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Tara Suwinvattichaiporn  
*Arizona State University*

Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post  
*George Mason University*

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Assessing the Effects of a Public Speaking Course on Native and Non-Native English Speakers

Tara Suwinyattichaiporn  
Arizona State University  
Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post  
George Mason University

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), more than 1 in 5 people living in the United States speak a language other than English at home. In the 2012-2013 academic year, a record high of 819,644 international students came to the United States to study in U.S. colleges and universities (Institute of International Education, 2013). Furthermore, many universities are working to increase international student recruitment and partnering with corporations that recruit international students in an attempt to offset budget shortfalls. Taken together, these numbers suggest that we have more students than ever before who are Non-Native English Speakers (NNES) in our college and university classes, and the NNES student population is likely to increase. This is becoming increasingly salient in our public speaking classes as communication departments and Basic Course Directors must make decisions regarding how to best help NNES develop strong public speaking skills. At the same time, these students might also still be learning many of the linguistic structures and nuances of the English language as well as the cultural expectations for communication practices. In response, one of the key questions Basic Course Directors should
ask is whether or not it makes sense to offer separate, protected sections of public speaking for NNES and Native English Speakers (NES).

Some universities have developed segregated or protected sections of public speaking classes for NNES, English as a Second Language (ESL), or international students, often using previous research that suggested that such students typically have higher levels of communication apprehension and anxiety (Burroughs, Marie, & McCroskey, 2003; Cyphert, 1997; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991) and are less willing to communicate (Burroughs, Marie, & McCroskey, 2003) when speaking in their second language as justification for doing so. On the campus where this study was conducted, all students are integrated into regular sections of a highly standardized public speaking classes, and although there is a high proportion of NNES students in public speaking classes due largely to being a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in a diverse urban setting, we have not typically seen obvious differences in student speaking performances based on students’ primary languages in past assessments. However, since one of the underlying course goals is to reduce communication apprehension and increase communication confidence as well as communication competence, we wanted to find out whether our existing integrated course structure was meeting those needs effectively for all of our students in order to decide whether there was evidence to suggest that we should consider teaching separate versions of our public speaking class for NES and NNES, as many other campuses do (e.g., Arizona State University, George Mason University). The goal of this study was to find out whether there was a difference in the benefits of a tradi-
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Assessing a Public Speaking Course for NES and NNES by assessing changes in Communication Apprehension (CA), Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC), and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) as a result of taking our integrated public speaking course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While some scholars have made recommendations about how to best teach NNES in public speaking courses, little research has actually been conducted to test the effectiveness of each of these strategies. Rubin and Turk (1997) suggested that there are four primary options for accommodating NNES in public speaking courses: (1) place NNES in an intensive English program instead of or before letting them take public speaking, (2) mainstream NNES into regular public speaking classes, (3) develop special sections of public speaking specifically for NNES staffed by instructors with additional training in teaching linguistically diverse populations, or (4) develop a reformed, culturally inclusive public speaking class that integrates cross-cultural competence throughout the curriculum. Likewise, Burroughs (2008) advocates for a three-tiered approach for working with NNES in public speaking courses: (1) develop a one-unit communication lab course to accompany the existing courses, (2) develop a new course for highly apprehensive and NNES, and (3) develop a Center for Communication Skills to provide personalized assistance. Despite these recommendations, the relative effectiveness of these approaches has not yet been tested.
NES and NNES

According to the Dictionary of Language Teaching of Applied Linguistics, “a NES is a person considered as a speaker of his or her native language, the language which a person acquires in early childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or it is the language of a country where he or she is living” (Richards, Schmidt, Kendricks, & Youngkyu, 1992, p. 241). For the purposes of this study, we are defining NES as individuals who speak English as their first language and as a primary medium of communication. NNES will be defined as individuals who acquired a language other than English as their first language and who still speak that particular language as a primary way to communicate at home, even though they also speak English in other places as required by context.

Public Speaking

Oral communication skills are identified as an essential learning outcome for Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2014), are now integrated into the English Language Arts and Literacy standards for the Common Core at the K-12 levels (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014), and have been identified by Hart Research Associates (2013) as one of the most important skills that employers would like to see receive more emphasis in college. Therefore, it is critically important that we build a highly effective oral communication course that helps all students build these skills and become comfortable speaking in a variety of contexts.
There are numerous benefits associated with improved public speaking skills, especially for NNES, including increased self-confidence that enables more effective communication in interpersonal contexts (Osborn & Osborn, 1991), improved memory and recall skills, increased ability to adjust messages in response to audience feedback, increased learning motivation (Bygate, 1987), and increased accuracy in grammar and syntax as well as improved audience interaction skills in a variety of academic and non-academic contexts (Ting, Mahadhir, & Chang, 2010). However, NNES face significant challenges, even if they appear to have “a suitable command of English” (Hendrix, 2000, p. 209). One the most significant challenges that NNES face in the public speaking classroom is high CA, whether it is due to speaking in a second language or simply from having to speak in front of a class (Young, 1990).

**Communication Apprehension**

McCroskey (1970) originally defined Communication Apprehension (CA) as "a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication" (p. 269). However, McCroskey (1977) later adapted the definition of CA to "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 78). CA typically varies for individuals across four different types of contexts: group discussions, interpersonal communication, meetings, and public speaking (McCroskey, 1982). Over time, researchers have found that a large proportion of CA is based in biology (genetic or trait) and is very difficult if not impossible to change, while as smaller component of...
CA is based on the context (state) and can potentially be reduced over time (McCroskey, 2009).

Average CA levels vary by culture and seem to be heightened when speaking in a second language. Many speakers are more apprehensive when speaking in a second language than in their first language, often due to concerns about their language proficiency levels or out of a fear that they will be negatively evaluated (Burroughs, Marie, & McCroskey, 2003; Jung & McCroskey, 2004; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Lucas, 1984; McCroskey & Beatty, 1998; McCroskey, Fayer, & Richmond, 1985; McIntyre & Gardner 1991). However, in some cultures, such as in Japanese cultures, communicators have high levels of apprehension whether speaking in their first or second language (McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1985). Moreover, apprehension in a person’s first language predicts a high proportion of their apprehension in a second language, regardless of levels of self-perceived competence in that second language (Jung & McCroskey, 2004; McCroskey, Fayer, & Richmond, 1985), which could be related to acceptable communication practices and levels of individualism in a particular national culture.

**Self-Perceived Communication Competence**

McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) define Communication Competence as the “adequate ability to pass along or give information; the ability to make known by talking or writing” (p. 109) and developed the Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) scale to serve as an indirect measurement of how competent the participant believes that s/he is in each of four contexts with three types of receivers. SPCC is highly correlated
with CA, WTC, and shyness, but all are distinct variables (Teven, Richmond, McCroskey, & McCroskey, 2010). SPCC is important because students who see themselves as competent communicators (high SPCC) typically succeed academically, while those with low SPCC tend to have lower levels of academic accomplishment (Rosenfeld, Grant, & McCroskey, 1995); thus, an ideal public speaking course should help enhance students’ SPCC. Furthermore, SPCC varies cross-culturally. In some cultures, people are generally more confident and relaxed in speaking with strangers than others (Hsu, 2007). For instance, Dilbeck, McCroskey, and Richmond (2009) found that Thai students feel most competent when speaking in small groups and they feel least competent when speaking in public speaking contexts. Similarly, Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, and Richmond (1991) found that both Finnish and American students felt most competent when communicating in interpersonal situations and least competent in public speaking contexts.

**Willingness to Communicate**

McCroskey (1997) defined WTC as an “individual’s predisposition to initiate communication with others” (p. 77). Individuals who have high WTC and score high in WTC commonly perceive themselves as good communicators. They also score higher in SPCC and lower in CA. Burroughs, Marie, and McCroskey (2003) examined WTC in first and second languages of Micronesians and found that participants had higher WTC scores in their first language than in their second language. Cross-culturally, the researchers also found that Americans scored higher in WTC than Micronesians when both
groups of participants used their first languages, and Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, and Richmond (1991) found that Finnish participants scored lower in WTC than Americans in public speaking contexts.

**Background**

This study was conducted at a moderately large, public university in a diverse urban setting in which a high proportion of the students speak a language other than English at home. At the university where this study was conducted, all students are required to take a public speaking course during their first academic year as a general education requirement. This course is highly standardized, and all sections of the course use the same textbook, syllabus, major assignments, peer workshop format, and exams. The course is taught in standalone sections, and 90-100% of the sections of the course are taught by master’s level Graduate Teaching Associates who go through intensive instructional training and are under the supervision of the department’s Basic Course Director.

The goal of this study is to find out whether there is a difference in the overall levels and changes in CA, SPCC, and WTC between NES and NNES as a result of taking our public speaking course. This will help us decide whether our existing course was serving all students effectively or whether we needed to consider adopting a protected section model similar to that used by some other campuses. The following three hypotheses guide this study:

H1: There will be a significant difference in the change in CA between NES students and NNES students after taking a public speaking course.
H2: There will be a significant difference in the change in SPCC between NES students and NNES students after taking a public speaking course.

H3: There will be a significant difference in the change in WTC between NES students and NNES students after taking a public speaking course.

**METHOD**

**Research Design**

This study used a repeat-measures design with measures for each participant matched at the individual participant level. Two survey questionnaires were given to the university undergraduate students who were enrolled in randomly selected sections of an oral communication course (public speaking). The first survey (pre-test) was conducted at the beginning of the academic term and the second one (post-test) at the end of the academic term. This course is a required general education course for all students at the university; thus, the participants are a fairly representative cross-section of the entire student body. Each of the two surveys included self-report measures about the student’s demographics, language background, and the following communication competencies: Communication Apprehension (CA), Communication Competence (SPCC), and Willingness to Communicate (WTC).

**Instrumentation**

**Communication Apprehension.** Communication Apprehension was measured using the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension, or the PRCA-24
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(McCroskey, 1982). The PRCA-24 consists of 24 statements using a 5-point Likert scale, including items such as “I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions,” and “I feel relaxed when giving a speech.” This measurement is widely used by communication scholars to measure the self-perception of Communication Apprehension (e.g. Hancock, Stone, Brundage, & Zeigler, 2010; Pearson, Carmon, Child, & Semlak, 2011), has high predictive validity, and typically has strong reliability ($\alpha > .90$, McCroskey, 1982). In this study, $\alpha = 0.92$ in the pre-test and $\alpha = 0.93$ in the post-test for the PRCA-24.

**Communication Competence.** Communication Competence was measured using the Self-Perceived Communication Competence Scale (SPCC) developed by McCroskey and McCroskey (1988). This scale includes 12 items, each of which represents a different communication situation, and asks respondents to rate their own competence on a scale from 0 (completely incompetent) to 100 (competent). Higher SPCC scores are indicative of high confidence in self-abilities to communicate in various contexts. This measurement has been widely used by many communication researchers to measure self-perception of communication competence (e.g., Burroughs, Marie, & McCroskey, 2003; Dilbeck et. al., 2009; Pearson et. al., 2008; Teven et. al., 2010), has strong face validity, and typically has strong reliability ($\alpha > .85$, McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988). In this study, $\alpha = 0.83$ in the pre-test and $\alpha = 0.87$ in the post-test for SPCC.

**Willingness to Communicate.** Willingness to Communicate was measured using the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987). This scale includes 20 items, each of
which describes a situation in which someone might or might not choose to communicate with the other person. Respondents are asked to indicate the percent of the time in which they would choose to communicate, with possible scores ranging from 0 (never) to 100 (always), and scores can then be computed to identify an overall WTC scores as well as sub-scores for four types of contexts and three types of receivers (McCroskey, 1992). The measurement has also been commonly used with cross-cultural studies (e.g. Lin & Rancer, 2003a; Lin & Rancer, 2003b; Lu & Hsu, 2008). This scale has strong face validity, good predictive validity, and typically has high reliability ranging from $\alpha = 0.85$ to $\alpha > 0.90$ (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). In this study, $\alpha = 0.88$ in the pre-test and $\alpha = 0.92$ in the post-test for WTC.

**RESULTS**

The sample consisted of 132 undergraduate students enrolled in a basic public speaking course. Of the 132 respondents, 28% (N = 37) were male, 71.2% (N = 94) were female, and 0.8% (N = 1) preferred not to disclose. In terms of age, 1.5% (N = 2) of the respondents were below 18 years old, 96.2% (N = 127) were 18 – 20 years old, 1.5% (N = 2) were 21 – 25 years old, and 0.8% (N = 1) was 26 – 30 years old. In terms of language group, 42.4% (N = 56) were Native English Speaker (NES), and 57.6% (N = 76) were Non Native English Speaker (NNES). Descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables are shown in Table 1.
Table 1  
Descriptive Statistics for All Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CA Pre-test</th>
<th>CA Post-test</th>
<th>SPCC Pre-test</th>
<th>SPCC Post-test</th>
<th>WTC Pre-test</th>
<th>WTC Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NES</td>
<td>M = 66.78</td>
<td>M = 61.98</td>
<td>M = 70.17</td>
<td>M = 80.01</td>
<td>M = 68.44</td>
<td>M = 78.07</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = 16.24</td>
<td>SD = 18.07</td>
<td>SD = 17.41</td>
<td>SD = 14.23</td>
<td>SD = 14.09</td>
<td>SD = 14.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
<td>N = 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNES</td>
<td>M = 69.41</td>
<td>M = 64.01</td>
<td>M = 68.39</td>
<td>M = 77.52</td>
<td>M = 63.50</td>
<td>M = 77.62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = 15.53</td>
<td>SD = 16.09</td>
<td>SD = 16.49</td>
<td>SD = 15.67</td>
<td>SD = 16.45</td>
<td>SD = 15.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
<td>N = 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>M = 68.29</td>
<td>M = 63.15</td>
<td>M = 69.1</td>
<td>M = 78.57</td>
<td>M = 65.60</td>
<td>M = 77.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = 15.83</td>
<td>SD = 16.92</td>
<td>SD = 16.84</td>
<td>SD = 15.07</td>
<td>SD = 16.02</td>
<td>SD = 14.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Apprehension (CA)

A within-subjects split plot analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the change in CA for NES and NNES as a result of taking a public speaking class. Wilks’ Lambda was significant for CA, $\lambda = .859$, $F(1, 130) = 21.312$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .141$. However, Wilk’s Lambda for CA by group was not significant, $\lambda = .999$, $F(1, 13) = .072$, $p = .789$, $\eta^2 = .001$. Tests of within-subjects effects were significant, $F(1, 130) = 21.312$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .141$. However, between-subjects effects were not significant, $F(1, 130) = .760$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .006$. An interaction graph depicting the results is shown in Figure 1.

![Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1](image)

**Figure 1.** Level of CA between NES and NNES
These results show that CA levels for both groups of participants decreased significantly as a result of taking a traditional public speaking course, and the amount of this decrease was the same for NES and NNES. As Table 1 indicates, CA decreased by approximately 5 points for both groups. Although preliminary descriptive statistics seem to indicate that NNES began the course with slightly higher levels of CA than NES, the difference was too small to be statistically significant. Thus, \( H_1 \) is not supported, and we can conclude that NES and NNES benefit equally from taking a public speaking course in terms of CA reduction.

**Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC)**

A within-subjects split plot analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the change in SPCC for NES and NNES as a result of taking a public speaking class. Wilks’ Lambda was significant for SPCC, \( \lambda = .730, F(1, 13) = 48.118, p < .001, \eta^2 = .270 \). However, Wilk’s Lambda by group for SPCC was not significant, \( \lambda = .999, F(1, 130) = .066, p = .798, \eta^2 = .001 \). Tests of within-subjects effects were significant, \( F(1, 130) = 48.118, p < .001, \eta^2 = .270 \). However, between-subjects effects were not significant, \( F(1, 130) = .757, p = .386, \eta^2 = .006 \). An interaction graph depicting the results is shown in Figure 2.

These results show that SPCC increased significantly for both groups as a result of taking a public speaking course, however, there was no significant difference in how much SPCC increased for each group. As Table 1 indicates, SPCC increased by a little over nine points for each group, and though the descriptive statis-
tics seem to indicate that NNES begin with slightly lower levels of SPCC than NES, the difference is too small to be statistically significant. Thus, H$_2$ is not supported, and we can conclude that NES and NNES benefit equally from taking a public speaking course in terms of increased SPCC.

**Willingness to Communicate (WTC)**

A within-subjects split plot analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the change in WTC for NES and NNES as a result of taking a public speaking class. Wilks’ Lambda was significant for WTC, $\lambda = .645$, $F(1, 130) = 71.419$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .355$. However, Wilk’s Lambda by group for WTC was not significant, $\lambda = .981$, $F(1, 130) = 2.542$, $p = .113$.
\( \eta^2 = .019 \). Tests of within-subjects effects were significant, \( F(1, 130) = 71.419, p < .001, \eta^2 = .355 \). However, between-subjects effects were not significant, \( F(1, 130) = 1.341, p = .249, \eta^2 = .010 \). An interaction graph depicting the results is shown in Figure 3.

These results show that WTC increased significantly for both groups as a result of taking a public speaking course, but there was no significant difference in how much WTC increased for each group. As Table 1 indicates, WTC increased by 9.63 points for NES and 14.12 points for NNES, and though the descriptive statistics seem to indicate that NNES begin with slightly lower levels of WTC than NES, the difference is too small to be statistically significant. Therefore, \( H_3 \) is not sup-

\textit{Figure 3. Level of WTC between NEW and NNES}
ported, and we can conclude that NES and NNES benefit equally from taking a public speaking course in terms of increased WTC.

**DISCUSSION**

We failed to reject the null hypothesis for all three of our hypotheses in this study, but in this case, these non-significant results have important practical implications for policies and practices in the public speaking class. There was no difference in the levels or change in CA, SPCC, or WTC for NES and NNES when they were in integrated sections of public speaking course, which indicates that all three groups had equal benefits and growth in integrated sections of the course. This suggests that teaching NES and NNES students together in integrated public speaking skills might be equally beneficial to both groups of students and that it might not be necessary or even helpful to teach separate sections of the course for each of these groups.

There are several reasons that we might be seeing such strong benefits for both groups of students. The first reason involves the nature of public speaking courses. Perhaps students are helping each other to improve their communication skills by serving as examples for each other when they give their speeches and by providing personalized, direct feedback to one another in peer workshops as they develop their speeches. It is possible that these interactions and constant examples of other students’ speeches are helping NNES to build their English speaking and listening skills and confidence. This is supported by previous research that shows that listening ability highly contributes to a per-
son’s English language comprehension, which in turn affects one’s speaking ability (Ma, 2011). Additionally, previous research shows that students who engage in peer workshops in public speaking classes experience significant growth in Connected Classroom Climate throughout the course (Broeckelman-Post & Hosek, 2014). Since students were engaging in peer workshops as part of the speech preparation process throughout this course, it is likely that students were developing a supportive community in the classroom while also reducing linguistic and intercultural uncertainty in that context, which would have helped them to become more comfortable speaking with one another.

Secondly, it is possible that the linguistic diversity of the campus on which this study was conducted contributed to our findings. As the results show, 42.4% of our students were NNES and 57.6% were NES; thus, it is possible that being with a significant number of peers that were both NES and NNES helped NNES students feel more comfortable speaking in front of their peers than NNES on less diverse campuses where a NNES might be the only NNES in their class. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) used Intercultural Communication Apprehension, defined as “the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially in different cultural or ethnic groups” (p. 152), to help explain that heightened uncertainty in intercultural and interethnic situations can lead to higher levels of CA. Since linguistic and cultural diversity typically go hand in hand, this might help to explain why our findings differ from findings in previous research. Most previous research on CA, SPCC, and WTC and international students or NNES was con-
ducted at far less diverse campuses where it might have been likely for a NNES to be the only NNES in his or her class, making it more likely that they would stand out as being different than their peers. However, due to the diversity of this particular campus and region, students interact with a diverse range of speakers and cultures every day, so it is possible that there is less communication and intercultural uncertainty than might have existed on campuses where other previous research has been done. As colleges and universities across the United States become increasingly diverse, and as intercultural communication becomes a part of everyday life for all of our students, these findings will only become more relevant.

On campuses that have a much higher proportion of NES than NNES, a more balanced linguistic learning environment could be simulated by setting aside sections of public speaking that include approximately equal numbers of NES and NNES, rather than creating completely segregated sections of the course for NNES or trying to mainstream NNES into regular sections of the course that are almost entirely comprised of NES. There is already support for such an approach in the composition studies literature on teaching ESL students in writing classes. Silva (1994) suggests that a cross-cultural composition course in which fairly equal numbers of NES and ESL/NNES be placed in classes together in order to “meet the instructional needs of both groups and, as a dividend, to foster cross-cultural understanding, communication, and collaboration” (p.40) can perhaps be most beneficial for all students. Matsuda (1998) recommends a symbiotic approach that includes cross-cultural composition courses, plus courses that focus ex-
clusively on ESL writing issues, which could extend into our teaching of public speaking by simultaneously enrolling NNES in a cross-cultural public speaking course and an intensive English language course.

However, further research needs to be conducted in order for us to make the best decisions possible about how to teach public speaking to NNES. This study only compared NES and NNES in integrated sections of public speaking, but future research should add NNES in protected sections of public speaking as well as NES in non-integrated sections of public speaking to find out whether there is a difference in the communication outcomes for NNES and NES in protected versus integrated sections. Additionally, this study utilized self-report communication competency measures, and while these are highly valid and reliable, future research should also incorporate some performance-based measures to assess communication competence and growth. Finally, further research needs to be conducted across a variety of types of institutions to find out whether our findings are unique to campuses that have a high proportion of NNES in all classes.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE**

Overall, the findings of this study support the conclusions of previous communication studies that explored the positive effects of a basic public speaking course on students (e.g., Bygate, 1987; Hodis, Bardhan, & Hodis, 2010; Pearson et. al., 2008; Rubin, Rubin, & Jordan, 1997). The results of this study reveal that both NES and NNES students feel less apprehensive in
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speaking with others, perceive themselves to be more competent in various communication situations, and are more willing to initiate conversations with others after taking the existing public speaking course. Moreover, many previous studies have concluded that students’ communication competence is highly correlated with their academic achievements and college success. Previous research shows that students with high levels of CA are less likely to communicate with their peers and professors, ask fewer questions in class, have lower GPAs, and have lower incomes after they graduate from college (McCroskey & Andersen, 1976). Students who have high WTC usually engage more in class discussions, ask questions when they do not understand the material, and ultimately perceived by their professors as highly participative students, which may positively affect their participation grades (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998). Finally, low CA, high SPCC, and high WTC are associated with more positive outcomes in other courses as well as in later careers (Hodis, Bardhan, & Hodis, 2010). Taken together, these findings reinforce the value of a public speaking or other oral communication courses for all university students, regardless of whether English is their native language.

Perhaps most importantly for communication departments and Basic Course Directors, this study suggests that an integrated public speaking course that includes NES and NNES in the same sections might have similar positive impacts on both groups of students and suggests that it might not be the best decision to assign NNES to protected NNES-only sections of the course. However, further research should be conducted to find out whether NNES and NES have similar gains in per-
formance or skills-based competence measures as well as to investigate whether protected sections of the course have different levels of communication gains for NNES and NES than integrated sections of the course. Contextual factors limit the extent to which decisions can be made based on these findings alone; nevertheless, the findings in this study should serve as an opening to a conversation and further investigations about how we can best serve all of our students and build skills effectively in introductory public speaking courses.

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