
University of South Carolina
General Education Assessment Criteria—Oral Communication
<http://ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/assessment/criteria/oral.htm>

Goal

Students will communicate orally in a manner that unites theory, criticism, and practice to produce an effective communicator.

Objective A. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate knowledge of the subject. This criterion describes the accuracy, extensiveness, and perspective of the knowledge which the speaker exhibits. This criterion also assesses the degree to which the speaker's information meets the content requirements of a specific assignment. (NOTE: For speaking assessments, which are integrated with assessments in Critical Thinking or one or more Perspective Outcomes, those appropriate criteria whole or in part may be substituted for Speaking Criterion #1.)

4 OUTSTANDING

Appropriateness: The speaker fulfills or exceeds all of the assigned content requirements.

Accuracy: The speaker's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout.

Extensiveness: The speaker exhibits convincing range and quality of knowledge, having done appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the speaker's assimilation and understanding of the material. When appropriate, the speaker is convincingly aware of alternative points of view AND of implications beyond the immediate subject.

3 EFFECTIVE

Appropriateness: The speaker fulfills the important content requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The speaker's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout except in minor details.

Extensiveness: The speaker seems informed on the subject, having done appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the speaker's assimilation and understanding of view OR of implications beyond the immediate subject.

2 ADEQUATE

Appropriateness: The speaker fulfills some of the important content requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The speaker's knowledge of the subject is generally accurate, though flawed.

Extensiveness: The speaker exhibits limited range or quality of knowledge, having done minimal appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals that the speaker has only partially assimilated or understood the material. When appropriate, the speaker shows some awareness of alternative points of view OR of implications beyond the immediate subject.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Appropriateness: The speaker fails to address the important content requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The speaker's knowledge of the subject is generally inaccurate.

Extensiveness: The speaker's knowledge of the subject lacks range or quality.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the speaker's failure to assimilate or to understand the material.

Objective B. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate an awareness of the audience/group. This criterion concerns the speaker's awareness of the audience. In demonstrating this awareness, the speaker must accommodate the listeners' attitudes toward or familiarity with the subject, as well as the listeners' comprehension levels. Depending on the characteristics of the audience, then, the speaker's development, language, and emphasis will vary and will reflect the degree to which the speaker has identified and is addressing those listeners.

4 OUTSTANDING

Development: The speaker's explanations and uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details are highly appropriate for the listeners.

Language: The speaker's word choices clearly demonstrate an awareness of the listeners. The language seems deliberately chosen to aid the listeners' understanding of the subject (including definitions where appropriate).

Emphasis: The speaker's discussion or argumentation is consistently clear and appropriate to the listeners and to the purpose. In emphasizing important points, the speaker uses evidence logically and carefully.

Feedback-- Monitoring: The speaker monitors the audience's/group's responses and adapts the presentation accordingly.

3 EFFECTIVE

Development: The speaker's explanations and uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details are highly appropriate for the listeners.

Language: The speaker's word choices demonstrate an awareness of the listeners. The language is consistent and seems generally appropriate to the listeners' understanding of the subject (including definitions where appropriate).

Emphasis: The speaker's discussion or argumentation is generally clear and appropriate to the listeners and to the purpose. In emphasizing important points, the speaker generally uses evidence logically and carefully.

Feedback-- Monitoring: The speaker monitors the audience's/group's responses and adapts the presentation accordingly.

2 ADEQUATE

Development: The speaker makes some attempt to provide evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details for the listeners, but some information is either extraneous or insufficient.

Language: The speaker's word choices indicate an awareness of the listeners, but the identity of the listeners is either unclear or inappropriate in some respects. Although the vocabulary seems fairly consistent, the language seems chosen more for the speaker's convenience than for the listeners' understanding.

Emphasis: The speaker's discussion or argumentation is generally clear or appropriate to the listeners and to the purpose, but may be lacking in some aspect of the use of logic or evidence.

Feedback-- Monitoring: The speaker's interaction with the audience/group is limited.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Development: The speaker generally lacks an awareness of the listeners, for the discussion lacks evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details.

Language: The speaker's word choices fail to reflect an awareness of the listeners, because either the vocabulary or the reference to the listeners is inconsistent or inappropriate.

Emphasis: The speaker's discussion or argumentation is generally unclear or inappropriate to the listeners and to the purpose. The presentation lacks emphasis, or is seriously defective in the use of logic or evidence.

Feedback-- Monitoring: The speaker fails to monitor the audience's/group's responses.

Objective C. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate organization appropriate to the purpose and to the interaction between speaker and audience. This criterion considers the structure and the coherence of the presentation. Structure refers to the way the speaker achieves unity by focusing and ordering the information. Coherence refers to the way the speaker connects the ideas to provide continuity from point to point and throughout the presentation. These aspects of organization should be appropriate to the audience and the purpose for speaking.

4 OUTSTANDING

Structure: The speaker focuses and orders the material to convey a unified point or effect.

Coherence: The speaker provides clear and consistent movement within and between major points and from beginning to end.

Introductory Comments: The speaker's opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points of the presentation and motivate the audience to listen.

Concluding Comments: The speaker's concluding comments are strong both in reemphasizing the purpose and major points of the presentation and in leaving the audience with an appropriate closing statement.

3 EFFECTIVE

Structure: The speaker focuses and orders the material to convey a generally unified point or effect.

Coherence: The speaker provides movement within and between major points and from beginning to end.

Introductory Comments: The speaker's opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points of the presentation and motivate the audience to listen.

Concluding Comments: The speaker's concluding comments are appropriately related to the purpose and major points of the presentation, but they are not very strong or emphatic.

2 ADEQUATE

Structure: The speaker provides some focus or order to the material, but this structure is somewhat unclear.

Coherence: The speaker provides movement within and between major points and from beginning to end, but this movement is at times either unclear or awkward.

Introductory Comments: The speaker's opening comments attempt to reveal the purpose and major points of the presentation and motivate the audience to listen, but in doing so the approach seems somewhat artificial, weak, or unimaginative.

Concluding Comments: The speaker's concluding comments are related to the purpose and major points of the presentation, but they either bring in extraneous information or are unnecessarily redundant.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Structure: The speaker provides little or no focus or order to the material.

Coherence: The speaker provides little movement within and between the major points and from beginning to end.

Introductory Comments: The speaker's opening comments are either inappropriate to the presentation, or they are unlikely to motivate the audience to listen.

Concluding Comments: The speaker closes the presentation either abruptly with no apparent concluding statement or with inappropriate remarks.

Objective D. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate vocal delivery which encourages listening. This criterion is concerned with those aspects of the speaker's delivery which either encourage or discourage listening: volume, pitch, enunciation, pronunciation pace, and tone of voice. These aspects of oral projection should be appropriate to the content, the occasion, the setting, and the purpose for which the comments are made. Empty vocalizations/verbal fillers (such as *you know," "uh," and," "uhm," etc.) affect the vocal delivery.

4 OUTSTANDING

Clear enunciation: Appropriate pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, and pace throughout. The speaker sounds genuinely interested in the topic. Delivery appears spontaneous throughout; notes may assist but do not interrupt or control delivery.

3 EFFECTIVE

Clear enunciation: Appropriate pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, and pace are generally maintained, but occasionally the speaker's voice is lacking somewhat in the appropriate enthusiasm or energy level. Delivery appears spontaneous throughout; notes may assist but do not interrupt or control delivery. A few empty vocalizations are noticeable but are not distracting.

2 ADEQUATE

Enunciation is hampered by occasional lazy articulation (such as slurring or run-together words); some inappropriateness of pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, or pace may be noticeable, but such instances do not seriously hinder the speaker's audibility. Delivery generally appears spontaneous, but some moments of apparent recitation, reading of notes, or reference to notes occasionally interrupt. Empty vocalizations are somewhat distracting.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Inappropriate or ineffective enunciation, pronunciation, volume, pitch, inflection, or pace seriously hinder the speaker's audibility or obstruct communication with the audience. Reading of or reference to notes, recitation, inappropriate display or lack of energy level, or empty vocalizations adversely affect the vocal delivery.

Objective E. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate physical presentation appropriate to the speaking situation. This criterion includes all aspects of what is commonly known as body language: facial expressions, eye contact, and body movement. Physical presentation helps reflect the speaker's poise and confidence.

4 OUTSTANDING

The speaker looks genuinely interested; facial expressions are consistently compatible with spoken content; physical presentation is appropriate and purposeful in enhancing the speakers comments; body movements and gestures are natural, appropriate, and relaxed; eye contact with the audience consistently maintained.

3 EFFECTIVE

The speaker appears interested; facial expressions are consistently compatible with spoken content. Body movements and gestures are usually natural, appropriate, and relaxed. Any nervous movements do not interfere with the presentation. Any lack of eye contact is only momentary.

2 ADEQUATE

The speakers facial expressions seem either limited or occasionally incompatible with the spoken content. Inappropriate body movements or gestures are occasionally noticeable but do not obstruct

communication. For the most part, the speaker maintains eye contact with the audience, but the inconsistency in eye contact is somewhat distracting.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The speaker's facial expressions seem either limited or incompatible with the spoken content. Poor posture, distracting or inappropriate body movements or gestures, or lack of eye contact interferes with the delivery.

Objective F. Students' effective speaking will demonstrate appropriate structure and word choice. This criterion focuses on the speaker's ability to use standard English grammar and to control language to achieve verbal precision, economy, variety, and emphasis.

4 OUTSTANDING

The speaker chooses words and expressions for both maximum clarity and variety; the speaker manifests no grammatical errors; the speaker's sentence structure manifests stylistic strengths -- that is, the sentence structures distinctively create emphasis, dramatic impact, or more effective listening.

3 EFFECTIVE

The speaker's word choices and expressions achieve both clarity and at least some distinctiveness; the speaker manifests no grammatical errors.

2 ADEQUATE

The speaker's expressions are accurate and clear, but rarely distinctive. An occasional sentence structure or grammatical error is noticeable.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The speaker's expressions are, for the most part, accurate and clear but rarely distinctive. The speaker's meaning is often muddled or his/her credibility undercut by distracting faults in sentence structure or usage.

Objective G. Students' listening skills as audience or co-communicators in group discourse will promote accurate extraction of information and meaning.

4 OUTSTANDING

The student's evident active attention to oral communications of others encourages further communication; student recognizes responsibilities for listening and for gaining clarification of incomplete communication. The student demonstrates an accurate and thorough understanding of communication content through oral and written responses.

3 EFFECTIVE

The student's active attention to oral communications of others provides visual feedback to the other of respect and interest; the student's responses indicate understanding of information, opinions and ideas presented orally.

2 ADEQUATE

The student listens with physical and mental attention to oral presentation of others and demonstrates the understanding of the major points or threads of an argument through appropriate oral or written response.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The student's attention lacks focus and is reflected in written or oral responses where meanings and information are incomplete or inaccurately understood.