

# THỰC TRẠNG KỸ NĂNG THUYẾT TRÌNH TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ BA CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH TẠI ĐẠI HỌC KHÁNH HÒA

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**Tóm tắt:** Kỹ năng thuyết trình đóng vai trò không thể thiếu trong giáo dục và phát triển nghề nghiệp tương lai của sinh viên đại học tại Đại học Khánh Hòa, vì những năng lực này giúp sinh viên xây dựng nền tảng kiến thức vững chắc và nâng cao khả năng nói trước công chúng. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích đo lường thực trạng kỹ năng nói và thuyết trình của sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại trường. Một nghiên cứu định lượng đã được tiến hành với sự tham gia của 72 sinh viên năm thứ ba chuyên ngành tiếng Anh. Kết quả cho thấy nhiều sinh viên thiếu tự tin về kỹ năng thuyết trình do thường xuyên mắc lỗi về từ vựng, ngữ pháp và sự trôi chảy. Hơn nữa, nghiên cứu chỉ ra những hạn chế đáng kể trong khâu chuẩn bị và tương tác với khán giả. Những phát hiện này sẽ là nguồn tài liệu hữu ích cho các giảng viên tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ (EFL) để cải thiện phương pháp giảng dạy về kỹ năng nói và triển khai các chiến lược mới giúp sinh viên vượt qua những khó khăn trong giao tiếp.

**Từ khóa:** thuyết trình, kỹ năng thuyết trình, kỹ năng nói, kỹ năng giao tiếp bằng lời nói, sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh.

## THE REALITY OF ENGLISH PRESENTATION SKILLS OF THE THIRD-YEAR ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS AT KHANH HOA UNIVERSITY

**Abstract:** Presentation skills play an indispensable role in the education and future career development of undergraduates at Khanh Hoa University, as these competencies assist students in building a superior knowledge base and enhancing their public speaking abilities. This study aims to measure the reality of speaking and presentation skills among English-majored students at the institution. A quantitative study was conducted involving 72 third-year English-majored students. The results demonstrate that many students lack confidence in their presentation skills due to frequent mistakes in vocabulary usage, grammar, and fluency. Furthermore, the study identifies significant limitations in preparation and audience engagement. These findings serve as a resource for EFL lecturers to improve their teaching methods regarding speaking skills and to implement new strategies to help students overcome their communication challenges.

**Keywords:** presentation, presentation skills, speaking skills, oral communication skills, English-majored students.

Received: 14/03/2026

Reviewed: 15/04/2026

Accepted for publication: 20/04/2026

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, English serves as a vital tool in education and professional integration, particularly in Vietnam where it is a compulsory subject. Among the various linguistic competencies, presentation skills are considered successful communicative goals (Kim, 2006; Evans, 2013) for higher education and future career development, as they assist students in building a superior knowledge base while enhancing their public speaking abilities. An oral presentation is defined as an activity where a presenter delivers ideas, explains processes, or provides information to a public audience in a clear and coherent manner. Guidelines for preparing effective presentations to attract audiences include the presenters' formal look, good intonation, and language fluency (Dung, 2021). Despite the clear importance of this skill, many undergraduates, including those at Khanh Hoa University, demonstrate significant limitations in their presentation performance.

Surveys conducted at various Vietnamese institutions indicate a concerning gap between students' academic grades and their actual

communicative performance. At Khanh Hoa University, feedback from employers suggests that graduates are often deficient in soft skills, with oral presentation being a primary area of weakness. This reality is mirrored in broader studies showing that students frequently lack confidence due to persistent errors in vocabulary usage, grammar, and fluency. Furthermore, the transition to university-level speaking requirements is often difficult because many students were rarely taught speaking skills prior to their higher education.

The challenges faced by these students are multi-faceted, ranging from linguistic to psychological factors. Anxiety and the fear of making mistakes are the most prominent obstacles, often leading to a lack of confidence when standing before a crowd. From a technical standpoint, students struggle with content organization, time management, and the effective use of visual aids. Additionally, many presenters rely too heavily on reading from scripts or slides, failing to utilize body language, eye contact, and vocal variety to engage their audience.

This article explores the current reality of English presentation skills among second-year English-majored students at Khanh Hoa University. By identifying the specific obstacles encountered during the preparation and delivery phases, the study aims to propose practical solutions and teaching strategies to enhance students' confidence and professional competence. Understanding these difficulties is crucial for educators to provide the necessary guidance and create supportive environments that facilitate effective language learning and skill acquisition. To achieve the study objectives, two primary research questions were formulated:

1. What are third-year English-majored students' attitudes towards speaking courses and presentation skills?

2. What are the difficulties that third-year English-majored students encounter when speaking and presenting in English?

## II. RESEARCH CONTENT

### 2.1. Review literature

#### 2.1.1 Definition of Oral Communication

Oral communication is defined by Kumar (2021) as the vocal expression of perspectives and the transmission of information through various channels, including presentations, speeches, and discussions, whether conducted virtually or in person. To effectively establish trust and professional rapport, individuals should prioritize face-to-face communication in formats like interviews, conferences, and meetings. In its simplest terms, it is the act of conveying information through speech.

Improving these skills involves mastering clear pronunciation, brevity, and precision, while ensuring the message follows a logical sequence. Furthermore, successful oral communication requires conviction, appropriate vocabulary, and a natural voice. Key strategies for enhancement include targeting the correct audience, avoiding assumptions, seeking active feedback, and fostering an environment where questions are encouraged.

#### 2.1.2 Definition of Presentations

Presentations are defined by Rosenzweig (2021) as essential tools for conveying specific topics to an audience through various mediums such as slide shows, demonstrations, lectures, or speeches, utilizing a combination of text and imagery. In today's technological landscape, tools like PowerPoint allow presenters to communicate

complex data or media through flexible presentation styles. Donohoe (2020) highlights those modern slides can incorporate a diverse range of interactive content, including tables, charts, drawings, word art, and high-quality multimedia like video and audio.

#### 2.1.3 Linguistic and nonlinguistic factors were influencing oral and presentation skills

Mastery of oral and presentation skills is shaped by a complex interplay of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Among the primary language competencies, speaking is often considered the most challenging due to pervasive language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). Research indicates that students frequently harbor a fear of using English to express themselves (Pabro-Maquidato, 2021). This anxiety leads to a cycle where learners become unwilling to participate in speaking activities, which directly prevents them from enhancing their overall performance (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Pabro-Maquidato, 2021). One of the most significant hurdles identified for EFL learners is the psychological pressure of speaking in front of a crowd (Rumiyati & Seftika, 2018).

Other critical factors influencing these skills include pronunciation, a persistent fear of making mistakes, and concerns over unattractive evaluations. Technical limitations, such as a lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge or a lack of preparedness, are also major contributors to poor performance (Dornyei & Clement, 2001; Mukminin et al., 2015). Furthermore, even the attitude of the teacher can impact a student's confidence and willingness to engage (Dornyei & Clement, 2001).

From a linguistic perspective, the mastery of collocations is essential for successful speaking performance. However, Vietnamese students are noted for frequently using wrong collocations (Bui, 2021). This often occurs because learners translate Vietnamese collocations directly into English, resulting in speech that sounds unnatural compared to the target language (Bui, 2021). Without rigorous and well-structured training, most Vietnamese learners struggle to achieve full competency in these areas.

#### 2.1.4 Previous studies

Previous research has highlighted several critical dimensions of oral communication and presentation skills within the EFL context. Riadil (2020) emphasized that communication is a

fundamental life skill, serving as the primary vehicle for expressing opinions, ideas, and emotions through language. In his qualitative study on Indonesian higher education, he noted that speaking is a particularly demanding competency because it requires the simultaneous integration of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and listening skills. Consequently, he advocated for teachers to employ pedagogical methods that minimize student shame and create a supportive classroom environment where students are encouraged to speak as much as possible.

The integration of modern tools has also been a focal point of recent studies. Chuyen et al. (2020) identified TED Talks as an innovative technique for the language classroom, using them to explore various aspects of student performance such as experience and self-evaluation. Their findings suggested that while students often have a strong theoretical foundation, they frequently lack the soft skills and practical opportunities necessary for effective delivery. To bridge this gap, Panggabean & Triassanti (2020) and Chandren & Yaacob (2016) argued that learners must develop metacognitive strategies, including the ability to follow complex tasks and appraise the quality of their own work through reflection and self-assessment.

Furthermore, researchers have explored the psychological barriers that impede linguistic progress. Yu et al. (2021) identified a significant “psychological obstruction” that often prevents students from mastering a foreign language despite high academic performance in other areas. Their 100-day observation of learners and educators revealed a disconnect between standard textbook-based assessments and the requirements for active, real-world English application. They concluded that educators should distinguish between academic classroom evaluations and the demands of actual conversation to better prepare students for practical communication.

These global and regional findings mirror the specific challenges observed at Khanh Hoa University, where employers have noted that graduates often struggle with soft skills, particularly in the realm of oral presentations. Like the students in these previous studies, An (2024) also identified undergraduates at Khanh Hoa University face significant hurdles related to preparation, language usage, and anxiety management. Consistent with the

recommendations of Riadil and Yu et al., local findings suggest that improving the quality of student presentations requires a shift toward more rigorous practice, better preparation strategies, and a focus on building communicative confidence.

In a 2016 study, Nakhalah analyzed critical speaking issues and their underlying causes among foreign language students at Al Quds Open University. The research pinpointed fluency as the most significant concern (72.5%), followed by grammar and pronunciation. Factors contributing to low oral performance included a fear of imperfection, a lack of motivation and confidence, and being unfamiliar with the new language system. Additionally, students struggled due to a shortage of topical knowledge, a limited vocabulary box, and insufficient actual practice. While educators attempted to correct verbal and non-verbal mistakes, the study suggested that comments should ideally be delivered in private to help students who are struggling with translation avoid embarrassment.

Furthermore, Indriani (2020) explored the implementation of recorded video as a tool to assess speaking and presentation skills, examining how technology benefits the learning process. By replaying their recordings, students were able to self-appraise their performance and receive valuable feedback from their peers, which fostered a passion for expressing their thoughts via camera. The use of video helped improve essential presentation qualities such as eye contact, body posture, and vocal variety. However, the study also noted that judging presentations properly remains a challenge for instructors, especially regarding assessment administration, as students frequently continue to make fundamental errors in grammar and vocabulary.

## **2.2. The study**

### *Participants & the setting*

The research examined about 72 third-year English-majored in the academic year 2025 – 2026 at UKH who were between the ages of 21 and 22. At the time of the study, they were in the first semester of their new school year and had previously approached the surface or studied the Advanced Listening and Speaking 2 course. The course provides students with skills to developing in-depth lecture comprehension skills, scientific note-taking, and enhanced presentation, and academic discussion abilities. The curriculum

helps learners become familiar with specialized terminology and develop high-level critical thinking skills. The students who took the course to learn theoretically and practically about presentation abilities were required to give oral presentations in the midterm and final examinations to evaluate the ability to apply what they learned in class into their speeches. A questionnaire about several aspects of academic oral presentation skills was provided to third years to get an overview of their ability on presentation skills.

*\*Data collection instruments, procedures*

This research paper was built by the quantitative research method so that it was easy to find the core of the problem in the current student presentation and come up with the most appropriate measures. By creating a question list based on Google Forms and presenting it to 72 students aged 21 to 22, currently in their third-year English-major of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at UKH, this study helped to clarify the main difficulties that most students were facing, helping students realize their problems. Taking students' answers via a list of survey questions and synthesizing key difficulties helped results be more realistic, stick to the problem, give appropriate measures that are best for students, help students have a more practical view to avoid difficulties, and develop soft skills.

The surveys included 38 questions with the five-point Likert scale from “totally disagree” to “totally agree” (1 = totally disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = totally agree) and 4 multiple-choice questions regarding students' self-assessment of speaking proficiency. The online questionnaire list posted on Facebook groups of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of UKH took participants five minutes to fill in and two weeks to collect them all. Regarding the advantages of the quantitative method, Wright (2005) reported that using questionnaire surveys saves efforts and time owing to providing automated data collection. In the technological development, the survey was conducted via the Internet, which permitted researchers to collect data simultaneously.

Phải giới thiệu chương trình học có bao nhiêu HP Nghe Nói. Đây là HP cuối cùng

### 2.3. Findings and discussion

#### 2.3.1. Findings

**Research question 1:** *What are first-year English-major students' attitudes towards speaking courses and presentation skills?*

Collected data in the following table and figure will be analyzed for percentages to respond to the first research question to explore the students' attitudes.

Table 1. English-major students' attitudes towards speaking courses and presentation skills

| Items | Questionnaires   | 1 (TD) | 2 (D) | 3 (N) | 4 (A) | 5 (TA) |
|-------|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1     | Presentation skills are vital for your future professional success                     | 1.4%   | 1.4%  | 6.9%  | 34.7% | 55.6%  |
| 2     | It is essential for EFL students to have strong presentation abilities.                | 2.8%   | 1.4%  | 5.6%  | 33.3% | 56.9%  |
| 3     | Giving presentations helps you become a better communicator.                           | 2.8%   | 4.2%  | 5.6%  | 41.6% | 45.8%  |
| 4     | Speaking to a crowd organizes your thoughts and improves your overall speaking skills. | 2.8%   | 0%    | 6.9%  | 38.8% | 51.5%  |
| 5     | These skills build your confidence in both school and career settings.                 | 2.8%   | 2.8%  | 6.9%  | 45.8% | 41.7%  |
| 6     | Mastering presentations helps foster a creative mind.                                  | 4.2%   | 5.6%  | 18%   | 43.1% | 29.1%  |
| 7     | Good presentation skills are a direct link to success.                                 | 5.6%   | 1.4%  | 13.9% | 50%   | 29.1%  |
| 8     | You must practice extensively to prepare for a high-quality presentation.              | 1.4%   | 4.2%  | 6.9%  | 55.6% | 31.9%  |
| 9     | Many students prefer learning through presentation-based methods.                      | 5.6%   | 26.4% | 45.8% | 13.9% | 8.3%   |

|    |   |       |        |        |        |        |
|----|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 10 | Developing excellent presentation skills is quite challenging.                            | 1.4%  | 9.7%   | 11.1%  | 48.6%  | 29.2%  |
| 11 | Some believe you should just read from slides or paper without using any body language.   | 41.6% | 43.1%  | 5.6%   | 6.9%   | 2.8%   |
| 12 | To present well, you must have a deep understanding of the topic.                         | 1.4%  | 4.2%   | 4.2%   | 44.4%  | 45.8%  |
| 13 | Speakers and listeners need to interact with each other during a talk.                    | 1.4%  | 4.2%   | 9.7%   | 38.8%  | 45.9%  |
| 14 | A presentation must be creative to keep the audience interested.                          | 1.4%  | 4.2%   | 5.6%   | 44.4%  | 44.4%  |
| 15 | Some think only people who believe in their own abilities should present in public.       | 5.60% | 29.20% | 23.60% | 30.60% | 11.00% |
| 16 | A talk is more engaging when the audience shares their opinions and joins the discussion. | 1.40% | 4.20%  | 16.70% | 51.40% | 26.30% |
| 17 | You should practice constantly to achieve a perfect performance.                          | 1.4%  | 2.8%   | 9.7%   | 48.6%  | 37.5%  |
| 18 | Some feel this is just a minor skill that doesn't require much focus.                     | 8.3%  | 27.8%  | 26.4%  | 26.4%  | 11.1%  |
| 19 | High-quality presentations should stay focused on the main message.                       | 2.8%  | 16.7%  | 22.2%  | 41.6%  | 16.7%  |
| 20 | Body language is a key skill for grabbing and holding the audience's attention.           | 0%    | 2.80%  | 5.60%  | 48.60% | 43.00% |
| 21 | Your attitude when answering questions is very important to the audience.                 | 1.40% | 0%     | 13.90% | 56.90% | 27.80% |
| 22 | Factors like voice, tone, and speed determine how attractive your presentation is.        | 0%    | 1.40%  | 6.90%  | 41.60% | 50.10% |
| 23 | Patience and creativity are necessary to make a presentation perfect.                     | 0%    | 0%     | 9.70%  | 47.20% | 43.10% |
| 24 | It is helpful to include many visual tools in your presentation.                          | 2.80% | 15.30% | 37.50% | 30.60% | 13.80% |
| 25 | Whether a presentation is good or bad often depends on your interest in the subject.      | 2.80% | 26.40% | 34.70% | 23.60% | 12.50% |

Table 1 indicates that English-majored students maintain a highly positive attitude toward the professional utility of presentation skills. Specifically, 90.3% of respondents recognize these competencies as vital for future career success, while 90.2% consider them essential for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Furthermore, participants strongly associate presentation experience with enhanced communication abilities (87.4%) and increased psychological confidence in both academic and professional environments (87.5%). A significant proportion (79.1%) also views strong presentation capabilities as a direct catalyst for overall success.

The data further reflects a consensus on the rigorous preparation required to achieve proficiency, with 87.5% of students acknowledging the necessity of extensive practice. Approximately 86.1% of the sample believes that consistent rehearsal is fundamental to attaining a perfect performance. Despite recognizing its value, 77.8% of students describe the mastery of these skills as a significant challenge, often attributing this difficulty to the fact that such skills are rarely formally trained before university entry. Consequently, 90.2% of respondents emphasize that a speaker must possess solid topical knowledge to deliver a high-quality presentation.

Regarding delivery mechanics, students overwhelmingly reject passive presentation styles; 84.7% disagree with the notion of simply reading from slides without utilizing non-verbal cues. Instead, 91.6% identify body language as a critical tool for sustaining audience engagement, and 91.7% emphasize that vocal factors such as rhythm, tone, and volume are decisive in a presentation's overall appeal. Interactive elements are also highly valued, with 85.3% supporting the need for speaker-listener interaction and 79.5% noting that audience discussion significantly enhances the engagement of a talk. Finally, 88.6% of participants assert that creativity is a prerequisite for attracting listeners, underscoring a sophisticated understanding of effective public speaking components.

The most prominent finding indicates that a substantial majority of respondents (65.3%) identified the use of traditional teaching methods devoid of engaging activities as a primary characteristic of their learning environment. This concern is compounded by nearly half of the participants noting a deficiency in the provision of grammatical structures (48.6%) and the selection of uninspiring or uninteresting topics (47.2%), both of which are perceived to negatively impact the acquisition of presentation skills. Furthermore, while representing the lowest frequency among the surveyed factors, 37.5% of students highlighted limited instructor feedback as a significant pedagogical shortcoming. Collectively, these results suggest that students at Khanh Hoa University perceive a strong need for a transition away from conventional, lecture-based instruction toward more interactive, topically relevant, and feedback-intensive educational frameworks to better support their communication challenges.

**Research question 2:** *What are the difficulties that first-year English-majored students encounter when speaking and presenting in English?*

"The Reality of English Presentation Skills of the third-year English-majored Students at Khanh Hoa University" highlight significant linguistic, psychological, and technical barriers encountered by undergraduates. A predominant challenge identified is the perceived disparity between native language proficiency and English presentation abilities, with 65.3% of respondents (combining "Agree" and "Totally Agree" responses) acknowledging this gap.

Psychologically, 58.3% of students reported experiencing fear or nervousness when addressing a large audience, underscoring the prevalence of language anxiety in public speaking contexts. Furthermore, the data reveals difficulties in delivery mechanics and engagement; 62.5% of participants expressed uncertainty regarding methods to sustain audience interest, while 54.1% struggled to articulate their ideas with clarity. Technical limitations also emerged as a factor, as 51.4% of the cohort indicated that insufficient computer skills negatively impacted their presentation performance.

Conversely, the data reflects a generally positive assessment of the pedagogical interventions and the academic utility of the speaking courses. Most of the surveyed students (55.5%) agreed that the curriculum provided the fundamental knowledge necessary for presenting, and 57% credited the instructors with sharing valuable professional experiences that enhanced the quality of their work. While the impact on self-confidence was more varied – with only 45.8% of participants reporting a definitive increase in confidence following course completion – the cross-curricular benefits of these skills were widely recognized. Notably, 81.9% of the third-year students affirmed that the improvements in their presentation skills yielded advantages in other academic subjects, indicating a high level of awareness regarding the transferable nature of these communicative competencies.

English-majored students at UKH in learning speaking skills, revealing that the most significant issue is a lack of information about the topic, reported by 65.3% of students. Psychological barriers also feature prominently, with 56.9% feeling timid or self-conscious and 54.2% fearing making errors, indicating that affective factors strongly hinder speaking performance. Additionally, 48.6% of students report having limited opportunities to practice oral skills, while 44.4% experience anxiety when speaking with foreigners, further emphasizing the role of both environmental and emotional constraints. In contrast, a lack of drive or interest in learning is the least reported problem at 20.8%, suggesting that most students remain motivated despite these challenges. Overall, the figure highlights that insufficient topical knowledge and psychological factors outweigh motivational issues in shaping students' speaking difficulties.

Factors influencing English-majored students' speaking performance at UKH, highlighting that pressure to perform well is the most significant factor, reported by 70.8% of students. Confidence also plays a crucial role, affecting 62.5% of respondents, followed by understanding the topic at 50%, indicating that both psychological readiness and content comprehension strongly shape performance. In contrast, several factors are reported at moderate levels, including time allowed to give a presentation (26.9%), listening skills (26.4%), and time for preparation (26.3%), suggesting these have a relatively smaller but still notable impact. Audience's support is the least influential factor at 22.2%. Overall, the figure demonstrates that internal factors, particularly performance pressure and confidence, outweigh external or logistical factors in determining students' speaking performance.

### 2.3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that presentation and communication skills among EFL students at Khanh Hoa University remain undervalued. Based on the data, it is recommended that students receive more structured guidance to practice professional English presentations. Additionally, lecturers should play an active role in monitoring students' performance and offering constructive recommendations to help them improve their presentation effectiveness.

These results are consistent with previous studies on the challenges faced by English-majored students in developing speaking and presentation skills, as well as their attitudes toward these competencies. Nguyen (2018) emphasized that students consider presentation skills essential and express a strong desire to practice them in classroom settings where feedback from lecturers and peers is available. However, many students remain dissatisfied with their speaking ability due to difficulties in delivering presentations fluently. Similarly, Riadil (2020) found that nervousness during presentations negatively affects performance, often due to individual limitations, audience-related factors, and inadequate presentation skills. Other studies (Al-Nouh et al., 2015; Radzuan & Kaur, 2011; Vitasari et al., 2010) further highlight issues such as insufficient grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, along with limited speaking practice opportunities, lack of

preparation, and weak technical knowledge, all of which contribute to anxiety and ineffective presentations.

In addition, Albino (2017) reported comparable findings regarding language proficiency, noting that students tend to feel more confident when using their first language because of greater mastery. For instance, Vietnamese speakers can communicate confidently in their native language in public contexts. In contrast, when using English as a second language, learners often struggle with grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary, which can hinder their speaking performance. Lu and Hsu (2008) similarly observed that limited vocabulary restricts students' ability to express ideas, as they may either lack the necessary words or forget their meanings. This issue is further compounded by the tendency to mentally translate from the first language into the second language, which disrupts fluency and communication effectiveness.

### III. CONCLUSION

Students received insufficient feedback from their teachers regarding their mistakes, which limited their ability to recognize and correct errors independently. As a result, their speaking competence remained underdeveloped, negatively affecting their presentation performance. They were required to devote more time to preparing presentations, yet this did not necessarily lead to noticeable improvement during their learning process. In addition, many learners demonstrated weak computer skills, which hindered their ability to design effective presentations with visual support. They also struggled to engage and adapt to their audience due to insecurity, unclear explanations, and inadequate examples. Furthermore, a large number of students experienced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, while also facing challenges such as limited vocabulary, incorrect use of collocations, grammatical errors, and poor listening skills.

Moreover, students lacked sufficient social and topical knowledge to discuss a wide range of issues confidently. They often felt pressured to perform well, which further affected their presentation outcomes. Many were dissatisfied with their learning experiences, as the courses did not effectively help all students build confidence in delivering presentations.

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