

Disciplinary Assessment of Oral Presentations: Initial Steps and Strategies

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Theoretical Context

Situated learning research predicts that students learn in ways that are inextricably tied to the real, local situations within which learning occurs. CXC movements grounded in this framework would design, implement, and assess communication competence based on the discourses, values, and standards of the target discipline. If this is the case, assessment of oral presentations should be situated in the discipline specific outcomes, standards of effectiveness, and genres. One of the key implications of this framework is that CXC scholars and practitioners enact assessment practices that are situated no generic; and in collaboration with, not separate from members of the discipline in which they are working.

General Issues of Disciplinary Assessment

- Encourage some form of discipline-specific accountability
- Create strategies for guidance (faculty and students alike)
- Initiate contexts for feedback to and from critical disciplinary stakeholders

Constructing Disciplinary Assessment Instruments

- Define discipline-specific genres (and their structural elements)
- Identify oral communication outcomes and competencies
- Incorporate usable and operational language
- Select scales consistent with disciplinary pedagogical goals
- Consider placement and structure of comments

Using Disciplinary Assessment Instruments

- Provide faculty (or TA) training in using instrument
- Encourage use of instrument in student instruction
- Consider multiple forms of feedback (instructor, peer, self analysis)

Creating a Feedback Loop

Disciplinary assessment instruments can be powerful tools for assessing the extent to which students are achieving the identified oral communication competencies in their respective disciplines. They also provide useful information for instructional design and programmatic assessment. In order for disciplinary assessment instruments to achieve these goals, there needs to be some form of feedback loop that connects individual assessment instruments (in particular courses) with larger curricular goals and objectives.

- Incorporate instruments in instructional and curricular conversations
- Integrate course-specific assessment with programmatic assessment