

COMM-20N Public Speaking for Nonnative Speakers

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Introduction

- Comm 20N: Public Speaking for Nonnative Speakers is designed for students to develop strategies for designing well-organized, researched, extemporaneous speeches on topics of social significance adapted to a diverse audience.
- Two instructors' COMM-20N Nonnative Public Speaking courses are sponsored by AANAPISI for the 2014-2015 school year.
- A crucial goal we set to teach this class is transforming the common perception of "language is a barrier" into "taking pride in cultural and language identity."
- We address public speaking as an American ideal and consider language as embedded in this cultural perspective. We tackle the concept of identity and the identification process to help build confidence from within.

Method

Explanation of Approach:

- *Cultural Identity and Silence*- Substantial class time is devoted to tackle subjects of identity and silence. The goal is to spark a conversation on cultural identification, and take the most valuable moments, including the silent ones, when everyone is making an effort to learn.
- *Gradual Invitation to Speak* - Starting with small group sharing, free writing, and then eventually students feel more comfortable to speak.
- *Dialogue* - A dialogic climate is the best environment for learning, where everyone takes initiative to teach and learn from each others.

Method for achieving our results:

- Quantitative assessment of student work- Numerical points (grading rubric) given by the instructor)
- Qualitative assessment of student work- In-depth feedback and comments regarding strengths and areas of improvement (given by the instructor).
- Quantitative and Qualitative assessment of teaching practices (given by students).

Materials (Student work):

- **Oral:** Speech presentations, speaking engagements, group presentations, participation in group and class discussions.
- **Written:** Full-sentence outlines, reflection papers, written exams, peer-response forms, in-class writings, notes from group activities, notes from lectures, homework assignments.
- **SOTES:** Students' opinions of teaching effectiveness

Results

The following results are a typical example of one of the final grades from Comm 20N courses in the 2014-2015 academic year, as well as students' opinions of teaching effectiveness (SOTES). The grades are a summation of the quantitative and qualitative assessments of students' oral and written work required for the successful completion of the course.

Students must receive a C or above in order to successfully pass this course (earning at least 740 out of 1000 points).

- The overall grade for this class was B- (84.06% in SP15, 83.38% in F15)
- In spring 15, 23 out of 25 students passed this class with C or better: among the 23, 7 students passed with As; 12 students passed with Bs; and 4 students passed with Cs.
- In Fall 15, out of 27 students, 4 students passed with As; 15 students passed with Bs; 5 students passed with Cs; 3 students received a grade of C- which means they have to retake this class to fulfill GE requirement.

Quote from SOTES

"This class is for the students who are non-native, and the instructor also is non-native makes a lot of students feel more comfortable. and she tried to push us speak English in an interesting way. she tried to group us in groups with different people in many times. she also likes a coach that help us speak English and learn the skills at SJSU." (Spring-2015)

Conclusion/Implications

In conclusion, Comm 20N contributes to nonnative speaking students' perception of cultural identity, professional skills, and academic career at SJSU.

Contributions to their cultural identity:

Comm 20N contributes to students' bi/multicultural identities.

- If students are interested in the subject matter, the writing and speaking comes easier. Specifically, in Comm 20N, we integrated appreciation of culture and diversity into the curriculum. Because students are able to speak and write about topics regarding their cultural background, they are able to take pride in, and view this bi/multiculturalism as a great asset.
- Another significant factor in Comm 20N is that the whole class consists of nonnative speakers. Therefore, language becomes less of a barrier because they are not comparing themselves to native English speakers. Students feel more confident and comfortable being vocal when they are surrounded by their nonnative speaking peers. Since they are not the only nonnative speaker, or one of a few, in class, they don't feel like they are at a disadvantage.

Contributions to their public speaking skills:

Comm 20N contributes to students' acquisition of American ideals of public speaking skills.

- We successfully achieved the following objectives for this course, such that after passing this Comm 20N, our students who are nonnative speakers developed strategies for designing well-organized, researched, extemporaneous speeches on topics of social and cultural significance adapted to a diverse audience.
- The speaking engagements, in-class activities, small group discussions, and speeches allowed them to practice and critique their oral communication skills as well as observe and evaluate those of others. Readings, lectures, written assignments and class discussions served as resources for them as they developed their public speaking abilities and become more at ease when addressing an audience.

Contributions to their academic career:

- Comm 20N is a 3-unit course, fulfilling the core General Education Area A1: Basic Skills, Oral Communication. All students MUST pass an A1 course in order to obtain a Bachelor of Arts and/or a Bachelor of Science Degree.



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