Conversational Skills Rating Scale

An Instructional Assessment Of Interpersonal Competence

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CSRS
The Conversational Skills Rating Scale

An Instructional Assessment Of Interpersonal Competence

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Fact Sheet for the Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS)

Purpose: To assess the conversational competence in interpersonal settings.

Description: The CSRS consists of 25 molecular skill items (e.g., speaking rate, articulation, posture, questions, etc.), and five molar items (e.g., inappropriate interactant--appropriate). The behavioral items can be subdivided into four skill clusters: **attentiveness** (i.e., attention to, interest in, and concern for conversational partner), **composure** (i.e., confidence, assertiveness, and relaxation), **expressiveness** (i.e., animation and variation in verbal and nonverbal forms of expression), and **coordination** (i.e., the nondisruptive negotiation of speaking turns, conversational initiation, and conversational closings). An additional five molar or general impression items are included to provide a validating (or dependent) measure to which the behavioral items are expected to relate.

Scaling: The skill items are typically scaled on a 5-point competence continuum as follows:

1 = **INADEQUATE** (use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)

2 = **FAIR** (occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)

3 = **ADEQUATE** (use is sufficient but neither very noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither particularly positive nor negative impression)

4 = **GOOD** (use was better than adequate, but not outstanding)

5 = **EXCELLENT** (use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Administration: The CSRS can be responded to by self or other(s). Thus, the student can rate self, can be rated by conversational partners, and by third-parties (e.g., the instructor or other observers) not directly involved in the interaction(s). The CSRS may be used to refer to past conversations in particular or in general. Its most typical application for competence assessment will be an instructor rating students interacting in a get-acquainted conversation (or other stimulus conversation). Many other applications and variations are discussed throughout this manual.

Pragmatics: The CSRS takes about five to seven minutes to complete. It does not require training, but training is recommended if consistency across observers is needed.

Validity: The CSRS and its subscales have related in the predicted direction, and generally with validity coefficients of reasonable size, to a wide variety of variables, across a wide variety of contexts and populations (see Appendix 3).

Reliability: The internal reliability (coefficient alpha) has consistently been above .85, and is often above .90. The reliabilities of the factor subscales have generally been above .80. The few studies in which interrater reliability has been assessed have found acceptable reliabilities (> .75).

1. INTRODUCTION

The instructional context presents several challenges to the valid assessment of interpersonal skills. The Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) was developed to accommodate both the needs of the instructor as well as the scholarly researcher. The CSRS was developed to compensate for certain limitations of other measures of interpersonal communication competence. The CSRS was designed: (a) to be equally relevant to instructional as well as basic research applications; (b) to be applicable to a wide variety of conversational settings; (c) to apply to, and be used by, self, partner, and third-parties; (d) to provide more diagnostically specific and molecular items than existing measures, (e) to represent the most established and common conversational social skills, (f) to resolve the problems associated with nonoccurrence of behaviors and (g) to resolve the potential for behaviors to be used excessively. The CSRS has now been used in a wide variety of studies, thereby permitting a consideration of its utility as a research and assessment instrument. Psychometric and criterion-based research collectively indicates that the CSRS is a highly reliable measure, with respectable stability of factor structure and sensible effect sizes with such outcomes of competent interaction as satisfaction, motivation, knowledge, and molar evaluation of competence. However, there are significant limitations that should be recognized as important parameters in applying the CSRS.

Interpersonal competence concerns the appropriate and effective management of interaction among people. To be effective is to obtain valued outcomes relative to the constraints of the context. To be appropriate is to fulfill standards of propriety and legitimacy in the context (Spitzberg, 2000; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002). The achievement of interpersonal competence presupposes the ability to manifest various skills of interaction. Clearly, survival in a social world depends greatly upon the extent of interpersonal competence, and its requisite communication skills, that a person can demonstrate across a wide variety of situations and episodes (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989; Spitzberg, 2003).

The Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) was developed to provide a psychometrically sound instrument for assessing self or other interpersonal skills in the context of conversation. It combines both verbal and nonverbal behaviors in its content, and can be used in a variety of contexts, including instructional contexts. It can be applied by students, instructors, and trained observers. It can also be used to refer to a particular conversation or to conversations in general. As such, it has considerable flexibility in (a) assessing student interactions in class, (b) providing feedback on interpersonal skills in a variety of populations, and (c) generating data for institutional accountability. It is recommended that it *not* be used, however, for admission, placement, or grade purposes, for reasons to be established below.

The CSRS consists of 25 behavioral items written at relatively microscopic levels, which comprise four skill clusters: *attentiveness*, previously referred to as altercentrism (i.e., a tendency to be concerned with, interested in, and attentive to, a conversational partner), *composure* (i.e., avoidance of anxiety cues, and an assertive or confident manner), *expressiveness* (i.e., gestural and facial animation, topical verbosity, etc.), and *coordination*, previously often referred to as interaction management (i.e., coordinated entrance and exit from conversations, nondisruptive flow of conversational turns, topical innovation, etc.). The measure typically also includes five general impression (i.e., molar) items, which are used to validate the behavioral (i.e., molecular) items. The scaling is on a competence continuum from inadequate, to adequate, to excellent. For reasons to be elaborated later, there are no absolute or a priori performance standards associated with these anchors.

2. PHILOSOPHY

The CSRS is a measure of interpersonal skills applicable in virtually all face-to-face conversational interaction. Many of the assumptions that underlie its development have been articulated at length previously by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984, 1989, 2002; Spitzberg, 2000, 2003). The assumptions most relevant to the design of the CSRS can be summarized in the following formal argument:

1. **Principles of judgment:** The judgment of a communicator's competence is subject to multifinality, equifinality, curvilinearity, perceptual locus, and contextuality:

    a. Multfinality: The same behavior (e.g., smiling) may produce different outcomes in different contexts (e.g., a prayer service vs. a party).

    b. Equifinality: Different behaviors (e.g., facial expression vs. questions) can produce the same outcome in the same context (e.g., a job interview).

    c. Curvilinearity: The same behavior (e.g., eye contact) that is competent in any context can be incompetent if performed to excess (e.g., 60 percent eye contact vs. 100 percent eye contact).

    d. Locus: Self is likely to perceive self's competence somewhat differently than the competence of a conversational partner, and both of these judgments are likely to vary somewhat from the judgments of an uninvolved third party.

    e. Contextuality: Thus, competence judgments are contextually moderated.

2. **Competence/skill distinction:** Competence, therefore, does not inhere in the ability to perform a behavior per se, but in the social evaluation of the behavior by a given perceiver in a given context. Competence is an impression, or an evaluative inference, rather than an ability or set of skills or behaviors per se.

3. **Functionality of impressions:** Although competence is an evaluation and not a skill, the evaluation is likely to be systematically related to skills. Certain skills are more likely to predict impressions of competence across given types of societal and cultural contexts than others.

4. **Abstraction:** Skills can be evaluated and assessed at multiple levels of inference and judgment, varying along a continuum of abstraction, from very specific (molecular) to very abstract (molar). The more specific the skills assessed, the more informed diagnostics, instruction, and intervention can be.

5. **Quality:** The impression of competence is optimally defined by two judgments of quality: appropriateness and effectiveness. Most other relevant evaluative criteria (e.g., clarity, understanding, satisfaction, efficiency, attractiveness, etc.) are substantially subordinate to appropriateness and effectiveness:

    a. Appropriateness: the perception of behavioral legitimacy or "fit-to-context."

    b. Effectiveness: the perception that preferable relative outcomes are achieved.

6. **Continuity:** Judgments of quality (i.e., appropriateness + effectiveness) are most naturally arrayed along a continuum, from lower levels to higher levels of competence. Indices of competence, therefore, need to be at least minimally ordinal to interval in nature.

7. **Utility:** Because skills are the only one of these factors directly observable to self, conversational partners, and third-parties, skills are the most appropriate location of any maximally flexible assessment approach.

8. **Competence model:** In any given context, judgments of appropriateness and effectiveness (i.e., competence) are expected to be a systematic function of the combination of three broad sets of communicator factors:

    a. Motivation: a communicator may fail to be viewed as competent because she or he is either too apprehensive, or not sufficiently motivated to pursue the goal of competence in a given conversation.

    b. Knowledge: a communicator may have sufficient motivation, and yet fail to be viewed as competent because she or he does not know the appropriate or effective behaviors to enact in a given conversation.

    c. Skills: a communicator may be both motivated and knowledgeable, and yet in a given conver-

sation poorly enact behaviors in accordance with this motivation and knowledge.

Thus, to be competent, an interactant needs to have the *motivation* to create a competent impression, and avoid being debilitated by anxiety. Further, an interactant needs to have the *knowledge* relevant to the context, topics, activity procedures, norms, and the like. But, having motivation and knowledge may not be sufficient if the person cannot demonstrate the actual interaction *skills* required to implement goals and understandings. The CSRS was developed to provide a subjectively based, yet relatively specific, assessment of the skills component of conversational interaction.

A very direct line of reasoning has led to a measure that is inherently imbued with subjectivity. It is as much an empirical fact as anything can be in the social world that competence is contextual (Spitzberg & Brunner, 1991). How this fact is dealt with determines the validity of any measure that is used to assess competence. In the case of the CSRS, assumptions laid out in Spitzberg and Cupach's works (1984, 1989, 2002) were followed to their logical conclusions. Specifically, it is reasoned that if any given behavior may be considered a competent response in one context (whether cultural, relational, social, environmental, or functional) but not in another, then it is not the behavior that is intrinsically competent or incompetent. It is the *evaluation* of that behavior's appropriateness and effectiveness that index the competence of the behavior in any given context.

Competence is a social standard, open to the prevailing subjective conceptions of propriety and efficacy. Further, because competence exists on a continuum (i.e., from low to high rather than a dichotomy or discontinuous form), behavior is always competent relative to its perceived possibilities. This in no way diminishes the importance of skills and abilities; it only shifts their role in a comprehensive model of communication competence. Skills and abilities (e.g., listening, speaking) may make the impression of competence more likely, but they do not guarantee such an impression.

Once this assumption is fully accepted, the question then shifts from what behaviors *are* competent, to what behaviors are consistently *perceived* to be competent in any given context. To begin to answer this question, a measure must be able to reference behaviors specifically, and in terms of the competence evaluations applied to them. One of the pragmatic implications of this assumption, however, is that there is no hope for, and indeed, there should be no attempt to impose, a universal pragmatic or prescription for any particular set of behaviors as comprising *the* repertoire of social, interpersonal, or communicative competence. Such an attempt would run afoul of at least three serious objections.

First, specifying a particular set of behaviors as essential competencies would entail some degree of ideological imperialism, reflecting the societal and cultural values of the milieu in which this list was developed (Lannamann, 1991; Spitzberg, 1994b; Spitzberg & Duran, 1993), and would therefore be biased on subjective grounds against other groups and individuals. Second, such an attempt at objectification and standardization would stifle creativity (Branham, 1980) and reify criteria of normality that unnecessarily prejudice deviance and deviants to the extent that it could not anticipate the evolutionary tendencies of social behavior (Gergen, 1973; Spitzberg & Duran, 1993). Third, the competence of communicative actions at one time in a stage of personal or relationship development can be significantly reevaluated at a later point in time. Finally, it would ignore the possibility that some people develop preferred cliques and networks, be they kinship, task, or social in nature, which develop their own idiosyncratic standards for competence that deviate from the standardized curriculum (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

Therefore, it is the philosophy of the assessment approach outlined in this manual that competence be considered an inherently socially anchored, evolutionary, and subjective phenomenon. The necessary implication of this assumption is that such an instrument should not be used in any way that penalizes or stigmatizes persons, because the bases for such applications would be subject necessarily to random errors, systematic subjective errors, and potential societal abuse.

At a very fundamental level, and with the exception of a variety of specific therapeutic endeavors, we are seldom interested in the brute fact of whether or not someone can merely perform a behavior, or even a sequence of behaviors, in the social realm. The vast majority of the time, particularly in the realm of social action, the concern is how *well* a class or group of behaviors can be performed, and the standards of quality in this regard are intrinsically social and subjective in nature. To suggest a rather pointed illustration, few of us would be willing automatically to declare a blind person communicatively incompetent if she or he has difficulty establishing eye contact in the process of interacting. Instead, we would tend to adopt alternative criteria, such as how smoothly turns were managed, how well topical flow was developed, how satisfied the interactants were, and so forth. Such standards are sub-

jective in nature. The question then, is how objectively such subjective standards can be incorporated into a measure of competence.

Subjectivity is not an anathema, but a fact. As such, it is to be embraced in the nature and architecture of an assessment and its subsequent applications. The traditional issues of reliability and validity still apply, but reliability and validity coefficients are expected to be less than unity because social evaluations are not univocal by their very nature, and only part of this is due to traditional concepts of error variance. For example, part of the variance of an interviewer's impression of a candidate's communication competence could be the candidate's appearance, the interviewer's stereotypes about the candidate's ethnic group, and even the physical setting, which can affect mood states. These may not be desirable sources of competence impressions, but they nevertheless influence people's evaluations, beyond the person's actual communicative performance in that particular situation.

3. RATIONALE

The issues surrounding the assessment of interpersonal communication competence are enormously complex. The available evidence generally indicates that competence in interpersonal interaction is integral to an understanding of self-esteem, psychological health, relational satisfaction, and even physical health (see Spitzberg, 2000; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989, 2002). Yet, the significance of this evidence is suspect when the serious problems of measurement are considered. Integrative reviews have marshaled a foreboding list of methodological and measurement dilemmas and criticisms of existing assessment schemes (e.g., Arkowitz, 1981; Bellack, 1979, 1983; Cooley & Roach, 1984; Curran, 1979a, 1979b; Curran & Mariotto, 1980; Eisler, 1976; Hersen & Bellack, 1977; Larson, Backlund, Redmond, & Barbour, 1978; Liberman, 1982; McFall, 1982; Pearson & Daniels, 1988; Rathjen, 1980; Schroeder & Rakos, 1983; Spitzberg, 1987, 1988; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 1989; Trower, 1982, 1983; Twentyman & Zimering, 1979; Wine, 1981; Yardley, 1979). The purpose of the present analysis is to review the evidence of the validity and utility of the Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) in addressing these issues. There are numerous other useful measures available that have been reviewed extensively elsewhere (see Rubin & Mead, 1984; Spitzberg, 1994c, 2003; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989) that might suit the needs of a particular instructional application.

The CSRS was developed in response to several particular problems in assessing interpersonal communication competence. It was developed primarily for basic and theoretical research. There were three conceptual limitations of most existing measures that provided the impetus to the construction of the CSRS (see Spitzberg, 1985; Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987a).

First, existing measures have limited evidence of validity. The problem of validity is particularly problematic in regard to interpersonal competence. The issue is what indicators should be used in determining the validity of a competence measure. Such indicators are difficult to select with confidence for a number of reasons: (a) Competence can be viewed as either an episodic/contextual phenomenon (i.e., a "state") or a dispositional/cross-contextual phenomenon (i.e., a trait); (b) Competence can be viewed as a set of social skills (e.g., assertiveness, self-disclosure, wit, etc.) possessed by an individual, or a set of relationship-specific processes (e.g., trajectory management, conflict management, topic maintenance, etc.) shared between partners in an ongoing relationship; (c) Competence impressions are based in part upon the observation of a person's behavior, but are also influenced by prior relational history, stereotypes, cognitive and affective biases; (d) Competence can be viewed variously as linearly related, curvilinearly related, or virtually unrelated, to a number of constructs.

The curvilinearity of behavior in particular, is widely ignored in purely behavioral approaches to competence. Several behaviors that are commonly associated with competence are considered incompetent when performed in the extreme. For example, empathy is easily one of the most commonly identified components of competence (see Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989, Table 4.7). However, excessive empathy and identification with coactor may debilitate a person's objectivity and skill (Steiner, 1955), or result in exploitation (Tedeschi & Rosenfeld, 1980), or hypersensitivity that actually results in misperception (as in over-attributing flirtation as harassment; Keyton, 1993). Further, its actual value in promoting competent interaction has been relatively small (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Spitzberg, 1990). Thus, reasonable arguments could be advanced that empathy is only slightly related, directly related, positively or negatively related, or related in parabolic form to interaction competence (Spitzberg, 1994a).

Likewise, several studies have indicated that talk time is curvilinear to evaluation, with low amounts evaluated negatively, moderate and moderately high amounts evaluated positively, and extremely high amounts evaluated less positively (Hayes & Meltzer, 1972; Hayes & Sievers, 1972; cf. Wheeless, Frymier & Thompson, 1992). Analogous results have been found for speech rate (Brown, 1980; Street & Brady, 1982), interpersonal distance (Patterson & Sechrest, 1970), self-disclosure (Aikawa, Oshiro, & Yokogawa, 1983; Cozby, 1972; Derlega, Harris, & Chaikin, 1973; Lombardo & Wood, 1979), intimacy (Harper & Elliott, 1988), social support (Silverstein, Chen, & Heller, 1996), teacher immediacy (Comstock, Rowell, & Bowers, 1995), behavioral accommodation (Fletcher, Thomas, & Durrant, 1999), self-presentation (Baron, 1986), and communicative knowledge (Berger, Karol, & Jordan, 1989). Clearly, before the construct validity of a measure of competence can be established, the construct itself needs to be carefully defined, and its assumptions delineated.

The direct implication of curvilinearity for a measure of competence is that the important judgment is competence rather than the frequency or amount of behavior. Thus, unlike many measures of competence that assess the occurrence or frequency/amount of occurrence of a behavior, the CSRS assesses the judgment of competence of behaviors, such that it is the judgment of the perceiver to what extent the amount of any given behavior was appropriate and effective to the context.

A second rationale for the development of the CSRS was that most existing measures mix their levels of inference. Specifically, many measures include items that vary in the level of abstraction (i.e., micro to mezzo to macro, or from molecular to molar). For example, a measure such as the self-rating of competence (Cupach & Spitzberg, 1981) includes items such as "I was trustworthy" along side items such as "I gave positive feedback." The former is a high-level inference in which various aspects of the person being judged must be taken into account, whereas the latter is a much more behaviorally-based, low-level inference. At least three problems result from such mixing of items: (a) Summed scores represent impure judgments, thereby obscuring the inferential processes and behavioral skills involved; (b) the molecular items increasingly get factored out across studies and samples, since they are less likely to be pan-contextual in salience and importance; and (c) the resulting measure is less diagnostically informative about the behaviors used in deriving evaluations and in providing feedback to the interactant. The direct implication for assessment is that items within any segment of a measure should be designed at a consistent level of abstraction. The CSRS consists of 25 items written at a relatively molecular level of behavioral abstraction, and another five items written at a relatively molar level of abstraction, and these two components of the measure are treated as separate measures, serving different assessment functions. The behavioral component provides diagnostically useful information about the specific behaviors that need attention, and the molar component is used as a validity check on the linkage between the behaviors and the impression of overall conversational competence.

A third rationale for the CSRS is that most existing measures are limited in their empirical and practical flexibility. Most measures were developed, conceived, and normed according to a particular format of application. Typically, measures are strictly self-report of self (i.e., AA: Actor's evaluation of Actor's own competence). Sometimes, measures are developed as other-report formats (i.e., CA: Co-actor's evaluation of Actor's competence). Occasionally, researchers have applied an AA measure in a CA format. However, rarely have measures been originally developed explicitly with *both* actor and coactor in mind as potential raters. The direct implication for competence assessment is that a measure's contents should be primarily behavioral, and thus observable to self and others, rather than entail attributed psychological characteristics (e.g., empathy, sense of humor, affability, etc.).

Most measures are also developed specifically as trait measures, with items that could not be reasonably applied to a particular context and episode (e.g., "S/he interacts well with strangers"). Rarely have measures been developed that could be applied just as easily to a particular conversation as to a person's general cross-contextual interaction tendencies. In addition, many measures used in instructional contexts involve elaborate stimulus activities, technology and personnel (e.g., the CCAI, Rubin, 1985). Such measures tend to presume a given (set of) context(s), and a given set of stimuli, which may practically restrict their instructional uses. Flexible measures would be useful in investigating actor-coactor disparities in inference, and in examining the relationships between states and traits of competent interaction, in a potentially wide variety of interactive situations and activities in class.

Reviews of existing measures of competence have revealed a need for a measure that is (a) firmly grounded in an explicit model of communicative competence that could produce testable predictions for purposes of construct validation; (b) inferentially pure in the abstraction level of its items; and (c) flexible in its potential formats and contexts of application. The Conversational Skills Rating Scale was developed in light of these needs.

4. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The CSRS has been used to (a) assess students in class and provide diagnostic feedback on their conversational behavior; (b) provide students feedback in ecologically representative settings; (c) examine improvement from one point in time (e.g., prior to skills training or activities) to another point in time (e.g., after skills training or activities); and (d) as a research instrument. In each of these capacities, the measure can be used as an episodic measure (i.e., assessing a particular conversational encounter) or as a dispositional measure (i.e., assessing a general cross-situational tendency). Various forms of the measure are presented in Appendix 1. The vast majority of the publicly accessible work on the CSRS has focused on basic research, which is reviewed later in Appendix 3.

Classroom Stimulus Tasks

In assessing students in class, several methods have been employed (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987a). Some of the criteria to consider when assigning stimulus conversational tasks to students include the following concerns:

1. Can all students, regardless of cultural or co-cultural norms or expertise, including students with disabilities, participate in the task? Is it a non-gendered task?
2. Can students participate without special preparation (e.g., having a resumé prepared for an interview task)? If so, then such preparation must be specified in advance.
3. Is the conversational task naturally relevant to the interactional experiences of the participants (e.g., the moon survival task vs. get acquainted)?
4. Is the conversational task potentially important in its generalizability to analogous situations the participants face, or may face (e.g., persuasion of partner to lend homework vs. job interview)?
5. Is it a task that can spontaneously and consistently sustain conversation for at least seven to 10 minutes?

Traditionally, the most flexible task that has been employed is the get-acquainted conversation. It is highly relevant to college students (indeed, probably to everyone). It is naturally important as a means of managing loneliness, depression, dating anxiety, job interviews, and a variety of potential interpersonal encounters. It also requires no special preparation, and although it may be somewhat culturally scripted, it also is largely unique in every instance. It can be performed with a stranger or a good friend (i.e., get "better" acquainted). The CSRS has been used in "waiting room" encounters, and at least one report suggests that the CSRS performed better as an assessment when "no instructions" were provided than it did when "get acquainted" and "role play" conditions were employed (see Segrin, 1998, note 4). Finally, given the problems of meeting people and making a good impression, it may be just taxing enough across 10 minutes to generate a reasonable distribution of scores.

Students can carry on a get-acquainted conversation in front of the class, although this may produce unknown apprehension and staging effects in people's behavior. Student dyads can be brought in one pair at a time in front of the instructor or raters only. Again, this may produce apprehension and staging effects in behavior. The easiest and most convenient method is for students to complete the measure themselves (rating self, partner, or both) after each extended (10-15 minute) interactive activity. If partner rating forms are used, exchange of forms can provide an alternative perspective.

Administration

The decision to choose between the instructor, student raters, or conversational partner is complex. Research has indicated that the correlations of these three reference points are generally statistically significant but not sizable (see discussion of locus of perception and rating in Spitzberg, 1987, 1988; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 1989). Although the correlations may be small, the mean differences between reference points is not necessarily large (Spitzberg, 1986). Even when such differences are large, discrepancies can be used to illustrate a number of potential lessons about the contextuality of competence. Raters can also be trained toward agreement, although to date the rating anchors that might be used for such an approach have not been developed sufficiently (see Appendix 2). Further, along with other problems, rater training risks the infusion of biases and ideologies that effectively causes the interactant's competence to conform to the raters' criteria rather than the criteria of the measure or the interactional context (see Spitzberg, 1987, 1988).

In addition to classroom assessment, students may be given forms to (a) complete on various naturally-occurring conversations outside of class, (b) complete on conversational "critical incidents" or unusually important conver-

sations they encounter over a semester, or (c) to give to friends and relatives to complete in reference to the student. Such additional administrations tend to support the truism that we often make a variety of impressions across interactants, that these impressions are sometimes not the one's we assumed we made on others, and generally, that our own impression of ourselves is higher than the impression others have of us. Each of these is a potentially useful lesson to expand upon in communication courses.

The administration time of the CSRS is typically between five and 15 minutes for the entire 30 items, depending upon respondent familiarity with the format. The items have been re-sequenced several times in the measure's history, with each renovation intended to place the items into an order in which the most immediately apparent behaviors appear first, and the more subtle or more episodic behavior items are presented later in the measure.

Scaling and Scoring

The five-level response scale is relatively unique. It is anchored by the terms INADEQUATE, FAIR, ADEQUATE, GOOD, and EXCELLENT. The polar and middle anchors are given verbal elaboration in the instructions (see Appendix 1). This response scale was designed to accommodate the "awkward" empirical finding that many behaviors normatively perceived to be incompetent are not (Spitzberg, 1994a). For example, most interruptions are actually competent forms of feedback or reinforcement (Kennedy & Camden, 1983). Thus, if an interactant uses interruptions, but uses them competently, the response scale permits recognition of this competence. It also accommodates the psychometrically awkward probability that the outputs of most social skills are curvilinear to impressions of competence (Spitzberg, 1994a). For example, eye contact is likely to be incompetent if used too little or too much. However, the brute fact of this response scale is that it necessarily entails subjectivity in application. This fact works against efforts to standardize and objectify a measure of competence, or to employ it in mass application, but is likely to be much more ecologically sound, given the nature of the phenomenon being assessed.

Scoring is generally straightforward. Because the response scale is intrinsically oriented toward competence (rather than incompetence), items can simply be summed, which produces a range from 25 to 125 for the 25 microscopic skill items. The five macroscopic items have traditionally been used for validation of the skill items. Specifically, all skill items should correlate positively to the summed molar items. When the skill items have been used as predictors of the molar scale, between 25 and 65 percent of the variance has generally been accounted for. In some studies, the validity coefficient is much higher; for example, Sutton and Boychuk (1997) when relating the global CSRS items to the micro CSRS items found a correlation of .91.

Subscales and Diagnostics

For pedagogical reasons, the CSRS may be divided into the following subskills: *attentiveness* (i.e., altercentrism or other-orientation), *composure* (i.e., calmness, confidence), *expressiveness* (e.g., facial and vocal), and *coordination* (i.e., controlling the flow of the conversation, or interaction management). These subscales, as identified in Appendix 1, are considered pedagogical because the factor structure has tended to vary somewhat across samples. The variation in factor structures across studies has sometimes produced two-factor solutions, sometimes three-factor solutions, and even the four-factor solutions have sometimes loaded several items on different factors than the a priori factors recommended in Appendix 1. Therefore, although the factor stability across studies is reasonable, it is not sufficiently uniform to recommend the a priori subscales be used for any purposes other than instructional.

For reasons indicated in the Philosophy section, there is no absolute cutoff point at which a student should be considered "incompetent." While the lack of a demarcation runs counter to the current competency movement, it is more compatible with the conceptual assumptions of most contemporary communication models. Nevertheless, the CSRS is recommended for diagnostics at two levels.

First, students can receive very useful diagnostic information on how they are perceived by others in terms of discrete communication skills. Most of the behaviors identified in the CSRS can be trained through a variety of social skills techniques. There are numerous approaches to social skills, and most research has indicated that at least short term improvement in such skills is achievable (see the following sources for a review of research and techniques: Eisler & Frederiksen, 1980; Kelly, 1982; Hollin & Trower, 1986a, 1986b; also see sources identified in Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989). Generally, students whose mean scores on a subscale, or whose absolute score on a given item, fall in the 1 (INADEQUATE) or 2 (FAIR) categories can be considered in need of improvement.

Second, at the program level, aggregate statistics can be collected, both as a systematic source of informa-

tion, and in pretest-posttest models designed to assess the effects of classroom instruction. At such a level the stigmatizing and labeling effects of incompetence are avoided for individuals, and yet useful data are provided about the average levels of conversational competence demonstrated by a student population, and the possible value of a given course or major.

Adaptations

A variety of adaptations may also be employed in the administration and scoring of the CSRS. Scaling can be changed to a "needs improvement" continuum (see Appendix 1). Such a change may compensate for the positive bias characteristic of typical competence distributions. The CSRS can be supplemented with other more stimulus controlled tasks (e.g., the Simulated Social Interaction Test, Curran, 1982; the Communicative Competency Assessment Instrument, Rubin, 1982). The CSRS could also be integrated into assessment forms such as portfolio assignments. In short, the CSRS is likely to be as rigorous and valid as the comprehensiveness of the assessment approach permits or requires.

5. DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE CSRS

The model of relational competence developed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) posits that competence is a subjective impression or inference. This inference is presumed to derive from both molar and molecular "data" (e.g., behavior, stereotypes, etc.). Furthermore, such an inference is predicted to be more probable if the actor being judged is highly motivated, knowledgeable, and skilled in communication (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 2002; Spitzberg, 1994d). By separating these components, it was possible to distinguish domains that had previously been confused. For example, a person may *choose* not to be competent or be impaired by anxiety (motivation), even though s/he may possess the requisite understanding (knowledge) and abilities (skills). This separation of components permitted greater precision in construct validation arguments (e.g., communication apprehension should be related primarily to the motivational component of competence, but not necessarily the knowledge or skill components). Numerous measures are available for the measurement of motivation and knowledge (see Daly, 1994; Duran & Spitzberg, 1994; Spitzberg, 1990, 1991a; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989), although much still needs to be done (Spitzberg, 2003, 2006b).

The distinction of the components that are likely to produce the impression of competence in self and others permitted another advantage. Skills were viewed as reproducible, goal-directed, functional actions and action sequences. As behaviors, they must by definition be observable, relatively discrete, and operational. Any measure of such skills would have to define a domain of communication skills that could be observed by self or other(s), and that could occur in or across virtually any given contexts or episodes of interaction. Because the universe of potential behaviors that could be sampled is virtually infinite (as in Chomsky's notion of competence permitting an infinite production and comprehension of novel utterances), the most culturally relevant and important behaviors would need to be sampled and represented. Spitzberg (1985) undertook this project.

Stage one consisted of an extensive literature search of relevant measures, reviews, and studies. Some of the studies involved had involved grounded generation of behavioral cues of competence (e.g., Conger, Wallander, Mariotto, & Ward, 1980). Stage two was a small pilot study that requested detailed open-ended production of behavioral cues used in evaluating one's competence. Stage three involved item-preening, based on redundancy, observability, behavioral specificity, and cross-contextual relevance. Stage four produced a pedagogically useful categorization of the items initially resulting in four skills clusters of 10 items each (see Table 1, Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987a, p. 31). The skills clusters reflected the skills of: *coordination* (e.g., topic initiation, topic follow-up, interruptions, etc.); *attentiveness*, at the time labeled altercentrism (e.g., seek clarification, other-references, body lean, etc.); *expressiveness* (e.g., monotone voice, gestures, personal opinion expression, etc.); and *composure*, at the time labeled interaction management (e.g., vocal tension, fidgeting, response shortness, etc.).

The decision regarding scale format presented a highly problematic set of issues. Because the item content had to be behaviorally-based and allow for curvilinearity and normative versus idiosyncratic competence, the response scale could not be a traditional Likert-type "frequency" or "true-false" format. For example, interruptions can be highly inappropriate (Wiemann, 1977) or perfectly appropriate (Kennedy & Camden, 1982). Thus, merely indicating whether interruptions occurred in a conversation, or whether someone used interruptions generally, would not indicate the *competence* with which they were used. It was decided to incorporate evaluations of competence into the response scale itself.

The earliest forms of the CSRS used a three anchor, five-response scale, ranging from "inadequate" to "needs work" to "adequate." Later response scales were refined, producing the most recent versions identified in Appendix 1. In addition, a small set of molar evaluation items has been included as a dependent measure and validity criterion of competence impression. The content of these molar items has evolved in relatively minor ways across studies, resulting in the five semantic differential format items displayed in Appendix 1.

6. ISSUES OF FACTOR STRUCTURE

While it is difficult to compare factor structures across studies, especially given differences in reporting formats, factor definition criteria, rotational decisions, and samples, there is evidence that the CSRS is best viewed as a factorially complex instrument, typically tapping three to five factors: attentiveness, composure, expressiveness, coordination, and vocalics.

Spitzberg's (1985) factor analysis of the 40-item version revealed a two-factor solution for instructors (28 percent, expressiveness and interaction management), partners (30.6 percent, expressiveness and composure), and peers (32.7 percent, expressiveness and composure). Spitzberg and Hurt's (1987a) first study identified a three factor solution explaining 39.4 percent of the variance, and consisting of expressiveness, composure, and altercentrism factors. Their second study produced a three factor solution explaining 55.5 percent of the variance, defined by altercentrism, vocalics, and composure. Chin and Ringer (1986) extracted a four factor solution (32 percent), consisting of interaction skills (similar to altercentrism), nervous movements (similar to composure), animation (similar to expressiveness), and vocal qualities (similar to vocalics). Bennett's (1987) study utilized poor extraction procedures (e.g., more parsimonious models were not tested, thereby permitting superfluous factors to fail definitional criteria). For both self-ratings and ratings of partner, a strong general factor emerged, with strong cross-loadings of the composure items. Additional solution statistics were not provided. Unpublished data by Wood (1991) on a small sample produced a five-factor solution mirroring previous research (altercentrism, composure, expressiveness, interaction management, and vocalics). Huwe et al. (1991), on a small sample, identified a four factor solution (64 percent), defined by expressiveness, altercentrism, composure, and vocalics. Karch (1995) identified three factors, labeled altercentrism (9 items, $\alpha =$ .94), vocal expressiveness (7 items, $\alpha = .93$), and bodily composure (4 items, $\alpha = .85$).

Huwe's (1990) factor analysis of the 25-item scale revealed four factors explaining 64.0 percent of the common variance: factor one, labeled expressiveness (43.7 percent), included vocal variance, gestures, vocal volume, smiling, humor, partner speaking, the giving of personal opinions, agreements, and facial expressions; factor two, labeled altercentrism (8.1 percent), included "topic maintenance, lean, topic initiation, questions, use

of time, and head nods"; factor three, labeled composure (6.2 percent), included twitches, fidgeting, posture, interruptions, and unmotivated movements; factor four, labeled vocalics (6.0 percent), included speaking fluency, speech rate, vocal confidence, and eye contact (p. 169).

Brundidge (2002) extracted a three-factor solution with oblique rotation, labeled: altercentrism, composure, and coordination. In Spitzberg (2006), the 25 molecular items of the CSRS were submitted to principle components analysis with oblique rotation (KMO=.92). A common 4-factor solution emerged accounting for 60 percent of the variance (expressiveness, vocalics, attentiveness, and composure).

Sophie's (2004) factor analysis employed orthogonal rotation and was able to reduce the 30-item CSRS to seven items accounting for 69.196% of the variance. These seven items "truly represented the four interpersonal skill subgroups developed by Spitzberg" (Sophie, 2004, p. 284). Factors were labeled as general impression of interpersonal competence (i.e. molar, 5 items, 38 percent), altercentrism (7 items, 8 percent), composure (7 items, 6 percent), expressiveness (3 items, 5 percent), composure (3 items, 4 percent), and a combination of expressiveness/composure (1 item, 4 percent). The small number of items on the latter factors suggests that this solution reflects over-factoring.

The strongest direct test of the factor structure of the CSRS is found in Spitzberg, Brookshire and Brunner (1990), based on reanalysis of the Spitzberg and Brunner (1987) sample of naturally occurring conversations. A comparison of hypothetical models using confirmatory factor analytic techniques revealed relatively equivalent support for both the four-factor (51.7 percent: altercentrism, composure, expressiveness, interaction management) and five-factor (56.1 percent: adding vocalism) models.

The fact that the number of factors has varied across studies bears comment (cf., Ketrow, 1991). While it would be ideal if the structure of competence evaluations were generalizable across time, context, perceivers, and perceived, there is not a lot of psychometric reason to expect common structure across all these contextually divergent variables. Research in a variety of domains does show fundamental dimensions of perception (e.g., the ubiquitous affect and status dimensions), relating (e.g., the ubiquitous love-hate vs. dominant-submissive

dimensions) or meaning (e.g., the ubiquitous evaluation-potency-evaluation dimensions). Whether these dimensions should generalize across conversational contexts and observers is not as well-established. The CSRS has not only been applied as both a trait and a state measure, it has been applied in task-oriented and more informal social contexts. It has been applied as a rating of self, and as a rating of others. Finally, it has been factored by authors who have used widely differing extraction criteria, rotational schemes, and factor definition criteria. The fact that similar *types* or *groupings* of items tend to be extracted is promising. Furthermore, the ultimate utility of the measure lies in the meaningfulness of the factors for a given application. In this, authors seem to have encountered little difficulty in interpreting the resulting factor structures in the context of their studies.

7. RELIABILITY

Consistently, throughout all research, internal consistencies of both the overall CSRS and its component factor subscales and molar evaluation subscale have been acceptable. Internal consistency has consistently been over .80, and is usually in the high .80s to low .90s. For example, Huwe (1990) found consistently high reliabilities for the CSRS and its components: the all molecular level (25 items, α = .94), the molar-level (five items, α = .88), the expressiveness subscale (nine items, α = 91), the altercentrism subscale (six items, α = .84), and the composure subscale (five items, α = .86). Smith (1994) also found the CSRS highly reliable (.95 for total items, .97 for molar items). Brundidge (2002) also found consistently high reliabilities for the 25 item scale (α = .84), the five molar items (α = .90), and the three subscales, altercentrism, composure, and coordination (α = .86, α = .78, and α = .67, respectively). Spitzberg (1995) found consistently acceptable reliabilities for altercentrism (α = .87), composure (α = .74), expressiveness (α = .83), and interaction management (α = .71). Segrin (1998) used the CSRS to assess both the self- and partner ratings of participants' (state) social skills (.96 and .97 respectively). Segrin (1999) employed the CSRS to assess state social skills, and found the following reliabilities: Self-rated, α = .93; Other/Partner-rated, α = .95; and Peer/Non partner-rated, average of six raters, α = .85. Gallardo (personal communication, C. Segrin, September 22, 2006) found internal consistency of the self-rated CSRS for both males α = .84) and females (α = .83).

Interrater reliabilities have also been calculated in several studies. Although not technically a test-retest statistic (because a treatment condition intervened), Dawson and Spitzberg (1987) found a correlation of .78 between pretest and posttest. Furthermore, when the CSRS has been used by raters, interrater reliabilities have been acceptable (Dawson & Spitzberg, 1986; Freeman, 1988; Graham, Papa, & Brooks, 1992). For example, Ellis (1994) found an interrater reliability of r=. 75. Cooper and Livesay (2006), in an analysis of mixed and same-sex "get acquainted" conversations found the means interrater agreement for all 30 items of the CSRS to be .87. Gallardo (personal communication, C. Segrin, September 22, 2006) used the CSRS to measure social skills via three trained observers. The interrater reliabilities for social skill were α = .81 and α = .72 for females and males, respectively.

8. VALIDITY

Does the CSRS fulfill its original intentions? In terms of validity, it has generally produced validity coefficients in the expected direction and of reasonable magnitude (see Appendix 3). There could be several explanations for the instances in which the CSRS or its component factors have not related substantially to other constructs. First, the constructs may not be conceptually tied to competence, either in general, or as operationalized by the CSRS. For example, to a supervisor, a subordinate's ingratiation may be successful to the extent it is not perceived as ingratiation. Thus, competence is an appearance of spontaneity and a masking of strategic intent in the production of ingratiating behaviors. The components of communication skills involved in this behavior may either involve skills at a different level of abstraction from the CSRS (e.g., deception, plan implementation, etc.), or involve action that by definition makes one's communication fade into the phenomenological background of the interaction episode. Some of the conceptual complexities involved are reviewed by Spitzberg (1993, 1994a, 2000). Second, the constructs may not be tied to the "frame" of the CSRS. For example, if the CSRS is applied to a given conversation, it may be no surprise when it does not relate well to trait-based, dispositional constructs. Similarly, because the CSRS was designed to avoid mixed levels of inference, it is not too surprising that it does not always relate strongly to more molar constructs (e.g., trust) and more mixed-level measures of competence (e.g., Wiemann's measure, Brunner's measure, etc.).

The third possibility is that the CSRS lacks construct validity. However, there is clearly evidence that the CSRS, and its component constructs, are strongly and sensibly related to motivation to communicate, knowledge of communication, the production of "typical" episodes, molar perceptions of self competence and partner competence, and contextual expectancy fulfillment, especially when these constructs are measured at the same level of episodic frame. Collectively, the CSRS has revealed significant correlations to conversational satisfaction (Spitzberg & Brunner, 1991), relational trust (Bennett, 1987), received social support (Spitzberg, 1991b), use of humor (Graham et al., 1992), loneliness (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987b), trait apprehension (Spitzberg, 1986), and partner perceptions of actor competence (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987a). It has been found to be related significantly to leadership effectiveness and immediacy ratings (Karch, 1995). It appears to be relatively sample and culture gen-

eralizable, and highly reliable. Its factors, while clearly not entirely stable, are consistent enough to provide a reasonable set of inferences regarding skills involved in producing competent episodes of interaction. In general, while there are clearly improvements that can be made, the measure provides a defensibly construct valid measure of competent interaction, especially in specific conversational episodes.

Using Pearson's r, Dawson (1986) found the CSRS to be significantly related to the Simulated Social Interaction Test (SSIT) (r =.55, p < .01). The two constructs (the SSIT and the CSRS) were found to relate in "expected" ways and "in some cases, reveal[ed] impressive power" (p. 24). The averaged competence pretest ratings of the CSRS "were significantly related to SSIT/skill post-test ratings three weeks later (r = .55, p < .01) and to SSIT/anxiety pretest ratings (r = .67, p < .001) (p. 24).

Brundidge (2002), using ANOVA, found a significant positive linear relationship with a modest effect size between communication competence (via the CSRS) and overall relational quality (F(1/217) = 21.97; $\hat{\eta}^2$ = .10; p < .01). As would be expected, avoidance and anxiety held significant negative correlations with overall competence. Females scored higher than males in communication competence (F(1/213) = 11.15; $\hat{\eta}^2$ = .05; p < .01). Respondents in relationships over four months reported higher levels of communication competence (F(1/219) = 8.47; $\hat{\eta}^2$ = .04; p < .01). Low levels of anxiety correlated with high levels of relational quality.

In terms of inference levels, the issue of abstraction has not actually been tested directly. At the level of face validity, the items were designed to, and appear to, reflect a relatively low level of abstraction, especially relative to most existing measures of competence. However, this is only one level of abstraction and there are probably at least three levels that need conceptualization and measurement: macroscopic (e.g., adaptability, creativity, planning, etc.), mezzoscopic (e.g., disclosure, assertiveness, conflict management, etc.), and microscopic (e.g., questions, articulation, facial expressions, etc.). Molar inferences such as humor, interaction management, etc., are likely to have their mid-range (e.g., jokings, turn-taking, etc.) and molecular (e.g., laugh, eye contact and gestures, etc.) parallels. The CSRS references primarily the microscopic level, and it does this at the level of available evaluations of lay interactants. Coding can achieve even a lower level of abstraction and inference, but loses flex-

ibility of research uses in the process. Therefore, these other levels of the abstraction ladder ultimately need to be filled in for a conceptualization of competence to be complete.

In terms of practical flexibility, the CSRS has been applied in groups of students, businesspersons, non-student adults, school principals, and military personnel. It has been applied to problem-solving interactions, laboratory situations, naturally-occurring conversations, and get-acquainted conversations. It has been applied as a state, a cross-contextual trait, and a relationship-based disposition. While it appears to be best suited for referencing the competence of particular skills manifest in a given conversational episode, it has provided sufficient evidence of transferability when applied in other formats.

Finally, to date there has been little commentary or critical feedback upon which to respond in discussing the CSRS. Ketrow (2001), however, offers a thoughtful critique of the CSRS. Her first concern is the lack of attention to "affect" in the CSRS. A related concern is that the measure may not assess sensitivity and awareness (including empathy, perspective-taking, etc.). Her second concern is the variable factor structure (already dealt with in Section 6). Her third concern is whether the measure is appropriate across cultural contexts (i.e., the tendency to assume "one size fits all"). The final concern is whether the assessment of "effectiveness" might misdirect ratings of competence in encounters when communicators may not be entirely conscious of their goals, and that the inclusion of "effectiveness" as a criterion might make perceptions of competence unstable across observers. It is a delight to have the opportunity to respond.

Regarding the first two interrelated concerns, it is true the CSRS does not attempt to assess perspective-taking or interior aspects of a communicator's affect. To the extent these could possibly matter in a communicative context, these will be *available* in the interactant's behavior. They cannot matter to the observer or the co-interactant if they are not in the communicator's behavior. Thus, for example, affect is assessed to the extent that it is part of the communicator's behavioral *expressiveness*. If it is not in the interactant's behavior, it cannot matter to the co-interactant or to the observer. Any measure of competence that is intended for use by people to rate other communicators makes a significant mistake if it attempts substantially to assess interior cognitive or affective states of another communicator. Indeed, Ketrow contradicts her own concern by claiming that any attempt to assess communicator interior states, such as

conscious goal achievement (i.e., effectiveness) would produce interrater inconsistency because of their lack of access to such information. The same would be true if affect, perspective-taking, or empathy were assessed by others. Thus, to the extent that a measure is to be useful for rating other communicators' competence, the measure must to a large extent focus on exterior or behavioral features of assessment.

Regarding the "one size fits all" problem (quote actually referenced to Chen), it is important to identify whether or not any measure is useful in other cultural contexts. It is therefore an empirical concern, and neither Ketrow nor Chen offer any evidence of the inapplicability of the CSRS to other cultures. It is also worth noting that identifying the usefulness or validity of a measure in other cultural contexts is not the same thing as requiring cross-cultural generalizability. A measure can still relate to other constructs as it should in different cultures, and yet not necessarily show the same magnitude or dimensional structure across these contexts. It is premature to claim that the CSRS either does or does not generalize in structure or validity coefficients. It has only been studied cross-culturally in one study (Matsufuji, 1993). In this study the CSRS revealed some similarities and some differences (see coefficients reported in Appendix 3), but then, as a measure focused on specific conversational behaviors and contextually specific in application, this may not be either surprising or problematic.

In addition, the argument that one size cannot fit all seems odd, given that the scaling of the CSRS is one of the only measures available for accommodating precisely this issue. Specifically, to argue that one size cannot fit all is to argue that "eye contact" or "gestures" or "asking questions" are not relevant in some culture of this planet or some aspect of this species. The scaling of the CSRS does not ask whether such behaviors were used in a conversation, nor whether they were used in a particular quantity or style of expression. It asks whether the behaviors' *use or lack of use* was *competent* or not. Thus, unless the argument is that there are cultures that do not engage in use of humor or speaking about topics of concern to the self and other, it is difficult to ascertain how such a measure would not possess face validity in any culture. There may be very specific behavioral routines that the CSRS does not assess that may be important. For example, the "use of silence" might be sufficiently important in Asian cultures that it might warrant the addition of such an item to the CSRS when it is applied in another culture, and if so, then it is cer-

tainly recommended that such adaptations of the CSRS be made by whatever scholar or instructor is seeking to reveal through the use of the CSRS.

The final concern mentioned by Ketrow is about the assessment of effectiveness. In the CSRS, effectiveness is one of five molar judgments, so it does involve some attribution about the other communicator's interior state of cognition when the CSRS is being applied to another communicator. Although effectiveness is generally a more valid self-assessment than assessment made by another, it is hardly entirely foreign to the judgments of others. In compliance-gaining, conflict, and persuasive contexts, for example, communicators are relatively (and often acutely) aware of whether or not the other communicator is attempting to achieve some goal, and whether or not the other communicator achieved that goal. Nevertheless, effectiveness is largely referenced by a relatively cognitive and affective goal state, and attributing effectiveness to another communicator is potentially problematic. The fact that this effectiveness item is only one among five molar items, and that these molar items tend to factor as a collective and have high inter-item correlations suggests that the attribution is not particularly problematic for raters. Whether or not it is more or less problematic than attributing such traits as perspective-taking, empathy, awareness, and sensitivity awaits further study, but given the limitations of everyday perspective-taking (Sillars & Vangelisti, 2006), it seems unlikely that such concepts already ill-defined in the literature, much less measurement, would fare as well as judgments of a single item of effectiveness.

Thus, there are likely to be skills that could be added to the CSRS, particularly when there is evidence of the importance of such behaviors in a particular culture. Ultimately, however, the relevance and importance of such behaviors is an empirical question, and the need for the CSRS to have behaviors added in any given cultural context awaits further investigation.

9. CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

The Conversational Skills Rating Scale is a practical, efficient, reliable instrument for assessing interpersonal communication skills. Its validity evidence is reasonably strong for the particular types of contexts for which it was designed; specifically, social conversational encounters. Its validity as a trait measure and in more task-oriented contexts is less well-evidenced, but the available research is at least as promising for its use in such contexts as many of the alternative available options. When applied in instructional contexts, the CSRS provides easily comprehended and diagnostically useful information to the assessed student regarding skills that are proficient and skills that are perceived as needing improvement.

Future Directions

In general, the CSRS, and its component factors (i.e., attentiveness, composure, expressiveness, coordination), provide a diagnostically useful, construct valid measure of perceived competence of interaction skills in conversational episodes. It appears to have promise in other applications that need to be explored in future research. In particular, the following are some suggestions for enhancing the measure's utility.

First, several of the studies examining the CSRS in applied contexts were methodologically flawed and extremely small-scale in their samples. In addition, many of the studies were too poorly reported to assure cumulative precision in knowledge claims. More exacting studies examining the construct validity of the measure in applied settings are needed for comparative purposes.

Second, the abstraction continuum needs to be examined and measures need to be produced that provide empirical bridges at higher levels of abstraction. Ideally, such a program of research would investigate the levels of abstraction subjects perceive in various interpersonal skills (i.e., how they unitize conversational skills). Such objectives are suggested by programs underway by Smith (1984) and Vallacher and Wegner (1987). Then, such research would need to examine the mapping statements that lay interactants use to connect lower-level skills to middle-level skills, and then to higher-level inferences of competence (see Pavitt, 1982, 1989, 1990). Aside from the important theoretical advances offered by such research, such studies will assist in developing optimal scaling and item content of measures.

Third, there is a need for research that investigates whether there are additional skill domains that are not represented in the CSRS. Despite the care taken in the original development of the measure, there are potential skills that are not well-represented. For example, the current version of the CSRS varies very slightly from the version reported in 1987 (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987a) because interviews with raters indicated that nervous behaviors were overrepresented and articulation was missing. Subsequently, two of the nervousness items were collapsed and an articulation item was added. Spitzberg and Cupach (2002) identified over 70 potentially distinct skills that have been related to marital or relational satisfaction alone, and over 100 potentially distinct skills identified in various factor-analytic studies of interpersonal skills. For example, the CSRS does not explicitly assess listening. To some extent, the attentiveness items may be interpreted as the "appearance of listening." However, given the ubiquitous nature of listening, and its presumed centrality in the communication discipline, the CSRS should probably be supplemented with some form of listening test (Daly, 1994). Clearly, there may be skills insufficiently represented in the CSRS. Any given user may elect to insert other skills that may be needed for any given application, or in general.

Fourth, there is a need to experiment with different scaling continua. Most distributions of the CSRS have been on the high end, indicating that the large majority of people who are rated, whether by self or other(s), appear to be relatively competent rather than incompetent. On the one hand, many other estimates would concur that the large majority of people are above minimally competent communicatively. On the other hand, many estimates place the percentage of "at risk" or incompetent persons at a much higher level than the CSRS evidences. Many of these less sanguine measures have been applied to non-college samples, and it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a sample selection problem. It may be that by the time students get to college, they will have acquired *minimal* communication competence. Nevertheless, attempts to make the scaling less pejorative and yet still sensitive to the curvilinear problem would be welcome. Recent research by Spitzberg (2006a) experimentally varied respondent exposure to three distinct rating scales, and there was no substantive difference in distributional characteristics across the

rating scales. Thus, initially it appears that the CSRS is resilient to variations in response scale. This conclusion needs to be viewed as tentative until further research can verify it.

Fifth, there may be an infinite number of ways of adapting the measure for specific purposes. For example, Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, and Gottman (1993) adapted the CSRS to develop a briefer, more parsimonious measure for rating married couples' interactions. The measure, bearing substantial conceptual similarity to the CSRS, performed well in their application. Similar adaptations should continue to reveal the flexibility of the basic CSRS measure.

Finally, the original conceptual framework of the CSRS had it assessing the skill domain of interpersonal competence. It does not assess the affective (i.e., motivation) or cognitive (i.e., knowledge) components of competence. A comprehensive approach to assess interpersonal competence should include measures of these components relevant to the interpersonal realm of interaction (Daly, 1994).

Cautions

In addition to some of the cautions implied above, there are two final cautionary notes. First, the CSRS is very simple in its flexibility, convenience, and application. These advantages become handicaps when the expectation of administrators is for something more "rigorous and demanding." In point of fact, the CSRS is only one element of an assessment approach. The rigor of this assessment depends upon the rigor of the operations surrounding it. Specifically, the rigor of the CSRS is proportional to the amount of training the raters receive, the level of difficulty of the communicative tasks being assessed, and the number of times, observers, and contexts used for assessment.

Second, as indicated earlier, the CSRS should not be used for placement or grading purposes. Not enough is known about cross-contextual generalizability of social skills utilized in everyday conversation to recommend major changes in student academic careers, much less to risk the potential stigmata of the label "incompetent." Estimates of the levels of serious social inadequacy seem to range from a low of seven percent to as high as 35 percent (see Spitzberg, 1994a; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989). Such variations in estimation may reflect population differences, but more likely reflect methodological differences. In the realm of social behavior, communication behavior is highly dependent upon context, task, motivation, familiarity, cultural background, and the subjectivities of the perceiver. Such communicative realities do not recommend the formulation of rigid criteria of competence and incompetence. Instead, the CSRS should be used to investigate basic research questions, to facilitate classroom instruction, to provide feedback to students wanting to improve their interpersonal and conversational skills, and to provide evidence of program impact.

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Appendix 1: Sample Versions of the CSRS

General Considerations

The CSRS can be used as a collective measure of conversational skills by simply summing the scores of the 25 behavioral items together. However, specific skill clusters can also be assessed by summing subsets of items. If possible, factor analyses in a given sample of students is recommended. If this is not practical or advisable (e.g., due to the relatively small number of ratings available), then an a priori skill clustering is possible, based upon previous factor analytic studies. The subscale scoring clusters presented below provide a reasonable pedagogical basis for assessing student skill areas in conversational interaction.

Subscale Keys

A pedagogical classification of skills subscales can be generated by adding the item ratings as indicated below (numbers in parentheses are optional. They reasonably tap the scale indicated, but are also redundant with items comprising other subscales. Their value is primarily convenience, making all subscales have the same number of items). If the instructor simply needs the subscales to be on a similar metric, the original summed scores can simply be divided by the number of items comprising the subscale (e.g., for EXPRESSIVENESS, add the ratings for items 4, 5, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16, and divide by 7).

A	=	Attentiveness:	8 +	12 +	18 +	19 +	20 +	21 +	(17)
Cm	=	Composure:	2 +	3 +	6 +	7 +	9 +	10 +	(16)
E	=	Expressiveness:	4 +	5 +	11 +	13 +	14 +	15 +	16
Co	=	Coordination:	1 +	17 +	22 +	23 +	24 +	25 +	(2)

Alternative Scaling Options

For some classroom and research applications, any of the following rating scales may seem less pejorative or more pedagogically or therapeutically useful. Research by Spitzberg (2006), in which the first three of these were randomly distributed and compared in a trait-based application of the CSRS, showed no substantial differences in distributional characteristics across these. Thus, the CSRS appears to be relatively resilient psychometrically to alterations in scaling. The user is encouraged to experiment with alternative scaling continua that are best for any given application.

Unskilled-Skilled Scaling:

Instructions: People differ quite a bit in terms of how skilled they are at communicating and conversing with others. For the descriptions of behaviors that follow, we would like you to estimate, **compared to typical conversationalists** you encounter, how skilled you are you for each behavior listed below…

I would say I am… [In the conversation, I would say my communication was…]

1	=	HIGHLY UNSKILLED
2	=	MODERATELY UNSKILLED
3	=	SLIGHTLY UNSKILLED
4	=	NEUTRAL; NEITHER SKILLED NOR UNSKILLED
5	=	SLIGHTLY SKILLED
6	=	MODERATELY SKILLED
7	=	HIGHLY SKILLED

Normative Scaling:

Instructions: People differ quite a bit in terms of how skilled they are at communicating and conversing with others. For the descriptions of behavior that follow, we would like you to estimate, **compared to typical conversationalists** you encounter, how skilled you are for each behavior listed below…

I would say I am… [In the conversation, I would say my communication was…]

1	=	EXTREMELY BELOW AVERAGE
2	=	MODERATELY BELOW AVERAGE
3	=	SLIGHTLY BELOW AVERAGE
4	=	AVERAGE
5	=	SLIGHTLY ABOVE AVERAGE
6	=	MODERATELY ABOVE AVERAGE
7	=	EXTREMELY ABOVE AVERAGE

7-Point Competence Scaling:

Instructions: People differ quite a bit in terms of how skilled they are at communicating and conversing with others. For the descriptions of behaviors that follow, we would like you to estimate, **compared to typical conversationalists** you encounter, how skilled you are using the following rating scale:

I would say I am… [In the conversation, I would say my communication was…]

1 = EXTREMELY INADEQUATE (use was consistently very awkward, disruptive or resulted in a negative impression of communicative skills)

2 = MODERATELY INADEQUATE (often awkward or disruptive, only occasionally adequate)

3 = MILDLY INADEQUATE (occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)

4 = ADEQUATE (use was sufficient but neither very noticeable nor excellent. Produced neither positive or negative impression, or produced mixed impression)

5 = MILDLY GOOD (use was occasionally but not consistently skilled and better than adequate)

6 = MODERATELY GOOD (use was often and fairly consistently skilled, producing generally good impression)

7 = EXCELLENT (use was smooth, controlled, and resulted in very positive impression of communicative skills)

Improvement-Based Scaling:

Instructions: People differ quite a bit in terms of how skilled they are at communicating and conversing with others. For the descriptions of behaviors that follow, we would like you to estimate, **compared to how well you are ideally capable of communicating**, how skilled you are for each behavior listed below…

I would say I am… [In the conversation, I would say there was…]

1 = VERY EXTENSIVE room for improvement (use of behavior was consistently noticeable in its absence, excess, or disruptiveness)

2 = EXTENSIVE room for improvement (use of behavior was often noticeable in its absence, excess, or disruptiveness)

3 = MODERATE room for improvement (use of behavior was occasionally noticeable in its absence, excess, or disruptiveness)

4 = MINIMAL room for improvement (use of behavior was generally skillful, with few absences, excesses, or disruptions)

5 = NO ROOM for improvement (use of behavior was excellent, and revealed no noticeable room for improvement)

					CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Rating of Partner Form)			

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Rating of Partner Form)

Your Name: Partner Name:

Your ID: Partner ID:

Date: Class: Activity:

Rate how skillfully **YOUR PARTNER** used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	**INADEQUATE**	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	**FAIR**	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	**ADEQUATE**	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	**GOOD**	(use was better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	**EXCELLENT**	(use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate your partner's overall performance. My partner was a(n)…

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Rating of Self Form)

Your Name:		Partner Name:	
Your ID:		Partner ID:	
Date:	Class:		Activity:

Rate how skillfully **YOU** used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	**INADEQUATE**	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	**FAIR**	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	**ADEQUATE**	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	**GOOD**	(use was better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	**EXCELLENT**	(use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate your overall performance. I was a(n)…

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Observer Rating of Conversant Form)							

Your Name:	Partner Name:
Your ID:	Partner ID:

Date:	Class:	Activity:

Rate how skillfully **THIS INTERACTANT** used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	**INADEQUATE**	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	**FAIR**	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	**ADEQUATE**	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	**GOOD**	(use was better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	**EXCELLENT**	(use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate this person's overall performance:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Rating of Other Form: Improvement Scale)								

Your Name:						Partner Name:		
Your ID:						Partner ID:		
Date:			Class:				Activity:	

Rate how skillfully YOUR PARTNER used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	VERY EXTENSIVE	Room for improvement (use or lack of use was extremely disruptive or noticeable)
2	=	EXTENSIVE	Room for improvement (use or lack of use was very disruptive or noticeable)
3	=	MODERATE	Room for improvement (use or lack of use was disruptive or noticeable)
4	=	MINIMAL	Room for improvement (use or lack of use was barely disruptive)
5	=	NO ROOM	Room for improvement (use or lack of use was not disruptive)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate your partner's overall performance. This person is a(n)…

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Trait Rating of Self Form-Skillfulness Scale)

Your Name:		Your ID:

Rate how skillfully **YOU GENERALLY** use, or do not use, the following communicative behaviors in your conversations, where:

1	=	**Very Unskillfully**	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	**Moderately Unskillfully**	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	**Slightly Unskillfully**	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	**Slightly Skillfully**	(use is better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	**Moderately Skillfully**	(use occasionally smooth & controlled, resulting in occasional positive impressions)
6	=	**Very Skillfully**	(use is highly smooth & controlled; results in very positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	6	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate your own general performance in conversations. I am a(n)…

POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE (Rating of Partner Form)

Your Name:		Partner Name:	
Your ID:		Partner ID:	
Date:	Class:		Activity:

Rate how skillfully **YOUR PARTNER** used, or didn't use, the following communicative behaviors in the conversation, where:

1	=	**INADEQUATE**	(use is awkward, disruptive, or results in a negative impression of communicative skills)
2	=	**FAIR**	(occasionally awkward or disruptive, occasionally adequate)
3	=	**ADEQUATE**	(sufficient but neither noticeable nor excellent. Produces neither strong positive nor negative impression)
4	=	**GOOD**	(use was better than adequate but not outstanding)
5	=	**EXCELLENT**	(use is smooth, controlled, results in positive impression of communicative skills)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

1	2	3	4	5	=	(1)	Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(2)	Speaking fluency (pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(3)	Vocal confidence (neither too tense/nervous nor overly confident sounding)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(4)	Articulation (clarity of pronunciation and linguistic expression)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(5)	Vocal variety (neither overly monotone nor dramatic voice)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(6)	Volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(7)	Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(8)	Lean toward partner (neither too forward nor too far back)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(9)	Shaking or nervous twitches (aren't noticeable or distracting)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(10)	Unmotivated movements (tapping feet, fingers, hair-twirling, etc.)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(11)	Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(12)	Nodding of head in response to partner statements
1	2	3	4	5	=	(13)	Use of gestures to emphasize what is being said
1	2	3	4	5	=	(14)	Use of humor and/or stories
1	2	3	4	5	=	(15)	Smiling and/or laughing
1	2	3	4	5	=	(16)	Use of eye contact
1	2	3	4	5	=	(17)	Asking of questions
1	2	3	4	5	=	(18)	Speaking about partner (involvement of partner as a topic of conversation)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(19)	Speaking about self (neither too much nor too little)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(20)	Encouragements or agreements (encouragement of partner to talk)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(21)	Personal opinion expression (neither too passive nor aggressive)
1	2	3	4	5	=	(22)	Initiation of new topics
1	2	3	4	5	=	(23)	Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
1	2	3	4	5	=	(24)	Interruption of partner speaking turns
1	2	3	4	5	=	(25)	Use of time speaking relative to partner

For the next five items, rate your partner's overall performance:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
POOR CONVERSATONALIST ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST
SOCIALLY UNSKILLED ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: SOCIALLY SKILLED
INCOMPETENT COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR
INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATOR
INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR ::	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Comments:

Appendix 2: Preliminary Training Guides for the CSRS

The following descriptive materials are meant to be suggestive of training materials for use of the CSRS for diagnostic or third-party application in research. An attempt has been made to exclude tautological or subjective terms such as "appropriate," "acceptable," "satisfying," etc. from the item descriptors, but it is often a necessary and presumed qualifier for behavioral evaluations in actual social situations. The typical training regimen would simply provide raters with 7-10-minute videotaped interactions analogous to those to be evaluated later (preferably, the tape would have examples of a low competent, a moderate competent, and a high competent conversation). The raters would rate the conversation, compare and discuss their ratings item by item, achieve consensus on their whenever possible, and then reiterating this procedure with other taped conversations until high rates of agreement are achieved.

01. SPEAKING RATE

Description: Speaks neither so rapidly (e.g., words per minute) nor so slowly as to disrupt partner comprehension and/or response.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Speaking pace makes utterances consistently difficult to comprehend, or disruptive to normal response and flow of partner response.

2 = Speaking pace makes utterances occasionally difficult to comprehend, or disruptive to normal response and flow of partner response.

3 = Speaking pace is, only a small number of instances, difficult to comprehend, or disruptive to normal response and flow of partner response.

4 = Speaking pace is occasionally varied, and never seems to impair partner comprehension or response.

5 = Speaking pace is varied compatibly with articulation and vocal variety so as to facilitate partner comprehension and response.

02. SPEAKING FLUENCY

Description: Displays speech disturbances or dysfluencies such as stutters, omissions, repetitions or noticeable pause fillers (e.g., um, uh, er, ah, okay, like, you know, I mean, etc.).

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Displays almost constant use of dysfluencies in manner that is disruptive to the partner responses, and/or receives partner negative sanction (e.g., frowns, statements of inappropriateness, furrowed brow, etc.).

2 = Displays frequent use of dysfluencies in manner that is disruptive to the partner responses, and/or receives partner negative sanction (e.g., frowns, statements of inappropriateness, furrowed brow, etc.).

3 = Displays occasional use of dysfluencies in manner that is disruptive to the partner responses, and/or receives partner negative sanction (e.g., frowns, statements of inappropriateness, furrowed brow, etc.).

4 = Displays few dysfluencies, and those used do not appear to be disruptive to partner.

5 = Displays no noticeable dysfluencies.

03. VOCAL CONFIDENCE

Description: Displays paralinguistic firmness, calmness/forcefulness, and steadiness of expression.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Vocalizations are almost constantly nervous, shaky, breaking in pitch, and/or equivocal in tone or volume.

2 = Vocalizations are frequently nervous, shaky, breaking in pitch, and/or equivocal in tone or volume.

3 = Vocalizations are occasionally nervous, shaky, breaking in pitch, and/or equivocal in tone or volume.

4 = Vocalizations are generally calm and/or forceful, firm, composed.

5 = Vocalizations are consistently calm and/or forceful, firm, composed, assertive.

04. ARTICULATION

Description: Pronounces words such that they are understandable to the partner.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Speaks with frequent errors, slurs, and/or incomprehensible utterances, resulting in frequent partner clarification gestures or statements.

2 = Speaks with occasional errors, slurs, and/or incomprehensible utterances, resulting in occasional partner clarification gestures or statements.

3 = Speaks with only a small number of errors, slurs, and/or incomprehensible utterances, resulting in no noticeable partner clarification gestures or statements.

4 = Speaks with no noticeable errors, slurs, and/or incomprehensible utterances, and no noticeable partner clarification gestures or statements.

5 = Speaks with clearly comprehensible utterances, but not with excessive "clip" or stilted pronunciation.

05. VOCAL VARIETY

Description: Varies pitch, tone, and range of verbal utterances while speaking

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Speaks in an extremely monotonous manner without variation.

2 = Speaks in a fairly monotonous manner with minimal variation.

3 = Speaks in a somewhat monotonous manner with occasional variation.

4 = Speaks with modulated and varied tonalities.

5 = Speaks with frequent variation in tonality, but not excessively 'cartoon-like' or excessively animated fashion.

06. VOLUME

Description: Speaks at audible but not extreme levels; no strain or distraction of attention.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Speaks at extremely quiet/soft or extremely loud level.

2 = Speaks at very quiet/soft or very loud level.

3 = Speaks at somewhat quiet/soft or somewhat loud level.

4 = Generally speaks at audible and comfortable level.

5 = Consistently speaks at audible, comfortable, and adaptive level.

07. POSTURE

Description: Exhibits posture that is comfortable (as negatively indicated by frequency of postural shifts) and adaptive to the partner.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Constantly shifts posture and/or maintains rigid and stiff posture, unrelated to partner or context.

2 = Very frequently shifts posture and/or maintains rigid and stiff posture, generally unrelated to partner or context.

3 = Frequently shifts posture and/or maintains rigid and stiff posture, often unrelated to partner or context.

4 = Shifts posture occasionally, and appears comfortable.

5 = Maintains apparently comfortable posture, adapting to partner and context.

08. LEAN TOWARD PARTNER

Description: Exhibits shifts and positions frontal body trunk with respect to partner as context permits that facilitates conversation and is oriented to the partner.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Oriented directly away from partner in lean and body orientation/lean; or is severely oriented toward partner to the point of being intrusive.

2 = Oriented strongly and obliquely away from partner in lean and/or body orientation/lean; or is frequently intrusive in orientation toward partner.

3 = Oriented slightly and obliquely away from partner in lean and/or body orientation/lean; or slightly intrusive in orientation toward partner.

4 = Oriented neutrally toward partner in lean and/or body orientation/lean, with occasional variability or shifts.

5 = Oriented obliquely toward partner in lean and/or body orientation, with occasional variability or shifts.

09. SHAKING OR NERVOUS TWITCHES

Description: Displays jerking motions of limbs or head, and/or shaking hands or fingers.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Very frequently shakes or twitches.

2 = Frequently shakes or twitches.

3 = Occasionally shakes or twitches.

4 = Only very occasionally shakes or twitches.

5 = Displays no noticeable shakes or twitches.

10. UNMOTIVATED MOVEMENTS

Description: Displays adaptors, plays with hair or objects, or otherwise engages in self-focused behaviors that bear no discernable direct relation to the topical development of the conversation.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Very frequently displays unmotivated movements.

2 = Frequently displays unmotivated movements.

3 = Occasionally displays unmotivated movements.

4 = Only very occasionally displays unmotivated movements.

5 = Displays no noticeable displays unmotivated movements.

11. FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Description: Facially displays range of affect, animation of facial musculature, and normative facial expressions compatible with verbal content and/or partner utterances.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Constantly displays blank, uninterested or hypnotic gaze, or highly exaggerated, cartoon-like expressions, inconsistent with subject matter.

2 = Frequently displays blank, uninterested or hypnotic gaze, or highly exaggerated, cartoon-like expressions, inconsistent with subject matter.

3 = Occasionally displays blank, uninterested or hypnotic gaze, or highly exaggerated, cartoon-like expressions, inconsistent with subject matter.

4 = Generally displays variation in facial affect consistent with subject matter and partner.

5 = Consistently displays variation in facial affect consistent with subject matter and partner.

12. NODDING OF HEAD

Description: Moves head in vertical arc (i.e., 'yes' motion) providing reinforcing feedback indicating comprehension, agreement, or acceptance.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Never nods head, or nods constantly.

2 = Rarely nods head, or nods very frequently.

3 = Occasionally nods.

4 = Occasionally nods at topic or context relevant times.

5 = Frequently nods at topic or context relevant times.

13. USE OF GESTURES

Description: Displays hand, arm, and head movements to compliment and/or elaborate utterances.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Displays no gestures, or constantly displays excessively animated or numerous gestures.

2 = Displays few gestures, or occasionally displays excessively animated or numerous gestures.

3 = Displays occasional gestures, or, a few gestures that are excessively animated.

4 = Displays frequent gestures that do not interfere with conversation.

5 = Displays frequent, complimentary gestures that facilitate and/or elaborate conversation.

14. USE OF HUMOR AND/OR STORIES APPROPRIATE TO CONTEXT

Description: Uses jokes, puns, double-entendre, stories, characterization, etc.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Continuously serious and humorless, or uses humor that receives overt negative sanction (e.g., frowns, statements of inappropriateness, lack of laughter in response to laugh tokens, etc.)

2 = Generally serious and humorless, or uses humor that receives apparent but not obvious negative sanction

3 = Uses some humor that is not apparently sanctioned negatively

4 = Uses several instances of humor with no negative sanctions and obvious laugh or smile responses

5 = Uses frequent instances of humor with no negative sanctions and frequent and/or animated laugh and smile responses

15. SMILING AND LAUGHING

Description: Displays laughter, chuckles, and/or smiles (upturned corners of mouth, teeth visible)

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Displays no smiles or laughter, or displays constant hysterical laughter or constant smirking, regardless of partner stimulus.

2 = Displays infrequent smiles or laughter, or displays frequent hysterical laughter or constant smirking, almost regardless of partner stimulus.

3 = Displays occasional smiles or laughter in response to humorous stimuli.

4 = Displays occasional smiles or laughter in response to humorous stimuli, and/or as positive reinforcement to partner.

5 = Displays frequent smiles or laughter in response to humorous stimuli, and/or as positive reinforcement to partner.

16. USE OF EYE CONTACT

Description: Uses mutual and direct eye contact in accordance with expressive and regulatory norms of conversation and context.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Completely avoids eye contact, or exhibits fixated or continuous eye contact with partner.

2 = Frequently avoids eye contact, or exhibits very frequent or long durations of eye contact with partner.

3 = Provides occasional eye contact of brief duration at points of turn relevance.

4 = Provides frequent eye contact of brief duration both during turns at talk and at points of turn relevance.

5 = Provides frequent eye contact that emphasizes vocal utterances and facilitates turn exchange.

17. ASKING OF QUESTIONS

Description: Seeks information from partner through use of formal or colloquial interrogative forms.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Never seeks information from partner, or constantly barrages partner with questions, or asks questions of excessive intimacy or privacy.

2 = Rarely seeks information from partner, or frequently barrages partner with questions, or asks questions of excessive intimacy or privacy.

3 = Occasionally seeks information from partner, or occasionally barrages partner with questions, or asks questions of excessive intimacy or privacy.

4 = Frequently seeks information from partner, but avoids barrage or excessive invasiveness of questions.

5 = Frequently asks questions that are suggestive of insights, involve partner in the conversation, or facilitates conversation.

18. SPEAKING ABOUT PARTNER

Description: Involves partner as a topic of conversation through comments or inquiries.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Makes no comments or inquiries about the partner.

2 = Rarely comments or inquires about the partner.

3 = Occasionally comments or inquires about the partner.

4 = Moderately often comments or inquires about the partner.

5 = Frequently comments or inquires about the partner.

19. SPEAKING OF SELF

Description: Involves self (interests, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc.) as topic of conversation through comments.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Makes no comments about self.

2 = Rarely comments about self.

3 = Occasionally comments about self.

4 = Moderately often comments about self.

5 = Frequently comments about self.

20. ENCOURAGEMENTS OR AGREEMENTS

Description: Provides verbal reinforcements to partner utterances, including verbal affirmations, "yeah's," "uh-huh's" etc., that relate to partner utterance content.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Provides no verbal encouragement or agreements, or provides it incessantly.

2 = Provides almost no verbal encouragement or agreements, or provides it almost constantly.

3 = Provides only occasional verbal encouragement or agreements.

4 = Provides several verbal encouragement or agreements.

5 = Provides frequent but coherently timed encouragements or agreements.

21. EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL OPINION

Description: Expresses own attitudes, values, and/or beliefs about subject matters of own choosing, or expresses these utterances too aggressively or passively.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Never gets to express personal opinions, or constantly expresses opinions overly aggressively or passively.

2 = Occasionally gets to express personal opinions, or frequently expresses them too aggressively or passively.

3 = Frequently gets to express personal opinions, or occasionally expresses them too aggressively or passively.

4 = Experiences no difficulties in expressing personal opinions, and such expressions seem neither too aggressive nor passive.

5 = Expresses personal opinions with ease and fluency, and with no disruption of partner or negative sanction.

22. TOPIC INITIATION

Description: Innovates new subject areas and comments that stimulate new lines of topical development.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Initiates no new topics.

2 = Initiates one or two new topics.

3 = Initiates several new topics.

4 = Initiates numerous new topics.

5 = Initiates numerous new topics and facilitates partner topic initiation.

23. MAINTENANCE OF TOPICS AND FOLLOW-UP COMMENTS

Description: Sustains topical coherence through extension and reinforcement of partner utterances.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Provides no extension of topics once initiated; follow-up comments are unrelated to previous topics.

2 = Provides few extensions of topics once initiated; follow-up comments are seldom related to previous topics.

3 = Provides occasional extensions of topics once initiated; follow-up comments are occasionally related to previous topics.

4 = Provides frequent extensions of topics once initiated; follow-up comments are frequently related to previous topics.

5 = Provides fluent, seamless, and innovative extensions of topics once initiated.

24. INTERRUPTIONS OF PARTNER

Description: Interrupts, over-talks, and/or provides vocal feedback during partner turns at talk in a manner that is not disruptive of partner conversational routine and receives no obvious negative sanction from partner.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Frequently takes the floor from partner before partner grammatical utterance is completed, and when partner talk continues in disrupted manner after interruption; signs of partner arousal/frustration apparent.

2 = Occasionally takes the floor from partner before partner grammatical utterance is completed, and when partner talk continues in disrupted manner after interruption; signs of partner arousal/frustration apparent.

3 = Displays small number of over-talks or interruptions that are minimally disruptive to partner.

4 = Displays occasional interruption and/or over-talk, but is nondisruptive to partner.

5 = Displays frequent interruption and/or over-talk, but is providing clarification or reinforcement feedback in the doing.

25. USE OF TIME SPEAKING RELATIVE TO PARTNER

Description: Balances relative proportion of speaking time in manner compatible with the context.

Normative Behavioral Anchors:

1 = Virtually does not speak, or uses only brief utterances, or speaks constantly and does not allow partner speaking turns or turns of any duration.

2 = Rarely speaks, or uses brief utterances, or speaks excessively relative to partner.

3 = Occasionally speaks, or uses utterances of moderate length, or speaks more but not excessively more than partner.

4 = Speaks frequently and of moderate duration, and is relatively balanced in speaking time relative to partner.

5 = Speaks in relatively balanced duration and frequency with partner.

Appendix 3: Chronological Summary of CSRS Validity Coefficients

Spitzberg & Hecht (1984); n=360; conversatio interruptus	ALT	COM	EXP	MGT
MOTIVATION	.33	.22	.24	.30
KNOWLEDGE	.13	.13	.11	.16
IMMEDIACY	.31	.19	.34	.42
COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION	.30	.14	.23	.28
SELF SATISFACTION	.14	.18	.16	.32
OTHER SATISFACTION	.18	.15	.16	.37
COACTOR COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION	.30	.14	.23	.28

Spitzberg (1985); n=107; actual in-class	INSTR SKILL	INSTR MOLAR
OBSERVER-RATED ALTERCENTRISM	.22	.28
OBSERVER-RATED COMPOSURE	.23	.31
OBSERVER-RATED EXPRESSIVENESS	.26	.33
OBSERVER-RATED INT. MGT.	.31	.36
OBSERVER-RATED MOLAR SKILL	.33	.31
OBSERVER-RATED SUMMED SKILLS	.32	.39
PEER-RATED ALTERCENTRISM	.00	.10
PEER-RATED COMPOSURE	.11	-.11
PEER-RATED EXPRESSIVENESS	-.03	.09
PEER-RATED INT. MGT.	-.05	.08
PEER RATING OF ALTER-COMPETENCE	.16	.10

R^2 (aamot+aakno+aaskill+instrskill=instrmolar) = .67
R^2 (out-of-class peerskill=peermolar) =   .48
R^2 (aamot+aakno+aaskill+peerskill=peermolar) = .47
R^2 (in-class peerskill=peermolar) =   .47
R^2 (instrskill=instrmolar) =   .63

Powers & Spitzberg (1986) n=20; actual	AA CSRS	CA CSRS	OB CSRS
(CA) COMM FIDELITY	.26	.21	.20
(OB) COMM FIDELITY	.43	-.02	.41

Chin & Ringer (1986); n=557; recalled trait	COM	EXP	MGT	VOC
GENERAL COMPETENCE	.20	.49	.50	.39
SOCIAL ABILITY	.15	.28	.25	.26
OTHER-ORIENTATION	.20	.60	.53	.53
SELF-ORIENTATION	-.07	-.23	-.22	-.14

Spitzberg (1986); n=218; actual in-class	AA SKILL	AA MOLAR	AA CSRS
COACTOR-RATED SUMMED SKILLS	.25	.19	.25
COACTOR-RATED MOLAR SKILL	.27	.24	.27
COACTOR-RATED CSRS (SKILL+MOLAR)	.25	.19	.27
COACTOR SELF MOTIVATION	.08	.07	.09
COACTOR SELF KNOWLEDGE	-.03	-.11	-.04
ACTOR SELF KNOWLEDGE	.42	.48	.45
ACTOR-RATED TYPICALITY	.40	.50	.42
OBSERVER-RATED SKILLS	.18	.23	.10
OBSERVER-RATED MOLAR SKILL	.14	.24	.16
OBSERVER-RATED CSRS (SKILL+MOLAR)	.18	.24	.19

R^2 (aamot+aakno+aaskill=aamolar) = .65
R^2 (ccmot+cckno+ccskill=ccmolar) = .83
R^2 (ccmot+cckno+ccskill=acmolar) = .11
R^2 (aamot+aakno+aaskill=obcsrs) = .04

Dawson & Spitzberg (1987); n=34; experiment	CSRS
SIMULATED SOCIAL INTERACTION TEST/SKILL	.55
SIMULATED SOCIAL INTERACTION TEST/ANXIETY	.67
CSRS/Pretest	.78

Spitzberg & Hurt (1987a); n=706; recalled
R^2 (aamot + aakno + aaskill + typ + sex = src) = .65

Spitzberg & Hurt (1987b); n=706; recalled
R^2 (obskills=obmolar) = .73

Bennett (1987); n=525; self-report	AA SKILLS	AàC SKILLS
SELF-RATED COMPETENCE	.44	
RATING OF ALTER-COMPETENCE	.46	
COACTOR RATING OF ACTOR SKILLS	.46	
MOTIVATION	.19	
KNOWLEDGE	-.04	
ACTRUST (FRIEND)		.47
ACTRUST (CLOSE FRIEND)		.51
ACTRUST (SPOUSE)		.23 to .30

Spitzberg & Hurt (1987b); n=160; actual/self-report	AAALT	AACOM	AAEXP	AAMGT	SKILL	MOLAR
LONELINESS CHRONICITY	-.27	-.36	-.36	-.21	-.35	-.39
TIME 1 LONELINESS	-.28	-.28	-.34	-.24	-.35	-.41
TIME 2 LONELINESS	-.18	-.19	-.27	-.13	-.25	-.30
TIME 3 LONELINESS	-.28	-.28	-.40	-.22	-.37	-.38
OBSKILLS	.25	.25	.32	.24	.31	.34
OBMOLAR SKILL	.26	.27	.34	.23	.32	.39
CASKILLS	.53	.53	.51	.49	.57	.59
CAMOLAR SKILL	.42	.42	.45	.42	.48	.60
CAS-ACTIVITY	.26	.27	.26	.23	.29	.37
CAS-SUPPORT	.37	.27	.39	.26	.36	.38
CAS-DISCLOSURE	.30	.29	.26	.20	.30	.30
CAS-ANXIETY	.26	.37	.35	.43	.39	.37
CAS-WIT	.11	.08	.19	.10	.15	.16
CAS-GRAMMAR	.11	.24	.16	.11	.18	.16

R^2 (activity + grammar + caexp + wit = T^1loneliness) =   .42
R^2 (activity + disclosure + grammar + wit = T^2loneliness) =   .34
R^2 (activity+discl.+aaexp+aamgt+gram.+wit+caexp = T^3loneliness) = .42

Wallace (1988); n=107; other-report	Ave C CSRS
JOB SATISFACTION	.30
SUPERVISOR SATISFACTION	.62
PAY SATISFACTION	NS
PROMOTION SATISFACTION	NS
CLIMATE SATISFACTION	.23

Allman et al. (1991) ; n=118 + 70 elderly; actual	HIGH COMP	LOW COMP
DECODING ABILITY (MEANS)	102	96

Spitzberg & Brunner (1991); n=496; recalleda
R^2 (aamot + aakno + aaskill + aacontext = amolar) = .57
R^2 (aamot + aakno + aaskill + aacontext = selfsat) = .52

Spitzberg (1991); n=130 targets + 360 evaluators	AA SKILL	RI SKILL	CF SKILL	CR SKILL
(ROMANTIC INTIMATE) SUPPORT	-.04	.11	.25	.03
(RI) EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	-.05	.23	.17	-.04
(RI) TANGIBLE SUPPORT	.13	.10	.14	-.05
(RI) GUIDANCE SUPPORT	.04	.18	.09	-.05
(RI) FEEDBACK SUPPORT	.10	.26*	.22	.21
(CLOSE FRIEND) SUPPORT	.07	.04	.16	.19
(CF) EMOTIONAL SUP PORT	.14	-.07	.38*	.16
(CF) TANGIBLE SUPPORT	.19	.09	.04	.14
(CF) GUIDANCE SUPPORT	.05	-.04	.23*	.05
(CF) FEEDBACK SUPPORT	.09	.02	.41*	.22
(CLOSE RELATIVE) SUPPORT	.21	.15	.01	.04
(CR) EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	.19	.16	.17	.04
(CR) TANGIBLE SUPPORT	.24*	.16	.13	-.14
(CR) GUIDANCE SUPPORT	.20	.15	.00	.09
(CR) FEEDBACK SUPPORT	.34*	.26	.15	.16
DEPRESSION	-.24*	-.12	-.16	.06
MOLAR LONELINESS	-.36*	-.07	-.33	-.01
(RI) LONELINESS	-.03	-.02	-.21	.11
(CF) LONELINESS	-.46*	.01	-.35*	-.20
(CR) LONELINESS	-.28*	-.14	-.12	-.26*

R^2 (freq-contact+kno+crsupp+gdnc+fdbk+crexp+cfgdnc = depression) = .37
R^2 (risupp + aaalt + cfexp + cffdbk + crtngb = genlonely) = .41
R^2 (emotsupp + freq-contact + risupp + cfsupp = intimate-lonely) = .57
R^2 (cfsupp + kno + aaalt + cfexp = friend-lonely) = .43
R^2 (crsupp + kno + crcom + risupp = relative-lonely) = .47

Huwe et al. (1991); n=59; self/other report	COMPE-TENCE	COMPOS	ATT	EXP
Coworker Ratings of Target INGRATIATION STRATEGY USE				
Active Enhancement	.18	.22*	.15	.29*
Active Conformity	.08	.12	.02	-.03
Passive Conformity	-.34	-.10	-.18	-.31*
Modesty	.07	-.10	.00	.10
Supervisor Ratings of Target INGRATIATION STRATEGY USE				
Active Enhancement	-.05	-.04*	-.10	-.09
Active Conformity	.08	.12	.02	-.03

Note: Active Enhancement (favors, name dropping, laughing at jokes, etc.)
      Active Conformity (being friendly, agreement)
Passive Conformity (not giving neg. feedback)
      Modesty (smiling, being humble)

Conlee & Vagim (1992); n=117; recalled
(alt+molar+com+exp+mgt)
R^2 (acalt+acmolar+accom+acexp+acmgt=acsatisf w/ physician) = .62

Graham et al. (1992); n=25 couples; self-report	AA SKILLS
POSITIVE USE OF HUMOR	.49-.50
SENSE OF HUMOR	.44-.65

= Milhouse (1993); n=75 military/German dyads; n=75 U.S./Non-U.S. dyads; actual	AA SKILLS
MOLAR SKILL	.84
SELF-RATED COMPETENCE	.86
MOTIVATION	.56
KNOWLEDGE	.57
APPROPRIATENESS/EFFECTIVENESS	.53
R^2 (aaskills=aaapp+eff) = .63 to .65 R^2 (aamotiv=aaapp+eff) = .05 to .11 R^2 (aaknowl=aaapp+eff) = .09 to .16	

Stonehocker (1992); n=172 adult protégés; recalled					
CERTAINTY:	ACALT	ACCOM	ACEXP	ACMGT	ACMOLAR
INFORMATION (WANTED - OBTAINED)	.25**	.27**	.25**	.27**	.19**
CERTAINTY (BEH'L CERT + CONFID)	.28**	.30**	.31**	.28**	.22**
UNCERTAINTY (INFO. + CERTAINTY)	.33**	.36**	.35**	.34**	.26**
HOMOPHILY	-.02	-.03	-.07	.03	-.04
MENTOR TENURE	.09	.20*	.12	.11	.14
PROTOGES WITH > 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE CERTAINTY:	ACALT	ACCOM	ACEXP	ACMGT	ACMOLAR
INFORMATION (WANTED - OBTAINED)	.08	.19	.26*	.23*	.15
CERTAINTY (BEH'L CERT + CONFID)	.00	.17	.16	.05	.02
UNCERTAINTY (INFO. + CERTAINTY)	.05	.23*	.25*	.16	.09
HOMOPHILY	.17	.12	.18	.27*	.05
PROTOGES WITH < 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE CERTAINTY:	ACALT	ACCOM	ACEXP	ACMGT	ACMOLAR
INFORMATION (WANTED - OBTAINED)	.34**	.33**	.25*	.29**	.24*
CERTAINTY (BEH'L CERT + CONFID)	.47**	.40*	.42**	.45**	.38**
UNCERTAINTY (INFO. + CERTAINTY)	.51**	.45**	.42**	.46**	.38**
HOMOPHILY	-.15	-.12	-.21*	-.14*	-.07

Miyagi (1993); n=100; actual in-class; intercultural	AAALT	AACOM	AAEXP	AAMGT	AAMOLAR
COLLECTIVISM	.33**	.28**	.37**	.33**	.47**
MOTIVATION	.34**	.32**	.43**	.31**	.42**
KNOWLEDGE	.41**	.50**	.45**	.49**	.42**
AC ALTERCENTRISM	.20*	.21*	.20*	.17	.05
AC COMPOSURE	.17	.22*	.12	.16	.07
AC EXPRESSIVENESS	.19	.19	.22*	.14	.03
AC INTERACTION MANAGEMENT	.23*	.22*	.16	.19	.06

Ellis et al. (1994); n=116 dyads; actual	CSRS (h²)
INTENSIFIERS	.08
QUALIFIERS	.04
ADJECTIVES	.05
SUBSTITUTIONS WITHIN	.04
ELLIPSES WITHIN	.07
X TIME FOR 1ST PERSON PRONOUNS	.04
X TIME FOR 2ND PERSON PRONOUNS	.13
X TIME FOR SUBSTITUTIONS	.06
X TIME FOR ELLIPSES BETWEEN	.06

Matsufuji (1993); n=98; Correlations Among Constructed Variables- ENTIRE SAMPLE	MOTIV	KNOW	AGMT	ACOM	AEXP	AALT	AMOL
COLLECT	.38	.07	.36	.30	.38	.31	.52
MOTIV		.15	.31	.32	.43	.34	.42
KNOWL			.49	.50	.45	.41	.42
AMGT				.87	.77	.86	.73
ACOM					.73	.78	.72
AEXP						.78	.71
AALT							.64

Matsufuji (1993); n=49; Correlations Among Constructed Variables- JAPANESE SAMPLE	MOTIV	KNOW	AGMT	ACOM	AEXP	AALT	AMOL
1. COLLECT	.06	.12	.07	.07	.06	.07	.19
2. MOTIV		.38	.35	.35	.40	.39	.34
3. KNOWL			.61	.57	.57	.50	.57
4. AMGT				.90	.84	.85	.64
5. ACOM					.83	.80	.73
6. AEXP						.79	.59
7. AALT							.54

Matsufuji (1993); n=49; Correlations Among Constructed Variables- AMERICAN SAMPLE	MOTIV	KNOW	AGMT	ACOM	AEXP	AALT	AMOL
1. COLLECT	.36	-.03	.18	.17	.25	.10	.37
2. MOTIV		-.08	-.06	.08	.23	.03	.19
3. KNOWL			.42	.44	.38	.32	.40
4. AMGT				.80	.41	.74	.61
5. ACOM					.44	.63	.61
6. AEXP						.59	.61
7. AALT							.48

Little (1997); n=49 (males) Self- and Coactor-Rated Competence (Pre-to-Post-Test)	
SELF	t
ALTERCENTRISM	3.08, p<.01
EXPRESSIVENESS	3.39, p<.01
TOTAL ASSESSMENT	3.01, p<.01
COACTOR	t
ALTERCENTRISM	1.09, ns
EXPRESSIVENESS	.68, ns
COMPOSURE	.66, ns
INTERACTION MANAGEMENT	.30, ns

Segrin (1998); n=221; Associations Between Self- and Partner-Rated Conversational Skills Rating Scales and Behavioral Involvement by Assessment Situation	INDEX OF BEHAV. INVOLV.			
ASSESSMENT SITUATION	TALK DUR.	SPEAK TURNS	GAZE DUR.	GAZE FREQ.
Get Acquainted				
Self-Rated	-.09	.05	.12	.13
Partner-Rated CSRS	.12	-.25	-.08	.08
R²	.02	.06	.02	.03
Role Play				
Self-Rated CSRS	.11	.09	.07	.02
Partner-Rated CSRS	.19	.15	-.01	.09
R²	.06	.04	.01	.01
Waiting Period				
Self-Rated CSRS	.28	.29	.49	.47
Partner-Rated CSRS	.33	.45	.16	.29
R²	.32	.49	.38	.51

Brundidge (2002); n=239;	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
1. Relational Quality																		
2. Intimacy	.90																	
3. Trust	.76	.62																
4. Passion	.66	.66	.26															
5. Love	.88	.77	.54	.48														
6. Satisfaction	.79	.67	.59	.42	.60													
7. Commitment	.79	.62	.46	.32	.77	.57												
8. Regression	-.20	-.12	-.27	-.04	-.12	-.26	-.15											
9. Reason	.16	.18	.13	.08	.12	.09	.13	.16										
10. Gaming	-.09	-.06	-.09	-.03	-.05	-.14	-.10	.48	.42									
11. Charm	-.02	.00	-.04	.10	-.01	-.08	-.13	.38	.50	.63								
12. Skills	.35	.27	.35	.24	.28	.21	.26	-.06	.20	-.08	.07							
13. Molar	.27	.26	.30	.22	.17	.17	.20	-.09	.14	-.10	.07	.66						
14. Total Competence	.33	.30	.36	.25	.24	.20	.24	-.09	.17	-.09	.08	.85	.96					
15. Composure	.20	.16	.20	.08	.14	.13	.16	-.02	.14	-.03	.01	.54	.28	.40				
16. Altercentrism	.36	.30	.33	.19	.30	.21	.28	-.11	.23	-.13	.01	.87	.61	.77	.39			
17. Coordination	.25	.20	.27	.20	.19	.12	.19	-.03	.14	-.09	.05	.77	.59	.71	.31	.60		
18. Avoidance	-.54	-.48	-.45	-.25	-.50	-.42	-.45	.23	-.04	.15	.15	-.28	-.23-.27	-.27	-.18	-.28	-.22	
19. Anxiety	-.13	-.10	-.24	-.05	-.01	-.22	-.01	.36	.17	.39	.29	-.17	-.15	-.18	-.05	-.13	-20	.07

Appendix 4: NCA Policy on Criteria for the Assessment of Oral Communication

Historical Background

Assessment received increasing attention beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the 1990s and the new millennium. Initially appearing in the standards developed by state departments of education, by 1980 over half of the states had adopted statewide student-testing programs. In *Educational Standards in the 50 States: 1990*, the Educational Testing Service reported that by 1990 statewide student-testing programs existed in 47 states. By 1996, standards programs were established in every state in the country and assessment of student learning was required to qualify for national, state, and local funding.

As standards and assessment programs expanded, the number of different subjects and skills being tested increased, with additional attention devoted to assessment processes and testing methods. Organizations, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, intensified and expanded the scope of their assessment procedures and publicized the results of their findings nationally and annually.

By the end of 1989, the public recognized the significance of the national educational assessment movement. In the Phi Delta Kappan-Gallup poll reported in the September 1989 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77 percent of survey respondents favored "requiring the public schools in this community to use standardized national testing programs to measure academic achievement of students" and 70 percent favored "requiring the public schools in this community to conform to national achievement standards and goals."

Also toward the end of the 1980s, colleges and universities began to realize that formal assessment issues were to affect them. In its 1989-1990 *Criteria for Accreditation*, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools—which provides institutional certification for over 800 colleges and universities in the South—held that "complete requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree must include competence in reading, writing, oral communications and fundamental mathematical skills." They also held that the general education core of colleges and universities "must provide components designed to ensure competence in reading, writing, oral communication and fundamental mathematical skills." Similarly, the other regional accreditation associations began mandating campus-wide assessment programs in all academic units concerned with student learning, as an integral component of the accreditation process in higher education.

In 1990, a series of reports confirmed that systematic and comprehensive assessment should be a national educational objective. The National Governors' Association stated that, "National education goals will be meaningless unless progress toward meeting them is measured accurately and adequately, and reported to the American people." *The National Education Goals: A Report to the Nation's Governors* reinforced that line of reasoning and the Governors' Association elaborated its commitment to assessment in *Educating America: State Strategies for Achieving the National Education Goals: Report of the Task Force on Education*. Additionally in 1990, in their report *From Gatekeeper to Gateway: Transforming Testing in America*, the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy recommended eight standards for assessment, arguing for more humane and multicultural assessment systems.

By the end of the 1990's, assessment of student learning became a permanent fixture at all grade levels, K through 16-18. It is now institutionalized in the accreditation and accountability processes that take place with regularity at academic institutions through the country. Additionally, oral communication is now more extensively included in the curriculum, K-18, and therefore it has a presence in assessment programs as well.

NCA's Role in Assessment

The evaluation and assessment of public address has been of central concern to the discipline of communication since its inception and to the National Communication Association when it was organized in 1914. In 1970, NCA formalized its commitment to assessment when it created the Committee on Assessment and Testing (now known by the acronym CAT) for "NCA members interested in gathering, analyzing and disseminating information about the testing of speech communication skills."

As the assessment movement evolved, NCA has convened conferences and produced publications exploring methods for assessing oral communication. These publications began to appear in the 1970s, proliferated during the 1990s, and now include in print the following: *Large Scale Assessment in Oral Communication: Assessing College Student Competency in Speech Communication: 1994 NCA Summer Conference Proceedings; K-12 and Higher Education; Program Assessment in Speech Communication; The Conversational Skills Rating Scale: An Instructional Assessment of Interpersonal Competence; The Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form;* and *Assessing Motivation to Communicate*.

Standards and Conferences

In 1979, in *Standards for Effective Oral Communication Programs*, NCA adopted its first set of "standards for assessment." Those standards called for "school-wide assessment of speaking and listening needs of students," "qualified personnel" to "utilize appropriate evaluation tools," and a "variety of data" and "instruments" which "encourage" "students' desire to communicate."

In 1986, in *Criteria for Evaluating Instruments and Procedures for Assessing Speaking and Listening*, NCA adopted an additional 15 "content" and "technical considerations" dealing "primarily with the substance of speaking and listening instruments" and "matters such as reliability, validity and information on administration." These criteria included among other concerns, the importance of focusing on "demonstrated" speaking skills rather than "reading and writing ability."

In 1987, at an NCA Wingspread Conference, "conference participants recommended that any chosen instrument conform to NCA guidelines for assessment instruments," and they specifically suggested that "strategies for assessing speaking skills" should be directly linked to the content of oral communication performances and student speaking competencies. Additionally, the Wingspread Conference participants considered strategies for assessing listening and for training assessors (see: *Communication Is Life: Essential College Sophomore Speaking and Listening Competencies*, Annandale, Va.: National Communication Association, 1990].

In 1988, an NCA Flagstaff Conference generated a series of resolutions calling for a "national conference" and "task force on assessment" because "previous experience in developing standardized assessment has met with problems of validity, reliability, feasibility, ethics, and cultural bias."

In July 1990, NCA and its Committee on Assessment and Testing convened a national working conference on oral communication and its assessment. The Conference generated resolutions, which reaffirmed existing NCA assessment policies and provided criteria for resolving new issues in assessment. A revision of those assessment criteria is contained in this publication. The 1990 assessment conference also resulted in NCA's publication of assessment instruments, for public speaking and for interpersonal communication.

In July 1994, NCA convened another assessment conference, focusing on oral competence assessment in higher education. The proceedings of that conference examine the philosophy, methods, and progress of assessment around the country and at a variety of academic institutions.

Presently, a set of recommendations for engaging in oral communication assessment is available on the NCA home page at www.natcom.org. The recommendations include suggestions for developing successful assessment programs by institutions and academic departments, as well as recommended methods and techniques.

General Criteria for Assessing Oral Communication

1. Assessment of oral communication should view competence in oral communication as a gestalt of several interacting dimensions. At a minimum, all assessments of oral communication should include an assessment of knowledge (understanding communication process, comprehension of the elements, rules, and dynamics of a communication event, awareness of what is appropriate in a communication situation), an assessment of skills (the possession of a repertoire of skills and the actual performance of skills), and an evaluation of the individual's attitude toward communication (e.g., value placed on oral communication, apprehension, reticence, willingness to communicate, readiness to communicate).

2. Because oral communication is an interactive and social process, assessment should consider the judgment of a trained assessor as well as the impressions of others involved in the communication act (audience, interviewer, other group members, conversant), and may include the self-report of the individual being assessed.

3. Assessment of oral communication should clearly distinguish speaking and listening from reading and writing. While some parts of the assessment process may include reading and writing, a major portion of the assessment of oral communication should require speaking and listening. Directions from the assessor and responses by the individual being assessed should be in the oral/aural mode.
4. Assessment of oral communication should be sensitive to the effects of relevant physical and psychological disabilities on the assessment of competence. (e.g., with appropriate aids in signal reception, a hearing impaired person can be a competent empathic listener.)
5. Assessment of oral communication should be based in part on atomistic/analytic data collected and on a holistic impression.

Criteria for the Content of Assessment

1. Assessment of oral communication for all students should include assessment of both verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication and should consider competence in more than one communication setting. As a minimum assessment should occur in the one-to-many setting (e.g. public speaking, practical small group discussion) and in the one-to-one setting (e.g., interviews, interpersonal relations).
2. Assessment of speech majors and other oral communication specialists could include in addition assessment in specialized fields appropriate to the course of study followed or the specialty of the person being assessed.

Criteria for Assessment Instruments

1. The method of assessment should be consistent with the dimension of oral communication being assessed. While knowledge and attitude may be assessed in part through paper and pencil instruments, speaking and listening skills must be assessed through actual performance in social settings (speaking before an audience, undergoing an interview, participating in a group discussion, etc.) appropriate to the skill(s) being assessed.
2. Instruments for assessing oral communication should describe degrees of competence. Either/or descriptions such as "competent" or "incompetent" should be avoided, as should attempts to diagnose reasons why individuals demonstrate or fail to demonstrate particular degrees of competence.
3. Instruments for assessing each dimension of oral communication competence should clearly identify the range of responses, which constitute various degrees of competence. Examples of such responses should be provided as anchors.
4. Assessment instruments should have an acceptable level of reliability, e.g. test/retest reliability, split-half reliability, alternative forms reliability, inter-rater reliability, and internal consistency.
5. Assessment instruments should have appropriate validity: content validity, predictive validity, and concurrent validity.
6. Assessment instruments must meet acceptable standards for freedom from cultural, sexual, ethical, racial, age, and developmental bias.
7. Assessment instruments should be suitable for the developmental level of the individual being assessed.
8. Assessment instruments should be standardized and detailed enough so that individual responses will not be affected by an administrator's skill in administering the procedures.

Criteria for Assessment Procedures and Administration

1. Assessment procedures should protect the rights of those being assessed in the following ways: administration of assessment instruments and assessment and the uses of assessment results should be kept confidential and be released only to an appropriate institutional office, to the individual assessed, or if a minor, to his or her parent or legal guardian.
2. Use of competence assessment as a basis for procedural decisions concerning an individual should, when feasible, be based on multiple sources of information, including especially a) direct evidence of actual communication performance in school and/or other contexts, b) results of formal competence assessment, and c) measures of individual attitudes toward communication (e.g., value placed on oral communication, apprehension, reticence, willingness to communicate, and readiness to communicate).

3. Individuals administering assessment procedures for oral communication should have received sufficient training by speech communication professionals to make their assessment reliable. Scoring of some standardized assessment instruments in speaking and listening may require specialized training in oral communication on the part of the assessor.

Criteria for Assessment Frequency

Periodic assessment of oral communication competency should occur annually during the educational careers of students. An effective systematic assessment program minimally should occur at educational levels K, 4, 8, 12, 14, and 16.

Criteria for the Use of Assessment Results

The results of student oral communication competency assessment should be used in an ethical, non-discriminatory manner for such purposes as:

1. Diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses;
2. Planning instructional strategies to address student strengths and weaknesses;
3. Certification of student readiness for entry into and exit from programs and institutions;
4. Evaluating and describing overall student achievement;
5. Screening students for programs designed for special populations;
6. Counseling students for academic and career options; and
7. Evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs.

No single assessment instrument is likely to support all these purposes. Moreover, instruments appropriate to various or multiple purposes typically vary in length, breadth/depth of content, technical rigor, and format.

Foundations for the criteria contained in this document were originally developed and adopted as resolutions at the NCA Conference on Assessment in Denver, Colorado, in July, 1990. Several of the criteria were authored by a subcommittee of NCA's Committee on Assessment and Testing, composed of Jim Crocker-Lakness, Sandra Manheimer, and Tom Scott. James W. Chesebro, then NCA Director of Educational Services authored the introductory sections to this publication in 1993, when the document was first published by NCA. The present iteration was revised in 1998 by Sherry Morreale, NCA Associate Director, and Philip Backlund, chair of NCA's Assessment Commission.