

Designing Rubrics, Assessment, and Evaluation for Oral Communication

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Talking through Artworks: Teaching Speech and Oral Presentation in the Museum

- Integrating oral communication
 - Repetition
 - Feedback
 - Clear Learning Objectives
 - Clear Assessment
- Setting clear objectives
 - Just as with an effective writing assignment, faculty need to communicate clear learning objectives for oral communication.
 - Scaffolded assignment allow the focus to shift and evolve.
- Communicating goals with students
 - Transparency
 - Frame assignment within course goals on syllabus.
 - Designing assessment together
- Developing Rubric/Assessment
 - Alignment of goals and assessment
 - Self assessment
 - Peer assessment

Designing Speaking Assignments: What are your goals & objectives?

A. Setting Goals and Objectives:

Determining your **goals and objectives** for using a speaking assignment in a class will help you determine which **methods** to use and **how to evaluate** your students. You must first define your goals for the process and then choose a method that will most effectively meet them.

Sample Goals:

Regarding content, goals for oral presentations include:

- Create understanding about....
- Demonstrating.....
- Convincing the audience of....
- Moving the audience to action....

Regarding presentational aspects of an assignment, goals for presentations include:

- Learning to organize information in a coherent manner.
- Developing an effective thesis for an oral presentation.
- Practicing the use of logical and emotional appeals to persuade an audience.
- Practicing the use of voice, gesture and bodily action to convey meaning.
- Understanding the importance of transitions in adding coherence to a speech.
- Preparing an effective introduction and conclusion for a presentation.
- Creating an effective and useful speaking outline and notes.
- Developing experience and confidence in one's presentational skills.
- Becoming a "local expert" in a subject..

B. Group versus Individual Presentations:

Group Presentations – There are substantial benefits to assigning presentations in groups. Groups encourage teamwork and help students get feedback from each throughout the process of developing the presentation. Groups can prepare presentations during or outside of class. Instructors should set standards for allocating the work so everyone knows what to expect: How long is each member expected to speak? How do you want the subject matter divided?

Individual Presentations – The benefits of individual presentations include helping students to gain confidence while speaking on their own in front of a large group, or to take personal responsibility for critically understanding and responding to questions. In the process, students become localized "experts" on certain subjects.

Brainstorming an Assignment

1. Do you want students to use the oral communication assignment to demonstrate knowledge of certain course concepts? If so, which concepts? And, if so, why is this mode the best way to demonstrate that knowledge (that is, why not a paper or exam)?

2. Do you want them to share original research, experiment results, or other data and information?

3. How would you describe the students' audience and purpose in doing this assignment? (For example, are they appealing to the audience to accept a policy proposal? Are they participating in a poster session much like what they might do at a professional conference in your field?)

4. At what point in the term would this assignment occur (midterm, end-of-term, throughout the term)? Why?

5. What format, components, etc., might apply to the assignment? (Circle any that apply)

Individual presentation

Group/panel presentation

Leading all-class discussion

Debate

PowerPoint (or other presentation software, like Prezi)

Poster

Handouts

Audio/visual/multimedia elements (original or source material)

Classroom exercise/interaction

Q&A session

6. For each of the items circled in 5, articulate *why* you think shaping the assignment in this way will help the students express their learning most effectively.

ASSIGNING ORAL PRESENTATIONS

From the University of Pittsburgh's Speaking in the Disciplines Initiative
<http://www.speaking.pitt.edu/instructor/oral-assignments.html>

Oral presentations can be among the best part of a class, or they can be the absolute worst. While there are few guarantees in the world of teaching and learning, here are some tips to make success a more likely outcome for you and your students.

1. Plan Ahead. Oral presentations take time—time for you to communicate your expectations and offer at least basic instruction on techniques; time for the students to prepare and rehearse outside of class; and time for them to actually give the presentations in class. Insufficient time devoted to any of these three things is likely to mean disappointing results.

2. Be Clear with Yourself About Your Goals. Why are you assigning presentations? Do you want to help your students become better speakers? Have them share the results of their research with classmates? Make them responsible for doing some of the teaching? Encourage active learning? Stimulate discussion? Transform your class from a monologue to a multi-voiced dialogue? Give yourself a break during a period you know will be busy? Break the monotony of exams and papers? All of these are legitimate goals, and while they are not mutually exclusive, some require different planning and modes of evaluation than others. If you want to stimulate discussion and turn the class into a multi-voiced dialogue, for instance, you need to allow plenty of time for conversation afterwards and might want to have just one or two presentations a day. If your goal is instead for them to share research findings, it might be appropriate to schedule a number of presentations in the same class period.

3. Write a Clear and Complete Assignment. Writing the assignment out helps both you and your students. It forces you to articulate what you want and gives you something to return to when evaluating the presentations or pointing students to what might have been lacking in their performance. And having the written assignment gives students an authoritative document to return to for guidelines when they are preparing their presentations.

Specify all of the following in non-ambiguous ways:

Identify goals or aims of the presentation: Spell out the purposes of the assignment and how it fits in with other course objectives. It is useful to put this right at the top of the assignment sheet under the heading 'Purposes of this assignment,' followed with a short list of 2-5 aims such as the following:

- to allow students to share their research with their classmates.
- to display skills of summarizing and condensing lengthy material.
- to gain practice translating technical journal articles for a lay audience
- to build upon concepts from the first unit of the course
- to give students an opportunity to set the agenda for group discussion.

Establish a reasonable time length: A specific range (e.g. 3-5, 8-10, or 15-20 minutes) is usually better than 'about 5 minutes' both because it reduces ambiguity and it encourages students to rehearse their presentation ahead of time.

Clarify all parts of the assignment: Include both the steps leading into the presentation as well as the required components of the speech itself. One can require students to have their topic approved by you and hand in a working outline of the presentation, as well as a bibliography, several periods before they speak. On the day of the presentation, have the students turn in a formal, full-sentence outline along with the notes they use to speak from.

For the presentation itself, be clear about what you expect: clear organization (introduction, body, and conclusion)? Supporting evidence or quotations from the text? A certain number of outside sources? A visual aid or handouts?

Highlight relevant due dates: Specify due dates for both the different parts of the assignment and for the presentation itself. For the latter, decide who will give their presentations on what day (or let them choose).

Detail criteria for evaluation: Exactly what will they be graded on? You might hand out the evaluation form you will use, or just make a list of criteria at the bottom of your assignment. Some possible criteria include:

- a clear pattern of organization (intro, body, conclusion, transitions).
- an effective delivery (eye contact, appropriate rate/tone/volume/gesture/appearance).
- meeting time constraints (too long or too short typically means the presentation was not sufficiently rehearsed).
- a speech that is tailored to the audience (assumes proper level of knowledge, is absent inappropriate jargon).
- an incorporation of outside research or concepts from the course.
- the appropriate use of visual aids.
- evidence of independent thought or creativity.
- a presentation stimulates class discussion.
- the speaker displays knowledge during question and answer session.
- overall communication (speaks with the audience—not at them).
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4. Prepare Students for Success. Once you have determined the goals, component parts, and criteria for the assignment, you can move students toward success in three ways. First, discuss the relevant techniques they will need to use—how to select a good topic to research, adapting to your audience, using appropriate language for oral communication, and raising productive discussion questions.

Second, show good and/or bad models of these techniques. You can do this through your own speaking, by the use of videos, or by drawing attention to good examples in your students (teaching from bad student examples is a trickier business).

Third, give them opportunities to practice. The best kinds of practice involve students getting to do more than one evaluated presentation. If this is not possible, give them in-class or at-home practice opportunities. You can use peer groups here—one-on-one or small group exercises—or you could require them to tape record a rehearsal of their presentation at home and evaluate it before they give it in class.

Workshop for Presentation/Paper Outline

With your partner, talk through the following questions. The writer should be able to answer the questions, and the partner should find ways to respond and ask follow up questions.

Portrait Set up/Description

- What portrait did you select? What is the subject of the portrait?
- Why did you select it? What drew you to the portrait?
- Describe the format of the portrait. What is the medium?
- Where do your eyes settle first on the portrait? Then where do you look?

Framework

- What framework or lens could you use to make a claim about this portrait?
- How can you connect the specifics of the lens to the specifics of the portrait?

Claim

- What is your claim/thesis?
- What are 3-4 points that you can make to support this?
- Can you frame those as topic sentences?

Questions/Suggestions

(Partners can offer suggestions or ask lingering questions at this point)

Criteria	Lower than Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Delivery			
Meets time limits (4-5 minutes)	≥ 1 minute under/over 0	≤ 1 minute under/over 1	Within limits 2
Makes appropriate eye contact	0	1	2
Vocal expression	0	1	2
Bodily expression	0	1	2
Presentation Aids			
Connection between visual aids and spoken content	0	1	2
Quality of visual aids (easy to read, illustrative, appropriate)	0	1	2
Content/Organization			
Clear Opening	0	1	2
Establishes Ethos	0	1	2
Clear Thesis Statement	0	1	2
Key ideas well-organized	0	1	2
Supporting evidence well-developed	0	1	2
Clear transitions and summaries	0	1	2
Effective and clear conclusion	0	1	2
Credible/appropriated sources	0	1	2

Category Description	Challenges	Strengths
Body Language Uses physical movements and gestures to support presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moves too much, or in a distracting manner ○ Unusually still ○ Turns away from audience ○ Uses excessive or meaningless gestures ○ Crosses body with arm(s) ○ Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Takes an appropriately relaxed stance ○ Keeps hands in a natural position when not gesturing ○ Keeps hands visible ○ Makes eye contact with the audience ○ Other:
Speaking Style Can be easily heard and understood while using proper inflection and tone when speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speaks too quickly ○ Uses a flat or soft tone of voice ○ Only read notes/slides ○ Uses filler words (umm, err, ok, right, etc.) ○ Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voice is audible ○ Uses pauses and silences ○ Smooth and natural verbal transitions. ○ Appropriately enthusiastic and engaging ○ Other:
Presentation of Content Effectively frames information in a way that is appropriate for the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reliance on jargon or ostracizing terminology ○ Misleading or unclear description of project ○ Other: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear introduction to the topic for a broad audience ○ Research topic is clearly stated ○ Other:
Material/Content Accurately describes material to audience in an appropriate way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unclear on main idea ○ Relied on generalizations ○ Misrepresentation of material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understood main idea of article ○ Used text to exemplify and support presentation ○ Clear and well-organized

Other comments or notes:

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Other comments or notes:

Presentation Feedback

Content and Organization

Introduction

- engaging (e.g., story, image, question, fact/stats)
- clear focus/question
- explicit preview of structure and content

Comments:

Body/Development

- Logical organizational scheme
- Ideas explained, terms and concepts defined
- Transitions/Flow between points
- Restatements and signposts

Comments:

Evidence and Research

- Points and ideas supported with evidence
- Sources **cited** in some way

Comments:

Conclusion

- Recaps and reinforces
- Closes strong

Comments:

Delivery

Enthusiasm for Topic
Eye Contact
Gestures and Body Language reinforce message
Voice: appropriate volume, speed, emphases
Ease with notes and any visuals

Comments:

Stayed within time limits?

Prepared for **Question and Answer** period?

Audiovisual Elements

Enhance presentation without dominating
Integrated with what is being said

Powerpoint slides or poster

- "Less is more" – bullets, text, images
- Legible at distance; simple, uncluttered, consistent design
- Charts and graphs are clear, helpful
- Sources of images **cited**

Comments:

Final thoughts: