

General Education Competency Showcase 2018-2019

General Education Competency: Oral Communication

Department: Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology

Why we chose to showcase Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology:

Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology is included in this showcase because the program utilized multiple measures, including NC State's common [Oral Communication Rubric](#), to assess a student learning outcome related to oral communication. The instructor of a senior-level FW course scored students' individual oral presentations alongside staff from the Office of Assessment. The resulting data was included in aggregate in the 2018-2019 university-wide Oral Communication General Education Competency Assessment report and in the Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology's 2018-2019 academic program assessment report.

Having multiple scorers allowed for interrater-reliability data. Applying the rubric to student presentations allowed faculty to analyze resulting data at the dimension-level which led to changes to an assignment and to instructor guidance.

Assessment Plan:

Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology has three program-level outcomes that are assessed through the application of rubrics to student work. For this showcase, they measured the following outcome: students will "*communicate proficiently in the kinds of writing and speaking required of fisheries, wildlife, and conservation biologists.*" Faculty considered students' written *and* oral communication skills.

In keeping with best practices, faculty in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology used multiple measures to assess this learning outcome. **For the purpose of this showcase, only data related to the assessment of oral communication are described.**

- In FW 415 (Professional Development in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology) students delivered individual oral presentations regarding a wildlife topic of their choice. The presentations were assessed on an 11-dimension common oral communication rubric. Staff from the Office of Assessment scored the student presentations alongside the FW 415 instructor.
- In FW 404 (Wildlife Habitat Management) students were asked to complete a stewardship plan. Students' first drafts were assigned a score using a grammar and clarity rubric, and the instructor provided comments and feedback for improvement. Students' second drafts were re-assessed using the same instrument.

Evidence of Student Learning:

Oral communication was assessed in FW 415 (N=43). Students' individual oral presentations were scored using the common Oral Communication Rubric. The rubric has 7 dimensions that assess presentation content and 4 dimensions that assess delivery. The scale ranges from 1-4

where 1 is minimal and 4 is advanced. In their assessment report, faculty in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology provided mean scores for each of the rubric dimensions. Students scored highest in “locates, synthesizes and employs compelling supporting materials” (N=42, mean=3.41, std. dev=0.554). Students scored lowest in the dimension “develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure” (N=42, mean=2.93, std. dev=0.677). Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology detailed the areas where students demonstrated strength and areas where students may need improvement.

Use of Student Learning:

Based on the evidence, faculty in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology determined that the program can help “improve on students’ development of a concluding slide to bring back together the main points of the presentation” and to improve on their presentation volume and their adherence to time limits.

In response to these data, faculty teaching FW 415 will provide additional guidance to students regarding their oral presentations and instruct students on the role and importance of concluding statements in oral presentations. The instructor will describe areas for improvement in presentations from previous classes and will provide students an opportunity to practice their presentations with peers.

A Note to Faculty:

Dr. Lara Pacifici, teaching associate professor in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, partnered with the Office of Assessment to assess her students’ oral communication competency using the [Oral Communication Rubric](#). Regarding the assessment Dr. Pacifici stated, “The rubric made things a lot easier. Having two external scorers was huge help. It was nice to see how our scores compared. For most measures, only one person is scoring something so the additional scorers added to the robustness of the assessment. It was super easy for me. If you have a class with an oral communication component, you can get good data using the rubric; you can drill down and see what areas you need to focus on.”