

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Fostering 21st century skills: The impact of a communication skills class on National University of Singapore business students

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ABSTRACT

Given that the express goal of the Centre for English Language and Communication (CELC) is to prepare students for the communication needs of the National University of Singapore and the workplace, what exactly is the impact of CELC communication courses on our students today? One such course, namely ES2002, which is a business communication skills course designed for all first and second year students at NUS, includes the specific course outcome of equipping students with “both oral and written communication skills that demonstrate concepts of communication principles, interpersonal skills and intercultural skills” so as to be able to “communicate persuasively and effectively in business settings” (CELC ES2002, 2014). Since its inauguration there has yet to be a detailed study of the impact ES2002 has on its students. This paper reports on a recent impact study of one of the several professional communication skills courses that CELC offers to NUS students. The research questions were: What is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes between the overall control and experimental groups of students? And what is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes of the same students in the experimental group before and after ES2002? The quasi-experimental naturalistic study used a pre-post survey and control and experimental groups’ performances grades. Cronbach coefficients were used to establish reliability of the items and p value calculated for comparison of the mean for scores. The results revealed clear differences in the experimental group, showing a more positive self-perception with regard to the skills as well as higher grades.

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills of undergraduates have become crucial given the need for graduates to be equipped with the necessary 21st century skills (AACTE, 2010). In a letter to educator preparation leaders, Sharon P. Robinson, President and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and Ken

Kay, President, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, note that “to be college and career ready today, student learning must go beyond mastery of core subjects and include 21st century knowledge and skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and technological literacy” (p. 3). This kind of communication is the ability to “articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and non-verbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts” (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 91). In line with these developments, the National University of Singapore (NUS) has initiated a campus-wide push for all students to become “able communicators” (Tan, 2009) before they graduate.

Given that the express goal of the NUS Centre for English Language and Communication (CELC) is to prepare students for the communication needs of the university and the workplace, what exactly is the impact of the CELC communication courses on our students today? One such course, namely ES2002, which is a business communication skills course designed for all first and second year students at NUS, includes the specific course outcome of equipping students with “both oral and written communication skills that demonstrate concepts of communication principles, interpersonal skills and intercultural skills” so as to be able to “communicate persuasively and effectively in business settings” (CELC ES2002, 2014). Since its inauguration, there has yet to be a detailed study of the impact ES2002 has on its students. The importance of ascertaining the impact of academic programs has been growing. There are increasingly calls from accrediting organisations, governments, and funding groups (Bers, 2008) as well as from industry representatives expecting graduates to be ready with relevant skills and competencies such as communication skills (Toutkoushian, 2005). This paper thus reports on a recent impact study of one of the several professional communication skills courses that CELC offers to NUS students.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Kirkpatrick’s model for evaluating training has been used extensively for not just human-resource related training programs (Arthur, Bennett, Edens & Bell, 2003) but also for academic learning programs (Kirkpatrick, 2005). In fact, the model has been argued to be a “comprehensive and systematic approach” (Praslova, 2010, p. 219) to evaluate higher education programs. This paper is part of a larger study that uses Kirkpatrick’s four levels (Table 1) as the framework to measure the impact of ES2002 in the students. However, this paper will only focus on the impact at one level: change in the learning (level 2). Levels 1, 3 and 4 are being reported elsewhere (Mok, 2014). Learning (level 2), seen as increase in knowledge and skills, and change in attitudes, is understood as the comparison between students’ demonstration of their oral presentation and communication skills during and at the end of the course.

Table 1. Measurement of the Kirkpatrick's four levels

Kirkpatrick's four levels	Measurement tools
Level 1: Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post motivation surveys (Students)
Level 2: Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post self-reporting surveys (Students) • External assessment of experimental group's performance (Tutors) • Post self-reporting survey in previous semester (Students)
Level 3: Behaviour (Transference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reporting post survey (Students) • End-of-semester reporting of students' communication skills in other business courses (Tutors)
Level 4: Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning and end-of-course tests (Tutors)

There is overwhelming evidence for a positive effect of communication skills training (Aspegren, 1999) and ES2002, like most communication courses, was designed with this assumption and expectation. However, this hypothesis of impact on students has yet to be empirically determined. While ES2002 uses end-of-course surveys to garner students' feedback, they are at best one dimensional and limited to students' satisfaction ratings. Also, the end-of-course survey does not take into account the situation of the students prior to the course and lacks the more reliable method of control and experimental methods of comparison. There is also the issue of lower performing students overrating themselves when self-evaluating (Chur-Hansen, 2010). Another criticism of students' self-reporting is that they may not necessarily be internally valid with a response shift bias (Howard et al., 1979) or correlate with external assessments either from the tutors or students (Wooliscroft et al., 1993).

To address the issues raised in student self-reporting and feedback, this study employed a natural and quasi experimental "pre-post comparison" method (Dinardo, 2008, p. 439). The "pre-post comparison" method adds strength to the internal validity of the findings (p. 436). In addition, the resulting increase in knowledge and skills, and change in attitudes, are measured in this study instead of students' satisfaction. In addition and more significantly, we are comparing between the control group and experimental group's self-reporting perception of their skills, knowledge and attitude. The concern for lower performing students overrating themselves in self-evaluation is minimised here due to the highly motivated and high achieving profile of the business students. Competition to be enrolled in the faculty of business is stiff and most if not all of the students were required to have excellent grades to get in. There is also research that shows that students' self-evaluation can correlate with external assessments either from the tutors or students (Chur-Hansen, 2010). In spite of the apparent and inherent

weaknesses in students' self-reporting, it is still the most appropriate and direct way to gather data from the intended recipients of the program.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Using the framework of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model and the hypothesis that ES2002 should have an impact on the students, the following research questions on learning (RQ) were framed to investigate the impact of ES2002 on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students:

RQ1: What is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes between the overall control and experimental groups of students? This is to determine the extent of the general impact on the experimental group. And how does this difference compare with a previous year's survey on another batch of students who underwent the same course? This comparison will confirm the reliability of the results of this quasi experimental study.

RQ2: What is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes of the same students in the experimental group before and after ES2002? This allows us to have a direct comparison of the same student before and after the course, giving us a more concrete picture.

To measure both RQs, the pre-post surveys were used to report on the mean scores of the students' self-reporting perception of their knowledge, skills and attitudes with regard to the different aspects of business communication skills. A post survey on another batch of students who took ES2002 in the previous year was also used to compare with these scores. Third, data collected from the students' assignment grades for the oral presentation component of ES2002 were used to triangulate the results of the first two tools.

ES2002

A professional communication module, Business Communication skills (ES2002), was selected to be evaluated with respect to its learning objectives in oral presentation, oral interaction, feedback and written communication skills. ES2002 was sampled as it has a reasonably large cohort of approximately 700 over students, who take the course over two semesters. This means that half of the students can act as the control group while the other half who were slated to take the course could be the experimental group in this quasi experimental study in a naturalistic setting. This quasi experimental study allows us to evaluate the

course in its natural setting so that we can authentically examine the impact of the course in a complex environment where students were not only subjected to the influence of ES2002, but also by other factors.

With approximately 48 hours of instruction, assignment, feedback and practice, ES2002 dedicates most of its hours to oral presentation (Table 2). Each type of business communication skills devotes a fair amount of hours to instruction, practice, feedback and assignment with oral presentation taking the lion's share of 22.5 hours. The emphasis on the oral aspects of business communication hinges on the demands and requirements of industry.

Table 2. Type of communication skills and hours spent over 12 weeks

Dimensions of communication skills	Instructional		Practice		Assignment		Feedback		Sub-total (hour)
	classes	hour	number	hour	number	hour	number	hour	
Oral presentation	2.5	5	5	2.5	3	12	3	3	22.5
Oral interaction and feedback	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	6
Writing reports	1	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	8
Inter-cultural	1	2	2	0.5	0	0	2	1	3.5
Inter-personal	1	2	2	0.5	0	0	2	1	3.5
Meetings	1	2	1	1.5	1	0.5	1	0.5	4.5
Total	7.5	15	14	10	6	14.5	11	8.5	48

Each dimension of these communication skills began with an instructional session, followed by practice and the assignment. Formative assessment in the form of feedback was given by both peers and the tutor during class and after each assignment. The assignments were evenly distributed over the 12 weeks with the final week culminating in a final oral presentation assessment.

METHODOLOGY

Three measurement tools were used: a) Pre-post surveys on control and experimental groups, b) Post survey on a previous group of students, and c) students' assignment grades for the oral presentation. All the surveys were identical to ensure that the understanding of the standard of measurement for the dimension being measured would not change much from pretest to posttest (Cronbach & Furby, 1970). A retrospective self-reporting pretest was not used due to the large number of questions and items (totalling 67) to which students had to respond, since this was part of a larger impact study (unpublished data).

Pre-post Surveys on Control and Experimental Groups

Two groups of students, the one a control and the other an experimental group, were subjected to a pre-post survey. 360 students were randomly assigned to ES2002 (experimental), with the remaining 350 taking the course in either the next or subsequent semesters. The experimental group underwent 12 weeks of the course, while the control group did not do so, but were enrolled in other business courses. The post survey was conducted after the students received their grades for the module so as to minimise their potential effect on the data and thus the power of the researcher, who was both the course coordinator and a teacher on the course. A total of 222 students from the control group responded to the pre survey, and 161 responded to the post survey with 112 being matched in the pre-post survey. The experimental group had 186 students in the pre survey and 149 for the post survey with 118 being matched in the pre-post survey.

Post survey on a Previous Group of Students

A post survey was conducted a year ago on a different group of students using an identical set of items. This set of findings was the result of a pilot survey to measure the same dimensions of communication skills in an earlier group of students. The findings were reproduced here to ascertain the reliability of this study's findings. This older study will henceforth be termed the "previous survey".

Surveys and Items

All the surveys were conducted online using the university's learning portal (IVLE). Students were invited to participate via emails; willingness to participate included a consent agreement. Students were informed of a second (post) survey at the end of the course. The invitation was voluntary with no rewards for participation, with a response rate of 57.46% (408 for both control and experimental groups) for the pre survey and 43.66% (310) for the post survey. The previous survey had a response rate of 45.56% (164).

The pre and post surveys consist of identical 32 attitudinal, skills and knowledge items. The surveys used a Likert scale to determine the value to self-reporting students of the different items. The 32 attitudinal, skills and knowledge items were posed in two different ways (Sets A and B) to ensure the item validity of the dimension measured. A set of 12 items (Q1-12) required students to rate their own skills from 1 to 5 (with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent) and the other set (Q1-XX) asked them to rate the extent to which they agreed to the statements from 1 to 5 (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). Please refer to appendices A and B for the items. With the emphasis

on oral presentation, 8 items measuring knowledge, skill and attitude of this aspect of business communication were constructed (Table 3). The rest of the dimensions and inter-reliability of the items are reflected in the Cronbach's α .

Table 3. Number and type of items measuring attitudes, skills and knowledge

Dimensions of communication skills	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude	Sub-total	Cronbach's α
Oral presentation	1	4	3	= 8	0.863
Oral interaction and feedback	1	1	0	= 2	0.853
Writing reports	2	2	2	= 6	0.759
Inter-cultural	2	1	2	= 5	0.702
Inter-personal	3	1	1	= 5	0.670
Meetings	1	1	0	= 2	0.708
Listening	1	1	0	= 2	0.442
Others	2	0	0	= 2	
Total	13	11	8	= 32	0.927

The different types of communication skills were measured with between 2 items and 8 items to ensure reliability of the scores (Table 4).

Table 4: Types of communication and corresponding items

Dimensions of communication skills	Set A	Set B
Oral presentation	Q1. Q11.	QI. QII. QIII. QIV. QXVI. QXVIII.
Oral interaction and feedback	Q2. Q3.	
Writing reports	Q4. Q5.	QVI. QIX. QXVII. QXX.
Inter-cultural	Q6. Q12.	QVIII. QXI. QXIV.
Inter-personal	Q7. Q10.	QX. QXII. QXV.
Meetings		QXIX. QV.
Listening	Q9.	QVII.
Others	Q8.	QXIII.

SPSS was used to generate the frequencies and averages with Cronbach coefficients to establish the reliability coefficient of the items. Correlation and statistical significance tests such as T-test and p-value were calculated for comparison of the mean for all the scores.

Profile of Students

These students are in their first and second years of study at the university. The matched control group students (N=112) were aged between 19 and 23 years (M=19.4 years; SD=1.1 years). These students were mostly in their first year (n=104) of study while there were some in their second year (n=3), with a fairly similar number of males (n=50) and females (n=57). The matched experimental group students (N=118) were aged between 19 and 23 years (M=20.7 years; SD=0.9 years). These students were mostly in their first year (n=112) of study while there were some in their second year (n=6) with fairly similar number of males (n=53) and females (n=65).

Quasi experimental studies in naturalistic settings require a high degree of contextual description and reporting to ensure validity and reliability. Information about the participants and their prior experience mitigate against unknown questions about the subjects and recognise the various factors that may influence the study.

Both experimental and control groups had similar prior experience with most of them (around 90%) in both groups not having gone through any communication skills training (Table 5). This means that any impact ES2002 had on the students could be considered to be largely due to taking the course. It also means that both groups were comparable and the self-reporting results were justifiably compared.

Table 5. Number of communication related skills courses taken before survey

No.	Experimental	Control
0	172 (92.5%)	193 (86.9%)
1	4 (2.1%)	3 (1.4%)
2	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.9%)
>2	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.5%)
Others*	8 (4.3%)	11 (5.1%)
Skipped	2 (1.1%)	12 (5.5%)
Total	186 (100.0%)	222 (100.0%)

* Short programs (less than 10 weeks)

Students' Assignment Grades for the Oral Presentation

Students' assignment grades were compared in order to examine the difference in their demonstration of the knowledge, skills and attitudes in the case of the oral presentation component. This is because the oral presentation component had 3 assignments requiring the students to perform a presentation activity at different intervals over a period of 12 weeks. These 3 periodical demonstrations of oral presentation skills were ideal for measuring the improvement or impact on students' skills over time. In addition, the objectivity of the measurement was further strengthened by having a blind assessor at the third presentation activity (assignment) who was not known to the student. This blind marking process has been statistically shown to raise the level of student discrimination and therefore lends higher objectivity to assessment (Mok & Toh, in press).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For RQ1, what is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes between the overall control and experimental groups of students, we discovered that there was a clear positive difference between the control and experimental groups in how they perceived themselves as apparent from their belief and confidence relating to the various specific communication skills.

The overall mean of 0.41 difference (12.61%) between the control and experimental groups (Table 6) shows that there was a positive impact on the

Table 6. Comparison between control and experimental groups in post survey

Dimensions of communication skills	Control (N=161)		Experiment N=149		p value	diff	% change
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Oral presentation	3.17	0.79	3.72	0.71	<0.001	0.55	17.48%
Oral interaction and feedback	3.17	0.79	3.72	0.71	<0.001	0.42	13.66%
Writing reports	2.96	0.81	3.47	0.74	<0.001*	0.50	17.38%
Inter-cultural	3.50	0.74	3.74	0.67	<0.001	0.24	7.10%
Inter-personal	3.43	0.70	3.74	0.68	<0.001	0.30	9.08%
Meetings	3.34	0.78	3.90	0.64	<0.001	0.56	17.09%
Listening	3.58	0.69	3.81	0.59	<0.001	0.23	6.48%
Others	3.36	0.75	3.79	0.71	<0.001	0.42	12.63%
Average						0.41	12.61%

* Two items (Q4 and Q5) had p value <0.02

students who underwent ES2002 compared to those who did not. The most notable difference was in meeting skills (0.56) and oral presentation skills (0.55), with writing reports (0.50) demonstrating a slightly lower difference. The smallest improvement was demonstrated by listening skills (0.23), with inter-cultural skills (0.24) and inter-personal following closely behind (0.30).

When compared to a previous year's survey on another batch of students who similarly underwent the same course, we found there was no major difference and in fact, the results were very similar (Table 7). This strengthens the reliability of the current study's results and suggests strongly that there was indeed a clear impact on students taking ES2002.

Table 7. Comparison between current post survey and previous year

Dimensions of communication skills	Previous study (N=164)		Experiment post (N=149)		diff
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Oral presentation	3.53	0.70	3.72	0.71	0.19
Oral interaction and feedback	3.43	0.63	3.72	0.71	0.29
Writing reports	3.33	0.72	3.47	0.74	0.14
Inter-cultural	3.67	0.64	3.74	0.67	0.07
Inter-personal	3.67	0.62	3.74	0.68	0.07
Meetings	3.70	0.61	3.90	0.64	0.20
Listening	3.72	0.61	3.81	0.59	0.09
Others	3.66	0.69	3.79	0.71	0.13

For RQ2, what is the difference in knowledge, skills and attitudes of the same students in the experimental group before and after ES2002; we discovered a clear and strong improvement of the experimental group's self-perception of their knowledge, skills and attitudes (Table 8).

The overall average difference of 0.44 (14.03%) between the pre-post surveys of the experimental group (Table 8), showed that there was a direct impact on the students who underwent ES2002. The most notable change was in writing reports (0.67) and meeting skills (0.62) while oral presentation skills were not far behind (0.57). The lowest improvement was in listening (0.20) and inter-cultural skills (0.25), with inter-personal following closely behind (0.29). These findings were similar to the general impact between control and experimental groups in post survey (Table 6).

Table 8. Comparison between pre-post surveys in experimental group

Dimensions of communication skills	Experiment (pre) (N=118)		Experiment (post) (N=118)		p value	diff	% change
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Oral presentation	3.15	0.84	3.72	0.72	<0.001	0.57	18.07%
Oral interaction and feedback	3.13	0.78	3.55	0.74	<0.001	0.42	13.52%
Writing reports	2.98	0.83	3.59	0.75	<0.001	0.62	21.89%
Inter-cultural	3.36	0.79	3.61	0.68	<0.001	0.25	7.90%
Inter-personal	3.43	0.73	3.72	0.70	<0.001*	0.29	8.79%
Meetings	3.27	0.80	3.94	0.63	<0.001	0.67	21.05%
Listening	3.62	0.72	3.82	0.61	<0.001+	0.20	5.53%
Others	3.28	0.80	3.79	0.77	<0.001	0.51	15.51%
Average						0.44	14.03%

*One item (QXV) had p value <0.3; + One item (Q9) had p value <0.07

All the results of the pre-post experimental group further showed there was impact with all registering higher or comparably positive changes, with the exception of inter-personal and listening skills. This tracking of the same students in the pre-post survey provided a more accurate comparison of the students' perception. Significantly, at the question response level (See Appendix A), no experimental group student felt they were poor in oral presentation (Q1), oral interaction and feedback (Q2 and Q3) after undergoing ES2002. Similarly, no experimental group student strongly disagreed that they can deliver an oral presentation (QIV, QXVI, QXVIII), participate effectively in a meeting (QV and QXIX), successfully write a report (QVI, QIX and QXVII), and communicate well inter-personally (QXV) (See Appendix B). All the above questions had students indicating they were poor or strongly disagreeing with the statements in the case of the pre survey.

The results seem to mirror the number of practice hours given in the course with writing reports having the highest number, followed by oral presentation and meetings (Table 2). What was also obvious was that the highest effect was also found in the types of communication that had assignments. Conversely, instructional and formative assessment hours spent did not have the same effect on the outcome.

Comparison between Pre-post Surveys in Control Group

The comparison between pre-post surveys in the control group showed little or no difference in the various types of communication skills measured (Table

Table 9. Comparison between pre-post surveys in control group

Dimensions of communication skills	Control (pre) (N=112)		Control (post) (N=112)		p value	diff	% change
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Oral presentation	3.19	0.83	3.21	0.78	<0.001	0.03	0.87%
Oral interaction and feedback	3.11	0.65	3.25	0.72	<0.001	0.14	4.42%
Writing reports	2.95	0.83	2.95	0.80	<0.001	0.00	0.05%
Inter-cultural	3.49	0.77	3.50	0.71	<0.001*	0.01	0.32%
Inter-personal	3.40	0.71	3.50	0.72	<0.001+	0.10	3.12%
Meetings	3.43	0.73	3.26	0.82	<0.001	-0.17	-4.82%
Listening	3.63	0.69	3.60	0.73	<0.001	-0.02	-0.43%
Others	3.33	0.72	3.36	0.78	<0.001	0.03	0.77%
Average						0.01	0.54%

*One item had p value <0.4 for these types (QXI)

+One item had p value <0.2 for these types (QXII)

9). Marginally positive changes were seen in inter-personal skills (0.10) and in oral interaction and feedback (0.14).

The overall positive changes in the experimental group when compared with the control group were further confirmed by the pre-post experimental group. Even the least improved skill, namely listening (0.20) (Table 8), was better than the most improved skills in the control group (Oral interaction and feedback; 0.14; Table 9).

Experimental Group Grades and Oral Presentation skills

From the first performance (P1) to the second (P2) and to the third (P3), there was overall a slightly positive change. However, from P2 to P3, there was a slight decrease. This may be due to having the independent assessment which provided more objectivity. Yet, there was a clear but slight gain in the mean score of the students in P3, which took place at the end of the course, when compared to P1, which was measured at the beginning. It can be said that there was some impact on the students in terms of the mean scores of their oral presentation performances. It should be noted that the assessment criteria were largely the same throughout the 3 performances with minor changes of up to 10%. P1 had a 10% group assessment compared to P2 and P3, which were all 100% individually assessed. As the control groups did not take ES2002, there were no grades to compare with the experimental groups.

Table 10: Comparison of the oral presentation performances grades

Oral presentation	P1	P2	P3 (external assessor)
Mean (N=149)	71.11	72.85	72.16
<i>SD</i>	6.67	6.49	7.91
p value	0.011	0.026	0.108
diff	1.05 (P3-P1)	1.74 (P2-P1)	-0.69 (P3-P2)

Comparing the changes in self-reporting perceptions of the experimental and control groups on the various aspects of communication skills and the students' oral presentation skills performance grades, it is clear that there are differences and that the experimental group experienced positive changes.

CONCLUSION

The results clearly show an overall positive change in the students' self-perception of their knowledge, skills and attitudes in business communication skills. In particular, meeting skills, oral presentation skills and writing skills demonstrated the highest positive change. The students' oral presentation performances grades also showed a clear increase in the mean scores, albeit this was small over 3 performances. Possible reasons for these findings could be the higher amount of practice time as well as the number of assignments providing greater opportunities for students to learn and enjoy more reinforcement. An implication then for the design and delivery of communication skills courses would be to allocate more practice time anchored to assignments for a greater positive impact.

The comparison with the previous year's survey findings reinforces the reliability and certainty of the impact over the two runs of the course, suggesting the impact can be sustained. However, it is acknowledged that this quasi-experimental study's findings on the impact are subject to contamination by unknown variables (Dinardo, 2008). At the same time, response shift bias (Howard et al., 1979) can also contribute to this contamination. Perhaps, to further support this study's finding, an evaluation solely dedicated to level 2 of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model would afford a retrospective self-report pre-test without the constraints of limiting the number of questions in this study.

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Appendix A

Set A items

Please rate the following items regarding your current communication skills in a formal business setting: (poor, below average, average, above average, excellent)

- Q1. Oral presentation skills
- Q2. Oral interaction skills in groups
- Q3. Oral feedback skills in groups
- Q4. Writing report skills
- Q5. Writing summary of report skills
- Q6. Awareness of issues relating to inter-cultural communication skills
- Q7. Awareness of issues relating to inter-personal communication skills
- Q8. Awareness of good communication concepts and principles
- Q9. Listening skills
- Q10. Resolving conflict skills
- Q11. Confidence in speaking in public
- Q12. Confidence in communicating to people of other cultures

Appendix B

Set B items

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements in a formal business setting: (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree)

- QI. I feel confident about making an oral presentation.
- QII. I can deliver a persuasive presentation.
- QIII. I can deliver a clear presentation.
- QIV. I can deliver an oral presentation that is very appropriate to the context and audience.
- QV. I can participate effectively in meetings and discussions.
- QVI. I can successfully write a report that is characterised by clearly stated aims and research problems, appropriate discussion of data, logical conclusions and feasible recommendations.
- QVII. I am able to listen genuinely to other people's concerns and argument, and identify and clarify their main point or argument in a conversation or discussion.
- QVIII. I am aware of important issues associated with good intercultural communication for improved communication with audiences of diverse backgrounds in the global business environment.
- QIX. I can successfully write a report that pays attention to the reader's needs, the reader-writer relationship and the cultural context.
- QX. I am aware of important issues associated with good interpersonal levels and resolving conflicts to ensure smooth and successful interpersonal relations.
- QXI. I believe I have a positive attitude towards people from different cultural group.
- QXII. To be assertive, one must listen well.
- QXIII. I know how to develop effective powerpoint slides.
- QXIV. I am highly aware of differences in communication styles across cultures.
- QXV. I know how to be assertive in different interpersonal situations.
- QXVI. I know the key elements in making an effective and successful oral presentation.
- QXVII. I know and can write the different languages involved in a good report.
- QXVIII. I am an effective presenter.
- QXIX. I know and can perform the different roles in a formal meeting.
- QXX. I know what the 3 'C's and 4 'P's are in good writing skills.