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Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy Integrated Rubric Guide

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Oral Communication, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy Integrated Rubric Guide

California State University, Monterey Bay

Faculty who have worked with these rubrics at CSUMB have developed this guide to help you apply the rubric. Although there are often multiple descriptors within any level for a criterion, we suggest that you choose the level based on the balance of evidence rather than grading “down” for weak performance on any of the particular descriptors. To quote from materials developed by Stanford University for scoring teaching samples, “The description requires professional judgment to apply to the evidence; it is not in the form of an item whose presence or absence is readily apparent to noneducators, and perhaps even to nonspecialists.”

The structure of this document follows a consistent pattern. 1) Each criterion is discussed in terms of its big ideas and the progression of those ideas across the levels in fairly broad terms. 2) For each criterion, there is a description of what distinguishes a level 3 (proficient) performance from a level 2 (developing) performance. *(The structure that follows is based on a document created for the Performance Assessment of California Teachers [PACT].)*

Language

1) Big ideas and their progression

Vocabulary--Academic disciplines (and all social groups) often develop specialized language used in particular ways. Depending on the audience and context, the use of such language can be jargonistic or colloquial and interfere with communication or can be appropriate and facilitate communication, assuming the language is used accurately. Development of this element reflects the writer’s command of the disciplinary vocabulary and appropriate use of it to communicate with the particular audience.

Syntax--Spoken language has its own appropriate sentence structure and is designed to be accessible and understood by listeners. Levels of performance with regard to this element vary from choices that interfere with communication to the speaker making choices that facilitate communication.

2) Level differences

For level 2, language choices are occasionally inappropriately specialized (jargonistic), abstruse, or inaccurate. The speaker sometimes uses disciplinary vocabulary inappropriately. Speaker’s choices regarding formality of diction, syntax, and the inclusion of humor or irony inconsistently show attention to audience and purpose.

In contrast, at level 3, speaker is consistent; language choices are engaging and create meaning.

Not Applicable (N/A)- N/A will likely not be used with language

Unscorable (U)- A U is used only if the speaker cannot be heard.

Zero (0)-A zero will be given in the language cannot be comprehended or is completely inappropriate for the setting.

Interaction

1) Big ideas and their progression

Body language--Includes posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye contact. Interaction by a speaker enhances the effectiveness of the discourse when the speaker stands and moves with confidence, avoids fidgeting, and looks primarily at audience/listener rather than notes or visual aids. Body language will develop from being distracting or contradictory to a message to consistently complementing or emphasizing the message.

Vocal expressions--This descriptor focuses on how fluidly the speaker communicates and the extent to which fillers ('um', 'like', 'you know', etc) interrupt that communication. Rate, volume, intonation, articulation, and variation of those elements all influence the effectiveness of communication, as do tone and register (conversational versus formal). Vocal expression will develop from being distracting to consistently complementing or emphasizing the message.

Response to audience--Because speakers are often co-present with their audiences, they have more opportunity to adjust their presentations according to audience feedback than writers. For viewers of a speech, the ability to judge this element will depend on whether or not the audience is visible (or audible). Indications of response to audience include overt alterations to the speech explicitly or implicitly caused by audience reactions, explicit check-ins with the audience, or comments about audience understanding or affect. Development of response to audience will move from rarely responding to audience cues to consistently and effectively responding.

Interaction by the listener--In the case of overtly dialogic communication, enhances the effectiveness of the discourse when non verbal cues encourage speaker (nodding head, smiling, making eye contact), body language is open and relaxed, appropriate space is maintained, time is given to the speaker to finish thoughts, turn taking is equal, etc.

2) Level differences

At level 2, Verbal and nonverbal behaviors (e.g., tone, pace, poise, volume, eye contact, hand gestures) do not interfere with communication but also do not add to the message. Verbal and nonverbal (e.g., tone, pace, poise, volume, eye contact, hand gestures) behaviors messages are somewhat consistent with each other, engaging and/or purposeful. If audience responses are visible or audible, only occasional appropriate adjustments to presentation are apparent.

In contrast, at level 3, the speaker uses complementary verbal and nonverbal communication that make the presentation mostly engaging and constructive. Audience cues are mostly noticed and responded to.

Not Applicable (N/A)—Rating N/A appears to be inappropriate for this component. Verbal and nonverbal interaction is essential in oral communication.

Unscorable (U)- An unscorable would be given if the taping of the presentation had audio and visual complications, such as lagging video, low volume, static, etc.

Zero (0)—A zero would be given if the speaker is incoherent or does not show any verbal or nonverbal communication. For instance, the speaker mumbles or speaks so softly that they cannot be heard on a recording or by audience members. Additionally, if the speaker presents like a statue and shows no expressions verbally or nonverbally.

Listening

1) Big ideas and their progression

Understanding--When participants take a listener role in communication situations, they are responsible for making meaning from the verbal and nonverbal cues offered by their interaction partners and the context in which the communication takes place. This element tracks evidence of the appropriateness of the meaning-making as indicated in the listener's response to the speaker. Performance levels move from seeing the message in an isolated state to drawing connections between verbal and nonverbal messages to construct meaning.

Biases--Part of attending to a speaker's message is detecting and interpreting what is unspoken. At beginning levels of performance, that involves identifying the speaker's tone. More advanced levels of performance include drawing inferences from that tone about the speaker's attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions. At the most advanced level, the listener demonstrates the ability not only to recognize the influence of the speaker's attitudes but also her own.

Inferences--In responding to a speaker, a listener necessarily draws conclusions about what the speaker means and how relevant the speaker's comments are to the situation. Listener should progress from being able to accurately distinguish between the speaker's and listener's views (that is, not impose one's own interpretation on the speaker's message) to considering the value of the message in context.

Recall--Listener must be able to recall messages accurately in order to provide meaningful response. To ensure this occurs listener may need to ask clarifying questions or provide a rewording of the information received. However, the listener's response if it is meaningful to the message may be enough to recognize effective recall took place. Listener will develop the ability to recall from rarely responding accurately or appropriately to speaker to consistently and accurately responding to speaker.

Turn-taking--Depending on the audience and context, exchanges of speaking turns may take different forms. In general, a listener should allow the speaker to finish their message before responding. However, the reactions of the participants will most clearly illuminate whether or not the listener's turn-taking behavior is appropriate to the context. The listener will move from a state of responding before speaker finishes to waiting for speaker to completely finish thought.

2) Level differences

At Level 2, When the person scored is acting as the listener rather than speaker, they may only respond to verbal messages to construct meaning, without acknowledging the impacts of non

verbal cues on the meaning of the overall message. They will provide responses that are sensitive to the speaker's attitudes, such as, "I see that we disagree on this," or adjust their own tone to account for those attitudes. The listener will show they understand merit of message by whether they respond to it at all make a qualifying statement such as "This appears to be off issue or topic..." Listener will sometimes restate the speaker's point to show recall or responds accurately to the speaker's point hence showing recall. Listener may not let speaker finish their full thought before speaking.

At Level 3, in contrast the listener now demonstrates understanding of both verbal and nonverbal cues to create meaning. They should be able to tell when non verbal cues contradict a verbal message and respond accordingly. The listener will move beyond understanding attitudes and beliefs to recognize whether sound logic is used and/or if a message is more emotionally driven. Communication partner responds to listener's inferences positively. Listener will mostly show recall skills as discussed in level 2. Listener will allow speaker to finish thought.

Not Applicable (N/A)- An N/A is used when the OC setting is a presentation without a Q&A or critique component.

Unscorable (U)- A U is used if the assessor cannot hear what is being said in the video or a live performance

Zero (0)-A 0 would be given if there is a Q&A session or the OC setting was interpersonal/dialogic, but the listener as if they are unaware of the speaker and message.

Communication Aids

1) Big ideas and their progression

Engagement with communication aids--Visual aids should supplement, not supplant the speaker in a presentation, nor should they interfere with the speaker's engagement with the audience. Levels of performance on this element range from speakers relying entirely upon the communication aid to using them to engage and guide the audience.

Visual effectiveness--When visual aids are used, they communicate much to viewers about the care and skill of a presenter. The use of color, images, language, and arrangement contribute both to the readability of the aid and the ethos of the speaker. Performance on this element varies from aids that diminish the credibility of a speaker to those that enhance the speaker's credibility and effectiveness.

Information management--Information overload with visual aids happens when the presenter puts more sentences, pictures, words, ideas on a slide than the typical audience member can process. This ultimately requires the audience to read the visual aid instead of paying attention the speaker and their message. In essence the visual aid may compete with the speaker instead of supporting the speaker's purpose.

2) Level differences

At Level 2, the speaker often stares at the screen instead of looking at the audience and mostly reads verbatim from the slides. Occasional grammar errors may mar the slides; or images may miss the target audience in terms of formality, complexity, or relevance. Format and style (e.g., font choice, size, and color) sometimes make content accessible, but may occasionally interfere with readability or distract audience. The visuals somewhat enhance organization, support understanding, and engage the audience. At times, the information provided visually is overwhelming and competes with the speaker's purpose.

In contrast, at level 3, the speaker engages with the visual aids to enhance the speaker's words; looking at the audience, except when the speaker wants the audience to look at the visual aid. The speaker is clearly the presenter; not the visual aids. The visuals are mostly audience appropriate, error-free and readable. Information overload is avoided, and audience attention and orientation are increased with effective and relevant text and images.

Not Applicable (N/A)—This would only be applied if the assignment was not designed to have any visual aids. Not having visual aids might be appropriate for creative presentations such as a poetry reading.

Unscorable (U)- An unscorable would be given if the recording was of poor quality, e.g., having lagging video, low volume, static, etc. Another reason a U may be given is if the visual aids were not visible to the assessor.

Zero (0)—A zero would be given if the speaker uses visual aids that are totally inappropriate for the audience, lacking any form of professionalism, riddled with errors, overloaded with information, and/or not readable.

Issue/Problem (CT)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Definition of issue--Writers both respond to and create an urgency for the response in writing. They do so by defining a problem or situation and highlighting what is *at issue* about that situation. In the physical sciences, issues are widely agreed upon, and the definition of the issue may be abbreviated or elliptical. In the humanities and social sciences, a great deal of rhetorical work may go into establishing that some situation is problematic and requires resolution. In applied physical scientific research, considerable rhetorical work similar to that required in social sciences may be needed. Across the rubric, this idea progresses from a vague or general definition of the issue to a precise, narrowly bounded definition.

Key Terms--In defining an issue, writers must often negotiate varied definitions of the terms used to describe the issue. Often, the terms have various meanings (for instance in popular versus academic contexts or among disciplinary contexts or even within a single discipline). Across the rubric the definition of terms varies both in terms of the number of ambiguous terms clarified and the quality of that clarification.

Background information--In order for readers to understand both the situation that is problematic and what is problematic about that situation, writers must provide some background information. In physical sciences, often very little background information is needed; whereas in applied

sciences and disciplines in the humanities, often a great deal of background information is needed to ensure clear communication of the issue. The levels vary in terms of this idea by the sufficiency of the information provided in order for readers to have a full and rich understanding of the issue addressed.

2) Level differences

At level 2, the speaker may frame the issue too broadly or may address too many different possible focuses on the issue. In place of defining an issue concretely and specifically, the speaker may use terms that characterize rather than specify the issue.

In contrast, at level 3, the speaker defines a narrow and focused issue. A proficient speaker unpacks terms such as *complexity* or *difficulty* both in terms of their meaning and the criteria used to determine them. At level 3, a speaker also contextualizes the issue, providing enough background information for listeners to understand the issue and why it matters.

Not Applicable (N/A)- An N/A is used when assignment does not require addressing an issue., such a creative piece.

Unscorable (U)- A U is used if the assessor cannot hear whether the issue/problem was stated

Zero (0)-A 0 will be given if speaker does not state or recognize there is an issue/problem

Organization

1) Big ideas and their progression

Organizational pattern for presentations--Because listeners to an oral presentation generally only hear the presentation once through, effective speakers use explicit markers and clear patterns of organization to orient the audience and keep the audience focused on the message. Presentations may have a specific pattern such as chronological, problem-solution, analysis of parts, cost benefits, etc.in order to make content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to achieve purpose. Speaker skills progress along this dimension from being partially explicit about topic and purpose to very clearly identifying purpose and key points and carefully structuring the presentation to keep a clear central focus.

Organizational pattern for interpersonal or group communication--May include the above but will likely ensure central message is clear and support points are focused.

Organization for the listener--Includes ability to understand the content and purpose of a message.

Transitions--Skillful use of transitions helps readers follow logical nuances in a speaker's discourse, building not only connection from one point to the next but also an overall sense of coherence in the work. A focus on transitions includes not only the conventional "transitional words and phrases" but other strategies for coherence such as repetition, reference, and parallelism. The skill with which speakers lead their readers through their reasoning distinguishes the levels in this element of the criterion.

2) Level Differences

At level 2, the presenter or speaker states a general purpose, but may not foreshadow explicit main points that develop the thesis. In addition, some of the main points in the body of the discourse are either not stated or are not explicitly connected to one another. The speaker does not return to the purpose of the discourse enough to keep audience oriented throughout the entire process.

In contrast, at level 3 the speaker explicitly states the thesis and foreshadows the main points of the body. They also draw connections between each main point and link the main points to the purpose. Transitions create an identifiable organizational pattern such as, Cause/Effect, Chronology, Problem/Solution, etc., that moves the audience from one main point to the next.

Not Applicable (N/A)—This would only be applied if the assignment was not designed to have an organizational framework. This might be seen in creative presentations such as a poetry reading.

Unscorable (U)- An unscorable would be given if the recording of the presentation had audio complications, such as low volume, static, etc. Another reason a U may be given is if the organizational elements are primarily achieved through the use of communication aids and the assessor is unable to read the aids.

Zero (0)—A zero would be given if the assignment or rhetorical setting traditionally calls for an organizational framework and the speaker did not provide any aspect of organization. For instance, there would not be main points, a thesis or a stated purpose.

Supporting Materials (IL)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Variety of sources--Different contexts call for different kinds of information sources--primary, personal, journalistic, academic. Depending on the discipline and task, the quantity and range of information sources selected may matter for the quality of the support speakers marshal. Some disciplines and tasks require speakers to use a variety of sources; others call for solely academic or primary sources. Across the rubric, this element progresses from too few sources to be convincing to appropriately various sources.

Criteria for source selection--In order to ensure a deep engagement with the issue they address, speakers select the sources after carefully considering such issues as topic, discipline, authorship, currency, audience, and point of view. More experienced speakers consider a greater number of these concerns in selecting their sources. Some areas additionally require engagement with certain foundational sources. This element may be difficult to assess unless a reference list (works cited, bibliography) is present.

2) Level differences

This criterion is concerned with both quantity and quality of sources, and recognizes that the expectations for these will vary by discipline and assignment. For this reason, much of the determination of what is “appropriate” is based on the scorer’s understanding of the assignment and what the student is trying to accomplish with each source. Because of this, a scorer would not

be able to accurately evaluate the supporting materials of a presentation based on a decontextualized bibliography. Even within a single assignment, the same type of source would be appropriate support for some purposes but not others. For example, the website of a nonprofit organization may **not** be an appropriate source of statistics on domestic violence, but it could be appropriately cited as an example of how nonprofits target their outreach to specific communities.

The difference between level 2 and level 3 is mostly a matter of degree, with level 3 having a greater proportion of sources considered appropriate with regard to authority, relevance, and currency. The quantity of sources may be insufficient to support the speaker's communication goals at a level 2, while the quantity will usually be sufficient at level 3.

Level 2: Multiple sources are used, but the quantity of sources may not allow the student to fully back up their claims or offer multiple perspectives, or is otherwise insufficient to meet the goals of the assignment. Some of the sources have appropriate authority, currency, and relevance, and others do not.

Level 3: In order to score a 3 on this criterion, it must be clear that the speaker has considered the authority of the sources, in addition to currency and relevance. The sources are of a quantity and quality that are, for the most part, appropriate to the discipline and the assignment, though the scorer sees some room for improvement. For example, for a research assignment requiring primarily scholarly sources, some information may be drawn from sources that are credible but not entirely appropriate (e.g. an irrelevant discipline, a trade journal, Smithsonian magazine, etc.). Overall, the sources have a positive impact on establishing the credibility of the speaker.

N/A: The nature of the presentation does not require the use of information beyond the student's personal experiences or creative work.

Unscorable: If the scorer is not able to evaluate the citations, either because the student does not provide them or because they are illegible in the video, this criterion is unscorable.

Zero (0)-- A zero is given if the quality and quantity of information sources is so poor as to not meet the description of level 1.

Shorter assignments may not allow students to demonstrate proficiency (reach a level 3) for this criterion.

Use of support (IL)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Organization of information from sources--Once speakers have chosen the information they will use, they must structure that information in ways that suit the genre and purpose of their task. Only in the lowest level of proficiency is organization of that information addressed as problematic in the rubric.

Interpretation/Analysis of information from sources--The job of speakers in expository or argumentative speaking is to narrow listeners' possible interpretations, to lead listeners to see information in the same ways that speakers see it. Depending on the context, speakers may make

certain assumptions about how listeners will interpret information. In situations in which multiple interpretations of information are plausible, speakers must explicitly analyze or interpret the information for listeners in a convincing manner. The quality of that explanation and its appropriateness to the speaker's purpose defines the movement across the levels for this element.

Synthesis of information from sources--In order to create new knowledge, speakers must set sources into conversation with each other, identifying patterns of agreement, disagreement, and nuance among the sources. Across the rubric, this idea progresses from little or no synthesis to synthesis that fully realizes the speaker's apparent purpose.

2) Level differences

At level 2, the presenter organizes, interprets, and analyzes information from sources. Information is provided in a structured and organized manner. However, a clear connection of how these pieces of information are related and used to achieve the intended purpose of the presentation is lacking. In other words, synthesis of the information is either not present or unclear. For example, students may summarize individual sources on separate slides (i.e. utilizing individual summaries without showing the similarities and differences between cited work).

To reach a level 3, the speaker must synthesize the information from sources. Beyond presenting relevant information related to the topic, setting the sources into conversation with each other and using the resulting understanding to support the presenter's purpose is expected. A presentation that scores a three identifies connections and relationships among the sources and draws warranted influences from those patterns.

Not applicable (N/A)--The nature of the presentation does not require the use of information beyond the student's personal experiences or creative work.

Unscorable (U)--This score is assigned in cases where either the visual or audio recording is poor and assessors are unable to hear or read the information critical to scoring this criterion.

Zero (0)--A zero is given if the organization, analysis, and synthesis of information from sources is so poor as to not meet the description of level 1.

Position (CT)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Position--When speakers enter an academic conversation, they establish their own position among the many voices they have cited. Ideally, such a position accounts for the variety of perspectives represented in the conversation, not only acknowledging those alternate perspectives but recognizing the limits of the author's own position and developing nuance through the engagement with other ideas. It is the clarity of this position and its nuance that distinguishes the levels in this element of the criterion.

Assumptions--The various perspectives engaged by speakers, both their own and others', are based on assumptions about knowledge and the world--whether they are disciplinary or experience based. Depending on the task, speakers acknowledge those assumptions in various ways--by

identifying limitations in analysis of information, by setting sources with contrasting perspectives into conversation, by explicitly marking those assumptions. Speakers at the beginning stages of development are more likely to recognize those assumptions in others' ideas than in their own. Speakers performing at the more experienced levels of the rubric demonstrate attention to the context, their own assumptions, and those of others.

2) Level differences

At Level 2 the speaker notes there is more than one side but treats them as entirely distinctive or seems to focus solely on a limited number of sides. Speaker does not fully recognize their own perspective's limitations. Speaker may place emphasis on ideas that support their own assumptions. However, they will recognize that other sides do exist.

In contrast for level 3, the speaker demonstrates awareness of own, as well as others' assumptions and their limitations (both epistemological and value). This may be experienced through speaker producing counterclaims, counter perspectives or by recognizing that information is just from a particular perspective. They will take into some account the complexities of the issues/problem and acknowledges the relevance of context. Recognizes that there are many perspectives on an issue and that different perspectives may share some dimensions as well as differing on other dimensions

Academic Integrity (IL)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Distinctions in levels for this criterion relate to the degree of consistency with which the writer does each of the following:

Attributes information to sources--While disciplines vary in the conventions they use to do so, all academic disciplines in the U.S. call upon speakers to distinguish between their own ideas and the ideas of others and to enable readers to trace information to its source.

Appropriately chooses to paraphrase, summarize, or quote--This element varies significantly across contexts. In some disciplines--such as the social sciences and physical sciences--directly quoting from sources is less common; in humanistic disciplines quotations are central to the academic endeavor.

Uses information in ways that are true to original context--Student speakers include information and state positions for a variety of purposes, not always because they represent the perspective of the source's author. This element refers to the student speaker's selection of information from sources and their ability to distinguish the purpose for which that information was used in its original context.

Distinguishes between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution--While sources can be found for almost any information, some knowledge is so widespread as to require no attribution. This element refers to the student speaker's ability to distinguish that information from information that is specific to particular sources.

Acquires information ethically and legally--This element is difficult to assess in finished products, as it relates to the *process* of knowledge collection, but in instances in which that process is evident in the presentation, standards of conduct regarding research--both primary and secondary--should be applied.

2) Level differences

At level 2, students may show an over-reliance on direct quotation and/or inconsistency in attribution and citation. Additionally, students may use information in ways that misrepresent the original context. They may provide citations for ideas that are common knowledge or fail to cite ideas requiring attribution. The listener may have occasional difficulty distinguishing between the speaker's own ideas and the ideas of others.

In a level 3, sources are consistently cited and there is a greater balance (appropriate to the discipline) between direct quotation and paraphrase or summary. Student attributes information to sources appropriately, and chooses to paraphrase, summarize, or quote in ways that are true to the original context. Student distinguishes between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution.

Not applicable (N/A)--The nature of the presentation does not require the use of information beyond the student's personal experiences or creative work.

Unscorable (U)-- This is possible in cases where either the visual or audio recording is poor and assessor cannot hear the speaker or see the slides to determine if sources are cited.

Zero (0)-- A zero is given if the student makes no attempt to follow the practices listed.

Conclusions and outcomes (CT)

1) Big ideas and their progression

Related outcomes--Writers not only take positions within ongoing conversations but make claims about the implications of those positions. The more experienced the writer, the more logical and sophisticated are those claims.

Relationship to evidence and perspectives--Just as the positions writers take should be grounded in thoughtful evaluation of evidence and multiple perspectives, so should their claims about the implications of those positions. Levels related to this element of the criterion differ in terms of how comprehensively and thoughtfully the writer appears to have considered the evidence and perspectives.

2) Level differences

At level 2, the presenter(s) or speaker(s) provides a conclusion which is supported by information provided during the presentation and is relevant to the type of presentation being performed. However, the conclusion provided lacks either a comprehensive review of information relevant to the topic being presented or uses information in such a way as to only support one's own argument or intended purpose. Similarly, the outcomes provided help to illuminate the audience about

potential implications or consequences related to the topic, but other potential outcomes are either missing or purposefully not included.

At level 3, the presenter(s) or speaker(s) provides a conclusion which is tied directly to a wider range of potential information sources, showing a comprehensive review of viewpoints on a given subject. The conclusion highlights weaknesses and strengths in one's own position by critically reviewing prior information provided in the presentation. Identified outcomes relate directly back to the conclusion and are realistic given the data and other relevant information provided in the presentation.

Not Applicable (NA): If a presentation does not require a conclusion or outcomes, such as a performance piece, than this criteria would not be relevant.

Unscorable (U): If a presenter is unable to be heard or if a recorded presentation is cutoff before this section is started/completed.

Zero (0): If a presenter(s) or speaker(s) end a presentation without a conclusion and/or outcomes than a zero would be an acceptable score. A conclusion and/or outcomes that are seemingly unsupported by the prior data and information provided may also be scored as a zero.