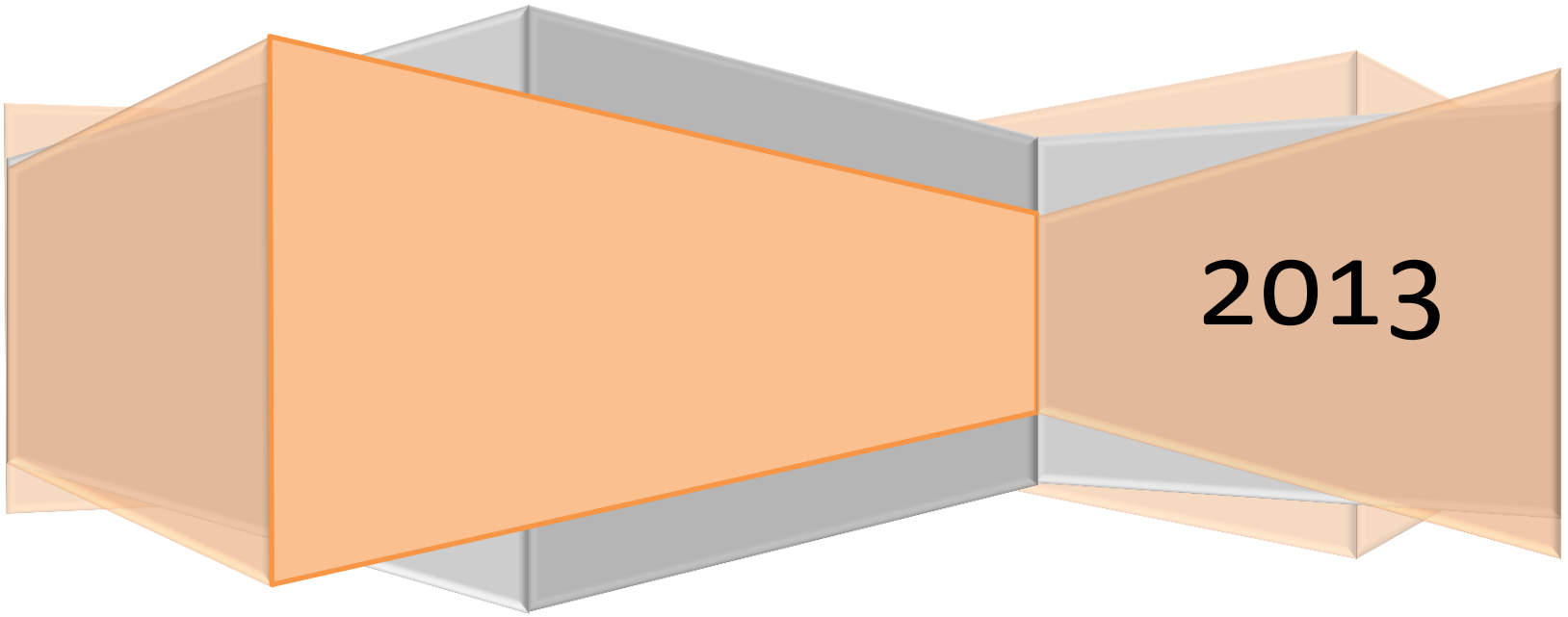
Hennepin Technical College

Institutional Assessment of Student Learning-
The Interview

Office of Institutional Research Donna S. Statzell, Director



Report of 2013 Institutional Assessment of Learning –Oral, Written, Technology

Introduction

The HTC Assessment Committee took on the task of continuing to evaluate the success of HTC students with respect to the stated institutional outcomes. A pilot in critical thinking had been conducted in the spring of 2012, and the assessment committee was seeking a method to perhaps evaluate more than one outcome in a manner that would benefit the students.

The decision was made to conduct an interview-this method would allow students to participate in a non-threatening interview, and gain feedback on their cover letters, resumes, and interview skills before completing their awards and entering the work environment. In addition, the interview format would allow the Assessment Committee to gather data on oral and communication skills and technological literacy. Interviews were conducted in the Spring of 2013.

Instrument

A rubric for oral communication had previously been established and was modified slightly for this exercise. A technological literacy rubric was established for this activity, and a written rubric was already approved and in place. The student would have three components of the interview activity: 1) Construct a letter and resume using a word processing program based on specific directions, 2) Upload these documents into the D2L environment, and 3) Schedule an interview using the EventBrite Software. Utilizing the rubrics for each of the areas, students were given a score in: oral communication, written communication, technological literacy. Students were also provided feedback during their interview, as well as, on their written documents. Thus, the activity was viewed as a learning experience for the student and the hope was more participation from the students.

Methodology

Currently enrolled students for Spring 2013 were pulled, and from that list, students who had completed 70% or more of their coursework toward their awards were identified. A sample size of 300 students was determined to provide a statistical significant result, and thus, 300 students were randomly selected from across the technical programs of the two campuses who met the 70% or greater completion criteria.

Program faculties were provided with "Interview Prep Packet" folders and a list of the students in their program that met the criteria for the participants. Instructors were directed to give the folders to their students and encourage them to participate. The folders contained specific instructions for the students, as well as, resources for writing cover letters and resumes and interviewing tips. In addition, mailings and emails were sent to the students inviting them to participate in the interview process.

Training for the faculty to serve as the "interview team" was conducted during the January workshop. This training allowed for questions to be answered and provided instruction on how the rubric was to work and how scores would be reported. Additionally, this training allowed for the faculty to see where to sign up for their interviews and how to handle if they were not able to meet the previous commitment, or if no interviews would be held during the time slot they had selected.

This training was handled by the co-chairs of the assessment committee. Faculty, both members of the assessment committee and non-members, were excited about this opportunity and a total of 44 were trained in the evaluation of oral and written communication. The technology portion was a check-list and was completed following the interviews.

Scoring was based on a scale where 1 = Developing, 2 = Basic, 3 = Proficient and 4 = Superior. English faculty evaluated the written documents, while a panel of 3 faculty were present for each interview to evaluate oral communication.

Results

The total number of students participating in this assessment project fell well below the target of 300. Thirteen students participated in the oral communication component (interview). Written communication had 20 students participate by submitting a cover letter to be assessed, and 22 students uploaded information to the D2L site. Results will be presented in two sections: Composite Scores for each outcome and Individual Outcome Component Scores.

I. Composite Scores

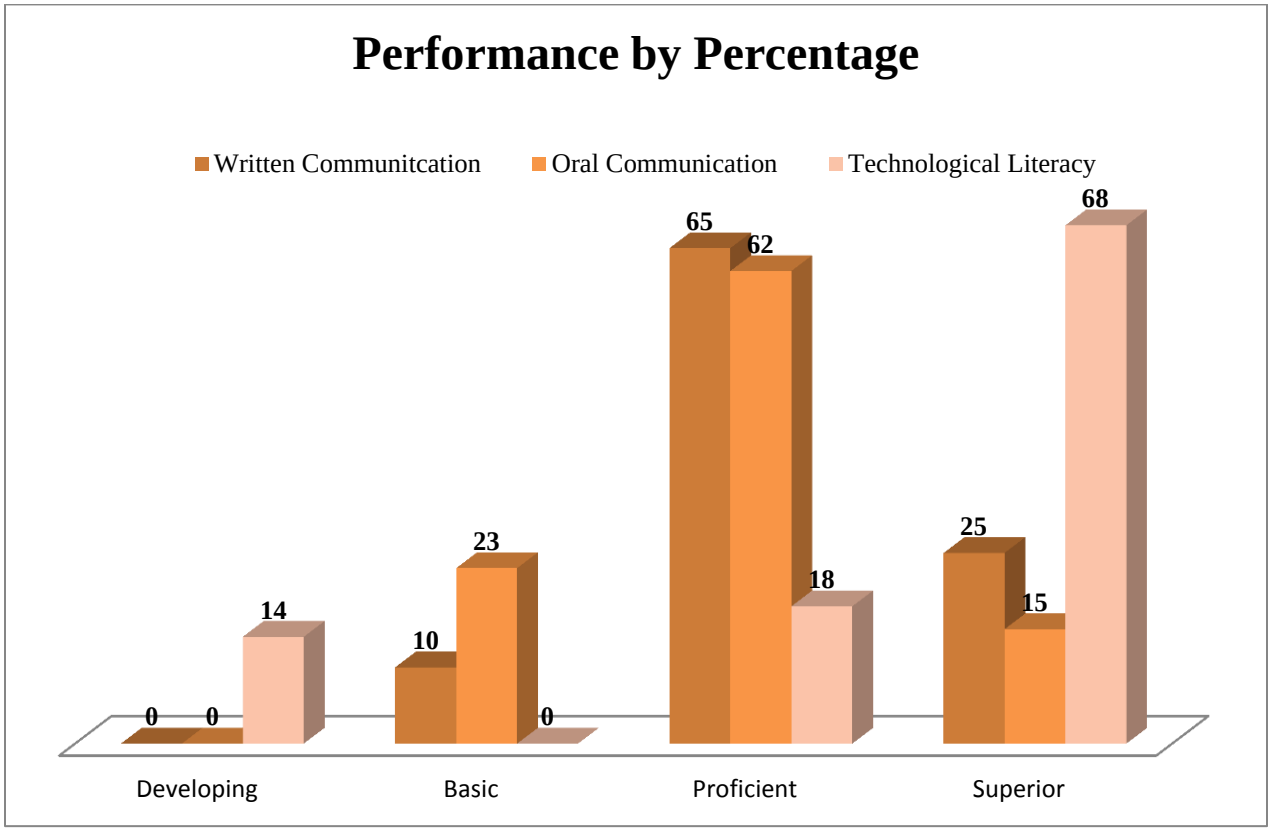
Overall students scored proficient in the written area, basic in the oral communication area and proficient in technological literacy. Means and standard deviations are provided below. Again, the low sample size does not allow for any conclusions to be made on this data.

Table 1.

	Written Communication	Oral Communication	Technological Literacy
N	20	13	22
Mean	3.15	2.92	3.41
Std. Deviation	.587	.641	1.054

Frequencies for the written component indicate that 65% of the students were rated proficient, while 25% were superior and 10% basic. The interview process found 62% of the students were proficient, 15% superior and 23% basic. Technology scores found a great percentage rated superior at 68% while 14% were developing and 18% were basic. These results are represented graphically below.

Chart 1.



II. Individual Outcome Component Scores

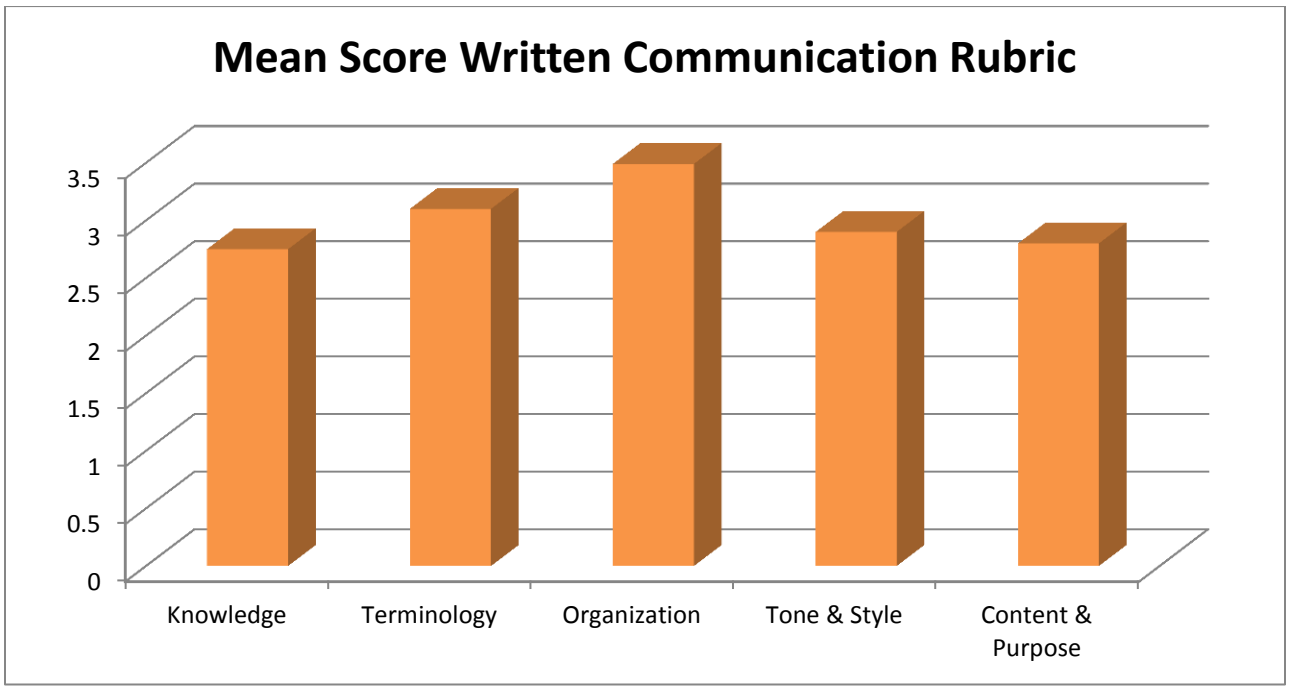
Seeking information in areas that HTC might improve, analysis was made on the scores for the components of the rubrics in each of the outcomes. Again, the small return does not allow for any statistical significance.

Written Communication

Table 2. Written Communication Rubric Components

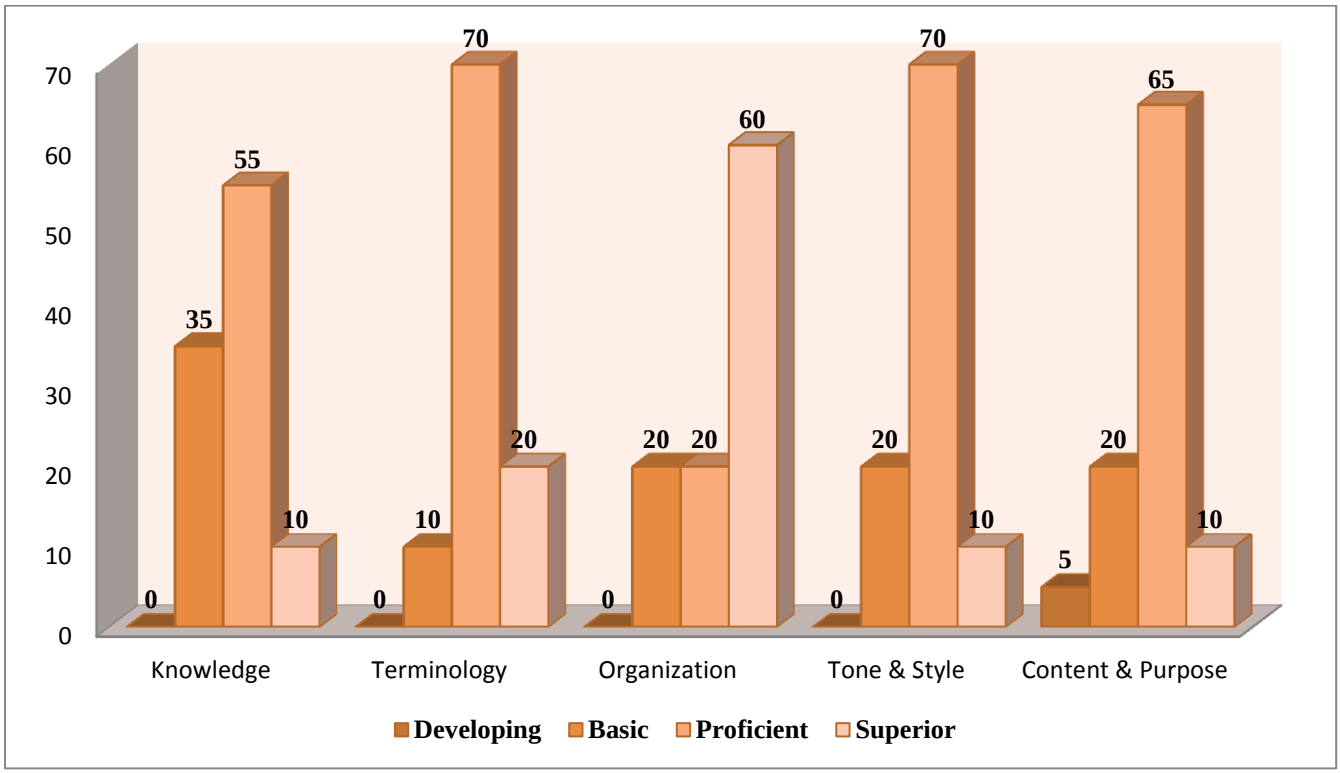
	Knowledge of conventions: Use of Standard American English	Terminology	Organization	Tone & Style (Audience Awareness)	Content & Purpose
N	20	20	20	20	20
Mean	2.75	3.10	3.40	2.90	2.80
Std. Deviation	.639	.553	.821	.553	.696

Chart 2.



When looking at the frequencies within the scores, a majority of the students were proficient in the areas of knowledge of conventions, terminology, tone and style and content and purpose. Students were superior in their organization of the material.

Chart 3.



Oral Communication

Mean scores for the oral communication components were 2.77-3.00. Forty-six percent of the students were proficient in responses to questions, while 69% were proficient in language, 50% in nonverbal, and 62% were proficient in appropriateness (content, style appropriate for the audience) while 46% were basic in speech (tone, rate, volume etc.).

Table 3 Oral Communication Rubric Components

	Response to Questions	Language	Appropriateness	Speech	Nonverbals
N	13	13	13	13	13
Mean	2.77	2.85	2.92	2.46	3.00
Std. Deviation	.725	.555	.641	.776	.739

Chart 4

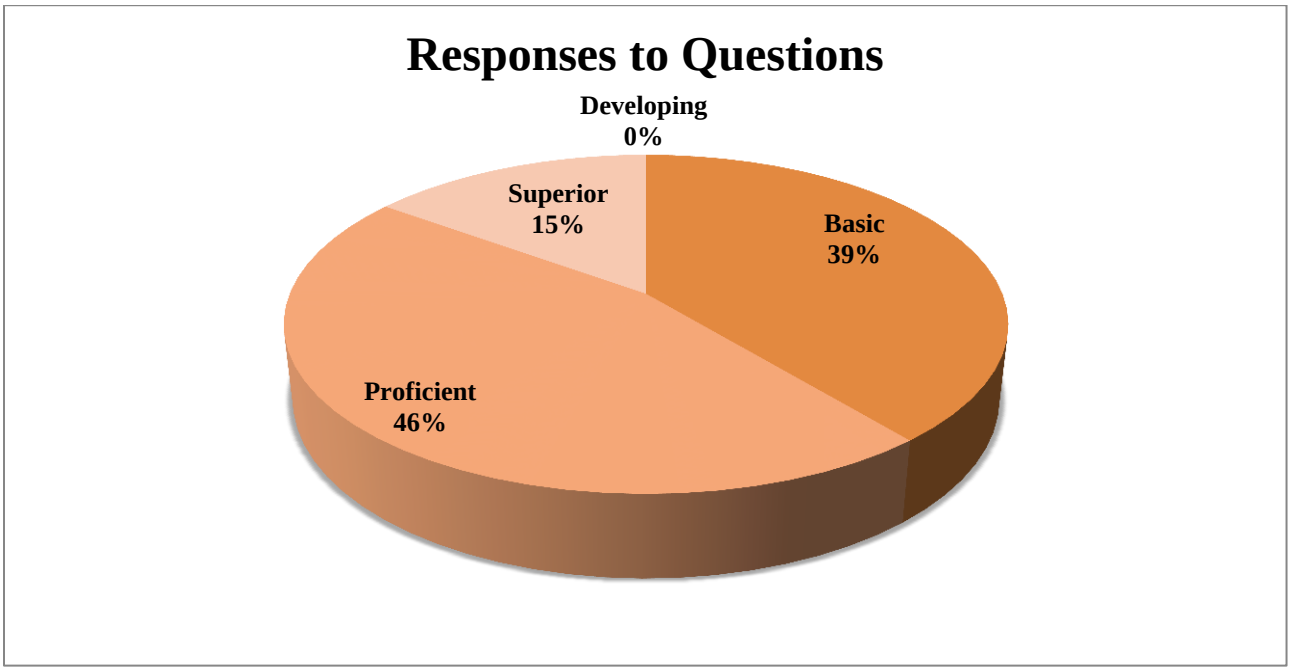


Chart 5

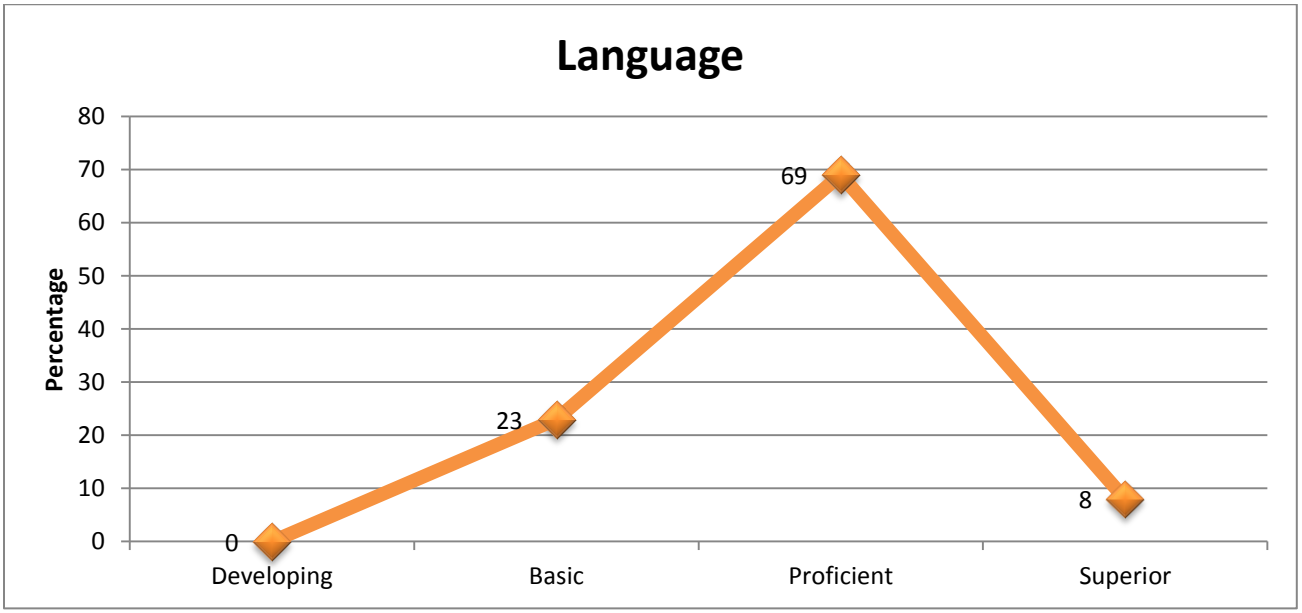


Chart 6

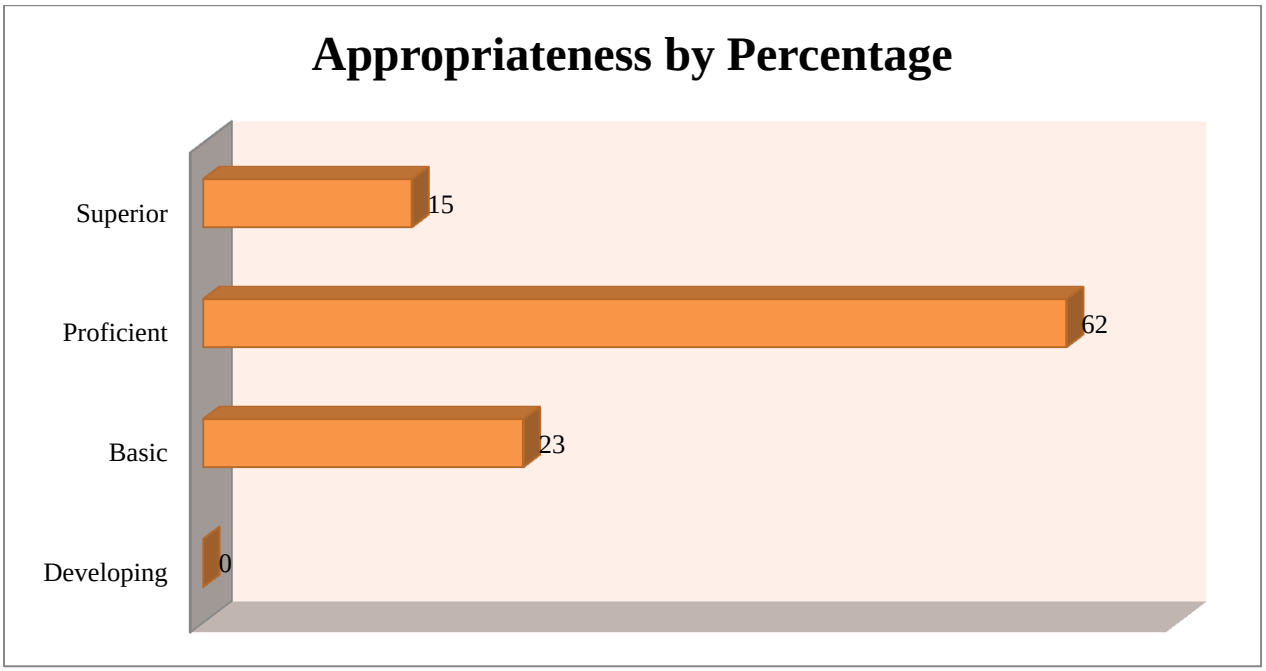


Chart 7

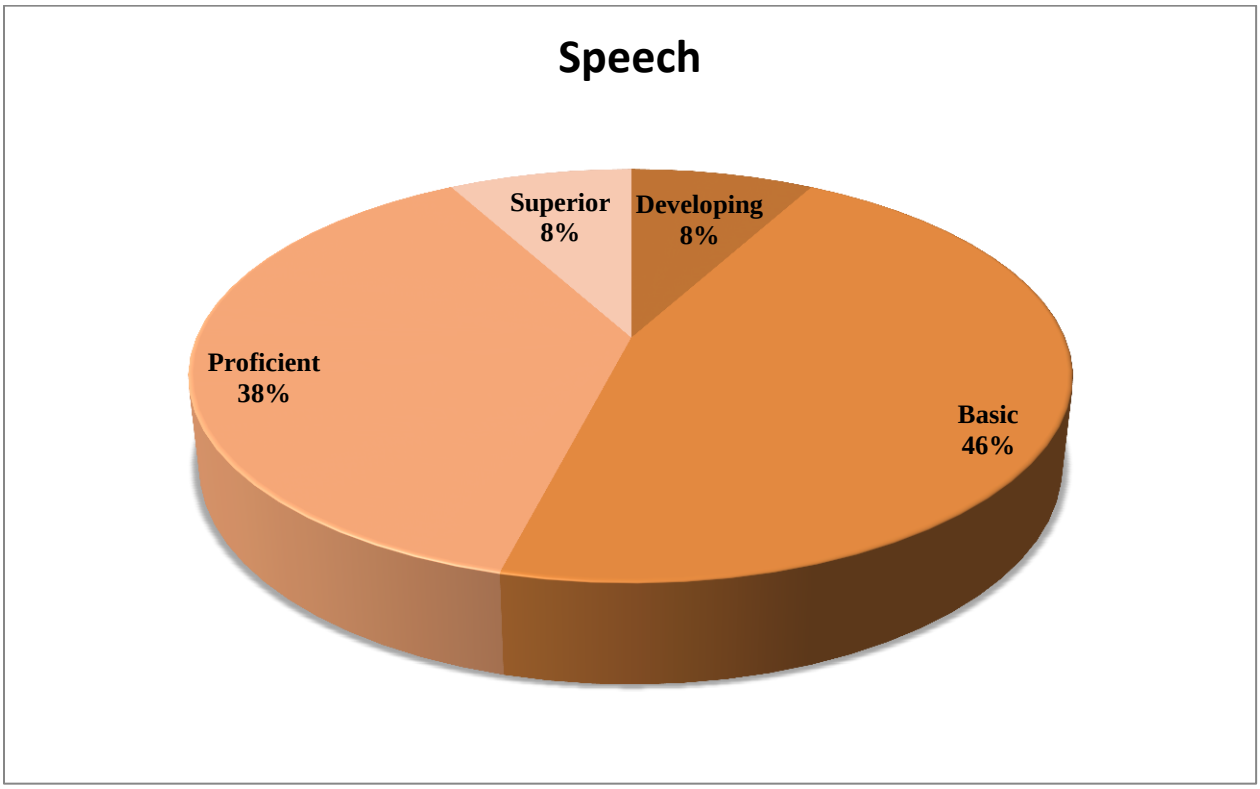
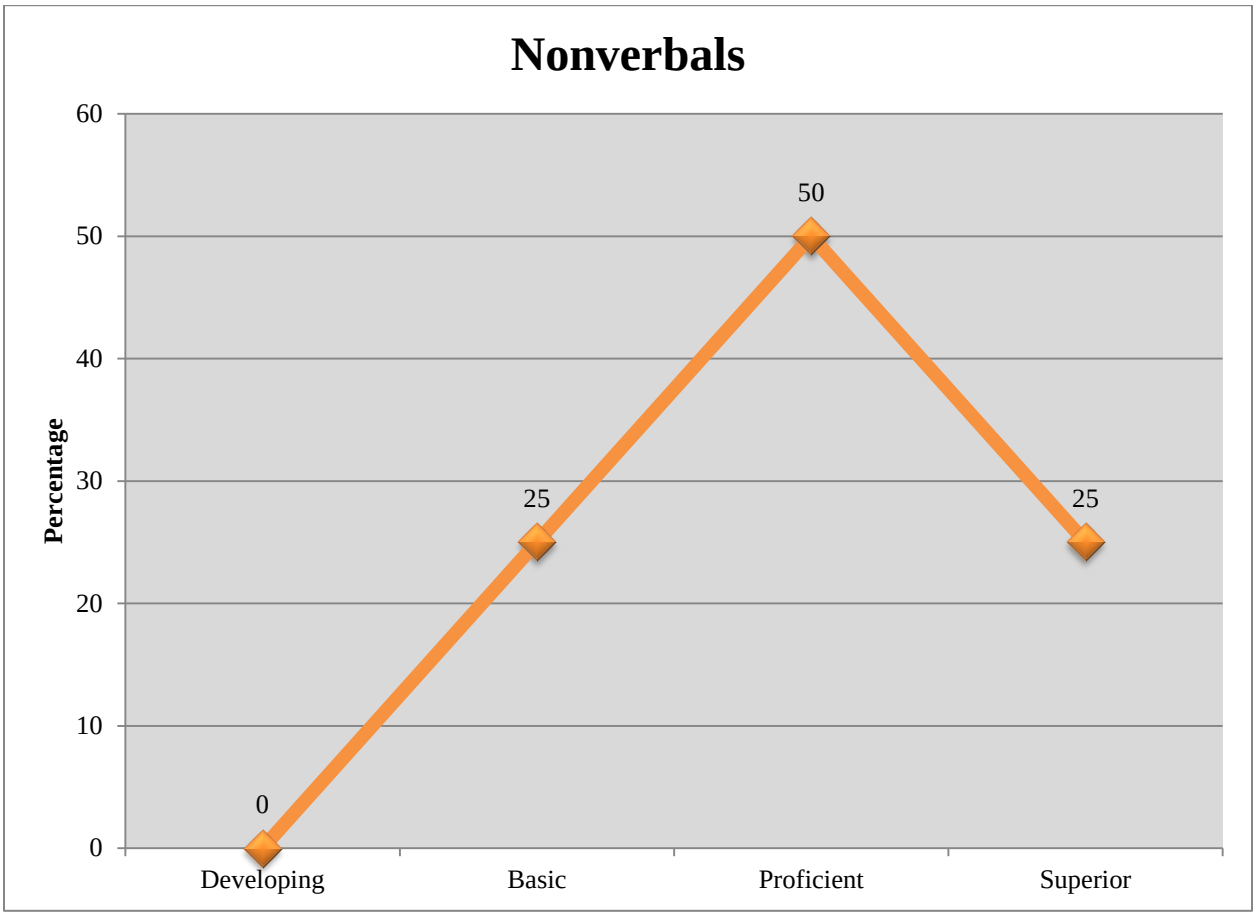


Chart 8



Technology

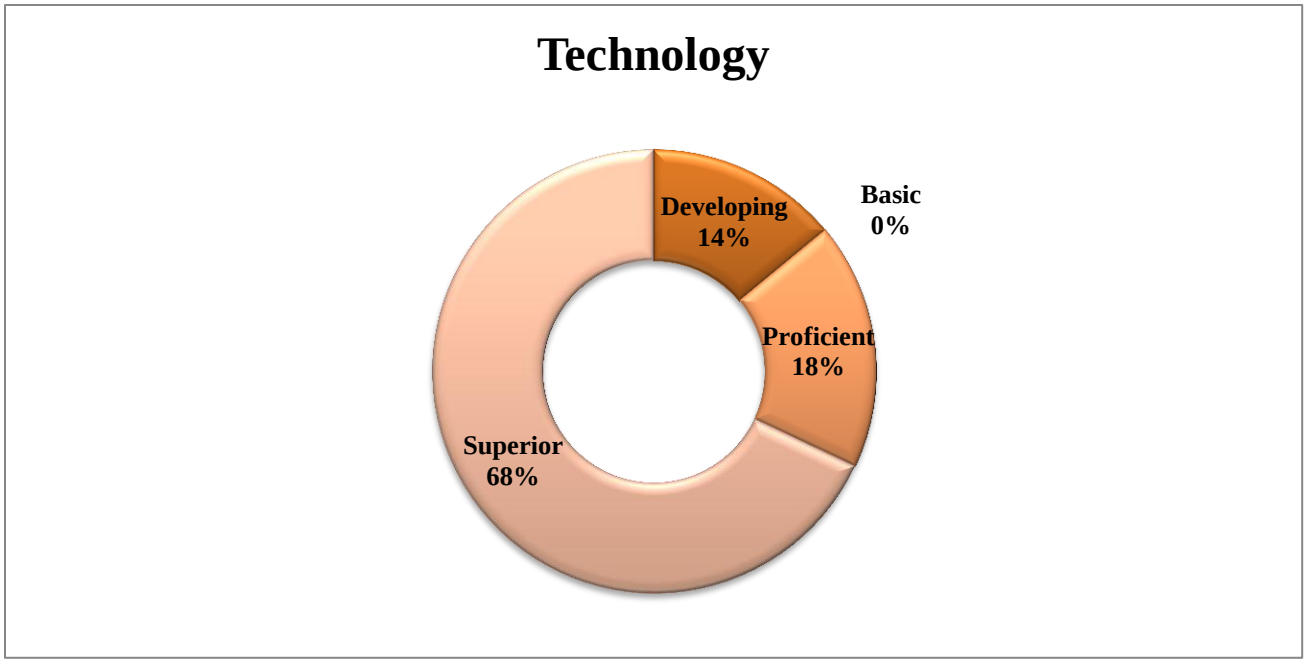
Students were given 10 technological literacy tasks to complete using a word processing program and the web-based D2L site. These tasks included: 1) Uploading the cover letter and resume, 2) Creating an electronic 1-2 pg. resume, 3) Creating an electronic 1 page cover letter, 4) Naming and saving the files as directed, 5) Formatting font size to be readable in resume and cover letter, 6) Formatting headings to stand out from rest of text in resume, 7) Name and contact information in resume, 8) Referring to company information related to entry level job in cover letter, 9) Addressing cover letter to human resources and 10) Accessing D2L. When looking at all of these skills, the mean score for technological literacy was 8.45. Scoring for this skill was as follows:

Table 4 Technological Literacy Rubric

	Superior (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Basic (5-6)	Developing (less than 5)
Percentage	68%	18%	0	14%

Of note-32% of the respondents (7 students) received a perfect 10 for their tasks. Students struggled with the naming the files as directed with only 45% completing that task, and addressing the cover letter to human resources (68%).

Chart 9



Conclusion

Assessment of the learner outcomes for oral and written communication and technological literacy using an interview format was a large undertaking. The assessment committee covered the process well, providing training, sufficient information for both students and faculty regarding the requirements to participate, and by demonstrating enthusiasm for the process. The framework for scheduling, communicating, and documenting this project was deemed very successful. In addition, the cross-discipline faculty and staff support for the project was reflective of a growing acceptance and interest in college-wide assessment as demonstrated by the following: 34 instructors from 24 different disciplines volunteered to be trained and conduct interviews; 10 faculty volunteered to assess written communication; Career Services prepared interview resources provided in the Interview Prep Packets; Institutional Research and Information Technology developed a system to randomly select students meeting the subject criteria; and staff managed scheduling and document archiving. Furthermore, the interview format did provide baseline data for the institutional assessment of oral and written communication and technological literacy, and the rubrics were determined to be appropriate for the tasks. Yet, while the interview process fit well with the mission of HTC, if continued, student participation needs to be required to ensure enough data to determine a statistical significant result. Finally, the small sample size does not allow for any statistical conclusions to be made at this time. Only 13 students completed all aspects of the interview process.

Recommendations

Consider alternative activity to gain greater student participation in the assessment activities. This institutional assessment needs to continue to increase to validate the good work that HTC is doing.