



# **Assessing Speaking**

## **Creating Rubrics for Assessing Presentations**

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# Assessing Speaking

Speaking involves the reciprocal ability to use both receptive and productive skills in a continual encoding and decoding of developing message(s).

Cyril Weir



# Features of Speaking

- Usually simply and loosely organized sentences
- Simpler discourse and less info
- Use of more general vocabulary
- Negotiation of meaning
- Frequent alterations and corrections
- Memory limitations
- Sometimes use of body language



# Assessing Speaking

## Caveats

- Limited access to research on theory and practice
- Vague and subjective criteria that may lead to inconsistencies
- Lack of rubrics
- Lack of differentiated approach towards assessment of different types of tasks
- Lack of practice of communicating categories/descriptors to students



# Speaking Assessment Techniques

## Indirect

- *word/sentence repetition*
- *reading aloud*
- *pronunciation and intonation*
- *learning rhymes/poems/tongue twisters/songs by heart*



# Speaking Assessment Techniques

## Direct

- *dialogues*
- *role-play (in case studies, negotiation)*
- *retelling stories*
- *rendering*
- ***presentation***
- *verbal essay (monologues, e.g. one-minute speech)*
- *digital voice journals*
- *picture cue/description, interpretation of graphs, tables, other*
- *interview*
- *debate*
- *discussion*
- *Extemporaneous/impromptu speech*



# Speaking Assessment Formats

- Monologue
- S-S interaction
- S-T interaction



# What do we want to assess?

- *how **accurate** and **informative** the **content** is;*
  - *how well the speech is **organized**;*
  - *how **fluently** and **accurately** they perform;*
  - *what **vocabulary** they use and how effectively they use that vocabulary;*
  - *how effectively they **take turns** or **address** the audience;*
  - *how well they handle **routine** (information and interaction) **skills**;*
  - *how effectively they use **improvisational** (negotiation, turn taking, other) **skills**;*
- ... and many other competencies, depending on the task...*





# Scoring systems

- Holistic

*a single score is awarded to the speaking task  
raters are trained not to think about individual  
components*

**but**

- Difficult to interpret a composite score;
- Lumps together what may constitute uneven abilities across subskills;
- Raters may overlook an aspect or two of the presentation;
- Reducing a score to one figure reduces reliability.



# Scoring systems

- **Analytic**

*the task is assessed on a variety of categories  
scoring embodies hypotheses about the  
underlying constructs of a skill and guards  
against collapsing of categories*

**but**

- Qualitative judgments are difficult to make.
- The descriptors may not be informative.
- Speaking is more than the sum of its parts.



## Criteria levels of performance: categories

- Content (informative? accurate?)
- Organization
- Coherence and cohesion
- Fluency (pauses? hesitant? effortless?  
Smooth and native like?)
- Language (grammar and vocabulary)
- Pronunciation and intonation
- Communicative ability/platform skills

# Comparing CEFR and ACTFL levels

## CEFR

### Proficient user

- *C2+*
- *C2 Mastery*
- *C1 Effective Operational Proficiency*

### Independent user

- *B2+*
- *B2 Vantage*
- *B1 Threshold*

### Basic user

- *A2+*
- *A2 Waystage*
- *A1 Breakthrough*

- ACTFL
- **Distinguished**
- **Superior**
- **Advanced** (*high/ mid/ low*)
  
- **Intermediate** (*high/ mid/ low*)
  
- **Novice** (*high/ mid/ low*)



# How to create a speaking rubric

- Decide on a task
- Decide on categories you would like to assess (e.g. content, organization, language, other)
- Decide on the levels/descriptors (e.g. excellent, good, satisfactory, poor; or advanced, proficient, developing, does not meet minimum requirements )
- Develop your own descriptors



Thank you 😊

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