

ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION 101 ASSESSMENT TEST RESULTS

The Communication 101 Assessment Test, comprised of 25 multiple choice questions and one scaled question, was administered to five classes on the first day of the Fall 2007 semester. The post-tests, given to students on the final exam dates, show a 25% increase in correct responses with an average of 20.95 of 25 questions being answered correctly.

The overall results reflect a strong correlation between what is being taught in the classroom and the learning outcomes for students. The most compelling question, #26, measures the student's perceived level of confidence as a public speaker. For the post test, the mean was 8.07, the mode was 7 and the median was 8, all excellent scores. On average, students' level of confidence increased 47% over a fifteen week period.

What is of interest and value is the post-test performance of Success students. There were two very low scoring Success students who dramatically improved on the post-test (one student increased from 8 to 16 and another from 8 to 19).

IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS ON CURRICULUM OR TEACHING METHODS:

Communication 101 focuses on three areas of study: Interpersonal Communication, Group Discussion and Public Speaking. While the overall average assessment score of 20.87 is noteworthy, the score that reflects the learning outcome for Group Discussion must be more closely examined. 24.2% of the students answered the Group Discussion questions incorrectly compared to 10.8 % for Public Speaking and 15.7% for Interpersonal Communication. The Group Discussion percentage should be more closely aligned with the other two areas.

The results of this test correlate quite closely with how much class time is actually allocated to each area of study. Nine to ten of the fifteen academic weeks are spent on public speaking. (Students spend five of the nine to ten weeks presenting and listening to 22 students each presenting two 5-7 minute speeches and two 10 minute speeches.) The remaining five to six of the fifteen weeks address interpersonal communication and group discussion, a woefully inadequate amount of time for such broad and valuable areas of study. Inevitably, group discussion is the subject matter that receives the least amount of time and the results of the assessment test reflect that time crunch.

There have been discussions within the Communication Discipline about the need to expand Communication 101 to a two-semester course or to add a lab to the class. One semester of Communication 101 is not fully adequate to teach three areas of vital importance to students' academic, career and personal success. Communication 101 is more than a theory class; it requires class time in which the students have opportunities to practice the varied and challenging communication skills that comprise effective interpersonal communication, public speaking, and group discussion. Class sizes of 22 students, unfortunately, directly impact the amount of time necessary to provide adequate opportunity for practice. (Fifteen students are ideal for a Communication 101 class; Administration has told us that class size is

determined by cohort size which is based on English class size.) It is important to note that for 95% of Chaminade students, Communication 101 is the only course in which they receive instruction in these areas of study.

The assessments test results seem to indicate that our students are benefiting by the amount of class time spent on public speaking and interpersonal communication. They seem to be shortchanged in the study and practice of the skills necessary to be effective group members and leaders. To address this finding, and if changes are made with regard to class size or length of the course, there will be concerted effort by all Communication 101 faculty to ensure that two to three weeks are committed to developing students' group member and leadership skills.