

Oral Communication

Premise

- Examples of Oral Communication include:
 - Oral exams
 - Group and individual presentations
 - Project defenses
 - Small group discussions
 - Role-playing
 - Debates
 - Interviews
 - Interpretive reading of a speech, poem, or work of literature.
- **Definition:** Oral communication is a complex personal *action* with three possible goals: Information (transference of knowledge), persuasion (transference of point of view), and experience (transference of feeling), with possible synthesis in any combination. The action of oral communication involves:
 1. **Communitive Competence:** A product of higher (*Pinker, 1994*) and lower-level (*Demasio, 2011*) cognitive functioning:
 - Experiential conceptualization
 - Critical analysis
 - Creative thinking
 - Ethical reflection
 - Organization, synthesis, distillation, and design of thought
 - Grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic competence (*see below*)
 - Memory
 2. **Performance Competence:**
 - Vocal/Physical, rhetorical, interpretative, and non-verbal (eye contact, etc.) delivery skills.
 - From the mind, to the breath, to the lips, “the voice is a highly interactive system, that works together, all the time.”
 - *I. R. Titze and A. Palaparthi, "Sensitivity of Source–Filter Interaction to Specific Vocal Tract Shapes," in IEEE/ACM Transactions on Audio, Speech, and Language Processing, vol. 24, no. 12, pp. 2507-2515, Dec. 2016.*

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- Group Communication skills
- Interpersonal Communication skills

3. Listening Competence:

- Apprehension of audience reaction and personal physical response
 - Discernment of cultural norms
 - Questioning and reflection
- Language production is logically divided into three major steps: deciding what to express (conceptualization), determining how to express it (utterance formulation), and expressing it (articulation).
- *Griffin, Zenzi. Ferreira, Victor. Properties of Spoken Language Production Handbook of Psycholinguistics.10.1016/B978-012369374-7/50003. 2006/12/31*
- Distinction of “communitive competence” vs “communicative performance” in ethnography and ESL learning.
- “A fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations).” (Chomsky, 1965)
 - *Canale, M.. Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing, Applied Linguistics, 1 (1980) p.1*
- Communicative Competence
- In 1980, the applied linguists Canale and Swain published an influential article in which they argued that the ability to communicate required four different sub-competencies:
 - Grammatical (ability to create grammatically correct utterances)
 - Sociolinguistic (ability to produce sociolinguistically appropriate utterances)
 - Discourse (ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances)
 - Strategic (ability to solve communication problems as they arise)
- Current cognitive science suggests that syntactical and morphemic mapping substrates of the brain may occupy independent regions for writing and speaking.
- *B. Rapp, S. Fischer-Baum, M. Miozzo. Modality and Morphology: What We Write May Not Be What We Say. Psychological Science, 2015; DOI: 10.1177/0956797615573520*
- Critical analysis utilizes communicative competence.
- The extent to which critical analysis is synthesized, organized, structured, parsed or distilled through writing, is to that extent not oral.

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- The success of oral communication is assessible only by those of whom are being addressed.
 - A speaker must, in real time, continually infer audience apprehension, frame of mind, and/or emotional reaction.
 - A speaker must be capable of making real time adjustments in organization, delivery, or recapitulation to achieve their goal.
 - A speaker must be capable of asking and/or answering questions of the audience to satisfy goals.
 - Oral Communication student learning objectives involves a cycle of action created in real time, in the presence of an audience.
 1. Mind/body to spoken word
 2. Spoken word to audience
 3. Audience response to mind/body
 - Numerous communicative cycles may be appropriate for the achieving of a goal.
 - Presentation material which is pre-written, read, or recited from memory, do not involve utterance formulation competency.
 - Oral Interpretation of speeches, poems, and literature require cognitive functioning for experiential conceptualization, critical analysis, and creative thinking, but not Utterance Formulation (Grammatical and Sociolinguistic competencies). Though, may it not be argued that the practice of stylistic grammatical formations may in turn develop grammatical competency, e.g. *The Columbian Orator*?
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Oral Communication

5 Definitions

1. AACU

Definition of Oral Communication:

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

(The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and therefore is the focus for the application of this rubric.)

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. **An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.**

(Even simplest answers require the immediate articulation of cogent thought clearly expressed. Also, what about oral exams?)

2. University of Southern California – Merced

Types of Oral Communication:

- Public speaking involves the preparation of a purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs or behaviors (AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric).
- Competent public speakers are able to achieve their communication goals through the use of delivery skills suitable to the topic, purpose and audience (Morreale, et al., 1998).
- Specifically, competent speakers demonstrate the following abilities in relation to preparation and delivery (Morreale, et al., 1998):

A. Public Speaking (e.g. formal presentations)

Preparation

- Choose and narrow a topic appropriate to the audience and occasion
- Communicate the thesis or specific purpose in a manner appropriate to the audience and occasion

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- Provide supporting material, including digital or non-digital presentation aids, appropriate to the audience and occasion
- Use an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion, or purpose

Delivery

- Use language appropriate to the audience and occasion
- Use vocal variety in rate, pitch, and volume to heighten and maintain interest appropriate to the audience and occasion
- Use pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate to the audience and occasion
- Use physical behaviors that support the verbal message

Advanced speakers, like university graduates, should also be able to:

- Incorporate information from a variety of sources to support his/her message
- Identify and use appropriate statistics to support her/his message
- Use motivational appeals that build on values, expectations, and needs of the audience
- Develop messages that influence attitudes, beliefs and actions

These competencies together with standards of performance are provided in the National Communication Association [Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form](#), a valid and reliable tool for assessing public speaking performance. (Rubrics from this resource are available immediately below.)

Rubrics

[NCA Competent Speaker Speech Rubric](#) (Descriptive)

[NCA Competent Speaker Speech Rubric](#) (Holistic)

[AAC&U's Oral Communication VALUE Rubric](#)

[Rubric for Capstone Presentation](#) (UCM Engineering)

B. Group Communication

Group communication involves three or more people, and serves to further the specific goals of the group or team.

Skilled group communicators build upon their [interpersonal communication skills](#) to effectively navigate the dynamics of a group interaction, including team projects in and outside of the classroom. Teamwork requires students to use their communication skills to collaborate, manage conflict and build consensus.

In addition to the interpersonal communication skills, competent group communicators will be able to (Morreale et. al., 1998):

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- Identify and manage misunderstandings
- Ask relevant questions
- Answer questions concisely
- Give concise and accurate directions
- Keep group discussions relevant and focused
- Understand and adapt to people from other cultures, organizations, or groups

Students skilled in group communication also need to give and receive constructive feedback about their ideas. Giving constructive feedback requires focusing on ideas and behaviors, instead of individuals, being as positive as possible, and offering suggestions for improvement. Receiving feedback requires listening well, asking for clarification if the comment is unclear, and being open to change and other ideas (University of Waterloo [Centre for Teaching Excellence](#)).

Rubrics and Resources

[AAC&U's Teamwork VALUE Rubric](#)

[University of Waterloo: Methods for Assessing Group Work](#)

[University of Waterloo: Tips for Helping Students Give and Receive Feedback](#)

C. Interpersonal Communication (one-on-one conversations)

Interpersonal communication facilitates relationships between two individuals in social and professional conversations through the appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal behaviors.

Through effective interpersonal communication students can build and maintain personal and professional relationships, fulfill their own interpersonal needs, and manage conflict while respecting all interactants' rights. Students can also respond to others' attempts to build relationships and reciprocate by self-disclosing, focusing on the other, empathizing, and displaying affinity (Morreale et. al., 1998).

The National Communication Association's [Conversation Skills Rating Scale](#) offers a valid and reliable rating scale to assess students' interpersonal communication skills that can be adapted for classroom use.

Advanced students should be able to:

- Approach and engage in conversation with new people in new settings with confidence

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- Maintain conversations by taking turns, managing the interaction, reciprocal conversation, self-disclosure, and alter-centrism
- Feel and convey empathy to others
- Identify conflict situations
- Assert themselves while respecting others' rights
- Allow others to express different views and attempt to understand them
- Describe others' viewpoints and differences of opinion
- Be open-minded about and receptive to another's point of view
- Provide and accept constructive feedback

Rubrics

[Interpersonal Communication Rubric \(descriptive\)](#)

[Interpersonal Communication Rubric \(holistic\)](#)

D. Listening (*for audience*)

Listening is the ability to receive, construct meaning from, and respond to spoken and non-verbal messages. Effective listening involves literal and critical comprehension of the ideas and information being communicated orally (Morreale, et al., 1998).

Competent communicators must first master basic listening skills, including being able to recognize main ideas, identify supporting details, recognize explicit relationships among ideas, and recall basic ideas and details. These skills lay the foundation for the more advanced skills expected of a university graduate, which enable them to meet their communication goals in diverse contexts, whether it be in interpersonal and small group interactions, or in attending to a public presentation or address.

Advanced listening skills include:

- Attending with an open mind
- Perceiving the speakers' purpose and organization of ideas and information
- Discriminating statements of fact from opinion
- Distinguishing emotional from logical arguments
- Detecting bias and prejudice
- Recognizing the speaker's attitude as reflected in verbal and non-verbal messages
- Synthesizing and evaluate by drawing logical inferences and conclusions
- Recalling the implications and arguments

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- Recognizing discrepancies between a speaker's verbal and non-verbal messages

For additional descriptions of these abilities see, [Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students](#). Morreale, Rubin, and Jones. 1998. PDF pp. 10-12.

Additional Resources

Harvard Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, [guide and resources](#) for working in groups.

University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Centre, [guide and resources](#) for group communication and teamwork.

Engineering Specific Resources

Free [ebook](#) from Georgia Tech, with input from executives who hire engineers and scientists.

IEEE Professional Communication Society, [Resources for Educators](#) page has podcast series, as well as a service learning database for communication projects.

ASME business communication [resources](#)

References

Morreale, S., Rubin, R. B., and Jones, E. (Eds.) (1998). [Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students](#). National Communication Association. Reviewed and reaffirmed by NCA's Educational Policies Board in the Spring of 2012.

Rubin, R B. (1996). [Setting Expectations for Speech Communication and Listening](#). *New Directions for Higher Education*, (96), 19-29.

3. [NC State University - Oral Communication Competency](#)

For the purposes of the general education competency assessment, the oral communication competency involves the ability to ethically and responsibly use verbal and nonverbal communication for clear expression of ideas and collaborative processes; engage in active listening; build, express, and justify a claim; and adapt messages to varying situations and contexts.

This competency can be further defined with the following criteria:

Use verbal and nonverbal communication for clear expression of ideas

- Provides clear central idea(s)
- Uses organizational pattern that enhances central idea(s)

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- Demonstrates confident, composed delivery (eye contact, gestures, vocal variety) that enhances the central message (rather than distracting from it)

Use verbal and nonverbal communication within collaborative processes

- Recognizes shared aim (using inclusive/communal language)
- Uses confirmatory responses
- Demonstrates engagement

Build, express and justify an informed position

- Communicates clear position
- Explains rationale for position
- Articulates evidence that supports position
- Recognizes counter-arguments

Adapt messages to varying situations and contexts

- Uses language that is appropriate to audience
- Manages disruptions and distractions appropriately
- Demonstrates a range of linguistic and delivery styles relevant to situation

4. Primer of Communication

Definition: Communication competence refers to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts.

- Ralph E. Cooley and Deborah A. Roach, “A *Conceptual Framework.*” *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 25.

The ability to communicate effectively is often included as a primary undergraduate learning goal along with other key skills like writing, critical thinking, and problem solving.

5. Core Management Skills and Competencies – Oral Communication

Oral Communication competency: being able to convey ideas clearly to others. It includes projecting credibility, poise, and confidence, even under difficult or adversarial conditions. People with this competency speak enthusiastically and use vivid language, examples, or anecdotes to communicate a message; they make use of unambiguous language, gestures, and nonverbal communication. This competency requires the basic skills of considering the needs of an audience and how it is likely to react, talking to people in a way they can understand, listening attentively to others, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary.

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Student Learning Objectives

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) six core competencies

(Forum: North Carolina Medical Board. Dec 31, 2009. No. 4.):

1. Patient Care
2. Medical Knowledge
3. Practice-based Learning and Improvement
4. **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**
 - "How you interact with others"
 - Residents must be able to demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their patient' families and professional associates. Residents are expected to:
 - Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients.
 - Use effective listening skills and elicit and provide information using effective nonverbal, explanatory, questioning and writing skills.
 - Work effectively with others as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group.
5. Professionalism
6. System-based Practice

Columbia (Center for Teaching and Learning)

Oral Presentation

Organization

- Strong opening, hooks audience
- Provides research context
- Clear key message
- Supports assertions with evidence
- Transitions smoothly b/w major points
- Strong closing, summarizes message

Delivery

Verbal

- Sticks to time, well-paced
- Speaks loudly and clearly
- Avoids filler words such as "um"
- Jargon-free, explains concepts
- Explains visual evidence
- Owns content (not reading from slides)
- Synched with slides

Oral Communication

- Projects enthusiasm and energy.
- Non-verbal
- Uses body language effectively
- Makes eye contact with audience

Interactions

- Answers audience questions
- knowledgeable, thoroughly, concisely
- Comments:
- Slides
- Content
- Includes only most essential content
- Presents one idea per slide
- No errors (grammatical or spelling)

Layout & Visuals

- Balances text, images, and detail
- Font and image size visible to audience
- Uses visuals (data representations and images) to illustrate message

National Communication Association:

What students should be able to do in terms of speaking and listening competencies by the time they graduate from college:

1. State ideas clearly.
2. Communicate ethically.
3. Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.
4. Identify their communication goals.
5. Select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating.
6. Demonstrate credibility.
7. Identify and manage misunderstandings.
8. Manage conflict.
9. Be open-minded about another's point of view.
10. Listen attentively.

BIO 110 (York College)

Project Preparation: (16 pts)

- Clearly described proposed research.
- Developed and stated testable hypothesis.
- Identified variables to be manipulated and measured
- Participated in the planning and execution of the experiment

Poster / PowerPoint Presentation

Title: (4 pts)

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- Title is appropriate (descriptive but concise)
- Names and affiliations of all authors included

Introduction: (10 pts)

- Introduction lays out the problem well, and establishes a framework for the rest of the presentation.
- Shows conceptual understanding of the project within a larger context.

Materials and Methods: (15 pts)

- Provides an explanation of experiment in words and as a figure.

Results: (30 pts)

- Effectively summarizes major results
- Depicts each finding using a figure.
- Includes legends with each figure.
- Carried out appropriate data analysis/manipulation.
- Figures are relevant in the context of the study.
- Figures were labeled correctly (axes, legends, lines, bars, etc.)

Discussion/Conclusion: (10 pts)

- Provides interpretation of results in the context of the hypothesis or question
- Describes how outcomes improve our understanding of the question or problem.
- Discusses potential uncertainties or limitations of the study
- Describes possible next steps for further understanding
- Delivers a conclusion summarizing the study

Oral delivery of poster (Individual): (10 pts)

- Oral presentation is clear and concise
- Oral presentation has a logical flow

Participation (Individual): (5 pts)

- Individual demonstrated teamwork
- Individual contributed to experiments
- Individual contributed to poster
- Individual contributed to presentation
- Individual handled questions well, including clarifications if necessary

AACU

Organization
Language
Supporting Material

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Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident. / Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.

University of Wyoming

Oral Communication

Ecosystem Science and Management
Agriculture Building 2013
Department #3354
1000 E. University Ave.
Laramie, WY 82071

Oral communication is considered to be a core aspect of employability, and involves informing, persuading, creating understanding, and building consensus.

Examples of oral communication include:

- Group and individual presentation
- Project defenses
- Small group discussions
- Role-playing
- Debates
- Interviews

A proficient oral communicator is able to:

- Organize messages
- Compose and deliver messages
- Acknowledge opinions and differences
- Paraphrase information and opposing points
- Demonstrate understanding and use of listening behaviors
- Phrase questions to obtain information
- Use communication skills

University of Arkansas

Objectives for the Skills

What should a student who has completed the general education program be able to do in the way of writing, critical thinking, speaking, using information technology, quantitative analyzing, and researching?

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Below are general goal statements and lists of behavioral objectives for each skill the general education program addresses. The general education council, working with selected faculty, and then receiving wide input from faculty, formulated these objectives. The council believes that these intellectual and practical skills are integral to the mission and goals of the general education program. The council welcomes your input on the formulation of these objectives.

The general education program has six skills areas with the following purposes and student objectives/outcomes...

2) *Oral Communication*

The overall objective is to develop students' oral communication skills by a variety of communication activities, from informal discussion to formal presentation. Oral communication objectives for students completing the general education program are:

1. Clearly state questions, concerns, and ideas so that both the instructor and other students can understand the intent.
2. Verbally condense larger amounts of information into concise, condensed analysis.
3. Discuss among various size groups of students so as to be able to contribute without over powering others.
4. Give a clear, organized and accurate oral presentation of course material (for example, summaries of readings, research projects, analyses of arguments, persuasive speeches and others).

Virginia Community Colleges

COMPETENT SPEAKER SPEECH EVALUATION FORM AND CORRESPONDING VCCS GENERAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES

Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form Competencies *Corresponding VCCS General Education Competency Coverage*

1. Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion.
A. Understand and interpret complex materials.
2. Communicates the thesis/specific purpose in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion.
A. Understand and interpret complex materials.
3. Provides supporting material (including electronic and non-electronic presentational aids) appropriate for the audience and occasion
B. Assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally.

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4. Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion and purpose
B. *Assimilate, organize, develop, and present an idea formally and informally.*
5. Uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion
C. *Use standard English.*
6. Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch and intensity (volume) to heighten and maintain interest appropriate to the audience and occasion
D. *Use appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions*
7. Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message
D. *Use appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses in interpersonal relations and group discussions.*
8. Recognized the role of culture and communication. overall performance in audience/speaker analysis
F. *Recognize the role of culture in communication.*

Ohio University

Rubric for Assessment of Oral Communication Skills (for Team Presentations)

The student's presentation is evaluated along five dimensions. The first four are mainly concerned with the individual student's oral skills and have to do respectively with the organization of his/her portion of the presentation, the mechanics (mainly quality of slides), effectiveness of delivery, and how well the speaker relates to the audience. The fifth dimension is concerned with the student's team working skills as exhibited during the team presentation as a whole.

Relating to Audience:

- Reads most of the presentation from the slides or notes with no eye contact with audience members; seems unaware of audience reactions.
- Occasional eye contact with audience but mostly reads the presentation; some awareness of at least a portion of the audience; only brief responses to audience questions.
- Generally aware of the audience reactions; maintains good eye contact when speaking and when answering questions.
- Keeps the audience engaged throughout the presentation; modifies material on the-fly based on audience questions and comments; keenly aware of audience reactions.