Core Competency Assessment: Communication and Comprehension
Summary and Overview

Communication and Comprehension: Students effectively communicate in written, spoken or signed, and artistic forms to diverse audiences. Students comprehend and respectfully respond to the ideas of others.

Assessment Method

Assessment Instruments / Data	• Short survey designed by Assessment of Learning Committee (ALC) asking students to rate their own competence in six communication-related skills • Holistic faculty rating of the same students in their communication skills • GPA of same students in communication-related courses
Sample	• Sections of courses where the "Communication and Comprehension" competency rated a "4=very important." • Random sample (8 sections—1=CEC; 7=ECC) & "volunteers" (8 sections—3=CEC; 5=ECC). • Random sections got both student and faculty survey; volunteer sections got student survey only; for both samples, student grades were pulled. • A follow up survey of students at the beginning of their education at ECC (or at least in lower level courses) was administered in Fall 2010. The main survey took place in Spring 2010.
Data Reflection	• Took place at two "summits," scheduled on Oct. 14 & 15, 2010. • Torrance and Compton faculty participation • 60+ participants • Included presentations of program-level and course-level assessments

Data and Implications

Table 2: Mean Scores by Activity – Student Self-Assessment

Activity/Skill	Mean*
Writing a paper	4.25
Delivering a presentation	4.01
Communicating a message through art	3.70
Expressing your own ideas	4.41
Respectfully critiquing and discussing the ideas of others	4.27
Communicating an idea to diverse audiences	4.06

N=440
5=very competent; 4=mostly competent; 3=somewhat competent; 2=slightly competent; 1=not competent

• Student self-assessment (Table 2) and faculty self assessment (Table 3) differ by over .5 on average.
• The difference in these averages points to the fact that faculty need to be more clear about the standards they are applying to judge student work. Students need more exposure to examples of work of varying quality, especially high quality work.

Table 3: Overall Mean Rating – Faculty Assessment of Students

Assessment	Mean*
Faculty Rating of Students' Overall Communication & Comprehension	3.52

Table 4: Grades and Course Performance – Communication and Comprehension Courses (ECC)

Overall Outcomes	
Success Rate	81%
Retention Rate	90%
GPA*	3.20
Undup students	313
Avg courses taken	8.6

* GPA excludes P, NP, DR, & W notations

Communication and Comprehension Courses (Compton)

Overall Outcomes	
Success Rate	74%
Retention Rate	85%
GPA*	2.83
Undup students	97
Avg courses taken	5.6

* GPA excludes P, NP, DR, & W notations

- The course grades add another layer of complexity and inconsistency.
- The average course GPA is a robust 3.20 and 2.83 at ECC and CEC, respectively. This contrasts with the holistic faculty rating of students' communication skills at 3.52 (which would be a C-).
- Students take an average of 8.6 and 5.6 communication courses at ECC and CEC, respectively. This is a large number of courses that emphasize this competency.
- This shows that the faculty has ample opportunity to develop their students' communication skills. Student exposure to specific standards and good quality examples are key. It would be useful for faculty from a variety of disciplines to come together to discuss common standards to judge student work.

Student Self-Assessment Average Responses by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Writing Paper	Presenta-tion	MsgThru Art	Own Ideas	Critiquing	Diverse Audience
Asian	4.2	3.9	3.6	4.1	3.9	3.8
African Amer.	4.4	4.0	3.7	4.7	4.4	4.2
Amer. Indian	*	*	*	*	*	*
Latino	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.4	4.1
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
White	4.3	3.9	3.5	4.4	4.2	4.0
Two or More	*	*	*	*	*	*
Unknown	4.3	4.2	3.5	4.5	4.3	4.2
Response Count	312	288	282	305	282	312

*Data suppressed due to student counts <5 per group.

- Asian students gave the lowest ratings in four of the six skills; African-American students gave themselves the highest ratings in four of the six skills.
- This points to an opportunity and a need for more faculty training in teaching culturally diverse students.

Activity/Skill	Pre-Survey (N=248)	Post-Survey (N=439)	Difference (Post - Pre)
Writing a paper	3.71	4.25	0.54
Delivering a presentation	3.52	3.99	0.47
Communicating a message through art	3.46	3.7	0.24
Expressing your own ideas	4.01	4.41	0.40
Respectfully critiquing and discussing the ideas of others	3.84	4.27	0.43
Communicating an idea to diverse audiences	3.55	4.07	0.52

- This table shows the different self-ratings between beginning (pre-survey) and more advanced (post-survey) students. Indeed there is significant growth in most areas, with the possible exception of "communicating a message through art."
- The strongest gain is in "writing a paper," which indicates that this skill is emphasized college-wide. The program- and course-level assessment presentations at the summit mostly emphasized this skill.

Location	Division	Course	Student Self-Assess.	Faculty Evaluations*
ECC	BSSC	HIST-1B	Y	
ECC	BSSC	POLI-1	Y	Y
CEC	BSSC	PSYC-5	Y	Y
CEC	BUS	CIS-13	Y	
ECC	FINE	ART-3	Y	
ECC	FINE	SCOM-25ABCD**	Y	Y
ECC	HS&A	RECR-217	Y	Y
ECC	HUM	COMM-1abc	Y	
ECC	HUM	ENGL-1A	Y	Y
ECC	HUM	ENGL-1B	Y	Y
ECC	HUM	ENGL-1C	Y	Y
ECC	HUM	ENGL-1C	Y	
ECC	HUM	GERM-21AB	Y	Y
ECC	ITEC	MTT-103ABCD	Y	Y
CEC	MATH	MATH-150	Y	
ECC	MATH	MATH-150	Y	
ECC	NATS	BIOL-102	Y	Y
ECC	NATS	OCEA-10	Y	

*Only faculty from a subset of sampled sections were asked to rate their students.
**A different Comm. Studies class was substituted since this course had ended before the assessment process began.

- This table shows the uneven representation of certain divisions (and campuses) in the sample.
- The next time a core competency assessment takes place, steps should be taken to ensure more even representation by using such methods as stratified random sampling.

Note: *The comments and observations in this report come largely from the participants in the Core Competency Assessment Summits on Oct. 14 & 15, 2010.*