

C2: Communication: Communicate ideas in writing and orally, following standard conventions of the discipline

1) What we learned about students' learning

In all of our classes, we want students to practice effective written and oral communication, whether it be oral presentations to peers, papers written on assigned topics, or merely asking questions in class. We have chosen to focus our assessment of this outcome within our Senior Seminar (CS195). We have decided to establish CS195 as our program's GE course satisfying the 'writing- or speech-intensive course within the major' requirement. As part of class, we have students give four formal presentations on the advancing phases of their senior projects, as well as several additional informal progress reports. We developed a rubric for scoring the oral presentations in the senior seminar. Our benchmark is that 75% of the students will show some improvement in communication. **Of the 21 students who have taken CS195 over the last four years, 10 have shown improvement in their oral presentations over the course of the semester.** At just below 50%, this may be a good outcome considering that students may have already improved significantly during their four years of college.

Rubric for Oral Presentations in Senior Seminar

	<i>Superior</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Lacking</i>
<i>Organization of content into coherent flow of ideas</i>	Elegant conceptualization and decomposition of content	Structures content into sensible units but places extra demand on listener to understand	Fails to structure the ideas into meaningful progression
<i>Delivery of presentation: eye-contact, posture, appropriate attire, flow of speech, comfort level</i>	Makes appropriate eye-contact, stands and moves in a natural manner, dresses appropriately, speech flows smoothly, and conveys a level of ease	Demonstrates three or four of the five qualities of superior performance	Fails to demonstrate at least three of the five qualities necessary for superior performance

2) Changes made or planned to improve student learning

We have experimented with informal oral presentations in other courses of our major, starting with the first introductory class, CS010. These experiments, while providing positive anecdotal support for improved learning in the area of communication, have subtracted from the coverage of core content in those courses. Therefore, we have not established a uniform practice of oral presentations in other courses of the major.