
SAC

Speaking Across the Curriculum

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Robert O. Weiss, Editor

Murray State University

The Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC) program at Murray State University (KY) has completed its second successful year. More than 50 faculty members have been trained in using both speaking and writing in the classroom.

At Murray State University, the CAC program is sponsored by the College of Humanistic Studies and the College of Fine Arts and Communication with both an English teacher and a Speech Communication instructor assigned to the CAC. During the spring, the annual Rhetoric Conference was devoted to an "across the curriculum" approach. Dr. George Grice of Radford University and Dr. Ted Sheckels of Randolph-Macon College were guests at the conference.

Since the Departments of English and Speech Communication are both operating in the CAC program, there has been widespread campus interest in the program. Faculty trained early in CAC have served as mentors to others. The program produces a periodic newsletter which summarizes CAC activities.

Further information about CAC at Murray State University can be obtained from: Gary Hunt, College of Fine Arts and Communication, Murray State University, P.O. Box 9, Murray, Kentucky 42071.

Short Course at SCA

At the SCA convention on Sunday, Nov. 20, at 1:00, Michael Cronin and George Grice will repeat their popular and valuable Short Course on "Oral Communication Across the Curriculum: Designing, Implementing, and Assessing a University Wide Program."

The deadline for registering for this short course, we might note, is October 7.

Louis Rosso Reports

Louis J. Rosso, chair, reports a "rapid strengthening" of the program of the Department of Speech at Winthrop (SC) University.

You are invited to send news for the next (May) issue to the editor:

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We had inquired about a rumor that a speaking across the curriculum initiative was contributing to a "threat" to that department. Rosso replied, "I'll have to cite the old line and say that the stories of my department's demise are greatly exaggerated."

He went on, "In fact, our recent program review resulted in a strong, positive evaluation. In short, our original jeopardy was a result of an administrative oversight which was parlayed into a rapid strengthening of the program."

Rosso will present a paper describing this saga at the SCA convention in New Orleans in November.

With respect to SAC, Rosso provides this commentary, "I continue to believe that there can be a strong positive correlation between speaking across the curriculum programs and speech communication departments. I see no loss of integrity if the department drives the SAC program."

"We are in the process of developing a speech laboratory which will have a direct linkage to the SAC program. This cooperative effort was a major factor in securing administrative support for the lab."

Finally, said Rosso, "I have been asked to lead a year-long study of the assessment of oral communication skills in our general education program. This is additional evidence that speech communication departments can make significant contributions to an institution beyond preparing our majors for the profession."

From Weber State U.

Colleen Garside reports from Weber State University (UT):

Sherry Morreale, from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, is our guest speaker for the fall SPEAC retreat. It is being held on September 6 and 7, and involves about 20-30 faculty members from across the campus.

We will also be participating in one of the sessions of faculty meetings held prior to the beginning of school. We are joining with writing across the curriculum, and our teaching and learning forum to talk about alternative learning methods via speaking and writing.

We are also planning a follow-up meeting in late November or December with the folks who attended the fall retreat to talk about what they tried in their classes and what worked and what didn't.

Developments at DePauw

Let us use this opportunity to take note of recent developments in DePauw's Oral Communication Competence Program.

Program Assessment

On the basis of a rigorous assessment, the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning in May approved the continuation of the Oral Communication Competency Program at DePauw. This program, in operation for more than 10 years, requires all students to demonstrate speaking and listening competence in specially designated upper-division courses in the university.

The assessment process included surveys of students, faculty and alumni, focus group interviews, and an "outside" evaluation by Kenneth E. Andersen.

Speaking and Listening Center

Pamela C. Miller (Ph.D., University of Southern California) has been appointed Director of the Speaking and Listening Center.

In August the Center moved into brand new quarters in the refurbished Harrison Hall as one of four elements of an Academic Resource Center. Under Dr. Miller's direction, a corps of undergraduate consultants provides assistance and resources for all students at the university.

Faculty Development Workshops

In August faculty members from seven departments completed a two-week (40 contact hours) Oral Communication Workshop designed to qualify them to offer the speech-intensive ("S") courses required of all students.

Since 1981, 12 "S" Workshops have been conducted by Robert O. Weiss (yours truly) and 113 DePauw faculty have received certification to teach "S" Courses.

SCA Assessment Conference

Regarding the SCA Summer Assessment Conference, the most relevant items for Communication Across the Curriculum relate to several resolutions proposed by an issues and problems session, which will be presented to the SCA Educational Policy Board.

They relate to the following: (1) that SCA and CAT should investigate and develop outcomes assessment processes for general education and service courses; (2) that there is a need for an SCA publication on communication across the curriculum; (3) that there is a need for communication professionals to assist accreditation agencies in evaluating programs; and (4) that there is a need for summer conferences. (Information supplied by Sherry Morreale.)

CREDO (From Our First Issue)

"Speaking Across the Curriculum" is one of several descriptors designating programs which explicitly incorporate speaking and listening components into a relatively broad spectrum of courses within an educational institution.

SAC has promise for all faculty members who wish to enhance learning in their courses, for members of speech communication and related disciplines, and for administrators seeking to implement established institutional objectives.

The twin pillars of rationale supporting almost every such program are (1) that oral communication competence may be improved by sustained class participation throughout the student's educational experience and (2) that student learning is enhanced through active participation and interaction in their courses.

Speaking and listening tend to differ from other channels of communication in a number of important respects, including (1) the immediacy with which knowledge must be available, (2) contextualization in a specific place and situation, (3) the interaction involved in adaptation to what others are saying, and (4) direct collaboration in socially constructed knowledge.