**GE AREA A1: ORAL COMMUNICATION**

**SLO Evaluation Report August 2025:**

**Background/Description of GE Program ePortfolio:**

Prior to the 2017-2018 AY, departments/programs were responsible for assessing GE student learning outcomes and submitting a report every year for the GE Committee to review. This system had several weaknesses. Departments and programs were responsible for deciding which of the two to four outcomes designated for a specific GE Area to assess; thus, some outcomes were evaluated multiple times within a year and others were not evaluated at all in certain years. It was also not possible for departments to access and evaluate a representative sample of student work, nor was it possible to compare the results from GE courses in the same GE Area taught by different departments/programs, because each department/program used its own criteria/rubrics. Finally, the GE Committee was not able to review and analyze the GE assessment reports in a comprehensive fashion, since the committee was also tasked with reviewing all GE curriculum proposals, as well as with discussing and updating GE policies and procedures.

Therefore, Fresno State developed a proposal for a new system of evaluating GE student learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 AY. The proposal was approved by Fresno State’s Academic Senate in May 2017 and by the President in August of 2017. Essentially, all freshmen and transfer students admitted to Fresno State beginning in Fall 2018 would submit one designated assignment aligned to one GE student outcome from lower-division (for freshmen) and upper-division (for freshmen and transfer students) GE courses to a GE Program ePortfolio. Students will also write 300-word reflections (first-year students write three and transfer students write one) about their learning and submit these to the GE Program ePortfolio. The GE Program ePortfolio was set up by the Director of Assessment and students were automatically enrolled. Handouts, videos, and other resources that were posted previously to Blackboard were uploaded to Canvas when the campus transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas.

During the first year of implementation (2017-2018 AY), efforts focused on electing members to the new GE Assessment Subcommittee and on approving common rubrics to be used to evaluate GE student learning outcomes. Fresno State’s GE student learning outcomes were approved by the Academic Senate in 2010. These forty outcomes were originally to be evaluated on a five-year rotating schedule. With the addition of Area F to the GE curriculum, the outcomes are now evaluated on a six-year schedule. With the implementation of the new Cal-GETC GE pattern, effective in fall 2025, the future rotation schedule was changed by the GE committee to reflect the new pattern (Appendix A).

The ePortfolio submission process changed Fall 2023. The original ePortfolio submission process was creating difficulties for students, advisors, and faculty. Students were responsible for submitting the assignment designated by their professor. If students did not submit the assignments as required, their registration could be blocked. This caused consternation among the students. It also resulted in numerous consultations between students, their GE professors, and (especially) their advisers as they tried to meet the ePortfolio requirement. These meetings took time away from the primary responsibilities of campus advisors and faculty members.

These difficulties led to discussions between Kathy Dunbar, Assistant Director of the University Advising Center and the director of assessment. Ms. Dunbar asked if there was a way that the designated GE ePortfolio student assignments could be automatically submitted to their ePortfolio at the same time they submitted the assignment to their professor in Canvas. After discussing the possibility of this solution with JoLynne Blake, an instructional designer in the Office of Ideas, Ms. Blake and the assessment director reached out to the Canvas support team to determine whether this type of concurrent assignment submission process would be possible. The Canvas staff determined that such a process was technically feasible, and Provost Fu agreed to fund the conversion. The university contracted with Canvas to develop an assignment LTI that eliminates the need for students to submit the designated assignments to their ePortfolio. When GE faculty set up their course in Canvas, they designate which assignment is the ePortfolio assignment. When students submit the designated assignment to their professor, the LTI duplicates the assignment and seamlessly routes that copy to their ePortfolio.

The new ePortfolio system was successful and there are now a sizable number of assignments available for assessment in each GE Area.

In AY 2024-25, student work in Area A was assessed. The assessment process and the results for Area A, Learning Outcome 1, are discussed below.

**Area A1 Assignment Selection and Assessment Process**

**Area A1 (Oral Communication) Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of an Area A3 course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective communication by analyzing and presenting extemporaneous informative and persuasive messages with clear lines of reasoning, development of ideas, and documentation of external sources.

2. Analyze the impact of culture and situational contexts on the creating and management of the communication choices used to inform and persuade audiences.

3. Create and criticize public arguments and reasoning, decision making processes, and rhetorical messages through oral and written reports.

**Assignments**

All A1 Oral Communication Courses are taught by the Communication Department. Students may fulfill the requirement by taking Communication 3 (Fundamentals of Oral Communication), Communication 7 (Persuasion), and Communication 8 (Group Discussion). For Learning Outcome 1, the assignments selected for assessment were videos of informative and persuasive speeches. For Learning Outcome 2, papers were selected from three different assignments that required students to analyze their audience and discuss how they were adapting their message to them. One was an audience analysis worksheet that asked students to analyze audience characteristics and explain strategies they were using to connect their topic to the audience. The second was a written assignment requiring students to apply principles of audience analysis and adaptation from their course textbook to their speech topic. The third was a speech plan assignment which required students to explain how their topic is important to the audience and how they planned to adapt their main points and supporting materials to the audience. For Learning Outcome 3, the assignments selected were full sentence outlines of persuasive and informative speeches.

The Director of Assessment selected assignments randomly and assigned them to the A1 Learning Outcome that best aligned with the content of the student’s speech or paper.

**Assessment Process**

The GE Assessment Subcommittee was responsible for assessing the student work. Committee members applied the rubric that had been approved by the GE Assessment Subcommittee before the first Area A assessment in 2018-19.

The assessment subcommittee met regularly during academic year 2024-25. During the meetings, the process for evaluating student work was discussed and committee members were able to ask questions about the assessment. Ten faculty members from seven colleges participated in the assessment. The speeches and papers for each learning outcome were assigned to two subcommittee members. Those members evaluated the student work individually and then compared results. If the two faculty members disagreed about whether an assignment should be rated proficient or not proficient, they met to discuss the evaluation and determine whether a consensus could be reached. If a consensus could not be reached, the Director of Assessment broke the tie.

**GE Area A1 Assessment Results**

**A1 Learning Outcome 1.** Students will be able to demonstrate effective communication by analyzing, creating, and presenting extemporaneous informative and persuasive messages with clear lines of reasoning, development of ideas, and documentation of external sources.

There were four criteria for evaluation of student performance on Learning Outcome 1. The first was for extemporaneous delivery, the second was clear lines of reasoning, the third was development of ideas, and the fourth was documentation of sources. Students were classified as proficient if they were rated either advanced or proficient. Students were classified as not proficient if they were rated developing. These were the results:

**Results for Area A1, Learning Outcome 1**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Extemporaneous Delivery | Clear Lines of Reasoning | Development of Ideas | Documentation of Sources |
| Proficient | 31 (100%) | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Developing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inter-rater Reliability | 31/31 (100%) | 31/31 (100%) | 31/31 (100%) | 31/31 (100%) |

The students demonstrated a very high level of achievement on Learning Outcome 1, with each speaker being rated proficient on each of the four criteria, exceeding Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

Inter-rater reliability was 100%, exceeding Fresno State’s standard of 90%.

**A1 Learning Outcome 2.** Students will be able to analyze the impact of culture and situational contexts on the creation and management of the communication choices used to inform and persuade audiences.

There were three criteria for evaluation of student performance on Learning Outcome 2. The first was adaptation to a diverse audience, the second was adaptation to a college student audience, and the third was adaptation to an academic context. Students were classified as proficient if they were rated either advanced or proficient. They were classified as not proficient if they were rated developing. These were the results:

**Results for Area A1, Learning Outcome 2**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Diverse Audience | College Students | Academic Context |
| Proficient | 15 (100%) | 15 (100%) | 15 (100%) |
| Developing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inter-rater Reliability | 15/15 (100%) | 15/15 (100%) | 15/15 (100%) |

The students demonstrated a very high level of achievement on Learning Outcome 2, with each assignment being rated proficient on each of the three criteria, exceeding Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

Inter-rater reliability was 100%, exceeding Fresno State’s standard of 90%.

**A1 Learning Outcome 3.** Students will be able to create and criticize public arguments and reasoning, decision making processes and rhetorical messages through oral and written reports.

There were four criteria for evaluation of student performance on Learning Outcome 3. The first was the speech thesis, the second was main ideas, the third was evidence and reasoning, and the fourth was rhetorical strategies. Students were classified as proficient if they were rated either advanced or proficient. They were classified as not proficient if they were rated developing or incomplete. These were the results:

**Results for Area A1, Learning Outcome 3**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Thesis | Main Ideas | Evidence and Reasoning | Rhetorical Strategies |
| Proficient | 21 (84%) | 21 (84%) | 20 (80%) | 21 (84%) |
| Developing | 2 (8%) | 2 (8%) | 3 (12%) | 2 (8%) |
| Incomplete | 2 (8%) | 2 (8%) | 2 (8%) | 2 (8%) |
| Inter-rater Reliability | 25/25 (100%) | 25/25 (100%) | 25/25 (100%) | 25/25 (100%) |

The students demonstrated a solid level of achievement on Learning Outcome 3, although not as strong as the assignments were for the first two learning outcomes. The proficiency ratings were between 80-84% on each of the four criteria. This was slightly below Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%. Between 8 and 12% were rated developing and 8% were rated incomplete on each of the four criteria.

The inter-rater reliability was 100% on each criterion, exceeding Fresno State’s standard of 90%.

**CONCLUSION**

On the whole, the students demonstrated a high level of proficiency on the Area A1 assessment. The student work was universally proficient (100%) on Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 and it was solid on Learning Outcome 3, although it did not reach Fresno State’s 90% benchmark. Inter-rater reliability was excellent, scoring 100% on each of the criteria for assessment.

**APPENDIX A GE Assessment Schedule Under the Cal-GETC Pattern**

AY 24-25 Subject Area 1 (English Composition, Critical Thinking/Composition, Oral

Communication)

AY 25-26 Subject Areas 2 and 5 (Mathematical Concepts/Quantitative Reasoning and

Physical and Biological Sciences)

AY 26-27 Subject Area 3 (Arts & Humanities)

AY 27-28 Subject Area 4 (Social and Behavioral Sciences)

AY 28-29 Subject Area 6 (Ethnic Studies)

AY 29-30 Upper Division Area 2/5, 3, and 4

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