

SACS

Speaking Across the Curriculum

Issue #9, May 1994

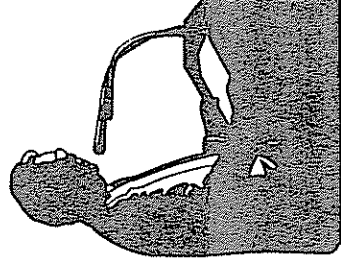
Robert O. Weiss, Editor

King's College

According to Prof. Michael Berry, King's College, in Wilkes-Barre, PA, has a thriving across the curriculum program, based upon a core curriculum during the first two years which includes a required course in Effective Oral Communication. All speeches in this course are videotaped and retained in a portfolio in the library for reference by students and by the instructors in upper division courses in which speaking is required.

During their senior year students at King's College take capstone senior seminar courses in which they "put it all together" and conclude with formal oral presentations.

The program is given oversight by an Effective Oral Communication Project Team made up of faculty members who meet on a regular basis to review progress and work on improvements. Oral communication is one component of the general education program (which includes writing, critical thinking, etc.) administered by Donald Farmer, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the college.



At the 4 C's

Theodore F. Sheckels, Jr., Randolph-Macon College, presented a paper entitled "Speaking Across the Curriculum: Its Progress, Its Problems" at the annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in Nashville in March.

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

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SAC at William and Mary

At the College of William and Mary, the development of an "Efficient Oral Communication Program" has been funded for \$191,506 over a period of two years through the Funds for Excellence program by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia. The Project Coordinator will be Tamara L. Burk.

The objective of the project is to increase the opportunities for all students to develop their oral communication skills throughout their undergraduate careers. Its rationale was derived from an outcomes assessment, which revealed that many William and Mary alumni think that their college experiences did little to help them to speak effectively and that they did not receive sufficient opportunities to successfully develop and improve their oral communication skills.

To implement a new emphasis on oral communication as widely as possible across the curriculum, William and Mary will:

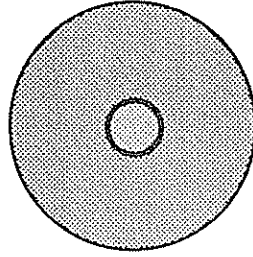
- Offer a faculty development program of seminars and short workshops to teach faculty how to incorporate oral communication activities into their classes;
- Identify which entering students most need help in improving their oral communication skills, provide this information to their advisors and give these students priority in enrolling in an appropriate speech course;
- Develop a new introductory speech class, Fundamentals of Oral Communication;
- Establish a small oral communication laboratory equipped with video equipment and computers with interactive video modules to support independent learning.

The program will be assessed using a number of tools, including evaluation of seminars and workshops by participating faculty; student surveys to determine changes in oral communication activities in the experienced curriculum; students' self-reported oral communication competences before and after taking an introductory speech class; student evaluations of the speech courses; the number of students given priority in enrollment who actually take an introductory speech course; and an outside consultant's review of our oral communication program.

CEA Conference Workshop

Professors Howard Budner and Barbara Kole, Borough of Manhattan Community College, presented a workshop at the 31st Annual Cooperative Education Association Conference on March 28 in Orlando, FL. The workshop, *Speaking Across the Curriculum: The Cooperative Education Program*, was based on their work with the Speaking and Listening Across Disciplines Committee (SALAD), a subcommittee created as a consequence of BMCC's faculty involvement in a Title III curriculum enhancement project.

The workshop focused on the philosophy, objectives and methods of implementing speaking intensive courses in the cooperative education program. Participants in the workshop received an 11-page booklet, written by Professors Budner and Kole, detailing the "why's" and "how's" of developing this type of program. Copies of the booklet are available from Dr. Budner, Borough of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers St., New York, NY 10007.



Another IVI VideoDisc

From Radford University. Michael Cronin reports, "We have recently completed our sixth Interactive Multimedia Instruction (IMI) program in Oral Communication. The latest IMI program deals with effective Introductions and Conclusions."

Some Negative Vibes

A Land-Mine That Can Explode at Any Minute

[The following warnings are excerpted from a letter from Roy Berko. Berko is Associate Director of the Speech Communication Association, but the views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the SCA.]

In my tenure as Associate Director of the SCA I have received calls from faculty members at various institutions who have either had their course offerings threatened or eliminated. In some cases the action had not yet taken place, but the instructors felt endangered that, in these days of economic cutbacks, administrators, looking for a cheap and "easy out," will eliminate required speech classes if the speaking across the curriculum movement continues its forward thrust. Since the basic courses are the bread and butter offerings or, at some schools, the only speech communication courses offered, there are those who feel that the speaking across the curriculum movement is an open door to disaster.

Though I feel that speaking across the curriculum advocates feel that they are presenting a positive learning/reinforcement method, it may turn against the field. No matter how many times our literature states that speaking across the curriculum is meant to support and strengthen speaking and listening skills, not replace the academic offerings of speech communication, it just opens the door for the assumption that "anyone" can teach oral communication. In addition, it encourages the assumption that reading aloud, doing a group activity, or giving a speech in class, any class, is a substitute for in-depth communication training.

Weber State University

At Weber State University last Fall, Patricia Palmerton of Hamline University conducted a retreat on speaking across the curriculum for about 25 faculty and administrators. According to Colleen Garside, participants said that it was one of the best retreats they have attended, and Palmerton was described as "the best presenter I have ever seen."

This spring, SPEAC (Speaking Excellence Across the Curriculum) was awarded a grant of \$1,825 for a conference in April. Faculty members from across the campus were invited to submit papers, and the 10 presenters selected (from communication, English, education, and business) received \$250 travel stipends.

Does this mean that the SAC thrust should be eliminated? I believe the answer is NO! With that said, I also must warn again and again that there is danger in assuming that the movement is not a land-mine that can explode at any minute. I think anyone who pursues the activity on their campus should not do so blindly, but should be aware of possible repercussions.

Harsh Replies

In a survey of all 92 faculty members at Abraham Baldwin College, 67 reported that they did not use any form of student presentations. The more detailed responses came from the science faculty, whose responses were written in a curt tone and were harsh in their assessment of the idea of student presentations in their courses. (Carl M. Cates)

Programs Fade Out

Of the eight institutions described in my 1988 study of Start-Up Strategies for Speaking Across the Curriculum, only four of their SAC programs have survived to this time: Hamline University, Alverno College, Central College, and DePauw University. (R.O. Weiss)

K-12

At CSCA there was concern expressed by people at the high school level about SAC being established without including speech educators at all. That has also been the experience of some K-12 people in Minnesota. (Pat Palmerton)