



Quality Enhancement Plan: Speaking by Design

Institution: The Art Institute of Houston

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Executive Summary

The Quality Enhancement Plan at the Art Institute of Houston and its branch campuses is an oral communication across-the-curriculum project entitled *Speaking by Design*. The initiative will improve students' formal presentation skills, with a particular emphasis on effective communication within the professional disciplines served by each of the college's academic programs. The reference to design in the title of the QEP reflects the creative nature of the programs of study at The Art Institute of Houston and also recognizes that speaking well takes deliberate study, thought, practice and revision.

To select an appropriate topic, The Art Institute of Houston and its branch campuses incorporated an institutionally inclusive process that included (a) reviewing its academic mission and institutional goals, (b) surveying constituent groups, (c) examining past QEP initiatives, (d) analyzing data on student learning, and (e) soliciting topic white papers from faculty. Finally, The QEP Steering Committee selected a topic that best meets the needs of the college and its students.

With additional feedback from faculty, the QEP Steering Committee then identified the following Student Learning outcomes for *Speaking by Design*:

1. Students will deliver original oral presentations that demonstrate understanding of the topic by explaining, analyzing or arguing specific concepts, ideas, images, or texts.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to support their spoken explanations, analysis or arguments with appropriate evidence and examples.
3. Students will use communication techniques (such as eye-contact, language, voice, and effective use of media) tailored to the topic, setting, and audience.
4. Students will design and deliver well-organized speeches of appropriate length.
5. Student presenters will respond in fitting and meaningful ways to questions, comments, and nonverbal cues from the audience.

The implementation of the QEP has five major components: professional development for faculty, *Speaking Intensive* courses that are mapped into the curriculum in each major course of study, support resources for faculty and students, a dedicated Speaking Resource Center at each campus, and a comprehensive *Speaking by Design* database that houses and produces reports on student learning outcomes data from all programs at all three campuses.

The program includes a comprehensive assessment plan which employs qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate student learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the program. With goals that are significant, aggressive and achievable, *Speaking by Design* will promote improved student learning outcomes and contribute meaningfully to student's success in their professional lives beyond the college.