

Oral Assessment and Oral Communication Skills in an Oral Learning Culture

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Abstract:

To be able “to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts” is one of the many ‘21st Century Student Outcomes’ of the P21 Framework. These communication skills are often not well understood. This presentation focuses on oral communication in the context of assessment and learning culture in higher education. It presents the findings of three research studies on how students experience *speaking*, rather than *writing*, what they know in assessment tasks. This research has demonstrated the powerful effect that the spoken word can have on students’ learning and identity. Insights into the spoken word from the world of acting will then be used to illuminate our understanding of what it means for students to speak in such assessment. Oral forms of assessment, within learning cultures that promote oral communication skills, are seen as central to developing and judging critical 21st Century learning and providing graduating students with the abilities they need “to succeed in work, life, and citizenship”.