

**THE EVOLUTION OF AN EFFECTIVE SPEAKING ACROSS THE
CURRICULUM PROGRAM FOR EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL
UNIVERSITY'S EXTENDED CAMPUS THROUGH UNIVERSITY
COMMITMENT
AND FACULTY TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the wonderful speaking across the curriculum programs extent across America, and especially those administrators and faculty who have dedicated themselves to this essential movement. The need for articulate and even forceful speakers will only grow in this new millennium.

A debt of gratitude is due Dean Emeritus Robert Hall, whose insightful vision and internal grant approval launched ERAU's Computing Across the Curriculum Program in 1993. This CATC program has evolved into a quadratic effort, now including computing, critical thinking, speaking and writing across the curriculum.

Last, the author wishes to acknowledge the leadership of Professor Earl Wheeler in initiating and continuing the Teaching Effectiveness Symposium series, now in its eighth successful year.

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a brief history of the American Speaking Across the Curriculum movement, chronicles the current Embry-Riddle Extended Campus Speaking Across the Curriculum Program, and recommends the steps to be taken to bring the ERAU Speaking Across the Curriculum program up to an effective level. The elements of industry need for effective and articulate speaking skills is documented, several SAC models are examined, and a shopping list of possible options is examined. Based on its unique Extended Campus model of over 120 resident centers and some 3,000 center faculty to be trained and developed for optimum SAC student gains, a specific SAC developmental model is proposed.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been written to chronicle the Speaking Across the Curriculum (SAC) portion of ERAU's quadra-faceted "Computing Across the Curriculum" (CATC) Program, and to recommend an optimized SAC program. Motivated by the possibility of acceptance for presentation this fall, thereby communicating the need for enhancing the current SAC program, the author desires to tell the story of enhancing student communication skills through an effective SAC program.

It is germane to, following this brief introduction, first discuss the emergence of the SAC paradigm, and chronicle several different SAC models, with an emphasis on university commitment and faculty development and training. Following this, Embry-Riddle's Extended Campus (EC) SAC

program is developmentally discussed. Last, an optimized ERAU EC SAC program is offered.

In this "fast food", "rapidly advancing technology", "two for one sales" millennium, it is considered very appropriate that all ERAU EC undergraduate and graduate students receive, in addition to their normal aviation/aerospace education, comprehensive communication and critical thinking skills. These embedded communication skills may far outweigh all other educational gains (Glasser, 1990).

As America's colleges and universities re-emerge from the last painful quarter-decade into this new millennium, the demand for multi-faceted communication skills is louder than ever before. Whether it is the new adult just clearing his or her teenage years, or the working professional with

20 years experience, the need for clear, concise communications skills is demanded by both life and industry.

With computing, speaking and writing skills to choose from, the author chose Speaking Across the Curriculum over computing and writing, not because of relative importance, but because of the first impression phenomenon. All too often in this life, we judge books by their covers, and one muffled verbal presentation, or even an uncomfortable or muffled introduction, find us signed, sealed and judged. There is much to do before public speaking leaves the “top ten” list of personal fears, and music vocals are actually understood (Foss, 1983). An effective Speaking Across the Curriculum program, with full administration support and an effective faculty SAC training and development program can get us to an effective speech communication Nirvana.

CHAPTER II

SAC HISTORY

Central College of Iowa

According to Cronin and Grice (1991), we can trace the importance of oral communications training by scholars to at least the time of Aristotle. Russell (1988) writes that the contemporary language across the curriculum movement began when British educators began to emphasize teaching language through talk in the 1960s. By most accounts, the first American Speaking Across the Curriculum program began, similar to the popular movie Field of Dreams, adjacent to an Iowa cornfield (Cronin & Grice, 1991). At the Central College of Iowa, the first communication across the curriculum (CAC) program, including SAC, began in 1976.

At Central College, faculty received training in reading, writing, speaking and listening at summer workshops (Cronin & Grice, 1991). For those needing extra assistance, speaking and writing centers were established. The Central course catalogue listed certain courses that emphasized one of the four communications skills.

Roberts (1983), who conducted a three year follow-up study of one group of Central students, mentioned that 74 percent reported an increase in their communication skills attributable to the Central CAC program. Some 90 percent of the students surveyed mentioned that they now had a moderate or intense desire to continue improving their own skills. The Central faculty mentioned that their benefits from the Central CAC program included increased knowledge about communication skills, confidence in teaching communication skills, and an increase in collegiality. Central faculty who were CAC trained gave the same number of oral assignments, but were more likely to assist students in preparing oral assignments.

The Clarkson University Oral Communication Program

Steinfatt (1986) describes the Clarkson program in which the School of Management imbedded communications modules in courses. A management faculty member trained in speech communications assisted the

course instructor in the design, implementation and evaluation of communication activities. The communications modules addressed basic oral presentation, listening, interpersonal communication in organizations, and applied persuasion.

In an initial outcomes assessment, Steinfatt (1986) surveyed graduating seniors and MBA students, visiting executives, and supervisors of graduates. All indicated that the Clarkson program appeared to have a significant positive effect on the communication and education of Clarkson students.

The Hamline University Oral Communication Program

According to Palmerton (1996), Hamline University began their SAC program in 1985-86 as the first step of Phase I of the curriculum known as "The Hamline Plan". This plan includes a first-year seminar, SAC courses, Writing Across the Curriculum courses, and computer-intensive courses. The oral communication component of this plan

requires students to take two speaking intensive (SI) courses to graduate. The SI courses can be taken at any time, and in any discipline.

The first-year seminar in oral communication is a discussion oriented course that helps students develop their class discussion abilities (Palmerton, 1996). This course becomes, in essence, a third SI course.

To teach a SI-designated course, Palmerton (1996) mentions that Hamline faculty must complete an oral communication faculty development seminar, and must have their course proposal approved by an oral communication faculty committee. The faculty-designed SI courses have three common objectives:

1. Speaking intensive courses must support the instructional goals of the instructor, and help the students learn course material.
2. The instructor must provide guidance and interventions to students in the process of

fulfilling the requirements of Speaking Intensive activities.

3. Students must have opportunities to put their learning to use, that is, there must be an opportunity for students to try again after having received criticism regarding their oral communicative efforts.

At Hamline, faculty are encouraged to focus on any of a number of oral communication activities, including large and small learning group discussions, communications in task groups, interpersonal and intercultural communications, and presentational speaking.

The Hamline Oral Communication Program is structured to assist students acquire understanding and ability in both knowledge about communicative processes, and the ability to enact communication behaviors successfully (Palmerton, 1996). Hamline is committed to the concept that learning is enhanced when students are actively engaged in oral

discussion of course content. The Hamline SAC program focuses on student performance, and helping students understand the relationship between their communicative choices and actions, the process of inquiry, and their learning. In essence, Hamline is committed to helping students become reflective practitioners.

At the department level, Palmerton (1996) reports that Hamline provides departmental support by providing both a major and minor in Communication Studies (CS), supported by a full complement of courses in communication studies. The Hamline SAC program does not require a course in Communication Studies as a part of the SI requirement, but several CS courses, such as Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, and Small Group Communication, are SI. In addition, the Communications Department works closely with the Study Resource center in staffing a Writing/Speaking Center with oral communication tutors.

According to Palmerton (1996), Hamline has three full-time faculty in Communication Studies, with occasional adjunct faculty help. They have structured the oral communication program so that faculty without academic specialization in Communication Studies will be specifically prepared to teach SAC courses. In addition, speech communication professionals are actively involved in faculty preparation to teach SI courses, and are available for faculty consultation at any time.

The Radford University Oral Communication Program

Cronin and Glenn (1991) mention that a State of Virginia Fund For Excellence Grant for \$172,048 was awarded to Radford University by the Virginia State Council for Higher Education for 1988-90 to develop Radford University's Oral Communication (OC) Program. With an additional \$203,886 awarded for 1990-1992, Radford University provided an

additional \$496, 466 in support of this SAC project.

According to Cronin and Glenn (1991), the primary mission of this million dollar program is twofold:

1. To provide programming, facilities, and professional expertise to help faculty, staff and students improve oral communications skills; and
2. To support and facilitate the incorporation of oral communication activities to enhance learning of course content throughout the undergraduate curriculum.

To accomplish these mission objectives, communication faculty established a center for assistance, developed instructional materials, and provided expert assistance to university faculty, students, and staff (Cronin &

Glenn, 1991). Each non-speech instructor of courses enhancing learning through the use of oral communication activities is paired with a speech faculty volunteer consultant. This consultant assists with planning, implementing and evaluating oral communication activities. Normally, Radford consultants provide lectures, handouts, critiques of student performance, and advice on preparing oral communication assignments.

According to Cronin and Glenn (1991), during the first three semesters of Radford University's OC program, most students in C-I courses heard lectures on oral communication skills (73%), participated in a group presentation(s) (70%), and received handouts on oral communication skills (59%). Student surveys at the end of the first three semesters of this OC program disclosed that:

1. Most students (67%) felt that the oral communication activities

helped them improve their communication skills.

2. Only 9% of respondents indicated that such activities did not enhance their oral communication skills.
1. Most students (67%) felt that they would have learned less course content without the oral communication component; 2% indicated that they would have learned more.
2. When asked for their overall evaluation of the oral communication activities, 29% marked excellent and 54% marked good; less than 2% of the students felt that the activities were poor or very poor.
3. Most students (65%) liked participating in the oral communication activities; 6% indicated that they disliked participating in them.

Anecdotal reports from both students and faculty, very parallel to evaluations from other SAC programs,

indicated that C-I courses, compared to non-C-I courses, have several benefits (Cronin & Glenn, 1991):

1. Instructors in C-I courses tend to give more training to students on how to accomplish oral training assignments.
2. Criteria for oral communication activities in C-I courses tend to be clearer (Roberts, 1984) and feedback to students on their oral communication assignments is often more specific.
3. Students feel that the active learning required by oral communication activities is preferable to the more passive learning in lecture-oriented courses. Students feel that oral communication activities place greater emphasis on sharing their ideas in their classes (Hay, 1990).
4. Faculty feel that oral communication activities in their classes are a fundamental mode of learning (Weiss, 1988)

because they promote cognitive structuring and higher levels of conceptualization for students (Modaff & Hopper, 1984).

SAC History Summation

From at least the days of Aristotle to the present, institutions of learning and faculty have known that verbal discussion in learning environments produces learning enhancements. No doubt spurred on by the British oral communication movement in the 1960s and the Central College of Iowa SAC program initiation in 1976, many American colleges and universities have initiated CAC and, more specifically, SAC programs. In 1991, Cronin and Grice discovered some 20 post-secondary campus-wide programs of oral communication across the curriculum. It is apparent that the SAC "movement" is growing in America, with many different models to choose from.

CHAPTER III

ERAU SAC PROGRAM

In the fall of 1993, an internal grant of \$3,600 was awarded to the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) Computing Across the Curriculum (CATC) Committee of the Extended Campus. This austere, but essential grant was awarded to initiate a CATC program that would provide computer hardware, software and training to some 25 full time and over 3,000 resident center EC faculty. From 1993 to the present, the CATC Committee has consisted of approximately 6-8 full-time faculty and administrative advisory members.

Beginning with the procurement and issuance of laptop computers and appropriate software to all full time faculty, the CATC Committee has overseen the procurement of:

1. resident center computers for academic support,
2. selected location resident center computer laboratories,
3. distance learning equipment to link two geographically separated

- centers together for shared synchronous courses,
4. CD-ROM hardware for academic computers,
 5. color LCD projectors for all full time faculty and over 120 resident centers,
 6. external peripheral equipment, including ZIP drives, UHF mice, PC/TV projection devices, portable VCRs, portable DVDs, etc.

In the fall 1997 meeting of the EC Faculty Senate, a motion was passed, and approved by administration, to include, in all undergraduate and graduate course outlines (and syllabi), a student performance objective relating to enhancing students' computing, critical thinking, speaking and writing skills. At this juncture, the ERAU Extended Campus embarked on a Communicating Across the Curriculum and Speaking Across the Curriculum path simultaneously.

At the writing of this paper, the ERAU EC SAC program has not been

formalized to resemble any of the 20 SAC programs described by Cronin and Grice in 1991. It is the intent of the author to prescribe that formalization through the presentation of this paper at the fall 2000 ERAU EC Teaching Effectiveness Symposium, and, later, through the presentation of a nominal and recommended program to the ERAU EC Faculty Senate as a Computing Across The Committee motion for adoption.

CHAPTER IV

A PROPOSAL FOR AN OPTIMIZED ERAU SAC PROGRAM

This concluding chapter will first document the need for enhanced student speaking or oral communication skills, then speak to the necessity of creating a formalized program of oral communication or speaking across the curriculum. Last; the author will recommend a nominal SAC program for ERAU's uniquely structured Extended Campus.

The Need for Enhanced Student Oral Communication Skills

According to a study conducted by Curtis, Winsor and Stephens in 1989, the skills most valued in the job-entry market are communication skills. The skills of oral communication (both interpersonal and public), listening, written communication, and the trait of enthusiasm are considered the most important. According to Brummett (1987), the College Board in 1983 proposed a list of five oral communication competencies in speaking and listening considered essential to a good education:

1. The ability to engage critically and constructively in the exchange of ideas, particularly during class discussions and conferences with instructors.
2. The ability to ask and answer questions coherently and concisely and to follow spoken instructions.
3. The ability to identify and comprehend the main and

subordinate ideas in lectures and discussions, and to report accurately what others have said.

4. The ability to conceive and develop ideas about a topic for the purpose of speaking to a group; to choose and organize related ideas; to present them clearly in standard English; and to evaluate similar presentations by others.
5. The ability to vary one's use of spoken language to suit different situations.

According to Steinfatt (1986), SAC, like Writing Across the Curriculum,

is too important to be taught in a single course. Apparently, learning occurs best through the cognitive processes associated with message formation. The cognitive act of message formation and the behavioral act of message delivery changes the way a student thinks about any issue, problem or topic area. Unless education is viewed as the learning of facts, the act of creating and

communicating a message is at the very heart of the educational experience.

Cronin and Glenn (1990) mention that, in response to widespread calls for increased communication skills training for college students, several institutions have initiated programs in oral communication across the curriculum. They state that business and education leaders nationwide have noted in recent years that college graduates do not possess adequate communication skills. Apparently, written and oral communication skills are best developed in a variety of courses. Improving the quality, and expanding the application of meaningful oral communication activities is seen as directly enhancing learning across the curriculum. Designed properly, oral communication and SAC programs can provide students multiple opportunities to emphasize speaking and listening in a variety of content areas, with carefully designed assignments and constructive feedback. Through the use of SAC programs, students are seen as taking a more active

role in mastering and communicating course content.

From a sociological point of view, it is readily apparent in the offices of marriage counselors that people often suffer from the tendency to evaluate what another person is saying and therefore to misunderstand or to not really “hear” (Rogers & Roethlisberger, 1991). Foss (1983) is specific in detailing the overcoming of what she calls “communication anxiety”, and describes how to best accomplish this well before she discusses teaching communication skills and speaking and listening education across the curriculum. Tarule (1992) mentions that adults “enter the academy experience-rich and theory-poor”, in contrast to younger traditional college students who are often theory-rich, but experience-short.

Tarule (1992) specifies that learning is not *in* the conversation, but *is* the conversation. Knowledge is socially constructed in our language constituted relations. The process of becoming a

knowledgeable adult in a social, cultural context, able to speak about one's concerns and build ideas with others, is often referred to as "gaining a voice" (Tarule, 1992, p. 12). Oral communication, or dialogue, as Tarule puts it, is the wherewithal of the educational process.

Dialogue also has been described as the way that domination, subjugation, privileged claims to truth, and the power of difference are negotiated and mediated in conversations and classrooms. Language, speech, and dialogue not only place people in relation to each other but also define and influence the nature of that relationship. All are aspects of verbal interchange, and are relevant as cultural, social, and political dimensions of defining an epistemological "discourse community" and the "cultural work" of the classroom. The opportunity for particular kinds of dialogue clearly is

important for many students.

...students define the ability to feel "safe" as they speak, to be "voiced", to listen and be heard, and to "explore ideas" not as *part* of their learning but *as* their learning (p. 14).

Hay (1987) mentions that

numerous studies of college graduates, employers and corporate executives have emphasized the relationship between professional success and sophisticated communication abilities. She quotes from the Association of American Colleges, which stated, in their Integrity in the College Curriculum:

We are a century or more away from the time when going to college meant instruction in oratory, stage presence, debate, and the arts of oral persuasion...A bachelors degree should mean that its holders can read, write and speak at levels of distinction and have been given many opportunities to learn how.

It should also mean that many do so with style (p. 19).

Creating a Formalized SAC Program

Cronin and Grice (1991) provide a model for designing, implementing, and assessing a university-wide oral communication program. Their program is designed to help faculty, staff and students develop their oral communication skills and to help faculty incorporate oral communication activities to enhance learning throughout the curriculum. In their program at Radford University, faculty receive personalized training to improve their professional communication skills.

SAC Services

At Radford University, the oral communication program provides the following services for staff, faculty and students:

1. Information-exchange forum
2. Oral Presentation Program
3. Speech Fright Program
4. Listening Program

5. Debate Program
6. Small Group Communication Program
7. Communication Laboratory
8. Communication-Intensive (C-I) Courses
9. Oral Communication (OCXC) Support Facilities
 - a. Offices for program administrators
 - b. An office reception area
 - c. A classroom for SAC/OCP meetings, workshops and receptions
 - d. An OCXC Laboratory
 - e. Taping/performance rooms
 - f. A Peer Tutoring Laboratory

Weiss (1990) mentions that any SAC program may consist of a number of components, including:

1. an educational philosophy,
2. an administrative structure,
3. a system of student assistance,
4. assessment of student speaking, and

5. faculty development

Concentrating in his paper on the faculty development component of SAC programs, Weiss (1990) mentions that it is when faculty development efforts are directed toward improved classroom teaching that they become important for SAC. He posits that it is not unreasonable to place faculty development as the sine qua non of speaking across the curriculum. Weiss describes some of the faculty development features commonly found in SAC programs as: workshops, workshop follow-ups, and coordination with Speech Communication faculty.

**Creating an Optimized ERAU EC
SAC Program**

Because of the nature of Embry-Riddle's Extended Campus structure and geographic footprint, there are additional problems that nominal university SAC program implementation does not encounter. With some 120 residential centers in the U.S. and Europe, and over 3,000 center faculty, both SAC program

implementation and faculty SAC development will be challenging.

As a nonprofit institution, Embry-Riddle can best fund an Extended Campus SAC program through a grant or series of grants that will allow for SAC program design, implementation and assessment/evaluation. This grant process will probably require some percentage of university matching for grant moneys received.

The Extended Campus, perhaps with the assistance of the Daytona Beach Speech Communications Department, or their equivalent, should consider developing certain speech intensive (S-I) courses across degree programs and disciplines. Again, with the assistance of Daytona Beach faculty and administration, faculty tutors might assist in the production of a videotape or CD-ROM product for faculty development. It is envisioned that all three ERAU campuses would eventually participate in the SAC and other "across the curriculum" learning environment programs.

While both funding and Faculty Senate approval for expansion of the existing minimal ERAU EC SAC program are being considered and acted on, there are certain SAC applications that can be implemented in the classroom by all EC faculty with a minimum of faculty development or training:

1. Begin regional faculty development training in the principles of SAC, with handouts developed by the ERAU EC CATC Committee. Some SAC applications that can be immediately implemented include:
 - a. Provide discussion opportunities for all students in all classes.
 - b. Provide end of course PowerPoint presentations in all courses.
 - c. Conduct oral quizzes, midterm exams, and final exams.

- d. Use the Socratic questioning method of teaching.
 - e. Emphasize the importance of appropriate oral communications in all applications in life.
 - f. Encourage and motivate all students to improve their oral communications.
 - g. Institute vocabulary enhancement through student and faculty enrollment in the Merriam-Webster Word of the Day Program, found at: www.Merriam-Webster.com/service/subinist.htm
 - h. Have all students orally introduce themselves in each course.
 - i. Require appropriate oral course deliverables each class of each course.
2. Create a WWW website or web pages that display essential SAC

- tenets and faculty “need-to-know
“ andragogical applications.
3. Create a Web-CT Educational
Technology (ET) course on SAC
with the assistance of the ERAU
ET Department.
4. Invite prominent SAC educators
from other universities, as well as
ERAU Daytona Beach Speech
Communication faculty, to visit
the ERAU EC Faculty Senate
meetings in Daytona Beach, to
conduct a videotaped SAC
tutorial, for distribution to the EC
faculty.
5. Obtain existing pertinent SAC
videotapes for use during
regional faculty development
workshops.
- implement their personal SAC program,
beginning with their personal oral
communications growth.

In conclusion, it is apparent that
there are both short and long term SAC
goals for both the Embry-Riddle
Extended Campus and university at large
to consider. While the long term goals
are being worked and proposals are
being readied, there is much that
Extended Campus faculty can do to

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