ORAL AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

This rubric was adapted from the AACU's VALUE rubric, developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States; although this adaptation is designed to aid Stephen F. Austin State University's (SFA) specific assessment plan relative to Texas Coordinating Board objectives, it is based upon the culmination of processes that included the examination of many existing campus rubrics and related documents. The rubric articulates fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubric is intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. As the AACU recommended, the core expectations articulated in all of its VALUE rubrics was translated into the language of SFA's campus, disciplines, and courses. The rubric positions learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialogue and understanding of student success.

The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and, therefore, is the primary focus for the application of this rubric. As the Texas Coordinating Board designates visual communication as one of its desired objectives, this rubric also provides for the examination of components for visual presentation most typically accompanying oral communication presentations.

Definition

Oral communication is, most generally, a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. In some disciplines, oral communication is a direct interaction between a "professional" speaker and specific audience (such as nurse to patient, in clinical or therapeutic settings), where the effect of the presentation of ideas is to foster understanding or learning.

Visual communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation and delivery of supporting visual aids, typically relative to the oral communication and intended to benefit or amplify an audience's understanding of a central message or purpose. Thus, visual communication is facilitated through such media as poster presentations, power point presentations, video presentations, among others available and appropriate to specific disciplines and classroom experiences.

Framing Language

Oral and visual 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. For speakers evaluated in field observations, the rubric may serve to measure the effectiveness of oral communication in the workplace setting. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message or purpose is conveyed; presentations should be supported by one or more forms of appropriate documentation, secondary materials, or visual aids, and should include purposeful organization and content. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric. At SFA, as intended by the assessment plan, skills in oral and visual communication should include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only. When assigning values to the rubric, assessment committee members should refer here to this Glossary for specific examples that may be used to determine levels of achievement. This Glossary is not intended to be absolute and exclusive of considerations appropriate to the needs of specific fields or disciplines; this should be considered as a guide only.

1. Organization: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and evidence-based support in a presentation. Organizational development that effectively supports a presentation typically includes an introduction, identifiable sections in the body of the message, and a conclusion. Organizational development that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives (such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc.) and makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.

2. Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive. Not only does such language aid the development of the message, but it also enhances the expression of ideas and contributes to meaningful audience interpretation.

3. Delivery (both oral and visual): Delivery techniques include a variety of oral and visual cues. In the example of Oral Delivery, such cues may be use of voice, including vocal expressiveness, diction, enunciation, and presentation-appropriate language. Visual cues include posture, gestures, eye contact, body language, proper attire, and so on. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.). Speaker energy and emphases, as evidenced in skillful delivery, foster interpretation of ideas expressed.

4. Evidence-based support: Explanations, examples, amplifications, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Evidence-based support is generally credible, relevant, and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Furthermore, evidence-based support requires correct use of citations, as expected within specific disciplines; in Oral Communication contexts, the speaker should know how to handle attribution of secondary resources so that it does not distract. Evidence-based support increases credibility when it is also vivid and varied (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities).

5. General purpose: The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away"/central message of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.

6. Visual aids: Appropriate use of charts, posters, slides, illustrations, graphics, bulleted information, animations, or videos, among other media; the visual aid should enhance the delivery of the communication, oral and/or visual by providing clarification, amplification, emphasis or support to the principal ideas and general purpose of the presentation.

ORAL AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

Definitions: Oral communication is, most generally, a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. In some disciplines, oral communication is a direct interaction between a "professional" speaker and specific audience (such as nurse to patient, in clinical or therapeutic settings), where the effect of the presentation of ideas is to foster understanding or learning.

Visual communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation and delivery of supporting visual aids, typically relative to the oral communication and intended to benefit or amplify an audience's understanding of a central message or purpose. Thus, visual communication is facilitated through such media as poster presentations, power point presentations, video presentations, among others available and appropriate to specific disciplines and classroom experiences.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
Organization	Organizational development is clearly and consistently observable; skillfully makes content and expression of ideas in the presentation cohesive.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are clearly and consistently observable within the presentation; content is expressed reasonably well as a result.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are observable within the presentation.	Organizational development and expression of ideas are occasionally observable.	Organizational development and/or expression of ideas are not observable within the presentation; lack of coherence and unity exist.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling; choices enhance presentation effectiveness. Language is appropriate to audience and aids the clear expression of ideas.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is appropriate to audience and is useful to the expression of ideas.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation and the expression of ideas.	Language choices are sometimes unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language appropriateness is inconsistent. Expression of ideas is hindered.	Language choices are unclear and fail to support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language is not appropriate to audience; ideas are not expressed clearly.
Delivery (oral/visual)	Delivery techniques make the presentation compelling; speaker appears polished and confident; speaker energy and emphases foster interpretation of ideas expressed. Dependency upon notes, if applicable, is not evident or intrusive. Non-verbal cues aid significantly.	Delivery techniques make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable; speaker tends toward conversational tone, and dependency upon notes is minimally noticeable. Non-verbal cues are appropriate and useful.	Delivery techniques make the presentation understandable; speaker appears tentative; speaker tends to be a bit casual, as evidenced in word choices; non-verbal cues do not particularly elevate audience's level of understanding or interpretation.	Delivery techniques sometimes detract from audience comprehension; speaker appears uncomfortable; speaker seems unenthusiastic, monotonic, or hesitancies suggest unpreparedness. Verbal cues include unnecessary gestures and purposeless body language.	Delivery techniques are either distracting from understandability of the presentation or fail to be effective; the speaker is clearly uncomfortable or unprepared.

	Capstone 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Unacceptable 0
General purpose	Purpose is compelling, precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported. Purpose and evidence are aligned well.	Purpose is clear and consistent; purpose and evidence are appropriately aligned.	Purpose is understandable but is neither reinforced nor memorable; purpose and evidence are generally aligned.	Purpose can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation. Alignment of purpose and evidence is not always clear.	Purpose is absent; the presentation does not seem to know what it is about. Unifying principles do not exist.
Visual aids	Visual aids effectively support the communication of purposes and ideas; aids are integrated into the presentation seamlessly, thus fostering a full understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids generally support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes; the aids effectively amplify or resonate the presentation of ideas and foster a good understanding of the message's content.	Visual aids support the communication of the student's ideas and purposes but are only partially useful or informative.	Visual aids do not particularly support the communication of the student's ideas and purpose; they are insufficient to be of much use as they do little to elevate understanding.	Visual aids are virtually non-existent, serve no purpose, or are not credible