

Summary of the Psychology Department's Recent  
Assessment of Written and Oral Communication Abilities

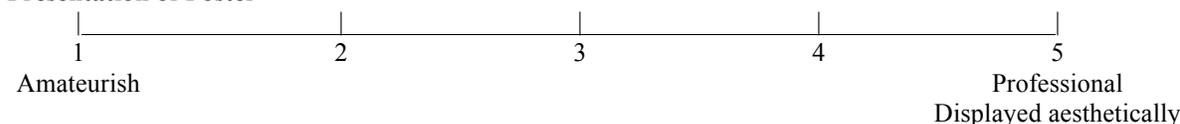
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**PLO - Written and Oral Communication Abilities: *Speaking within the Discipline*:** Students will be able to speak in genres appropriate to the academic discipline of psychology.

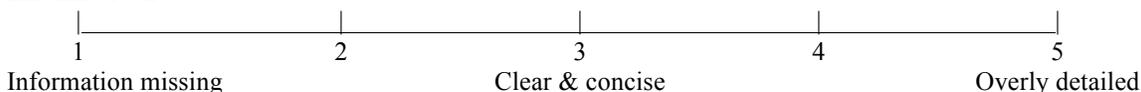
- Assessment: The number of student presentations at research conventions were tallied, the total grades of students' oral presentations in PSY 196 (Capstone Senior Practicum) were calculated, and the presentation skills of students in PSY 013 (Experimental Psychology) and PSY 198 (Capstone Senior Research) were assessed at the Westmont Research Symposium, Spring 2010, using 5 criteria based on the benchmarks below:

**Rubric for Poster Presentations**

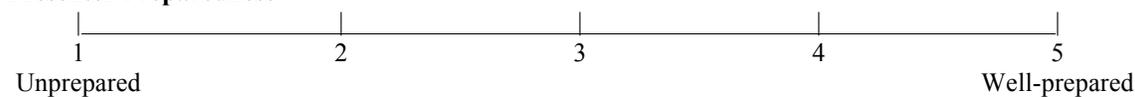
**Presentation of Poster**



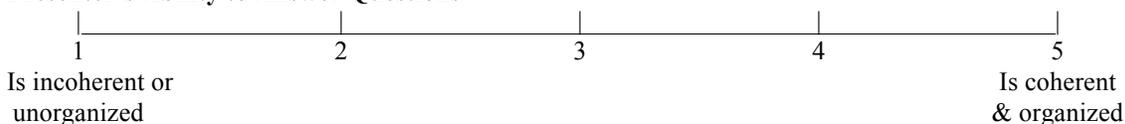
**Informativeness**



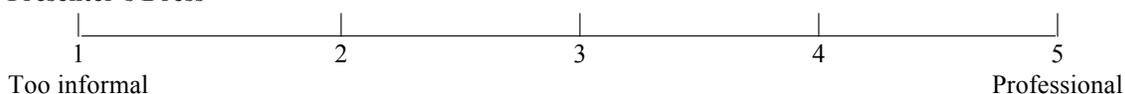
**Presenter Preparedness**



**Presenter's Ability to Answer Questions**



**Presenter's Dress**



- What We Learned:
  - As the result of research in PSY 192, Individual Research in Psychology ( $n = 6$ ), there were over 10 separate research poster presentations at conferences that included American Psychological Association, International Neuropsychology Society, the UCLA Conference on Aging, the Stanford Undergraduate Research Convention, and the Westmont Student Research Symposium. One student also coauthored a book chapter.
  - In PSY 196, Capstone Senior Practicum ( $n = 9$ ), the average grade of the students on their oral case and topical presentations was 87 (range was from 49 to 98). This presentation was presented in Powerpoint for 50-60 minutes, and included both a case presentation of a client with whom the student was working, and a topical presentation of a clinical syndrome related to their case and practicum site.

- The criteria and means for each the PSY13 and PSY198 presentations were:

	PSY 013 Experimental Psychology ( <i>n</i> = 8 <b>projects</b> )	PSY 198 Capstone Senior Research ( <i>n</i> = 5 <b>students</b> )
Presentation of poster (5)	4.09	4.50
Informativeness (3)	3.18	2.64
Presenter preparedness (5)	4.00	4.20
Presenter's ability to answer questions (5)	3.86	4.30
Presenter's dress (5)	4.95	4.60

On 3 of the criteria, the PSY 198 students performed better than the PSY 013 students, which is to be expected and hoped for, if senior students are more experienced and familiar with oral presentations. This year, the PSY 198 students were less detailed in their presentations (Informativeness), compared to the PSY 013 students. In addition, the PSY 198 students again may have taken a more casual approach to the symposium, as suggested by their slightly lower ratings in Presenter's Dress. Psychology majors are operating at an Effective or Distinguished level according to the benchmarks for Speaking within the Discipline listed below in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Benchmarks for *Written and Oral Communication* Student Learning Outcome

<i>Student Learning Outcome</i>	<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Distinguished</i>
<i>Speaking within the Discipline (e.g., poster, ppt)</i>	Presentation is missing critical information or unorganized; presenter is unprepared, and cannot answer questions coherently	Presentation is missing some information, rambling, and is too informal; presenter shows lack of preparation, and has difficulty answering questions	Professional presentation but is overly detailed or missing minor information; presentation is informative, and presenter answers questions adequately	Presentation is professional: content is well-organized, not overly detailed and displayed aesthetically; presentation is informative and coherent; presenter is prepared, poised and confident

- Changes We Have Made and Plan to Make: Some aspects of our seniors' presentation skills could use further development, namely, Informativeness and Dress.