Stevens Institute of Technology

Howe School of Technology Management

**AACSB
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

**Ph.D. in Technology Management**

**LEARNING GOAL # 1**

**Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications.**

**Responsibility: Thomas Lechler & Andrew Stein**

February 2015

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# 1. INTRODUCTION: LEARNING GOAL #1

**Goal: Students can communicate effectively in writing and oral presentations.**

*Objective 1: Students will be able to write effectively.*

*Objective 2: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

A major educational objective of the Howe School education is to ensure that all of our graduates have effective written and oral communications skills.

While many of our students have strong communications skills, other students, especially foreign students, need special training in this area. In the past, all academic programs and individual instructors have made an effort to assess and improve the communications skills of their students. An advantage of the AACSB assessment process is that it helps us take a more organized and uniform approach to achieving this crucial educational objective.

The communications learning goal is assessed using the learning objectives, traits and rubrics as described in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

To support this goal across the university, Stevens has established a Writing and Communications Center (see <http://www.stevens.edu/cal/wcc>.)

This website is intended for use by:

1. Instructors wishing to help students improve their written and oral skills.
2. Students seeking information on Howe School communication skill requirements and the resources that are available at Stevens to help them meet these requirements.
3. Students seeking guidance on issues ranging from basic grammatical skills to the required format of master and PhD theses.

# 2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND TRAITS

The following table outlines the specific learning objectives and corresponding traits for the Howe School’s written and oral communications skill assessment:

|  |
| --- |
| **Objective 1:** *Students will be able to write effectively.* |
| **Traits** |   |
| Trait 1: | Logical Flow |
| Trait 2: | Grammar & Sentence Structure |
| Trait 3: | Spelling & Word Choice |
| Trait 4: | Development of Ideas |
| **Objective 2:** *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* |
| **Traits** |   |
| Trait 1: | Organization & Logic |
| Trait 2: | Voice Quality |
| Trait 3: | Physical Presence |
| Trait 4: | Use of Slides to Enhance Communication |
| Trait 5: | Transitions/Time Management/Q&A |

# 3. RUBRICS

|  |
| --- |
| **Writing Rubric***Goal: Students will be able to communicate effectively in writing.* |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** | **Score** |
| **Trait 1:****Logical Flow** | Unclear introduction or conclusion. Does not use a sequence of material to lead reader through the paper. Draws illogical conclusions | Develops ideas through effective use of paragraphs, transitions, opening and concluding statements. Generally well structured to suggest connection between sub-topics. | Maintains clear focus, uses structure to build the paper's conclusions. Presents analysis using sequence of ideas, clarity of flow and continuous voice or point of view. |   |
| **Trait 2:****Grammar & Sentence Structure** | Frequently uses inappropriate grammar and incomplete or poorly structured sentences which interfere with comprehension. | Generally complies with standard English grammar and sentence usage. | Sophisticated use of English language, using varied sentence structured, phrasing and cadence. Grammar is error-free |   |
| **Trait 3:****Spelling & Word Choice** | Frequent misspellings. Poor or limited choice of words for expression of ideas. | Has proofread or checked spelling, and uses vocabulary correctly. Minor errors. | Demonstrates good use of words to support written expression of topic. Spelling is error-free. |   |
| **Trait 4:****Development of Ideas** | Many unsupported statements offered. Uses flawed or unclear reasoning. | Most statements supported, ideas explained with examples and written with sufficient explanation. | Shows thoughtful reasoning and explores alternatives. Uses existing, supported ideas to develop well-formed, readable output. |   |
| **Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20-29; Exceeds: 30-40 Total Score:** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Presentation Rubric***Goal: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** | **Score** |
| **Trait 1: Organization & Logic** | Fails to introduce topic; no evidence of or poor logical flow of topic. | Prepares listeners for sequence and flow of topic. Loses place occasionally but flow and structure are still clear. | Engages listeners with overview, guides listeners through connections between sections, and alerts audience to key details and concepts.  |  |
| **Trait 2:Voice Quality** | Cannot be heard or understood well due to volume, mumbling, speed, monotone delivery, and/or heavily accented English.  | Clear delivery with well-modulated voice. Displays some confidence and enthusiasm, but may also contain flatter periods or sound overly rehearsed. | Exemplary delivery, with a voice that sounds fully engaged, conveys enthusiasm and confidence, and relates to the audience well.  |  |
| **Trait 3:Physical Presence** | Turns away from audience or uses distracting gestures, such as pacing or tugging clothing. Speaker seems stiff, awkward or uncomfortable. Little eye contact. | Speaker is relaxed in front of the room and keeps distracting movements and gestures to a minimum. Generally faces audience and makes eye contact. | Speaker’s body language is superb and fully engages the room. Strong, consistent eye contact to the entire audience. Uses confident gestures to underscore key verbal points. |  |
| **Trait 4:Use of Slides to Enhance Communications** | Misspelled, too busy, too much text, too many slides for allotted time, and/or poor use of graphics like charts.  | Slides are readable, containing a reasonable amount of material per slide. Good use of graphics or illustrations. | Slides are well written/designed, engaging to the audience, and used as support to verbal content presentation. |  |
| **Trait 5:TransitionsTime ManagementQ&A** | Transitions are awkward or non-existent. Speakers go over time limits. Answers are disorganized or non-responsive. | Transitions are smooth. Speakers generally stay within time limits. Speakers respond to questions well and provide sufficient response. | Transitions are professional and very smooth. Speakers respond convincingly and address all aspects of question. |  |
| **Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20-35; Exceeds: 36-50 Total Score:** |  |

# 4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where & when measured?** | **How measured?** | **Criterion** |
| Students are assessed in the fall and spring semesters in a required Ph.D. course. | Student presentations are video-taped, and student essays are assessed for writing skills. Feedback is provided to each individual student.Sampling: Rubrics are completed for a sample of 30 students in each semester. | Students who score below (20) will be referred to Stevens tutoring and will be required to complete MGT 897 Technical Writing Webinar Series. |

The PhD program assesses the communication learning skills of all students in a required course in the first year of a student’s program (as PhD courses are only taught every second year, this course varies from year to year.)

The instructor in the selected class collects written essays/case studies from students as part of the normal coursework. These writing samples are holistically graded by staff in the Howe School’s Business Communications Center. Feedback to students consists of a grade (*0 to 10; 0-3 = Does Not Meet Expectations; 4-7 = Meets Expectations; 8-10 = Exceeds Expectations*) plus a short description of the meaning of each score (see Appendix B). The instructor managing the learning goal receives a list of the students and their scores – which is used for AACSB reporting purposes.

# 5. RESULTS OF LEARNING GOAL ASSESSMENT – INTRODUCTION

The results of the initial learning goal assessments carried out to date are included below.

**Explanation**

Each learning goal has a number of learning objectives, and performance on each objective is measured using a rubric that, in turn, contains a number of desired “traits.” Students are scored individually on each trait.

The grading sheets for each student are used to develop a Summary Results Sheet for each learning goal objective. A selection of these summaries is included below.

The first table in the Summary Results Sheet for a learning objective/trait gives the counts of students falling in each of the three categories:

* Does Not Meet Expectations
* Meets Expectations
* Exceeds Expectations

The right-hand column in the table is used to record the average score of the students on each trait. This table provides an indication of the relative performance of students on each trait.

The second table on each sheet provides the counts of students who fall in each of the above three categories for the overall learning objective.

The person doing the assessment provides explanatory comments and recommendations on the bottom of the Results Summary Sheet. The recommendations improve content or pedagogy changes for the next time the course is given.

# 6. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2013

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2013*

**ASSESSOR:***Bruce, Carlson, Grullon, Wirstiuk*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***11 Students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **1** | **6** | **4** | **6.0** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **2** | **5** | **4** | **6.0** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **1** | **8** | **2** | **6.1** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **1** | **6** | **4** | **5.9** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **6.0** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **4** | **3** | **4** |

**COMMENTS:**

*The majority of the students in the PhD program met or exceeded expectations in terms of their writing ability. In general, similar to the other programs, they continue to do better on the criteria that rate logical flow and idea development than on those that rate overall grammar, sentence structure, paragraph structure and word choice. Students in this program were also helped by the new ELC (English Language and Communication) requirements for all international graduate students, who are all required to take 1-2 semesters of ELC courses as part of their graduate curriculum.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Instructors in the PhD program should continue to provide detailed feedback notes to students, highlighting areas where the students need to improve. Students should take more advantage of the resources of the Writing and Communication Center (WCC) which has plans to begin offering online sessions next fall. Additionally, by the fall we should have 2-3 new writing and communication video tutorials posted online to reinforce basic concepts and provide students with the opportunity to review the material on their own time.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***April 2013*

**ASSESSOR:***Mary Robin Whitney, Andrew Stein*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***10 Students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **8** | **2** | **5.6** |
| 2: Voice & Body Language | **0** | **7** | **1** | **6.4** |
| 3: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **8** | **2** | **5.6** |
| 4: Ability to Answer Questions | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** |
| 5: Content | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **5.87** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **8** | **2** |

**COMMENTS:**

*All of the students in this program were at or above expectations in their ability to present effectively. In general, organization and the ability to use slides effectively to convey the speaker’s message was strong, likely due to strong modeling of professional techniques by the instructor. The biggest variance came in the trait assessing voice and body language, which is much more closely related to level of public speaking experience and, to some degree, whether or not the presenter was a native speaker. Due to the nature of the projects and the time constraints, Traits 4 & 5 were not assessed.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*The only effective way to improve Trait 2 is to practice public speaking at every opportunity, so all students are encouraged to do so. Some of these opportunities will present themselves in other Stevens’ classes, and some will present themselves in outside situations. Stevens’ ELC classes now feature an even greater emphasis on spoken language, including mandatory work in the Language Lab where students practice English pronunciation. Students should also continue to observe other PowerPoint slideshows (on campus or at workplaces) to see the best (and worst) of professional practices. Also, newer slideshow creators such as Prezi should be explored. This year many students benefitted from two Presentation Video Tutorials that were created and posted online. Viewing of these, and any new, tutorials should be made mandatory for all students.*

# 7. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2013

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***Nov-Dec 2013*

**ASSESSOR:***Hardin*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***1 Student – MGT 680*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **1** | **0** | **7.0** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **1** | **0** | **6.0** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **1** | **0** | **6.0** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **0** | **1** | **8.0** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **6.75** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **1** | **0** |

**COMMENTS:**

*[NOTE: There was only one student in this assessment. The notes below were written about the entire assessment pool.] Once again, the large majority of students in the PhD program met or exceeded expectations in terms of their overall writing ability. As we have seen in the past, these students tend to do better in the areas of logical flow and development of ideas, indicating that they understand what they want to say and the right way to organize their ideas. Their scores in the areas that rate sentence and paragraph structure, grammar and word choice are somewhat lower. This may be attributable to several factors, including the students having less experience with longer-form writing due to the rise of smartphones and social media, plus the fact that a significant portion of the students are English Language Learners.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Instructors in the PhD program should continue to provide specific, written feedback to student papers, indicating not just where mistakes have been made but also, in some cases, showing examples of how the writing can be fixed to read smoother or better get across the ideas. As always, the Writing and Communications Center (WCC) can be a great resource to all students, and instructors should encourage students who are in need of additional assistance to take advantage of it. There is also a growing collection of online webinars, seminars and videos (Ted Talks, Khan Academy) that are available to students to allow them to build their skills and understanding of the writing process outside of the classroom.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**NOTE: This objective was not assessed in Fall 2013**

# 8. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2014

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***Mar-May 2014*

**ASSESSOR:***Bruce, Hardin, Grullon, Kreisler, Pelphrey, Kephart*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***3 Students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **2** | **1** | **7.0** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **3** | **0** | **4.7** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **3** | **0** | **5.0** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **1** | **2** | **0** | **5.0** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **5.4** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **1** | **2** | **0** |

**COMMENTS:**

*The large majority of students in the PhD Program continue to meet or exceed expectations in their overall writing ability. These students typically do better in areas dealing with organization of their ideas, supporting arguments, providing specific examples, and generating a clear flow in their writing. While spelling is typically strong (thanks to spell-checkers), certain grammatical issues such as subject-verb agreement, run-on sentences, word choice, and misused or inconsistent punctuation are still present in the writing to various degrees. Faculty are likely not line editing these papers, and students are perhaps unaware of the errors they are repeatedly making.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Students should be encouraged to visit the Writing and Communications Center even if they receive a good grade on a paper. Specialists there can go over the writing and writing style with the student and attempt to highlight areas for continued improvement. Online sessions are now being offered, so even students with full-time employment can utilize the Center. It would also be useful for the instructor to set aside a small amount of class time for peer-to-peer document review, where students can see the writing style (pros and cons) of their fellow students. These sessions would be an opportunity to stress the importance of writing and communications to the entire class.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2014*

**ASSESSOR:***Billy Middleton*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***5 Students*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **1** | **3** | **1** | **6.4** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **3** | **2** | **6.8** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **2** | **3** | **0** | **5.4** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **5** | **0** | **5.4** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **3** | **2** | **7.2** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **6.2** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **4** | **1** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Overall scores for presentation skills for students in the PhD program continue to be set at or above expectations. In general, most of the students can accurately and confidently deliver a business level presentation. However, it should be noted that in most classes students are given an overall template to follow, so many of the structural questions and issues are taken out of their hands. Slide quality was perhaps the largest variable from group to group, and represented not so much a gap in talent as a difference in preparation; it was always fairly obvious which groups had put the requisite time and thought into their slides and which groups had not. Physically, many presenters still need to work on fully facing the audience (instead of the screen) while speaking, and maintaining eye contact.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*It is recommended that the instructors encourage their students to practice delivering their presentations while NOT sitting in front of their computers. When speakers become too comfortable with staring at the screen while practicing, it encourages them to disengage from the audience and speak to the screen during the real thing. Students should continue to practice speaking whenever possible, and faculty are encouraged to assign more short, impromptu speaking opportunities so that students understand that public speaking is not only something done for a midterm or a final exam.*

# 9. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2014

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***November-December 2014*

**ASSESSOR:***Bruce, Hardin, Pelphrey, Kephart, Minsloff, Ketchum*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***7 Students – MGT 711A*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **1** | **6** | **7.3** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **1** | **2** | **5** | **6.6** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **2** | **5** | **6.9** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **2** | **5** | **6.9** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **6.9** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **6** | **1** |

**COMMENTS:**

*A significantly majority of students in this program meets or exceeds expectations in their written communication. By and large, these documents are clearly organized and professionally structured, with enough specific detail and supported arguments. As has been the case for several semesters, the areas which lag behind are those dedicated to paragraph- and sentence-level issues such as grammar, punctuation, word choice and sentence length. The vast majority of these documents would benefit from more deliberate writing, and specifically from more careful and dedicated proofreading.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Instructors should continue to encourage students to begin projects early to allow enough time for attention to the quality of their writing. Students should also be encouraged (or even mandated) to visit the Writing and Communications Center on a regular basis for feedback. It might also be beneficial for instructors to dedicate some portion of class time to peer feedback – where students get to read and evaluate the writing of other members of the class. This can serve as a useful way to highlight common issues and errors that can more easily be recognized when reading a paper that the student did not write.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***December 2014*

**ASSESSOR:**
*Billy Middleton, Mary Robin Whitney, Andrew Stein, Zachary Balog*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***6 Students – MGT 711A*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **2** | **4** | **7.7** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **5** | **1** | **7.2** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **0** | **5** | **1** | **7.0** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **1** | **5** | **0** | **5.3** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **1** | **5** | **7.8** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | **7.0** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category***(Based on average score across all traits)* |  |  |  |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students in this program continue to perform at or above expectations in the delivery of oral presentations. Although certain issues continue to plague the group overall (such as a lack of enthusiasm and not enough eye contact) the fundamentals of clear organization, stable and professional body language, and speaking loudly and slowly enough, were firmly in evidence. PowerPoint slides were generally strong, with clear labels, good use of color and professional layouts. The consistent negatives were use of small fonts and generally placing too much data/text on the slides.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*The most obvious means of improving presentation skills are obvious and unchanging: be familiar with the material and practice. Beyond that, the two elements that need the most work are eye contact and enthusiasm. For that, it is recommended that students are encouraged, and given opportunities, to practice their presentations in front of a group prior to the official presentation. A mandated peer review practice session, where other members of the group, and of other groups, can see the errors that are being made, and encourage their peers to improve their style, would be most beneficial. It would also be useful if the instructor could grade on their presentation style, which would encourage students to focus more of their attention on their delivery.*

# 10. OUTCOMES: PHD LEARNING GOAL # 1 AFTER ROUNDS OF ASSESSMENT

The following table shows the average scores on each goal objective for the last 5 years.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Objective 1Written Communication | Objective 1Oral Communication |
| Spring 2013  | 6.0 | 5.9 |
| Fall 2013 | 6.8 | n/a |
| Spring 2014 | 6.5 | 7.6 |
| Fall 2014 | 6.9 | 7.0 |

# 11. CLOSE LOOP PROCESS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT RECORD

**Assurance of Learning**

**Assessment/Outcome Analysis**

**Close Loop Process - Continuous Improvement Record**

Program: PHD in Technology Management

Goal 1: Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications.

Goal Owner: Thomas Lechler & Andrew Stein

Where Measured: Students are assessed in the fall and spring semesters in the required course: *MGT 680 Organizations and Behavior.*

How Measured: Student presentations are video-taped, and student essays are assessed for writing skills. Feedback is provided to each individual student.

Sampling: Rubrics are completed for a sample of 30 students in each semester.

Closing the Loop: Actions taken on specific objectives

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective 1** | *Students will be able to write effectively.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Fall 2014* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *Instructors should continue to encourage students to begin projects early to allow enough time for attention to the quality of their writing. Students should also be encouraged (or even mandated) to visit the Writing and Communications Center on a regular basis for feedback. It might also be beneficial for instructors to dedicate some portion of class time to peer feedback – where students get to read and evaluate the writing of other members of the class. This can serve as a useful way to highlight common issues and errors that can more easily be recognized when reading a paper that the student did not write.* |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** | *The written skills assessment was up, reflecting the focus on these skills. The oral skills assessment was slightly down. We expect the changes we are making to improve this area.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Spring 2014* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *Students should be encouraged to visit the Writing and Communications Center even if they receive a good grade on a paper. Specialists there can go over the writing and writing style with the student and attempt to highlight areas for continued improvement. Online sessions are now being offered, so even students with full-time employment can utilize the Center. It would also be useful for the instructor to set aside a small amount of class time for peer-to-peer document review, where students can see the writing style (pros and cons) of their fellow students. These sessions would be an opportunity to stress the importance of writing and communications to the entire class.*  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** | *The written assessment was down while the oral skills were up nicely.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Fall 2013* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *Instructors in the PhD program should continue to provide specific, written feedback to student papers, indicating not just where mistakes have been made but also, in some cases, showing examples of how the writing can be fixed to read smoother or better get across the ideas. As always, the Writing and Communications Center (WCC) can be a great resource to all students, and instructors should encourage students who are in need of additional assistance to take advantage of it. There is also a growing collection of online webinars, seminars and videos (Ted Talks, Khan Academy) that are available to students to allow them to build their skills and understanding of the writing process outside of the classroom.*  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** |  |
| **When Assessed:** | *Spring 2013* |
| **Remedial Action** | *Instructors in the PhD program should continue to provide detailed feedback notes to students, highlighting areas where the students need to improve. Students should take more advantage of the resources of the Writing and Communication Center (WCC) which has plans to begin offering online sessions next fall. Additionally, by the fall we should have 2-3 new writing and communication video tutorials posted online to reinforce basic concepts and provide students with the opportunity to review the material on their own time.* |
| **Objective 2** | *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Fall 2014* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *The most obvious means of improving presentation skills are obvious and unchanging: be familiar with the material and practice. Beyond that, the two elements that need the most work are eye contact and enthusiasm. For that, it is recommended that students are encouraged, and given opportunities, to practice their presentations in front of a group prior to the official presentation. A mandated peer review practice session, where other members of the group, and of other groups, can see the errors that are being made, and encourage their peers to improve their style, would be most beneficial. It would also be useful if the instructor could grade on their presentation style, which would encourage students to focus more of their attention on their delivery.* |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** | *The written skills assessment was up, reflecting the focus on these skills. The oral skills assessment was slightly down. We expect the changes we are making to improve this area.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Spring 2014* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *It is recommended that the instructors encourage their students to practice delivering their presentations while NOT sitting in front of their computers. When speakers become too comfortable with staring at the screen while practicing, it encourages them to disengage from the audience and speak to the screen during the real thing. Students should continue to practice speaking whenever possible, and faculty are encouraged to assign more short, impromptu speaking opportunities so that students understand that public speaking is not only something done for a midterm or a final exam.*  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** | *The written assessment was down while the oral skills were up nicely.* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Fall 2013* |
| **Remedial****Action** | *n/a* |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** |  |
| **When Assessed:** | *Spring 2013* |
| **Remedial Action** | *The only effective way to improve Trait 2 is to practice public speaking at every opportunity, so all students are encouraged to do so. Some of these opportunities will present themselves in other Stevens’ classes, and some will present themselves in outside situations. Stevens’ ELC classes now feature an even greater emphasis on spoken language, including mandatory work in the Language Lab where students practice English pronunciation. Students should also continue to observe other PowerPoint slideshows (on campus or at workplaces) to see the best (and worst) of professional practices. Also, newer slideshow creators such as Prezi should be explored. This year many students benefitted from two Presentation Video Tutorials that were created and posted online. Viewing of these, and any new, tutorials should be made mandatory for all students.* |

# APPENDIX A: CURRENT PROCESS

The current assessment and review process for the Howe School Support and Assessment Program (*MGT 898*) is as follows:

1. Essay submissions are requested from participating students. These requests are either sent via course instructors, or via an online submission form (Moodle Portal). Essays are designated as 3- or 4-page papers that utilize paragraph and sentence structure.
2. Essays are collected by the *MGT 898* Course Coordinator (Andrew Stein). Essay collection can occur either through hard-copy format (i.e., course instructors collect a stack of essay and hand them to the Course Coordinator) or through soft-copy (i.e., students submit essays electronically through Moodle, and subsequently to TurnItIn.com – an originality verification service).
3. Essays are then delegated to designated assessors, who have undergone a standardizing and normative process in order to make sure that assessment scores and feedback is consistent across assessors.
4. Assessors review each essay, either in hard-copy or soft-copy, and (1) make grammatical corrections, (2) indicate successful strategies, (3) comment on areas to improve or focus on, and (4) offer suggestions for style, flow and organization. This process is designed to take roughly 20 minutes per essay.
	1. Note: This new assessment process, which provides each student written feedback on his/her essay, is intended to help the student during review. Since the comments and corrections included in each assessed essay are designed to be constructive and forward-looking, it is our hope that this feedback helps the student focus on (1) the successful areas of each essay, and (2) those areas which can be improved upon in future assignments.
5. After each essay is commented on and corrected, the assessor scores the essay on each of four key metrics, noted on the Writing Rubric (see Section 3).
6. After the assessment process is completed for all essays in a particular course, the scores are tallied and essays are either (a) returned to the course instructor as hard-copies, who then distributes the essays to each individual student, or (b) returned to the individual student as soft-copies via Moodle.
7. As part of the returned materials, students also receive one of two letters indicating either a successful level of assessment or an unsuccessful level. Both of these letters, however, detail the writing and communication support services available to all Howe School students, which are as follows:
	1. **On Campus Support:** Free and professional writing and communication specialists are available as part of the Writing & Communications Center (WCC) at Stevens. The WCC is located on campus and appointments are available Monday to Friday.
	2. **Online Materials:** The following link provides online resources that explain and assist in the development of key writing considerations. While an attempt has been made to group the materials by subject matter, several sites offer robust resources that span multiple areas.

# APPENDIX B. PREVIOUS PRESENTATION RUBRIC

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| **Presentation Rubric***Goal: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.* |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** | **Score** |
| **Trait 1: Organization & Logic** | Fails to introduce topic; no evidence of or poor logical flow of topic; does not manage time. | Prepares listeners for sequence and flow of topic. Loses place occasionally. Maintains pace, without need to rush. | Engages listeners with overview, guides listeners through connections between sections, and uses time to good effect. |  |
| **Trait 2:Voice & Body Language** | Cannot be heard well due to volume, mumbling, speed, rote delivery, and/or heavily accented English. Turns away from audience or uses distracting gestures, such as scratching or tugging clothing. | Clear delivery with well-modulated voice and self-carriage. | Exemplary delivery, using voice and gestures as part of medium. Uses vocal and physical resources to aid in communicating topic. |  |
| **Trait 3:Use of Slides to Enhance Communications** | Misspelled, too busy, too many slides for allotted time, and/or poor use of graphics like charts. | Slides are readable, containing a reasonable amount of material per slide. Good use of graphics or illustrations. | Slides are well written/designed, and used as support to verbal content presentation. |  |
| **Trait 4:Ability to Answer Questions** | Student does not answer questions that are asked. | Student responds to questions well and provides sufficient response. | Student responds convincingly and addresses all aspects of question. Knows material thoroughly. |  |
| **Trait 5:Content** | Student does not satisfy assignment requirements. Misuses theory or selects poor examples. | Student provides good analysis of subject, satisfying intent of assignment and demonstrating knowledge. | Student shows evidence of strong research and highly competent use of analyses to reach conclusions and recommendations. |  |
| **Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20-35; Exceeds: 36-50 Total Score:** |  |