

Related to Interpersonal Communication: The Interactive Media Package for the Assessment of Communication and Critical Thinking (IMPACCT)

Overview: The IMPACCT is an online survey covering over 40 self-report types of student communication competency, as well as a test of critical thinking based on cognitive problem-solving. The student nominates two peers who rate the student's interpersonal, computer-mediated, group and leadership, and public speaking communication competence. The student takes the self-report survey at Time 1 (T1), and also at a Time 2 (T2).

The system generates a printable profile for the student displaying the following percentiles: (a) T1-Self (i.e., how the student sees self's communication skills in various skill domains at time 1), (b) T2-Self (i.e., how the student's scores changed from T1 to T2), (c) Peers (i.e., how self-rated skills compare to averaged ratings by two peers nominated by the student), and (d) Norms (i.e., how self-rated skills compare to everyone else's self-ratings who has taken the survey). The resulting collective data are available to the department to provide evidence of student self-perceived skill deficits at T1, as well as perceived change from T1 (e.g., beginning of course or major) to T2 (e.g., end of course or major), providing quantifiable data for assessment accounting and reporting. The initial development of IMPACCT began with one well-established measure: The Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS – described below) (Spitzberg, 1994, 2007) consisting of a core of 25 behavioral items, intended to assess four skill areas, such as attentiveness (e.g., asking questions and encouraging a partner to talk.) All of the measures brought together through IMPACCT, including those related to Critical Thinking, are described in a related research study (Spitzberg, 2011.) Among them a measure of computer-mediated communication (CMC) competence developed by Spitzberg (2006) was adapted for use in the IMPACCT.

Research related to validity: The system was tested on a basic course sample of 1,880 freshmen basic course students and 1,999 affiliated peer raters. All subscales were sufficiently reliable. The self-reported motivation, knowledge, and skills constructs accounted for between 68-72% of student self-perceptions of overall communication competence (i.e., appropriateness, effectiveness, clarity, attractiveness, satisfaction). Student self-perceived skills were systematically lower than peer ratings of students. Students consistently perceived that their communication competence and skills increased significantly over the span of the semester (Spitzberg, 2011.)

More About Peer Competence Ratings Used in this Assessment: When a student registers into the IMPACCT system, the student provides the e-mail addresses of two individuals who have had the opportunity to observe the student communicate in a wide variety of circumstances, and could provide reasonable feedback about the student's communication behavior. These "peers" are automatically sent an introductory statement and upon activating the link, peers are taken to a survey site with a few demographic and informational items, and then 45 items in which the peers rate the competence of the student. These data are merged by the IMPACCT system and matched with the student, based on correspondence of the e-mail address and the student's registration ID. The competence items were introduced with the instruction: "Based on my conversations with this student, and/or my observations of this person's communication, I would consider this person's communication to be . . ." This is followed by a 7-point rating scale corresponding to the scale used for the CSRS, ranging from "Extremely Below Average" to "Extremely Above Average." Sample questions are included in the related research study (Spitzberg, 2011) and more information is provided online.

**The text above has been excerpted from longer, published reports.
Read more about the IMPACCT online: <http://www.impactctassess.org/>**