



A Simple but Complete Rubric for the Assessment of Oral Reports

As part of a university-wide goal to graduate students with proficient skills in oral and written communication, Widener University has made the commitment to assess oral communication skills within each student's undergraduate program. Although many academic units elected to do this in an informal way, by relying on subjective reports resulting from instructor-designed course assignments, Widener University's Continuing Education Department (University College) elected to take a stronger stand and developed a specific oral communication scoring rubric that instructors are encouraged to use as part of their course syllabi.

In the fall of 2007 members of the University College Assessment Committee met to develop an oral communication rubric that would be suitable for use across various fields. First a review of previously published rubrics for oral communication was conducted. This review included but was not limited to the following: the Virginia State Council of Higher Education Competency Standards for Oral Communication (2006), the Iowa State University's Oral Evaluation Rubric (2005), and the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory's Four-part Rubric for Oral Assessment (1998). This review was supplemented by an informal survey of information dealing with the basic nature of the communication process, as well as information about how the process might differ within diverse career areas.

The above efforts resulted in the development of the Widener University, University College Rubric for the Assessment of Oral Communication, a comprehensive scoring rubric that focuses on three main areas: 1) the Message, 2) Presenter Expertise, and 3) Audience Engagement. The Message section addresses the question, "Was the information presented in a clear and concise fashion?" This section includes two subsections: one that deals with articulation and pronunciation; and another that deals with aspects of organization. Presenter Expertise answers the question, "Was the speaker knowledgeable and professional?" This section is composed of ratings on appearance and demeanor; pacing and use of time; and preparation. The final section, Audience Engagement, answers the question, "Did the speaker show enthusiasm & capture the attention of the audience?" Eye contact and establishment of rapport are included in this section. A fourth area, Visual Aides is also included as an optional rating category as needed. Furthermore, ratings across each category are scorable at four competency levels: Expert, Competent, Developing, and Unacceptable.

Once developed, this rubric was presented to faculty from a multiplicity of disciplines at an annual professional development workshop. Discussion focused on the competencies as indicated, as well as the rubric's utility for use during classroom presentations and projects. Comments were collected and minor revisions were made, then the rubric was pilot tested during the Fall of 2007 and the Spring of 2008.

The current study looked at the reliability of scoring oral reports using the Widener University, University College Rubric for the Assessment of Oral Communication.

Forty-two students from two undergraduate courses (one section of Human Growth and Development,

and one section of Introduction to Education) delivered oral reports on topics related to each course's content. Each student's oral communication proficiency was assessed both by the instructor and by a subset of the student's classmates that were randomly assigned before each presentation took place. Proficiency levels were recoded numerically as follows: Unacceptable = 1, Developing = 2, Competent = 3, Expert = 4. Results showed that interrater reliabilities across categories were high with the highest being "the message" at $r = .96$, and the lowest being "presenter expertise" at $r = .85$. Most participants did report that scoring was very easy after the first or second time they completed the ratings.

Conclusions indicate that the Widener University, University College Rubric for the Assessment of Oral Communication is a tool that can assist instructors in determining oral communication proficiency by offering a concrete, yet multifaceted method for performing both formative and summative evaluations. Although the previously reviewed instruments were inclusive, they were also complex. The Widener University, University College Rubric offers a simplified but reliable alternative to these formerly published oral communication evaluation tools.

2. Proposal Review

Please rate the proposal according to the indicated criteria.

1. Significance

	Insignificant				Critically Significant
How relevant is the proposal to research in educational psychology?	<input type="checkbox"/> Insignificant How relevant is the proposal to research in educational psychology? Insignificant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critically Significant

2. Theoretical Framework

	Not Articulated				Well Articulated
How well articulated is the theoretical foundation of this proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theoretical Framework How well articulated is the theoretical foundation of this proposal? Not Articulated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Well Articulated

3. Methods

	Inappropriate/Underspecified				Appropriate/Well-defined
How appropriate/well defined are the chosen methods for the topic or issue addressed in this proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Methods How appropriate/well defined are the chosen methods for the topic or issue addressed in this proposal? Inappropriate/Underspecified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate/Well-defined

4. Data Sources

	Inappropriate				Appropriate
How appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data Sources How	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate

	Inappropriate	Appropriate
are the data sources included in this proposal?	appropriate are the data sources included in this proposal? Inappropriate	

5. Data Analyses

	Inappropriate/Unfinished	Appropriate/Finished
Does the submission contain appropriate data analyses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Analyses Does the submission contain appropriate data analyses? Inappropriate/Unfinished	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate/Finished
Does the submission contain finished data analyses?	<input type="checkbox"/> Does the submission contain finished data analyses? Inappropriate/Unfinished	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate/Finished

6. Conclusions/Interpretations

	Ungrounded	Well grounded
How well grounded are the conclusions of this proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Conclusions/Interpretations How well grounded are the conclusions of this proposal? Ungrounded	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Well grounded

7. Quality of writing/organization

	Unclear/disorganized	Clear/Well organized
How clear and organized is this proposal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality of writing/organization How clear and organized is this proposal? Unclear/disorganized	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Clear/Well organized

8. Originality

Routine Highly Original

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How would you rate the originality of this proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Originality How would you rate the originality of this proposal? Routine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly Original

9. Membership Appeal

	Small Audience				Large Audience
How would you rate the appeal of this proposal in terms of potential member attendance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Membership Appeal How would you rate the appeal of this proposal in terms of potential member attendance? Small Audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Large Audience

10. Attendance


	Definitely No				Definitely Yes
Would you attend this session?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attendance Would you attend this session? Definitely No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Definitely Yes

11. Overall Recommendation

	Proposal not acceptable/Reject				Outstanding Proposal/Definitely Accept
What is your overall recommendation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overall Recommendation What is your overall recommendation? Proposal not acceptable/Reject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Proposal/Definitely Accept

12. If accepted, this proposal should be a

If accepted, this proposal should be a Poster

 Paper session

13. Comments to the Program Chairs:

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14. Comments to the Author/Submitter:

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13. Comments to the Program Chairs:

The topic is worthwhile and will probably be very helpful in its goal, e.g, to improve students' oral skills. However, this proposal is very simplistic and contains no real research that should be presented at a national conference. The proposal discusses an internal college matter, e.g., a proposal to standardize evaluation of undergraduate student's oral skills. It does not present any theoretical background on why the proposal is unique or any significance why the proposed rubric should be used.

Comments to the Program Chairs:

14. Comments to the Author/Submitter:

The development of a standardized rubric to standardize the evaluation of students' oral skills across an entire program is a very worthwhile endeavor for any college or university.

However, you have not presented any significance why proposed rubric should be used. You have not presented any theoretical framework for your research or why it is important or unique and should be considered by other universities.

Comments to the Author/Submitter:

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