

Oral Presentations

By Edna T. Holm

To be able to communicate information orally to others in a logical, coherent manner is a skill which can be learned. Because students are often afraid to speak in front of a group and because effective oral communication is often such an important part of their jobs when they graduate, students must be coached on the fine points of oral presentations at every opportunity in the classroom.

Formal presentations occur in many settings in the academic environment: as part of routine class activities, as a report to a sponsor on an individual or group project, as a seminar for peers and faculty, as a culmination of research activities that are part of a graduate degree program, and to share research findings with professional colleagues. In these and other settings, helping them to learn how to communicate effectively with self confidence is an objective which could (and perhaps should) be on every syllabus.

As feedback for the student, an evaluation form which addresses the organization and understanding of the subject matter, the visual aids used, the manner of delivery and the personal demeanor can provide meaningful insights for the individual. An example of an evaluation form can be found below. It is only one example of at least 10 different forms which are used by various units on campus. Sample copies have been collected and placed in a file which may be viewed in the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research in Minard 224. Units may wish to adapt or adopt a form that will suit their needs.

Instructor Use of The Form

The form must be shared with the students well in advance of the time at which the form will be used for evaluation of their presentations. This will give a student guidance in terms of how the information should be presented as well as giving him/her advance notice of how the evaluation will be done. The faculty member could distribute the evaluation forms to those attending a presentation with a request that they provide helpful feedback to the student by completing the evaluation form. Collecting and summarizing the results and discussing them with the student gives the faculty the opportunity to help the student improve.

Faculty may have the students who are doing the presentations do self-assessments if several presentations are given by an individual student during a semester. The self-assessment could be compared with summaries of evaluations by peers and/or faculty to assist the student in determining strong and weak areas and where and how improvements can be made.

Assessment Use of The Form

As an assessment tool, the instructor and/or the unit (department or program) can collect copies of the evaluation form summaries (without student names) to review for the

purpose of determining aspects which are most problematic for the students. These aspects, then, could be the areas which should be targeted for additional instruction and practice in the classroom to improve student performance.

1. Items to be rated on the form need to provide evidence related to the intended outcomes such as, communicate effectively, knowledge of the discipline, etc.
2. Remove student names, remove any "evaluator" names. Can keep categories of persons, such as "faculty" or "student" if you think their judgments may differ.
3. Collate ratings across students across raters. DO NOT add items together.

Adaptation for Assessment of Student Presentation

Date

| Subject Matter | Needs Improvement | | | Excellent | |
|--|-------------------|---|---|-----------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Did the introduction provide sufficient background for you to understand the topic? | | | | | |
| 2. Was the subject matter developed in logical order? | | | | | |
| 3. Given the time constraints, was the topic developed sufficiently? | | | | | |
| 4. Did the summary or conclusion emphasize the significance of the information? | | | | | |
| 5. Did the speaker appear to understand the material and answer questions effectively? | | | | | |
| 6. Did the presentation enhance your understanding of the topic? | | | | | |

| Presentation | Needs Improvement | | | Excellent | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|-----------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Were the visual aids easily read and appropriate for the information presented? | | | | | |
| 2. Did the speaker talk loudly and clearly enough to be understood? | | | | | |
| 3. Was correct grammar used on the visual aids and in the oral presentation? | | | | | |
| 4. Did the speaker use eye contact, gestures, and voice inflections to maintain audience? | | | | | |

5. Was the speaker able to present the material without excessive dependence on notes?

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|--|--|--|--|--|

Faculty_____

Student_____

Other_____