Oral assessment and oral communication skills in an oral learning culture

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Déroulement

• 21C skills
• Why speaking matters – four research studies
• Developing speaking skills
• The policy context

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21st Century Student Outcomes

• “to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using **oral**, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts
• use communication for a range of purposes (eg to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade)
• communicate effectively in diverse environments

[Partnership for 21st Century Learning]
Research study 1: Law

“...I’ll just write some kind of rubbish, whether it relates to the topic or not. But in the viva you know you’re going to look a fool so you make sure you know what you are saying.”

“In a written assignment you can remain quite remote from what you write.”

“In an exam you’re just a number but the viva’s personalized and you’re in direct contact with the people who assess you.”
Research study 2: Theology presentations
Research study 2: Theology presentations

‘David’
- More authentic
- Higher quality learning
- Deeper engagement

‘Mary’
- More understanding
- More work
- Greater responsibility

‘Tom’
- More preparation
- More personal
- More understanding
- More learning
- More ownership
Research study 3: Veterinary science

• “In exams they get you to remember a specific list of something, and so you just rote learn it. You don’t understand it. Whereas a viva is more understanding.”

• “I much prefer the viva ... I think that the oral exam gives you a better chance to get across what you’re actually thinking.”

• “I think it’s been verification for me that I am going to be able to be a vet next year, in terms of speaking to people, looking at something, explaining. I think it’s been quite – it’s a validation”

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Research study 4: Acting

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Oral assessment and skills development

- Presenters Podium
- RADA Communication Skills Training
The policy environment

- Australian Qualifications Framework
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
- Office for Learning and Teaching
Australian Qualifications Framework

Bachelors level:

“... communication skills to present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas”
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015

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The expected learning outcomes for each course of study:

• are specified
• discipline-related and generic
• employment and registration to practise
• skills in independent and critical thinking suitable for life-long learning.

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Higher Education Standards Framework

• “Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.”

• “Methods of assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes being assessed.”

• “On completion of a course of study, students have demonstrated the learning outcomes specified for the course of study, whether assessed at unit level, course level, or in combination”

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Office for Learning and Teaching

• Threshold Learning Outcomes in the disciplines
• AAGLO
Characteristics of tasks effective in the assessment of Graduate Learning Outcomes

• “Many tasks were multi-component in that written reports were often accompanied by oral presentations which reflected ‘real world’ practice.”

• “All reports are accompanied by an oral presentation” (Engineering)

[Hughes and Barrie 2013]
Summing up

• Oral communication for work, life, and citizenship
• Oral assessment as a major driver of learning
• Developing oral communication skills
• The policy environment
Some references


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