

# THE IMPACT OF AN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS COURSE ON PERCEIVED COMMUNICATION ABILITIES

JOE RAMSTAD | DARLA ROMBERGER | SCOTT SMALLEY | IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## INTRO & FRAMEWORK

- Students' discomfort speaking stem from a fear of judgement, physiological responses, lack of confidence, and lack of preparation (Grieve et al., 2021).
- Training diminishes anxiety (Raja, 2017).
- Developing confident AFNR advocates is essential to overcoming challenges and stigmas (Kurtzo et al., 2016).
- Self-efficacy theory evaluates one's perceived belief in their ability to succeed in tasks (Bandura, 1977).
- Self-efficacy is established through:
  - Performance outcomes
  - Verbal persuasion
  - Physiological feedback
  - Vicarious experiences

## PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

### PURPOSE

To evaluate the impact of a semester-long AFNR communication course on students' perceived abilities

### OBJECTIVES

- To assess students' perceived communication competence at the start of the semester.
- To evaluate changes in students' perceptions at the end of the course.



## METHODS & PROCEDURE

- Frame was 43 ISU students in an AFNR communications course in Fall 2025.
- McCroskey and McCroskey's (1988) instrument was utilized ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ; Nunnally, 1978).
- Instrument contained 12 items in 7 constructs; 3 related to the audience and 4 related to the setting.
- Each item consisted of a task associated with both an audience and a setting (e.g., "present a public talk to a group of strangers").
- Respondents scored each task on a scale from 0 (i.e., incompetent) to 100 (i.e., completely competent).
- Distributed on Qualtrics using Dillman's (2014) procedure at the beginning and end of the semester.
- Analysis used standard descriptive statistics and paired samples *t*-tests.

## RESULTS & FINDINGS

	Pre		Post		df	p
	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma$	$\bar{x}$	$\sigma$		
Audience: Strangers	71.73	15.22	80.70	12.94	40	< 0.001*
Audience: Acquaintances	82.22	12.04	87.59	10.44	40	< 0.001*
Audience: Friends	92.10	8.04	94.10	8.37	40	0.042*
Setting: Public	81.02	12.09	85.77	12.26	40	0.007*
Setting: Meeting	75.70	11.97	83.88	12.36	40	< 0.001*
Setting: Group	84.44	11.51	88.95	8.45	40	0.004*
Setting: Dyadic	86.89	8.80	91.23	7.57	40	<0.001*

\* Denotes statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$

## CONCLUSIONS

- Students expressed some degree of perceived competence related to communication at the start of the course; this may be based on prior training (Raja, 2017) or their perceived level of efficacy from prior feedback or mentorship (Bandura, 1977).
- The course increased students' perceived competence across each of the 3 audiences and 4 four settings.
- Statistical significance was achieved in each area; this may suggest the course was associated with increases in perceived competence (Bandura, 1977).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore students' perceived self-efficacy after their presentations using written reflections or interviews (Bandura, 1977).
- Use biometric data to evaluate how these change if communicating with different audiences or in unique settings (Grieve et al., 2021).
- Integrate communication training into as many courses as possible.

## REFERENCES & ABSTRACT



Scan the QR code to view the references and full abstract.