Connecting Assessment with Teaching through Faculty Capacity Building: An Example of an Oral Communication Assessment Project

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Abstract: Connecting assessment with teaching through faculty capacity building can be a design principle in any assessment project aimed at improving student learning. This design principle is supported by the evaluation capacity-building literature, backward design curriculum approach, research on learning, and inquiry-driven assessment-for-learning framework. This paper provides an example of how this design principle guided the implementation of an institutional oral communication assessment project at a large public research-intensive university throughout an assessment cycle, from developing learning outcomes to using assessment results. Steered by five operating principles (be transparent, provide teaching support, foster shared understanding, form collaborations and value faculty expertise, and offer technical support), our center and campus groups carried out major strategies such as building and restructuring a project website, providing pedagogy workshops and panels for faculty, compiling and publicizing teaching and assessment resources, organizing faculty study groups on assessment, and collaborating with and motivating stakeholders and faculty to use assessment results. We advocate that connecting assessment with teaching should be intentional in the design and implementation of an assessment project to maximize the meaning and usefulness of assessment, ideally, through capacity-building activities.

Keywords: *assessment, teaching, capacity building, professional development, oral communication assessment*

Introduction

Looking back to assessment in the 1980s, we see the emergence of two approaches: assessment for improvement and assessment for accountability (Ewell, 2008). Today, despite regional accreditation requirements that reflect an accountability model, higher education institutions can engage in an assessment for improvement approach and simultaneously meet accountability requirements. To accomplish this at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, we started from a faculty development mindset, not a measurement mindset; we turned to the program evaluation literature, specifically evaluation capacity building and utilization, and professional development and learning theories. The underlying assumptions that led us there were that faculty were in the best position to lead and undertake assessment for improvement and that our role as an assessment and curricular support center is to connect assessment with teaching through building faculty's capacity in both assessment and teaching practices.

A faculty development mindset dovetails with an evaluation capacity building (ECB) approach. In program evaluation, ECB is a formal, intentional process to "increase individual motivation, knowledge, and skills, and to enhance a group or organization's ability to conduct or use evaluation" (Labin et al., 2012, p. 308). To accomplish this, ECB may include written and online materials, technical assistance, mentoring, and communities of practice (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). ECB may also use train-the-trainer (Garcia-Iriarte et al., 2011) in which a key person in the program undergoes ECB and becomes a "catalyst for change" (p. 1).

What sets ECB apart from traditional faculty development and training are its goals, which include "sustainable evaluation practice— where members continuously ask questions that matter, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use evaluation findings for decision-making and action" (Preskill & Boyle, 2008, p. 444) and "for staff within the target organization to regularly and effectively document the implementation and impact of their programs as a result of increases in evaluation capacity" (Garcia-Iriarte et al., 2011, p. 169). In the higher education assessment context, the questions that matter pertain to student learning and teaching and the program's impact on student learning achievement.

On our campus, the ECB process enhances academic policy makers' ability to conduct and use learning outcomes assessment and faculty's ability to form an explicit connection between assessment practice and pedagogy. We use ECB to train faculty to conduct learning outcomes assessment and use assessment as part of an improvement process that necessarily involves pedagogy, curriculum design principles, and learning theories.

The link between assessment and teaching can be easily made because assessment is, after all, an integral part of teaching and learning. Backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; McTighe & Wiggins, 2012), a broadly adopted curriculum design approach, specifies three curriculum development phases. The first phase is identifying desired results in the form of the intended student learning outcomes, and the second is designing the tasks to collect learning evidence that document and validate whether the desired learning has been achieved. These two phases are essential assessment processes. "Backward design encourages teachers and curriculum planners to first think like assessors before designing specific units and lessons" (McTighe & Wiggins, 2012, p.2). The third phase is to design the learning experience and instruction, including the instructional content, materials, and pedagogical approaches to scaffold students' learning toward outcome achievement.

Assessment tools such as student learning outcomes, evaluation criteria (e.g., rubrics), and direct assessment methods via authentic, performance-based assignments are powerful learning tools in and of themselves. According to Ambrose et al.'s (2010) summary of the research in learning theories, explicit learning expectations through specifying clear and tangible learning outcomes and evaluation criteria increase students' motivation by creating a positive outcome expectancy and an efficacy expectancy. Explicit outcomes and evaluation criteria can also increase students' learning attainment by facilitating deliberate goal-oriented practice (Ambrose et al., 2010). Rubrics that specify components of the tasks to be evaluated (e.g., *introduction*, *hypothesis*,

and *conclusion* for an analytical paper) and criteria to evaluate the integration skills (e.g., *coherence*, *flow*) help students to practice component skills and the integration of component skills, which are essential for learning mastery (Ambrose et al., 2010). Providing performance criteria with the assignment, especially in the form of the rubrics that explicitly specify the components at varying levels of mastery help students develop metacognitive habits so that they can gauge the demand of the tasks and monitor their own performance through evaluating their own work against a set of criteria. Direct assessment methods, such as a well-designed assignment that represents real-world tasks, can increase students' motivation by engaging them in meaningful tasks that are relevant to their personal or future professional life. A well-scaffolded assignment allows students to practice component skills (e.g., topic selection, use of sources) and integrate different component skills to perform a complex and integrated skill, such as a presentation of research, to promote skill mastery (Ambrose et al., 2010)

At the program level, learning assessment provides tools for collaborative program development, alignment, and refinement. The assessment cycle helps cultivate faculty's shared understanding of learning expectations and student performance. Collaboratively going through an assessment cycle prompts systematic reflection and evaluation of program efficacy, an inquiry-driven assessment-for-learning framework called for by Maki

(2010). By completing the assessment cycle and answering questions such as these listed in Table 1, a program or institution completes an assessment-for-improvement cycle.

In this paper, we illustrate our design principle for assessment-for-improvement projects: building instructors' assessment capacity while simultaneously building their knowledge and skill in teaching practices and learning principles. Our example is from a campus-wide, oral communication assessment project in which we explicitly connected assessment with pedagogy, formed partnerships, honored instructor expertise, and facilitated reflections, and prompted actions. The result was a completed assessment project with actionable student learning achievement results, documentation for accountability requirements, lasting resources on teaching and learning oral communication skills for instructors and students, and positive engagement with faculty teaching oral communication (OC) general education courses.

To illustrate our design principle in action, we first describe our institutional context and the OC assessment project. We then detail the capacity-building activities carried out at each step of the assessment process. We conclude by summarizing the operating principles and major strategies that we utilized throughout the assessment project process with lessons learned.

Table 1. Program Reflection Questions during the Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle	Collaborative Program Reflection Questions
Developing program student learning outcomes	• What knowledge, skills, and values should students have when they graduate from the program? • How do the program learning outcomes reflect the program's uniqueness, students' needs, societal and workforce needs and expectations? • Have we incorporated equity principles?
Mapping the curriculum	• How can the program structure the learning path to ensure students have the frequent, varied, and regular learning opportunities called for by Maki (2010) for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
Selecting learning evidence	• Where can the program collect the evidence of learning? • What tasks benefit students and allow them to demonstrate their learning? • What learning evidence best reflects students' ability to transfer and apply learning in future professional settings? • Have we applied equity principles to the task design?
Evaluating student evidence and setting performance standards	• How will we determine the level of students' performance and what does performance look like at each level? • What is the minimum satisfactory level of performance? What does that standard say about our students and our program?
Analyzing and interpreting results	• In what ways can we analyze and present the information about student learning so that stakeholders have an accurate and clear understanding? • What other facts and evidence can be used to inform our understanding? • What do the results on learning and the contextual information tell us about the program's efficacy? What do other stakeholders' perspectives tell us (e.g., current students, alumni, potential employers, community members)? • Are all groups of students meeting performance expectations?
Communicating and using the results	• How will we communicate the results to stakeholders? • How do we communicate the results to prompt actions? • What actions might the program or the institution take to improve the program based on the discoveries made in the assessment process and based on the assessment results? • What consensus can we reach on an action(s) and when/how will we implement the action plan? • Have equity considerations been addressed?

Institutional Context

The University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa has signaled the importance of oral communication skills by faculty approval of oral communication (OC) as an institutional learning objective and an OC general education requirement. Undergraduates take an approved OC-designated course in a subject area, often within their major, at the 300- and 400-level. Each semester, faculty offer about 130 OC sections in 50 different subject areas with nearly 2,000 seats filled. OC enrollment is capped at 30 students per section. A faculty group, the Oral Communication Focus Board

(OC Board), approves applications for the OC-designation on a course section. The campus's General Education (Gen Ed) Office provides support to the OC Board. The OC Board and the Gen Ed Office are the most familiar with OC curricula and instruction on campus.

A diverse faculty group from different units created the Gen Ed OC learning outcomes in 2008. In 2015, the OC Board agreed to use the OC Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubric[1] to evaluate students' OC presentations in order to form a baseline and to set the performance standards. The OC standard is 2.4 on the VALUE rubric, meaning a UHM graduating undergraduate will need to score 2.4 or higher to be considered meeting institutional expectations on OC.

We implemented a multi-year OC assessment project in collaboration with the Gen Ed Office, the OC Board, and the Institutional Learning Objectives Implementation Committee (ILOIC) from 2015 to 2019.

Overview of the Oral Communication Data Collection and Evaluation

In the data collection phase, we, the Assessment and Curriculum Support Center (ASCS) randomly selected 86 OC-designated courses in spring and fall 2017, stratified by college so that the subsequent student sample would represent the proportion enrolled in the college. In these courses, there were 829 undergraduate seniors who met our selection criteria of first-time degree-seeking undergraduates with 90 or more college credits.[2]

Out of the 86 courses, 11 agreed to participate, and we collaborated with the instructors to collect 74 presentation recordings plus we collected an additional five student presentations from an undergraduate research symposium. We used video-editing software to anonymize the presentations as much as possible (e.g., blocking the name on the title slide of a PowerPoint presentation), a process similar to redacting written papers.

In the evaluation phase, we recruited 16 faculty raters and organized a rater norming session prior to scoring. Before the norming session, each rater scored six sample presentations of different quality levels. During the session, raters discussed three presentations in detail, one at a time and rescored the three samples after the discussion. In the hindsight, the session needed to be longer (e.g., five hours) for the raters to have time to discuss six samples.

The medians of the raters' final scores served as the anchor scores, i.e., reference scores to give for the presentations that represent similar skills as the sample. The raters then scored the remaining 73 presentations. Fourteen raters (two dropped out) completed scoring using a commercial collaborative scoring platform. Twenty-six presentations were scored by one rater and 58 by two or more. Among a total of 290 sets of scores (58 presentations; five evaluation dimensions each with two or three scores), 87% contained ratings that were no

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more than 1 point different. This is an acceptable level of interrater agreement. We used the median of multiple scores to represent the final score on each rubric dimension, i.e., *Organization*, *Language*, *Delivery*, *Supporting Material*, and *Central Message*. An overall OC score was the average of the five dimension scores. With the standard set at 2.4, 63% of the sampled students achieved the OC learning outcome. Among the five dimensions assessed, students achieved the highest on *Organization* with 65% meeting the expectation, followed by *Central Message* (61% meeting the expectation), *Supporting Material* (59%), and *Language* (58%). The lowest dimension was *Delivery* with 49% of the sampled students meeting the expectation. In the following sections, we explain how we collaborated with campus stakeholders and faculty and proactively used the assessment process and results to enhance faculty's capacity in assessment and teaching.

Capacity Building Throughout the Assessment Process

The following operating principles steered our assessment and teaching capacity-building activities:

Principle 1. Be transparent. Use websites, regular emails, and presentations to communicate and educate faculty about the assessment methodologies, tools, and processes.

Principle 2. Provide teaching support. Offer professional learning opportunities and resources to support teaching and learning prior, during, and after the assessment project.

Principle 3. Foster shared understanding. Engage faculty and key stakeholders in collaborative discussions that facilitate shared vision and expectations to move the curriculum and assessment work forward.

Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise. Collaborate with key academic policy decision-makers, committees, campus units, and enlist assistance from faculty who have expertise in the targeted learning area.

Principle 5. Offer technical support: Do the legwork for faculty and help them overcome any technical or logistical hurdles so that they can focus their time and energy on teaching and students.

We give examples of capacity-building activities in each step of the assessment process carried out by our center and/or by campus groups in Table 2. Each activity aims to increase faculty and stakeholders' knowledge of collaborative assessment processes, effective pedagogical practices, and skills in adapting the assessment tools (e.g., learning outcomes, rubrics, assignments).

In the sections below, we provide detailed explanations of the capacity-building activities.

Table 2. Capacity-Building Activities in Assessment Cycle and the Operating Principles

Elements in the Assessment Cycle	Activities	Operating Principles
Developing program student learning outcomes	Organized collaborative development of learning outcomes. The activity facilitated faculty's shared understanding of national and professional perspectives.	Principle 3. Foster shared understanding Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise
Setting performance standards	Collaborated with the Gen Ed Office to recruit a faculty study group and helped the group to reach shared expectations of minimum performance level on a learning outcome.	Principle 3. Foster shared understanding Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise
Selecting learning evidence (signature assignment development)	Collaborated with the Gen Ed Office to organize a faculty study group to provide feedback on the signature assignment to collect evidence for a learning outcome. Faculty participants shared teaching practices, aired concerns, and learned pedagogical strategies.	Principle 3. Foster shared understanding Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise
Collecting evidence for evaluation	Informed stakeholders and provided support: 1. Collaborated with campus groups to offer assignment design workshops prior, during, and after data collection. 2. Built a website to provide assessment resources and address concerns. 3. Provided technical support. 4. Communicated purposefully with participating faculty and provided individual feedback on teaching.	Principle 1. Be transparent Principle 2. Provide teaching support Principle 4. Foster shared understanding Principle 5. Offer technical support
Evaluating assessment evidence	Organized rater training to form shared expectations of students' performance, increase faculty evaluation skills, and help faculty explore pedagogical strategies	Principle 3. Foster shared understanding Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise
Communicating results and promoting the use of results	1. Published resources to support teaching 2. Restructured the website to feature teaching resources 3. Presented results in context and on a regular basis to empower stakeholders to take actions upon results. 4. Collaborated with stakeholders and faculty experts to offer OC workshops	Principle 1. Be transparency Principle 2. Provide teaching support Principle 3. Foster shared understanding Principle 4. Form collaborations and value faculty expertise

Collaboratively Developed Learning Outcomes to Form Share Expectations

Defining student learning outcomes at the program or institutional level helps faculty form shared expectations for student learning. It is also an optimal opportunity to leverage faculty expertise and bring national and professional perspectives to the awareness of faculty. On our campus, to develop the specific OC learning outcomes, the OC Board members and the General Education Office leaders consulted faculty members teaching the public speaking course, researched the competencies published by National Communication Association,[3] and studied the VALUE OC rubric published by American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In doing so, they increased their knowledge about learning outcomes. Our campus's OC outcomes are aligned with national competencies and definitions, which then guided a concerted effort in faculty professional development activities. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's OC learning outcomes for the undergraduate students are that students are able to:

- select appropriate content for an oral presentation;
- present information in a clear and organized manner appropriate for the intended audience and purpose;
- demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal delivery; and,
- use supporting materials such as handouts, visual aids, models to promote clarity and interest.

These activities reflected the capacity-building operating Principle 3. *Foster shared*

understanding and 4. *Form collaboration and value faculty expertise*.

Fostered Shared Expectations through Standard Setting

To foster shared expectations of what a good oral presentation looks and sounds like, Dr. Stitt-Bergh, the second author, collaborated with the Gen Ed Office and led a faculty study group in using the OC VALUE rubric to set the OC performance standard, which resulted in a minimum score of 2.4 or higher on the 4-point OC rubric to meet exit expectations (Assessment Office, 2015). Eleven faculty who had taught an OC course and who were from eight different departments participated in the five-hour standard setting session. Ten of the 11 completed the session evaluation and all reported the session was worthwhile and, importantly, indicated that their participation led to a change in how they will teach or caused a change in their views of assessment—toward a more positive view. We followed up with two faculty participants and learned that they immediately adapted the OC VALUE rubric in the capstone course that they teach, one in engineering and one in animal science. We see here that we have harnessed an assessment activity to leverage collaboration and faculty expertise (Principle 4) and to foster shared understanding (Principle 3) to enhance faculty's capacity in teaching and assessment.

Faculty's Expertise Guided the Refinement of Signature Assignment

The General Education Office (with Dr. Hokulani Aikau, the Director of the General Education Office at the time of the project) led the effort

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[3] https://tinyurl.com/w8y2y9y

in developing an OC signature assignment—an assignment that shares common elements across different sections, courses, or programs. It provides qualifying specifications that determine suitable assignments for an assessment project. Employing a signature assignment in assessment makes students' performance relatively comparable across different courses and disciplines. In this project, our signature assignment of an in-person, formal oral presentation includes the following characteristics:

(a) Length: 5 – 20 minutes;
(b) Purpose: to persuade or inform;
(c) Language: English;
(d) Specify intended audience; and
(e) Includes supporting material (e.g., evidence, primary/secondary sources to support claims, graphs, charts, materials, visual aids to support presentation).

We found that signature assignment discussions can increase faculty's understanding of their role in assessment and teaching, namely, comparable learning evidence can aid faculty's evaluation and collaborative discussion of student learning. It also honors faculty's expertise by seeking their experience and feedback to create and later refine the instrument that we use to collect learning evidence, adhering to our operating Principle 4. *Foster collaboration and value faculty expertise*.

Dr. Hill, the first author, collaborated with the Gen Ed Office and organized a study group to discuss the OC signature assignment. During the session we promoted best teaching practices and peer sharing of pedagogical strategies. In particular, we promoted using scaffolding strategies to help students succeed. The scaffolding sequence (developed by Dr. Aikau) asks students to do the following:

(a) Review rubric and critique a sample oral presentation (class discussion)
(b) Select topic and read 5-7 credible, relevant articles to supplement the textbook readings: submit bibliography using a style guide; get instructor feedback
(c) Complete an annotated bibliography: write a 750-1,000 word summary of the three most relevant articles and submit to instructor; get feedback
(d) Write a "stated purpose" statement (in class pair & share activity)
(e) Write and submit a presentation storyboard; complete out-of-class peer review
(f) Revise presentation storyboard using feedback
(g) Practice presentation at home (including timing) and complete a self-assessment using the rubric
(h) Practice presentation (an in-class, small group activity); complete in-class peer review
(i) Give oral presentation to the class

These faculty study group activities represented our effort to directly support teaching (Principle 2). Faculty discussions demonstrated their understanding of the role that a signature assignment plays in an institutional assessment project, supporting our operating Principle 3. *Foster shared understanding*. Furthermore, the study group also aired faculty's concerns that a signature assignment could be seen as unfairly privileging a prepared speech to a live audience

over other valid forms of oral communication (e.g., debates, client intake interviews, teamwork). Based on the faculty's feedback, a modified signature assignment and responses to faculty's concerns were included on our project website.

Used a Transparent Data Collection Process to Directly Support Teaching and Assessment
Providing professional development to the faculty teaching the OC courses and collecting evidence from their courses made up the bulk of the activities in the 2017-2019 OC assessment project and embodied four out of five operating principles that guided our capacity-building activities.

Collaborated with Campus Groups to Offer Assignment Design Workshops Prior, During, and After Data Collection
We believe that it is an ethical and responsible institutional practice to support teaching before the institution requests that faculty submit evidence of student learning for program-level assessment and decision making. Before engaging in institutional learning assessment, faculty need to be aware of the institutional expectations for student learning, know the institutional evaluation criteria to judge students' performance, and have the opportunity to enhance their assignments through which the evidence of learning is collected. To exercise this responsibility, we turned to assignment design and assignment charrette activities advocated and practiced by leaders in NILOA (i.e., Natasha Jankowski and Pat Hutchings)[4] before, during, and after data collection. Because we honor faculty expertise

and we know faculty learn best from peers through active and collaborative participation (Garet et al., 2001; Hunzicker, 2010), we facilitate the sharing of that expertise through assignment charrette activities. In our assignment charrette activity, faculty learned about curriculum alignment and assignment design principles. They then took turns to share assignments and provide constructive feedback in small groups following a guided process like what was described in NILOA's *Resources for Conducting an Assignment Charrette*.[5]

Hutchings et al. (2014) promote catalyzing the assignment design activities on campus. The most compelling reason is that "assignments are not only a source of rich evidence about student learning, they are also pedagogically powerful—sending signals to students about what faculty think matters, and about what they expect from students" (Hutchings et al., 2014, p. 7). The WASC Senior College and University Commission's Community of Practice initiative, which we were part of, included two successful project leaders (Julie Stein from California State University and Daniel Shapiro from California State University Monterey Bay) who showed that assignment design workshops worked well in promoting a positive assessment culture when they are offered frequently and regularly (Heyman et al., 2019). OC assignment design activities were our main form of professional learning activities organized by Dr. Hill, for individual teaching faculty and staff, in collaboration with the ILOIC, OC board, the General Education director, and experienced teaching faculty. We offered *Assignment Design for Powerful*

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[4] www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/ourwork/assignment-charrette/

[5] tinyurl.com/y2eqht2m

Learning in Oral Communication workshop in 2016 before the data collection[6] and *Oral Presentation Assignment Design Strategies* in November 2017 during data collection.[7]

To enrich the assignment design workshops and the charrette exchange that we offered during the data collection phase, we purposefully documented faculty's successful pedagogical strategies and used them as examples in the assignment design workshops. Such examples include the following:

- providing multiple in-class opportunities (3-6) for students to practice oral presentations
- having students video-record each other's presentations and upload them on YouTube (use unlisted or private links) for further peer-feedback
- having students pose intriguing questions to the audience to facilitate peer discussions after their presentations.

Our workshop evaluation demonstrated positive results: 85% of the respondents (19 respondents out of 21 attendees of the 2016 or 2017 workshops) were able to correctly identify two effective OC assignment design strategies (e.g., provide practice opportunities, use feedback). Ninety-five percent considered the workshops useful and effective.

Constructed a Project Website to Address Faculty Questions, Provide Project Updates, and Offer Assessment Resources

Dr. Hill led the construction of the project website as a major communication device to address faculty questions and to ensure transparency. From faculty's questions and concerns we encountered during our earlier assessment projects, we had learned that we needed to make our assessment project transparent by providing regular updates on the project and to address commonly raised concerns. The reasons are two-fold:

(1) Everyone needs to know the students' rights; the campus's responsibilities for ethical practice; the official response from the campus's Institutional Review Board on this type of project; how faculty were selected to participate; how the results will and will not be used for, and so on.

(2) By describing the assessment methodologies in plain language, we can enhance faculty's assessment capacity. Institutional assessment projects involve many technical procedures, such as signature assignments, rubric development, standard setting, sampling, collecting student work from course-embedded assignments, and so on.

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) has long advocated for institutions to make their assessment efforts visible on institutional websites through their Transparency Framework (NILOA, 2011). Our first iteration of the website included the recommended components from NILOA's Transparency Framework, e.g., student learning outcomes statements, assessment plans, assessment resources, current assessment activities, evidence of student learning, and

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[6] manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops-events/design-for-learning-in-oral-com

[7] http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/workshops-events/oral-presentation-design-strategies/

(the intended) use of student learning evidence. Our project website addressed the faculty's questions proactively. We explained key assessment tools, procedures, and past achievements. We want to keep faculty informed and help them learn what an institutional learning assessment project involves and the assessment tools available to adapt for their own teaching.

Provided Strong Technical Support in Recording Student Presentations and Processing the Recordings

For this project, we only collected students' oral presentations delivered live and in person. Collecting in-person presentations brought on challenges that we do not encounter with written/text forms of learning evidence. The recordings need to be decent quality so that sound and image quality will not be distracting factors for the raters, a lesson that we learned from an evaluation of the OC standard setting process (Assessment Office, 2015). In addition, faculty may not have the equipment to record or process the recording. To enact Principle 5. *Provide technical support,* we proactively addressed the technical obstacles through the following:

(a) We published tips and strategies on how to record live presentations, prepared by our graduate student Jenna Caparoso.

(b) We purchased and loaned our video-recording equipment to instructors so they could record students' presentations and playback the recording to facilitate the instructor-student feedback process.

(c) We did the videorecording for faculty upon request. Our center's staff

recorded more than half of the oral presentations during the data collection phase.

(d) Our student assistant, Mariko Niosco, edited and compressed each video.

In online courses, the data collection may be much easier. For example, students may present online via Zoom or similar technology which have built-in recording features. Instructors can upload recordings of student presentations to a secure cloud folder (e.g., Google Folder) through a secure and encrypted channel.

Even so, the data cleaning process for institutional assessment can be intensive. For our project, we edited each video to remove identifiers such as student name, professor name, and course before scoring began. Videorecording and file-processing were time-consuming components of the project. Our undergraduate student assistant self-trained and used the Adobe Premiere to complete the video editing and processing tasks. These efforts saved faculty valuable time so that they could focus their attention on teaching and their students.

Communicated Purposefully with Participating Faculty

By reaching out to the instructors of 86 courses, we increased communication of the institutional expectations: the institutional OC outcomes, rubric, and the signature assignment. Throughout the semesters in which data were collected, we conveyed the message that assessment was for teaching and learning by offering teaching resources, assignment design workshops, and collecting

individual faculty's successful assignment strategies. For the instructors who invited us to conduct recordings in their classes, we sent thank-you letters, commended them on good teaching practices and gently suggested one or two things to consider for improvement. These efforts were guided by Principle 1. *Be transparency* and 2. *Provide teaching support*.

Increased Shared Expectations and Explored Pedagogical Strategies Through Rater Training
To increase shared expectations at each level of the performance specified on the rubric, following our guiding Principle 3. *Foster shared understanding*, we organized a two-and-a-half hour rater training session described earlier. Raters scored each sample presentation prior

to the session, shared the rationales for their scores during the session, and scored the presentation again after the discussion. The general observation was that raters' scores converged during the second round of rating compared to when they scored on their own, evidence of increased rater consistency. Take the Sample Presentation 1 for example, the standard deviations, an indicator of the individual score differences, on four out of the five dimension scores were smaller the second time around than those for the initial scores. See Table 3 below.

Table 3. Standard Deviation for Sample Presentation 1 in the First and Second Round of Scoring

Rubric Dimension	Round 1 (n = 16)	Round 2 (n = 16)
Organization	0.72	0.37
Language	0.48	0.34
Delivery	0.00	0.00
Supporting material	0.73	0.60
Central message	0.68	0.45

In addition to increasing scoring consistency, the rating training session seemed to have deepened faculty's understanding of the rubric criteria, motivated them to adapt the institutional rubric in their own teaching, and stimulated pedagogical improvement ideas. Our observation, as well as the record of the detailed meeting notes, documented lively interactions among faculty during rater training as they exchanged ideas on how they may change pedagogical activities in their courses.

The most common idea was to adapt the rubric in their courses. Two faculty members decided to record student presentations and annotate the recordings using the rubric language. They intended to present model presentations as pedagogical material, so that students would understand the instructors' expectations and learn from good presenters.

Four out of 16 (25%) raters evaluated the training through an online survey, administered

after all the raters completed their scoring. Despite the small number of respondents, the responses pointed to a positive impact on their teaching and assessment. All respondents:

    (a) reported that they could better interpret the rubric as a result of the session;

    (b) observed the effort of our center using assessment to support student learning; and

    (c) planned to change their own courses.

Three respondents elaborated that they would use rubrics more effectively in their own courses.

We were also intentional in selecting an incentive for the volunteer faculty raters: a presentation slide advancing clicker. When we video recorded student presentations in classes, we observed that some student presentations were interrupted by them moving between the computer and the screen many times during the presentation. We believed a clicker can potentially improve student achievement on the "demonstrate effective verbal and nonverbal delivery" outcome, exercising our guiding principle 2. *Provide teaching support*.

Use of Results to Enhance Teaching Resources and Support Policy Changes
With the goal to use results to enhance teaching and learning and to empower decision making, we dedicated extended effort in compiling resources, restructuring our website, contextualizing the results to empower action, and collaborating with various stakeholders to

offer professional learning activities to directly support teaching and learning. We advocate for planning and preparing for the use of results during the assessment cycle as part of capacity-building activities.

Preparing for the Use of Results: Published Resources on the Restructured Website
Beginning in the data collection and analysis phase, Dr. Hill and our graduate student assistant Michelle Cantwell were already geared up for using the assessment results. We compiled resources to support teaching and learning so that when we disseminated the results, we could also offer suggestions for improvement actions, if needed. Ms. Cantwell conducted a literature review on program and institutional level oral communication assessment strategies and evidence-based oral communication pedagogical strategies. She compiled an annotated bibliography with a summary of three principles for instruction and six principles for learning activities (Assessment Office, 2018).

To disseminate these resources, the Center reconstructed the project website with the help of another graduate student assistant, Adrian Alarilla. Our newly constructed website[8] conveys the explicit link between assessment and teaching and that the ultimate purpose of assessment is to support teaching and learning. In the revised website, we shifted from a project communication site to one that both communicates and serves as a resource repository on teaching and assessment.

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[8] manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/gened/oral-communication/

At the top of the webpage, we highlight four intended audiences: faculty, student, assessment professionals, and the accreditation agency. Faculty members are our primary intended audience and we compiled a list of teaching-focused resources that integrate assessment concepts to signal that assessment is an integral part of teaching. Such resources include the following:

- Tips for effective oral communication instruction
- Tips for effective oral communication learning activities
- An annotated bibliography on the pedagogical principles for oral communication competency
- Setting learning objectives/outcomes for oral presentations
- Setting criteria to evaluate oral presentations
- Signature assignment
- Sample scaffolding activities for an oral presentation assignment
- Oral communication assignment design workshop materials

To support student learning, we also compiled YouTube video links on strategies to improve oral presentations.

As a result of our research and faculty-friendly website construction, the Gen Ed Office regularly promotes our project site in their faculty development sessions. We continue to work with the Gen Ed Office and the OC Board to advertise these resources to the faculty.

Presented Results in Context to Empower Action

Analyzing and presenting assessment results is not hard, yet presenting the results in a way to empower action is challenging. We identified our primary intended audience and user of the results as the OC Board because the Board directly influences the policy on the OC general education course designation. We utilized three strategies to empower action.

First, we intentionally situated the current assessment results with all the research results that we had on oral communication. We used a compilation of data to tell a story of why it was important to act on the results. We created an infographic using data collected from other institutional assessment projects, i.e., National Survey of Student Engagement, students' survey from a longitudinal Student Success project[9] and student focus group responses. Our story showed that even though only 63% of students met OC achievement expectations, OC was still the second highest achieved SLO among the core competencies that we assessed. Even though students in both the OC designated courses and non-OC designated courses reported many learning opportunities, students in the OC designed courses claimed a much higher level of learning, a pattern consistent over five years. Our message to the OC Board was that enhancement to the OC policy and an increase in the instructional quality of the OC designated courses could positively impact OC achievement.

Our second strategy was to educate the intended users on the ways to improve the

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[9] manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/gened/student-success-project/

results. While presenting the results, we listed the best pedagogical practices that we identified in research described above. We also presented the students' voices, presented on the T-shirts and newspaper headlines that they designed during the focus group sessions in the Student Success project. We wanted the research and student voices to empower the OC Board to make informed and educated decisions.

Our third strategy was to actively engage the stakeholders in action planning. For example, in Dr. Hill's presentation to the OC Board in 2018, she only presented the results for five minutes and used more than 20 minutes to facilitate the Board's discussions on possible improvement actions. As a result of the discussion, the group came up with a list of feasible actions, including requiring faculty to specify how they give feedback to the students, list best pedagogy strategies, and provide the institutional rubric on the OC course application form. The chair even offered to organize a faculty panel discussion on OC pedagogy.

Did the OC Board implement these actions? It turned out that implementation was hard because the OC Board members rotate every year. The decision made by one Board may not carry to the next Board. This means that communication of the results and the promotion of the use of the results needs to be a regular activity. Since the initial presentation, Dr. Hill has presented the OC results to the Gen Ed Office with new leadership and the OC Board in 2019 and 2020, reiterated the previous Board's ideas for action, and offered partnership in enacting these ideas.

As of this writing, the current OC Board had implemented policy changes. Informed by the OC assessment results and resources provided by us, the OC Board has revised the OC course proposal form in 2021 to:
- request instructors to specify an assessment tool and the evaluation tool (evaluation tool or rubric)
- have instructors check and explain the strategies they use to support successful completion of the assignments
- request instructors to detail the ways students will receive feedback
- request instructors to describe lessons learned from assessment

Collaborated with Stakeholders to Offer Professional Learning Activities
Throughout the process of compiling resources and interacting with the Gen Ed Office and OC Board, we formed strong collaborative relationships. Together, we compiled new OC resources and offered regular professional learning events for faculty teaching OC courses. Since 2020, our center, the Gen Ed Office, and the OC Board offered five workshops and faculty panels on OC pedagogy while communicating the OC assessment results.

We adapted our professional learning activities to the pandemic. For example, we offered the assignment charrette online for the first time in September 2020. This event leveraged seven OC and instructional design experts as the facilitators for the assignment charrette in Zoom breakout rooms. An additional seven faculty participated and all rated the session as *very useful*, *very effective* in giving them concrete ideas to enhance their assignment,

and *very effective* in demonstrating that assessment is an integral part of teaching.[10]

We summarized and regularly updated the OC improvement activities at the campus level in our project website.[11] These professional development opportunities are our way to conduct assessment-related activities that enhance teaching and assessment capacity in OC, enacting our Principle 2. *Provide teaching support*.

Conclusion

Throughout the OC institutional assessment cycle, from defining the learning outcomes to using results, we intentionally and deliberately structured efforts to connect assessment with pedagogy. Capacity building was our primary design principle that guided how we should carry out assessment activities with the ultimate goal to support teaching and learning. Our principle was based on evaluation-capacity building principles and approaches, supported by the backward design approach, research on learning, and the inquiry-driven assessment-for-learning framework. The five operating principles helped us strategize capacity-building tactics throughout the assessment process. They are to be transparent, provide direct teaching support, foster shared understanding, form collaborations and value faculty expertise, and offer technical support. Steered by the operating principles, our center and the campus groups implemented different strategies across the processes embedded in an assessment cycle, from developing learning outcomes to using assessment results. Our major strategies included building and restructuring a project website, providing pedagogy workshops and panels for faculty, compiling and publicizing teaching and assessment resources, organizing faculty study groups on assessment, and collaborating with and motivating stakeholders and faculty to use assessment results. We have come to understand that attention to enhancing faculty capacity in teaching and assessment should not be an afterthought and done only when the assessment results are available. We hope our principles and strategies can be a springboard and inspiration to our colleagues in the assessment profession to conduct assessment activities that build faculty's capacity in teaching and assessment.

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[10] See sample description at http://go.hawaii.edu/3aA.

[11] https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/reports/gened/oral-communication/use-of-oc-results/

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