

3. effectively assert themselves.

C. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

1. listen attentively to questions and comments from other communicators.

2. ask questions effectively.

3. answer questions concisely and to the point or issue.

4. give concise and accurate directions.

D. CONVERSATION MANAGEMENT

1. be open-minded about another's point of view.

2. convey enthusiasm for topic through delivery.

E. GROUP COMMUNICATION

1. work on collaborative projects as a team.

2. keep group discussions relevant and focused.

IV. COMMUNICATION CODES

1. use pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate to the designated audience.

2. use appropriate vocal behaviors for the message and the audience.

V. ORAL MESSAGE EVALUATION

1. listen attentively.

2. listen with an open mind.

3. distinguish facts from opinions.

4. identify important points when given oral instructions.

5. distinguish main points from supporting details.

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Table 3: Basic Skills for Persuading, Informing, and Relating (Rubin, 1995; Rubin & Morreale, 1996)

College graduates should be able to:

I. GENERAL SKILLS FOR ALL THREE PURPOSES

A. Students can encode clear messages, using appropriate language, articulation, pronunciation, paralinguistic qualities, and organizational patterns.

B. Students can decode messages correctly, understand others' nonverbal cues, critically evaluate messages, and distinguish between various communicative purposes.

C. Specifically, students can:

1. recognize when it is inappropriate to speak.

2. speak clearly and expressively, using appropriate articulation, pronunciation, volume, rate, and intonation.

3. decode verbal and nonverbal cues accurately.

4. be aware of language indicating bias regarding gender, age, ethnicity, or sexual/affectional orientation.

5. detect errors in the communication of others.

6. achieve goals without jeopardizing more important goals in other contexts.

7. assess the communication context and adapt the message to the audience.

8. present their ideas in an organizational pattern that allows others to understand.

9. distinguish between different purposes and goals in communication (persuading, informing, and relating).

10. listen attentively.

11. select and use the most appropriate and effective medium for communication.

12. convey enthusiasm for one's topic.

13. structure a message with an introduction, main points, useful transitions, and a conclusion.

II. PERSUADING SKILLS

A. Students can (a) construct a persuasive message, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context of the situation, (b) present the message, using effective delivery, reasoning, and organizational pattern, and (c) achieve their persuasive goals.

B. Students can tell when someone is trying to persuade them and critically evaluate those attempts to influence.

C. Specifically, students can:

1. defend their positions with evidence and reasoning.

2. use an effective organizational pattern to persuade.

3. adapt the message to the audience and communicative context.

4. provide feedback to someone who is trying to persuade them.

5. distinguish fact from opinion.

6. distinguish between informative and persuasive messages.

7. evaluate critically another's spoken or mediated messages and attempts to influence.

8. identify others' level of receptivity to the message.

9. recognize when others do not agree.

III. INFORMING SKILLS

A. Students can present information, answer questions, give directions, and give assistance clearly and effectively.

B. Students can recognize when others do not understand, understand others' messages, ask questions, and follow directions.

C. Specifically, students can:

1. give information and support it with illustrations and examples.

2. give directions accurately and in order.

3. ask clear questions.

4. ask for information.

5. identify main points, understand what is said, and remember important points in others' messages.

6. answer questions directly and accurately.

7. recognize when others do not understand.

8. summarize messages for others.

9. understand others' messages, follow their ideas, and draw inferences.

10. describe and summarize viewpoints different from their own.

IV. RELATING SKILLS

A. Students can (a) develop, maintain, and nurture interpersonal and small group relationships with others; (b) fulfill their own interpersonal needs; and (c) manage conflict while respecting all interactants' rights.

B. Students can respond to others' attempts to build relationships and reciprocate by self-disclosing, focusing on the other, empathizing, and displaying affinity.

C. Specifically, students can:

1. achieve interpersonal goals (giving/seeking inclusion, affection, and control).

2. identify conflict situations.

3. respect others' rights and stand up for one's own rights.

4. feel and convey empathy to others.

5. build relationships with others.

6. describe others' viewpoints.

7. describe differences in opinion.

8. express their feelings to others when appropriate.

9. perform social rituals (introductions, telephone answering, greetings, farewells).

10. maintain conversations by taking turns, managing the interaction, reciprocal conversation, self-disclosure, and altercentrism.

11. receive affinity (e.g., compliments) from others.

12. work on collaborative projects in teams.

13. keep group discussions relevant and focused.

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Table 4: Advanced Communication Skills (Morreale & Rubin, 1997)

College graduates should be able to:

I. GENERAL SKILLS

1. Identify and adapt to changes in audience characteristics.

2. Incorporate language that captures and maintains audience interest in message.

3. Identify and manage misunderstandings.

4. Demonstrate credibility.

5. Demonstrate competence and comfort with information.

6. Recognize time constraints of a communication situation and know how to operate within them.

7. Manage multiple communication goals effectively.

8. Demonstrate attentiveness through nonverbal and verbal behaviors.

9. Adapt messages to the demands of the situation or context.

II. SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

1. Incorporate information from a variety of sources to support message.

2. Identify and use appropriate statistics to support the message.

3. Use motivational appeals that build on values, expectations, and needs of the audience.

4. Develop messages that influence attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

III. RELATING TO OTHERS

1. Manage and resolve group conflicts effectively.

2. Approach and engage in conversation with new people in new settings with confidence.

3. Negotiate effectively.

4. Allow others to express different views and attempt to understand them.

5. Effectively assert themselves while respecting others' rights.

6. Convey empathy.

7. Understand and value differences in communication styles.

8. Be open-minded about and receptive of another's point of view.

9. Motivate others to participate and work effectively as a team.

10. Understand and implement different methods of building group consensus.

11. Set and manage realistic agendas.

12. Lead meetings effectively.

13. Understand and adapt to people from other cultures, organizations, or groups.

14. Identify important issues or problems, draw conclusions, and understand other group members.

Table 4: Expectations for Speaking and Listening for College Graduates

Advanced Communication Skills (Morreale & Rubin, 1997)

Advanced skills are more than just knowing, doing, or feeling (Rubin & Morreale, 1996). They are blends of knowledge, skill, and attitude; they require greater

levels of behavioral flexibility/adaptability. For instance, a basic skill such as "Identify communication goals" at an advanced level becomes "Manage multiple communication goals." This advanced skill requires both identification of the goals and the behavioral component of managing the goals, both of which require adaptability. Such advanced skills were identified by the survey of faculty, employers, and policy makers (Jones, 1994). The following list of advanced skills represents what might be expected of a college graduate in a variety of different communication situations. Advanced skills specifically for public speaking and for interpersonal (one-on-one) communication are also included.

Advanced skills also require reasoning and audience analysis. Examples of advanced skills include being able to understand people from other cultures, organizations, or groups, and adapting messages to the demands of the situation or context (Jones, 1994). Both require greater emphasis on creating appropriate and effective messages, two main components of competence. College graduates also need to refine their listening skills; they need to identify important issues or problems, draw conclusions, and understand others to manage conflict better and empathize with their colleagues. Jones concluded that "advanced skills in both writing and speech communication require the development of reasoning skills" (p. 38). Speech communication educators have long been teaching reasoning skills because they realized that even basic communication skills require sound reasoning.

The advanced skills could be used to describe expectations for graduates from any academic discipline. So each discipline could examine these skills and determine applications for their graduates. Faculty and alumni groups could identify examples of how the skills could be utilized by their graduates. In capstone courses and before graduation, students' skills could be assessed through observation and testing. The department and the institution could use the assessment results to inform their accountability and program review efforts (Rosenbaum, 1994). Students could use the results in their personal portfolios to inform potential employers of their advanced communication skills.

College graduates should be able to:

I. GENERAL SKILLS

1. Identify and adapt to changes in audience characteristics.

2. Incorporate language that captures and maintains audience interest in message.

3. Identify and manage misunderstandings.

4. Demonstrate credibility.

5. Demonstrate competence and comfort with information.

6. Recognize time constraints of a communication situation and know how to operate within them.

7. Manage multiple communication goals effectively.

8. Demonstrate attentiveness through nonverbal and verbal behaviors.

9. Adapt messages to the demands of the situation or context.

II. SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

1. Incorporate information from a variety of sources to support message.

2. Identify and use appropriate statistics to support the message.

3. Use motivational appeals that build on values, expectations, and needs of the audience.

4. Develop messages that influence attitudes, beliefs, and actions.

III. RELATING TO OTHERS

1. Manage and resolve group conflicts effectively.

2. Approach and engage in conversation with new people in new settings with confidence.

3. Negotiate effectively.

4. Allow others to express different views and attempt to understand them.

5. Effectively assert themselves while respecting others' rights.

6. Convey empathy.

7. Understand and value differences in communication styles.

8. Be open-minded about and receptive of another's point of view.

9. Motivate others to participate and work effectively as a team.

10. Understand and implement different methods of building group consensus.

11. Set and manage realistic agendas.

12. Lead meetings effectively.

13. Understand and adapt to people from other cultures, organizations, or groups.

14. Identify important issues or problems, draw conclusions, and understand other group members.

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