

## **Evaluating Basic Public Speaking Course Student Presentations: Some Assessment Considerations**

Mary Mino\*

### *Abstract*

*Evaluating basic course students' presentational speaking skills accurately and effectively has always been a challenging and vitally important instructional task. Considering the communication discipline's need to clarify and to improve communication course assessment, this essay compares the effectiveness of four valid presentational speaking forms. In order to explain the need for this comparison, first, the essay emphasizes for basic public speaking course instructors the significance of increasing students' understanding of communication competence both in theory and practice. Second, the essay supports a rationale for examining the effectiveness of presentational evaluation forms using a comparative analysis as the basis of this descriptive study. Third, an overview of relevant communication assessment literature is shared. Next, the four valid presentation evaluation forms, three of which are similar in their design and content to those forms that are used by instructors, are compared, and the conclusions derived from these comparisons are discussed. Finally, the study's limitations are described, additional reasons that reemphasize the need to concentrate on the evaluation form are discussed, and some suggestions for future study of basic public speaking course assessment forms are offered.*

**Keywords:** *assessment; basic public speaking course; communication competence; reflection cognitions; basic public speaking skills; basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form content*

Communication professionals persistently reiterate students' need for gaining oral communication competence. For example, in 2000, Morreale, Osborn, and Pearson reported that the National Communication Association "in response to requests from communication departments and administrators for evidence supporting the centrality of their discipline," had "collected and annotated nearly 100 articles, commentaries, and publications that call attention to the importance of the study of communication in contemporary society" (p. 1). Since that time, additional literature has emphasized repeatedly that "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately is learned, and therefore, must be taught" (Morreale et al., 2000, p. 2).

Basic Public Speaking is one course consistently offered at community colleges (Engleberg, Emmanuel, Van Horn, & Bodary, 2008) and universities (Johnson & Szczupakiewicz, 1987; Morlan, 1993; Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006; Pearson, Child, Herakova, Semlak, & Angelos, 2010). In fact, over the past four decades, the basic public speaking course has been either required or recommended for a majority of undergraduate students (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Typically, the basic public speaking course represents one foundation of the communication discipline, provides communication majors and minors their introductory course, and offers perhaps the only opportunity to improve oral communication competence for students interested

---

\* Mary Mino (Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University, 1986), is Interim Co-Director of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Communication Arts & Sciences at The Pennsylvania State University DuBois. An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2010 Eastern Communication Association Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland. The author thanks her Panel Respondent, Danette Ifert Johnson, Ph.D., for the thoughtful comments that directly contributed to some of this essay's revisions.

in other disciplines of study (Mino, 2007). Due to its prevalence, often communication instructors are assigned to teach one or more sections of this course.

Since the focus is on helping students improve their speaking and listening competencies, it has been described best and most reasonably as a “skills course” (Duran & Zakahi, 1989; Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleson, 1985; Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Therefore, for basic public speaking course instructors, evaluating multiple speeches that focus on each student’s presentational skills effectively and accurately is one of their most challenging yet tedious responsibilities. Despite the repetitive nature of this evaluation process, instructors must assure that each student understands exactly the presentational skills he or she performs well and which skills need to be improved. Accordingly, each presentation evaluation must be precise, comprehensive, and reliable.

In the basic public speaking course, using performance evaluations to help students improve their presentational speaking skills and assessing the effects of these efforts have been central foci of the communication discipline. However, assessment is particularly important now that it is “institutionalized on a majority of American campuses” (Morreale, Backlund, Hay, and Moore, 2011, p. 256). Because of this concentration on assessment, Spitzberg (2011) has emphasized that “there is an increased pressure to identify what communication skills are,” to establish that “the communication discipline has a set of skills that represent its core competencies,” and to demonstrate that the discipline “can effectively train its students in ways that improve their skills in these core competencies” (p. 146). Spitzberg (2011) also has shared a disciplinary “quandary;” it is “unclear what communication skills actually are” and there is “little consensus regarding how such skills should be assessed” (p.146).

Given that the communication discipline needs to respond to administrative assessment in order to examine more closely the evaluation form and to assist in improving students’ presentational speaking performances, the essay first emphasizes for instructors the significance of increasing students’ understanding of communication competence both in theory and in practice. Second, the essay explains a rationale for examining the effectiveness of four presentational evaluation forms using a comparative analysis as the basis of this descriptive study. Third, an overview of relevant communication assessment literature is shared. Next, the four valid presentation evaluation forms (see Appendix, Forms A, B, C, and D), three of which are similar in their design and content to those forms that are used by basic public speaking course instructors, are compared and the conclusions derived from this comparison are discussed. Finally, reasons that reemphasize the need to concentrate on the evaluation form are discussed and some suggestions for future study of basic public speaking course assessment forms are offered.

In short, the research shared in this essay is intended to aid in clarifying student core communication competencies; to assist in choosing or designing and implementing an evaluation form; to help improve presentational speaking performances; and to provide administrators with assessment evidence that demonstrates the need for and value of communication studies.

### **Emphasizing the Significance of Communication Competence**

The basic public speech course’s purpose is to teach students core communication competencies that improve the application of their speaking and listening skills.

However, students often believe that their level of oral communication effectiveness is innate, inherent through their speech developmental process, or affected by their prior communication knowledge or experience. Therefore, they believe that they understand well enough how to effectively communicate orally (see specifically, Mino, 2012, 2007; Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000; Pearson, Child, Herakova, Sendlak, & Angelos, 2010).

Regardless of student attitudes about their speaking and listening competencies, communication professionals have shared a variety of perspectives concerning the importance of understanding and applying communication competence and its crucial role in communication instruction (see, for example, Almeida, 2004; Canary & MacGregor-Istley, 2008; Duran & Spitzberg, 1995; McCroskey, 1982; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). Research, however, is contradictory and “deserves greater scrutiny” regarding the conclusion that previous experience in presentational speaking settings, such as “high school public speaking or debate activities or participating in public speaking activities within organizations,” better prepares students for basic course presentational speaking assignments (Pearson, Child, Herakova, Sendlak, & Angelos, 2010, p. 62).

Moreover, it has been reported that students often do not comprehend the usefulness or value of basic public speaking course instruction and are unclear about communication competence’s relationship to the course or its significance in their personal and professional lives. In fact, administrators have reported students may lack the motivation to attend, prepare, or study while enrolled in the course (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Afterwards, students’ understanding of the course’s objectives and purpose may continue to be uncertain. According to Morreale, Worley, and Hugenberg (2009), even though “communication competence is a major learning outcome” (p.124) and instructors often include “learning objectives in syllabi, grading rubrics, assignments, and oral explanations” (p.126), instructors were unsure whether or not students understood them. Morreale et al. (2009) have contended “this disconnect is worth additional consideration” (p.126).

Due to the basic public speaking course’s vital role in improving core communication competencies, despite students’ views about communication instruction as it relates to their core communication competencies and/or their presentational speaking experience, and since the course is usually the only communication course in which non-communication majors or minors enroll, the instructor’s primary objective is for students to understand both theory *and* application in order for them to become competent oral communicators (Mino, 2007). Communication majors or minors also must fully comprehend communication constructs as one foundation of their studies. Therefore, specifically introducing communication competence and addressing students’ perceptions of oral communication should determine what students believe the course is intended to teach and, most importantly, to ascertain from students their views regarding the significance of course instruction.

### **Communication Competence**

Almeida’s (2004) analysis has reported the different perceptions students may have when defining communication competence. Students may view communication competence as a performance; “something is done” (p. 360) that is evaluated either

positively or negatively; as a “physical activity,” such as “body, clothes, movement or appearance” (p. 361); as an “intellectual” activity, like “organization, self-expression, increasing persuasiveness, becoming more assertive, and learning to respond appropriately in different communication situations” (p. 361); or based on their definitions of personality characteristics that include “outgoingness or shyness” (p. 362), as a “sociality” that spans “a continuum of interpersonal bonding to interpersonal alienation” (p. 362).

Further, Almeida (2004) has emphasized that “understanding the notions students bring to communication classes about what constitutes communication competence has potential for enhancing instructional practices” (p. 357). She also cautioned educators to consider students’ self-consciousness and their perception of the physical aspect of communication competence as a potential threat in skills courses because students’ anxiety or perceived physicality “may prevent them from being influenced by their instructors’ evaluation of their communication abilities and potentials” (p. 363).

Spitzberg’s (1991) definition of communication competence comprises knowledge, motivation, and skills. In order for students to realize that they may demonstrate varying degrees of effective and ineffective communication behaviors that positively or negatively impact on them in each personal and professional context, they must understand and apply the most competent communication skills. Further, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the student’s communication behaviors is evaluated not only by the instructor during the course but also by the listener(s) who, in all communication contexts, decide(s) if or how to respond to the message and determine(s) whether or not the student was successful.

Since the performance behaviors students are taught in the course are intended to enable them to replicate the effective speaking and listening behaviors that comprise communication competence consciously and consistently during their presentations and in other communication settings, these students need to learn how to operationalize competence when learning effective presentational speaking components; while preparing, rehearsing, and delivering their speeches; when interpreting the instructor’s evaluation of presentational speaking competencies; and while relating these communication competencies to interacting with others in real life contexts.

Duran and Spitzberg’s (1995) notion of “cognitive communication competence,” that consists of five types of “cognitions,” “planning, presence, modeling, reflection, and consequence” (p. 270), provides very useful definitions to share with students. Besides understanding communication competence in theory, students need to apply it in practice. Therefore, Mino (2007) has provided examples that describe how these communication cognitions may be defined for students when communicating in all contexts and how they can be specifically operationalized for presentational speaking. These examples follow.

*Planning cognitions* allow the student to anticipate and to monitor his or her topic. For example, the student says to himself or herself, “Before my presentation, I am going to practice what I will share with my audience as much as is necessary.” *Presence cognitions* display awareness by the student of how the listener or listeners are reacting to a message. “My audience laughed when I said something funny, so they understood the humor I used.” *Modeling cognitions* enable the student to express his or her awareness of the contextual variables that provide information that help the student to make interaction choices, such as “I will listen carefully to those speakers the instructor defines as being

excellent to see what they say and how they say it.” *Reflection cognitions* allow the student to evaluate the quality of a performance behavior in order to improve subsequent performances. “I will look at my audience instead of my note cards the next time I speak with them.” Finally, *consequence cognitions* exhibit the student’s genuine awareness and concern for the effects of his or her performance. “I will review my evaluation to discover if I supported my information with strong and accurate evidence that enhanced my credibility.”

Basic public speaking course instructors who recognize that they and their students need to perceive communication competence in the same way and emphasize the significant impact it has on student success in the course and in their personal and professional lives can increase students’ understanding and appreciation of the course’s purpose, objectives, and value. In other words, when the instructor accentuates the usefulness and importance of learning communication competencies and directly connects how to apply these skills effectively in the course and beyond to affect them positively, students are often more motivated to understand and to evaluate their oral communication behaviors and to work more diligently toward improving them (see, specifically, Mino, 2012, 2007, 1999; Mino & Butler, 1997, 1995).

### **A Rationale for an Assessment Form Comparison**

Studies have examined the effects of student evaluation (e.g., Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds, & Cutbirth, 2004; Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009; Stitt, Simonds, & Hunt, 2003; Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009). However, due to the “pressures” to provide “quantifiable evidence of student performance gains,” there is a significant need for developing evaluation forms that offer “efficient, scalable, adaptable, convenient, and valid” assessments of students’ communication skills (Spitzberg, 2011, pp.146-147).

In addition, research has studied the content of various presentational speaking evaluation forms used during the speech assessment process. These course evaluation forms primarily assist instructors in more accurately assessing student presentations (see Schreiber, Paul, & Shibley, 2012). Specifically, the evaluation form shares instructor-appropriate prompts for each communication competency that, in combination with the student’s performance, generate their written comments about students’ speaking strengths and weaknesses to determine a grade for the presentation. In other words, typical presentational speaking evaluation forms are designed to insure instructor accuracy and reliability when assessing student presentations (Schreiber et al., 2012).

For students, these evaluation forms list the fundamental communication competencies, such as “gained attention,” “established credibility,” and “previewed main points,” that they should exhibit when presenting a speech (see Form A). However, few evaluation forms provide the performance content detail that students need to comprehend fully presentational speaking criteria. This information is usually shared with students through reading assignments, course lectures, or class discussions. In order to reinforce communication competencies, the evaluation form should contain not only the fundamental communication competencies but also include the performance behaviors that are necessary to develop effectively the introduction, body, and conclusion of the speech, and provide the types of delivery behaviors that operationalize for students the specific behaviors that result in an excellent presentation (see Form D).

Considering Spitzberg's (2011) research on the need for improving student performance assessments, communication educators need to consider if the presentation evaluations forms employed focus on helping students become the most effective presentational speakers. Thus, one may conclude that because of the basic public speaking course's significance in the discipline and its strong focus on more effective assessment, examining instructional approaches that improve students' communication skills by examining communication competence and its role in the course evaluation form's content detail warrant additional consideration.

Pearson et al. (2010) agree that instructors must focus on course improvement and have emphasized that "especially in an age of increasing importance of effective public speaking skills, the basic course demands our attention as researchers, as instructors, and as course developers" (p.74). Morreale et al. (2011) are more specific about the instructor's role when they point out that these course instructors need to share those "assessment efforts" that represent "the scholarship of teaching and learning, a well-respected initiative in the communication discipline" (pp. 270-271; see also Huber & Morreale, 2001). Moreover, National Communication Association President, Richard West's (2012) message to communication educators strongly encourages them to share their views in connection with the basic public speaking course in order for the association to receive "instructive" advice about "reexamining [this course's] direction" (p. 1).

Spitzberg's (2011) concerns regarding clarifying communication skills and effectively assessing core competencies can be addressed to some extent if, as Pearson (2010) and Morreale (2011) and their coauthors and West (2012) recommend, instructors contribute to the assessment discussion and share their teaching and learning scholarship. Therefore, it stands to reason that through their extensive experience teaching core communication competencies and constantly adapting their pedagogical strategies to meet their students' oral communication needs most effectively, veteran instructors are particularly equipped to share their best practices and advice concerning what core competencies are and need to be taught and how these skills should be assessed.

Offering a valid basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form that was initially designed by a communication educator and has been adjusted consistently over 30 years of communication research and practice can provide instructors with some pedagogical considerations that may affect more positively students' performance gains (see Form D). Comparing this form to other valid evaluation forms similar in their design that are or may be used by colleagues (see Forms A, B, and C) can aid communication educators and administrators when considering which evaluation form's content can best improve their own assessment efforts.

### **An Overview of Relevant Communication Assessment Literature**

For years, communication researchers have studied topics related to presentational speaking evaluation (see, for example, Applbaum, 1974; Backlund, 1983; Becker, 1962; Bock, 1970, Bock, 1972; Bock & Bock, 1984; Bohn & Bohn, 1985; Bowers, 1964; Brooks, 1957; Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995; Clevenger, 1963, 1964; DiSalvo & Bochner, 1972; Gunderson, 1978; Kelly, 1965; Miller 1964; Tiemens, 1965; Stiggins, Backlund, & Bridgeford. 1985; Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds, & Cutbirth, 2004; Rubin, 1990; Schreiber, Paul, & Shibley, 2012; Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009; Stitt,

Simonds, & Hunt, 2003; Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009). Moreover, Morreale et al. (2011) have shared their comprehensive, descriptive, and empirical study that reviews the historical development and trends of the oral communication assessment movement over a 34-year period. In this article, they define the common terms used for assessment. Specifically, they define “rubric” as “a scoring tool that lists the criteria for an assignment or task, or ‘what counts’ and articulates gradations of quality from excellent to poor” (p. 257). In most cases, the instructor shares with students the scoring tool used through his or her presentation evaluation form.

The evaluation form’s purpose is to allow the instructor to assess the quality of the student’s presentational content, organization, development, and delivery. It also should be designed so students understand the criteria on which they will be evaluated and can use the form to prepare, practice, and deliver their presentations; recognize their presentations’ strengths and weaknesses by reviewing the instructor’s evaluation form comments; and improve their future presentations by employing the instructor’s evaluative advice.

With the goal of examining the reliability of student evaluation, Carlson and Smith-Howell’s (1995) research focused on the content and delivery validity of basic public speaking course evaluation instruments. Three informative speaking evaluation forms that list the criteria for student evaluation (see Forms A, B, & C) based on Rubin’s (1990) evaluation of and criteria for the basic elements of content and delivery were designed and used in Carlson and Smith-Howell’s study. Their findings concluded that “student speeches can be evaluated reliably and validly using any number of different basic course evaluation forms that address the fundamental speech constructs of content and delivery” (p. 87). Thus, based on Carlson and Smith-Howell’s (1995) research, any presentation evaluation form that conforms to these criteria can be defined as a valid and reliable speech evaluation instrument (see, also, Form D, “Informative Speaking Evaluation”).

Later, Behnke and Sawyer (1998) shared their discussion of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced evaluations and how to best integrate the two. This research advised instructors to provide performance standards that help students understand more specifically what they have done well and what they must do to improve. Stitt, Simonds, and Hunt’s (2003) study also emphasized the importance of clear expectations and specific feedback during the evaluation process. Likewise, McCroskey (2007) directed communication educators to avoid any ambiguity concerning what will be evaluated. He asserted that instructors whose evaluations are communicated clearly to their students will enhance “the quality of education at every level” (p. 514). Further, Canary and MacGregor Istley’s (2008) comprehensive research on communication competence reiterated the importance of instructional clarity on student behaviors.

Instructors also must attend to how students perceive evaluative feedback. Because some students claim that their presentation evaluations are based on instructor subjectivity or proclivity, rather than on objective criteria, the evaluation must be free of perceived rater bias (Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995; Mottet & Beebe, 2006), be consistent among students (Lawton & Braz, 2011), and be defined by students as credible (Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009).

Trees, Kerssen-Griep, and Hess (2009) have asserted that effective instructional feedback helps students “aim their cognitive resources at managing the details of the

learning task itself, rather than concentrating cognitive attention on personal face-saving or repair” (p.400) . They believe that in order to be successful at student evaluation, instructors’ comments must alleviate the threats to students’ self-identities. Therefore, the types of comments or “feedback interventions” that instructors use determine whether or not students “focus their thoughts on tasks rather than on selves” (p. 400). Hence, the evaluation process’s purpose should be defined clearly for students, and the evaluation form must be used in ways that encourage these students to view the form as a tool on which they will rely to improve subsequent performances.

### **Comparing Presentation Evaluation Forms**

Choosing or designing and implementing a presentational speaking evaluation form for the basic public speaking course are crucial instructional tasks. Evaluation Forms A, B, and C are the types of reliable and valid evaluation forms instructors can and do use (Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995; Rubin, 1990). However, research has indicated that in addition to ensuring an evaluation form is reliable and valid, instructors must keep other evaluation standards in mind. These evaluation standards include sharing specific criteria that most clearly define the quality of each student’s content and delivery (Canary & MacGregor Istley, 2008; McCroskey, 2007); ensuring the form is perceived by students as the most objective, credible, and consistent evaluation of their presentations (Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995; Lawton & Braz, 2011; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009); and aiming for a form that is adaptable, scalable, and efficient (Spitzberg, 2011).

Ultimately, the standards the instructor implements when conducting student presentation evaluations frequently determine the degree to which students follow the instructor’s evaluation advice and improve their presentational speaking skills. Using the evaluation standards communication scholars recommend when evaluating student presentations, Speech Evaluation Forms A, B, C, and D are compared (see Table 1). The conclusions reached as a result of this comparison follow.

#### **Clarity**

Forms A’s and B’s content criteria for organization and development indicate that these forms provide some clarity. Phrases describing what the student might do well in the introduction, body, and conclusion of a speech are present on each form. For example, Form A includes the positive comments, “gained audience’s attention,” “main points clearly identified,” and “prepared audience for end.” Similarly, Form B’s phrases, “captured attention,” “clear progression of ideas,” and “provides closure,” also offer some specificity about the presentation’s potential strengths and what counts during the evaluation. Form C includes the words “interest,” “content material,” and “conclusion.” Therefore, when compared to Forms A and B, Form C is the least clear in its content detail.

With respect to Form D’s content detail, when describing presentation criteria, such as “the attention-getter,” this form also provides the quality of performance or the gradations, “excellent,” “very good,” and “good.” Further, as with Forms A and B, Form D contains positive comments, “gained attention,” and “builds suspense,” for this speech criterion. However, unlike Forms A, B, and C, Form D specifies possible performance weaknesses. These comments, “vague,” “begins with ‘today I’m going to talk about,’”



**Table 1**  
Evaluation Form Content Criteria Comparisons

<b>Form A</b> <b>Attention-getter</b> Gained audience's attention	<b>Form B</b> <b>Attention-getter</b> Captured attention	<b>Form C</b> <b>Attention-getter</b> Interest
<b>Main Points</b> Main points clearly identified	<b>Main Points</b> Clear progression of ideas	<b>Main Points</b> Content material
<b>Conclusion</b> Prepared audience for end	<b>Conclusion</b> Provides closure	<b>Conclusion</b> Conclusion
<b>Form D</b> <b>Gained Attention</b> Excellent; Very good; Good; Gained Attention; Builds suspense  Use effective vocal delivery here; Vague; Begins with “Today I’m going to talk about” or “According to my audience;” Missing  Build suspense; Look at your audience; Use a stronger attention-getter-startling fact, or statistic, or relevant example, or quote  <b>Main Points</b> <b>Clear and Effective Development:</b> Excellent; Very good; Good; Attempted  Doesn’t include sub points; Different than sub points on outline or structure sheet; Not sub point development but rather evidence (definitions, examples used or listed instead of sub points developed by evidence)  Further narrow the topic down; Tailor the topic more to this audience; Effectively develop your topic  <b>Conclusion</b> <b>Summary of Main Points:</b> Excellent; Very good; Good; Very clear; Restated exactly as designed and stated in intro; residual message and on the outline/structure sheet  Reiterated main and sub point words only; Choppy; Needed to be more thoroughly summarized based on main point development; Missing  Develop a summary  <b>Thesis Statement or Residual Message Stated:</b> Excellent; Very good; Good;  Closely related to design; Changed from outline or structure sheet; Changed from Intro; Emerged as the speech progressed  Restate your residual message clearly  <b>Strong Final Note:</b> Excellent; Very good; good; Effective  Use delivery here; Vague; did not strongly support purpose; Gave audience little to think about; Changed speech purpose—advocated action while informing; Speaker incorrectly added new material to conclusion—new source(s) or audience analysis; Missing  Use a stronger final note		

---

“according to my audience,” and “missing,” indicate the reasons the attention getter was not an effective one. Form D also suggests ways to improve gaining attention through the phrases, “build suspense,” “use effective vocal delivery here,” “look at your audience,” and “use a stronger attention-getter—startling fact or statistic, relevant example, or quote.”

What’s more, when compared to Forms A, B, and C, Form D’s content criteria concerning the main points and the presentation’s conclusion follow the same evaluation pattern. Likewise, the content patterns related to organization and to development found on Forms A, B, and C are repeated uniformly through all content criteria the forms contain (see Table 1).

In addition, as they describe behaviors related to delivery (see Table 2), Forms A and B list “eye contact” under the criterion of “Presentation and Delivery” or “Delivery,” respectively. Form C includes “contact vitality” which one can assume is related to eye contact, a nonverbal delivery criterion. Form D also contains eye contact as a delivery criterion. However, in contrast to Forms A, B, and C, Form D is more detailed in its comments related to this delivery criterion. For example, under “Delivery,” for “eye contact,” Form D specifically lists “eye contact with audience” and contains the positive comments, “excellent,” “very good,” and “good,” in addition to the phrase, “established and maintained eye contact with the audience.” Moreover, similar to the detail it contains for speech content, (organization and development), if the delivery (verbal and nonverbal cues) is ineffective, Form D’s content detail is more specific than are Forms A, B, and C. Here again, Form D includes words or phrases that are based on possible ineffective behaviors related to eye contact. These comments include “established and maintained eye contact with the note cards, floor, ceiling, walls, windows; students in certain areas of the room only;” and “looked at the instructor most of the time.” The form also offers advice about how to improve students’ eye contact with the suggestion, “establish eye contact with different audience members throughout the presentation.” As with their speech content, Forms A, B, C, and D are each similar concerning their uniformity and degree of clarity when describing delivery criteria.

Although Forms A, B, C, and D all include the reliable and valid criteria necessary for student performance evaluation, Form D contains in more detail the performance criteria and behaviors that will be considered during the evaluation. Form D provides comments that “articulate gradations of quality” and includes “what counts” (Morreale et al., 2011, p. 257) more unambiguously in the areas of content, organization, development, and delivery than do Forms A, B, and C. Form D also takes into account and lists some of the most common weaknesses past students have demonstrated during their presentations and shares specific suggestions for improvement. In short, Form D appears to be the most effective in its use of clarity and in highlighting “reflection cognitions” (Duran & Spitzberg, 1995, p. 270) that evaluate the quality of a performance behavior in order to improve subsequent performances and emphasize the core communication skills that display communication competence.

### **Objectivity, Credibility, and Consistency**

Despite Forms A, B, and C’s basic content and delivery criteria detail, one cannot assume instructors who use these types of evaluation forms do not take more specific

**Table 2**  
Evaluation Form Delivery Criteria Comparisons

<b>Form A</b>	<b>Form B</b>	<b>Form C</b>
<b>Eye Contact</b> Eye Contact	<b>Eye Contact</b> Eye Contact	<b>Eye Contact</b> Contact Vitality

**Form D**

**Eye Contact with Audience**

Excellent; Very good; Good; Established and maintained with audience

Established and maintained with note cards, floor, ceiling, walls, windows; students in certain areas of the room only; Looked at the instructor most of the time

Establish eye contact with different audience members throughout the presentation

---

speech content and delivery performance behaviors into consideration when choosing or designing the evaluation form. In addition, when implementing it, the instructor will not comment on presentation quality with these performance behaviors in mind. In general, regardless of the presentation evaluation form used, when assessing presentational speaking performances, the instructor should include written comments on the evaluation form that define the quality of student performances by identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

On the other hand, in many cases, students want to prepare for their presentation evaluation by most clearly understanding how their content, organization, development, and delivery skills will be evaluated. That is, students often rely on the criteria and the evaluative comments contained on the evaluation form, such as Form A's, B's, or D's evaluative comments, "gained audience's attention" or "captured attention" for a criterion, like attention-getter, as their guide while preparing and practicing their presentations.

However, unlike Forms B and D that contain the performance quality gradations, "excellent," "very good," and "good," for each individual criterion, Forms A and C also necessitate composing more limited or extensive written comments, such as "great job," "nicely done," or "very good effort," that describe the instructor's evaluation of the attention getter's quality. The comments, "nicely done" or "great job" that can be added to Forms A and C and relate to a performance criteria behavior, in this case, gaining attention, may be unclear while, in most cases, more standard descriptions of quality, such as "excellent," "very good," or "good," contained on Forms B and D that indicate A, B+, or B work may be more familiar to students.

Forms A, B, and C also require the instructor to include on the evaluation form those written comments that are related to performance behavior criteria the instructor discussed or implied but does not appear initially on the form. For example, although the instructor expects additional performance behaviors when students gain attention, like "build suspense," "use effective vocal delivery here," and "look at your audience" (see Form D), these performance behaviors are not present on Forms A, B, or C. These three forms' more limited content detail may present ambiguity for students while planning their presentations and/or reviewing their evaluations. In other words, when preparing for

their presentations, students may not consider or connect all of the specific performance behaviors the instructor has in mind during an evaluation or the possible comments related to each criterion that the instructor may compose but has not included on the evaluation form. Those performance behaviors not initially included on the evaluation form are usually the ones that make a significant difference in performance quality and count during the evaluation.

Furthermore, the appropriateness and reasoning for including the written comments added by the instructor on Forms A, B, and C are evident to the instructor. However, even though the instructor believes otherwise, these comments may not be as clear to the student as he or she reviews the evaluation. The student may define a written comment(s) that needed to be included on Forms A, B, and C as a performance criterion that was not explained clearly enough by the instructor before the student was evaluated. For example, if a student used a startling statistic to gain the audience's attention, he or she may wonder why the instructor is commenting on a vocal or physical delivery weakness. Wasn't the startling statistic itself enough to gain attention? Further, students may not receive the specific and consistent detail through written comments that are necessary to improve their subsequent performances the most.

Other issues with the basic content detail designs of Forms A, B, and C as compared to Form D are their potential setbacks for instructors and students. If the comments on an evaluation form related to the presentation's quality or how to improve are not included already, rather than accepting the instructor's written suggestions for improvement, students may question the instructor's intentions for including them. That is, sometimes students believe instructors have hidden agendas while evaluating their presentations or they may think, unlike other subjects where answers are either correct or incorrect and are objective, a presentation evaluation is based primarily on instructor subjectivity. Consequently, students' interpretations of the instructor's written comments may result from their inaccurate rationalizations about why they did not receive the evaluation and the grade they believe they deserved instead of accepting the instructor's suggestions for improvement when preparing and practicing their subsequent presentations.

In addition, after written comments are added, if or when students compare their evaluations and their grades, Form D's content does not vary as it would for Forms A, B, and C. Because Form D contains standard quality gradations, identical comments about performance behaviors, and consistent comments suggesting performance improvements on each student evaluation form, its content detail may be one way to minimize students' perceptions of rater bias. That is, if the instructor provides students with the content and delivery criteria and the performance behaviors that apply to each criterion in advance and describes and connects the evaluation form's presentational speaking content and delivery detail as it applies to the performance behaviors expected during the evaluation, the performance criteria and the comments related to them may be more explicable. Thus, students may be able to apply more objectively through "reflection and consequence cognitions" the evaluations of their performances in order to improve the quality of subsequent ones (Duran & Spitzberg, 1995, p. 270).

By connecting more specific and consistent communication competencies to the evaluation process, students can recognize the possible range of instructor comments they can expect to review after their presentation. These efforts on the part of the instructor

may “mitigate the threat to student self-identity” that is often associated with the “feedback intervention” (Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009, p. 400).

Likewise, the instructor’s description of the evaluation process and the evaluation form can lessen the threat associated with evaluative feedback. In particular, from the beginning to the conclusion of the course, the instructor needs to point out and to emphasize for students that his or her evaluation form contains the specific and essential criteria or constructs of content and delivery that will be used to assist them in improving presentational organization, development, and delivery. The form’s objective is to provide constructive criticism or those comments that are designed and included solely to aid students in completing the course’s presentational speaking assignments most successfully. Thus, the evaluation form and the feedback process are intended to help students focus on their performance “tasks” and are not meant to focus students on their sense of “selves” in any adverse or threatening ways (Tree et al., 2009, p. 400).

Above all, sharing with students that relying on their instructor, a communication expert who has their best interests at heart, and making the adjustments to performance behaviors that the instructor suggests, will benefit students not only in their academic careers but also in future personal and professional contexts where demonstrating effective oral communication skills counts the most and will have the greatest positive impact.

Overall, instructors who strive to eliminate the negative connotations associated with performance evaluation by promoting objectivity, credibility, and consistency may minimize or eliminate the threat associated with the evaluation process. Thus, the evaluation comments can be viewed and interpreted by students as an important benefit as they prepare their presentations and process their instructor’s evaluative feedback.

### **Adaptability, Scalability, and Efficiency**

Because they contain the “fundamental” constructs of content and delivery, Forms A, B, and C appear to be most flexible. Specifically, when using these forms, due to the impromptu nature of composing written comments, each allows for varying performance comments and advice for students about the content and delivery criteria and the performance behaviors that apply to each criterion. Thus, Forms A, B, and C may be defined as more adaptable for instructors concerning the amount and types of written comments that they can include on these forms.

However, while focusing on the constructs of content and delivery, Form D’s additional content detail also can be adaptable. While the comments on Form D do not vary as they would on Forms A, B, and C, where the instructor composes limited or extensive written comments for each presentation criterion for each student, Form D still can become tailored to each student. As a consequence of the variety of student performance behaviors and the quality of those behaviors, the comments offered on Form D and selected by the instructor do differ. These differences result in a personalized evaluation adapted to each student that is based on performance quality variations among students.

Although more adaptable in terms of the comments the instructor can add, each of these limited or extensive varying comments related to each of the basic content and delivery criterion added to Forms A, B, and C may be interpreted by students less easily. As a result, they may need to spend additional time comprehending these performance

comments. Also, because Forms A, B, and C's initial performance behavior content is less detailed, using this content detail as a guide for preparing and practicing before the presentation may be more challenging for students. In the same way, after subsequent presentations when comparing evaluation forms to determine how to alter best ineffective performance behaviors, students may experience more difficulties due to the inconsistency of the varying comments composed by the instructor.

In contrast to Forms A, B, and C, Form D may allow students to prepare for their initial presentations and improve subsequent ones more easily. Since Form D includes more detailed performance behavior comments in the areas of content, organization, development, and delivery, students can anticipate the quality gradations that will be used while preparing and practicing for the initial presentation. They can note the common presentation weaknesses they may demonstrate in each area. And they can adapt their performance behaviors by reviewing the effective performance behaviors listed and incorporating the suggestions for improvement indicated. As a result, Form D can assist students in avoiding performance weaknesses, in understanding how to improve their content and delivery, and in helping them to work toward these goals before the presentation.

Along with assisting students in adapting their performances before the presentation, as compared to Forms A, B, and C, Form D's additional detail may help students more comprehensively understand their content and delivery strengths and weaknesses after subsequent presentations are evaluated. Thus, following the initial presentation, Form D may enable each student to (1) recognize more quickly the quality of his or her performance behavior for each criterion; (2) to understand more accurately his or her specific strengths and weaknesses; and, (3) to evaluate more immediately if he or she requires additional instructor assistance in understanding and applying the components of effective presentational speaking and the quality of their content and delivery.

Since the performance behavior comments on Form D do not differ, students can compare each performance comment for each criterion on all the completed evaluation forms to identify their specific performance patterns. Awareness of these presentational speaking patterns may help students more effortlessly determine their performance strengths and weaknesses and more effectively adapt during future presentations by replicating their positive performance behavior patterns and by altering their weaker ones based on the improvement suggestions selected by the instructor. In short, while Forms A, B, and C can be more adaptable for the instructor, Form D may be a more adaptable evaluation form for students.

Furthermore, when compared to Forms A, B, and C, similar to its introduction, body, conclusion, and delivery criteria and the comments related to them, Form D's beginning appears to be more visibly specific, more adaptable for students, and more noticeably scalable. The form includes a more unambiguous assessment of the level of the topic's challenge, the clarity of the topic's purpose, and the amount of attention given to audience analysis and adaptation.

In the same way as Forms A, B, and C, Form D contains space throughout the form to reinforce performance strengths or to discover a performance weakness that does not appear on the form. However, because the performance behavior comments related to each criterion and included on Form D are based on former students' performance

quality, a performance behavior not appearing on the form can be explained to the student and justified more easily by including this behavior on the form before the next speaking assignment. This type of inclusion emphasizes the specific behavior as a performance strength or weakness that could be exhibited by other students and should be included as a performance behavior comment.

Also, at the end, Form D indicates for the student the quality of his or her overall performance: excellent, very good, good, average, or below average. It specifies how well speaking time was used. It reiterates the area(s) on which the student need(s) to focus. It provides the percentage values assigned to content, to development, and to delivery. The form's content also encourages the student to see the instructor if he or she needs more clarification concerning the presentation evaluation. Like Forms A, B, and C, Form D contains space for brief additional comments to reemphasize the form's positive comments and to further reinforce its suggestions for improvement.

Moreover, a more detailed evaluation form, designed like Form D, as compared to basic and less detailed evaluation forms, designed like Forms A, B, and C, may make evaluating student presentational skills a more timesaving task. Once the instructor becomes familiar with the evaluation form's additional content detail, he or she can circle, highlight, or underline the corresponding words or phrases for each criterion that define the quality of students' performance behaviors, indicate the improvement(s) students need to make, and select the improvement suggestion(s). Thus, when comparing Forms A, B, and C to Form D, because of the comments on the quality of content and delivery the form already contains, the instructor does not have to compose similar types of limited or extensive written comments about each presentation criterion for each student's presentation speaking behaviors over and over again; therefore Form D's more detailed evaluation form content can be more efficient.

Likewise, while evaluating the presentation, in contrast to Forms A, B, and C, which require the instructor not only to concentrate on the presentation but also to focus on composing more limited or detailed written comments, Form D may allow the instructor to pay closer attention to the presenter's content, organization, development, and delivery. Assuming the instructor wants to conduct the evaluation once as he or she initially observes the student presentation, at that time and/or later when the presentation ends, the instructor can select the corresponding words or phrases that match the quality of each speaking criterion and choose performance weaknesses and improvement suggestions. Because Form D, unlike Forms A, B, and C, includes in bold positive comments that indicate the gradations of quality for each criterion and also contains the effective performance behaviors students displayed, lists common student performance weaknesses, and contains suggestions for improvement, the instructor's primary focus may be shifted to the content and the delivery of the presentation itself, instead of writing limited or extensive comments about its effectiveness.

Additionally, Forms A, B, C, and D all can be modified for computer mediated instruction for those instructors who now offer the basic public speaking course using an online format (see, for example, Clark & Jones, 2001; Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). When the basic public speaking course is offered online, instructor evaluation through effective feedback is as important or, since there may be no face-to-face interactions, perhaps even more essential. Thus, this feedback must contain specific comments and clear suggestions for improvement (Miller, 2010; Reisetter & Lapointe,

2007). As the basis for online evaluations, Form D's detailed content may be more useful than Forms A, B, and C.

Further, Form D's more comprehensive content can be used "as is," if instructors notice similarities in its content detail and the comments that need to be made for their student evaluations, or can provide a rubric or scoring tool on which to base a personalized student evaluation form for informative and other speech presentation assignments. That is, instructors can adapt their evaluation form to their student audiences by specifying on their form the positive comments that instructor wants to include for each criterion; they can take into account the presentation weaknesses they have noticed as frequently occurring and on which they have commented repeatedly while evaluating their students' past presentations; and they can identify on their evaluation forms their specific improvement suggestions.

In all, as compared to Forms A, B, and C, Form D's increased attention to the variety of recommended evaluation standards can be very useful to both experienced and novice basic public speaking course instructors who teach the course using face-to-face or online instruction.

### **Future Study**

Communication scholars have shared their research on basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form content. In order to assist in clarifying communication assessment of core communication competencies, this essay's descriptive research compares evaluation forms' content detail by applying the evaluation standards these scholars believe instructors should employ when choosing or designing and implementing this form. However, this research is not without its limitations.

Specifically, the rationale for selecting the evaluation forms compared (see Forms A, B, C, and D) is based only on the communication research's findings that determined any evaluation form that addresses the fundamental constructs of content and delivery can be defined as valid and reliable ones (see specifically Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995; Rubin, 1990). Moreover, the conclusions reached through the evaluation form comparisons are one communication educator's interpretations of the evaluation standards recommended in the literature. Other communication educators' conclusions concerning the definitions of evaluation standards, the forms' designs, and the types and perceptions of the content detail they contain may vary.

However, even with this research's limitations, the communication literature it does share underscores the importance of assessment, the need to clarify core competencies and assessment practices, and the evaluation standards instructors should employ. This literature's findings also point to examining further the basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form. Moreover, considering this essay's limitations, quantitative research that reexamines the conclusions reached concerning the presentation evaluation forms compared is necessary. Therefore, the following rationale that reemphasizes the need to concentrate on the evaluation form is offered and further studies that may reinforce or offer findings that differ from the conclusions drawn here are suggested.



## **Rationale**

First, communication educators do not agree about how to assess core communication competencies. Thus, assessment research has described the strong demand “to seek to demonstrate a viable assessment approach” (Spitzberg, 2011, p.146). Additionally, there is the need for student communication skills assessments that are “efficient, scalable, adaptable, convenient, and valid” (Spitzberg, 2011, p. 147). Through reviewing past research and conducting additional studies on basic public speaking course student evaluation, communication educators may begin to resolve the lack of agreement in the discipline concerning what communication skills are and how they should be assessed. Since the basic public speaking course centers on teaching core communication competencies, a key assessment consideration, reexamining the presentation evaluation form’s content may result in establishing a viable assessment approach on which communication educators can agree.

Second, Canary and MacGregor Istley’s (2008) research findings have reported that “the corpus of research on classroom communication has focused on teacher behavior to a greater extent than on student behavior” (p. 41). Specifically, “over 1000 articles have been published over the past 20 years” that “focus on teacher classroom behavior” and “only a handful of studies” have concentrated on “student classroom behaviors.” (p. 41). Canary and MacGregor Istley (2008) believe “a greater focus on student behavior could help students become more empowered and responsible in their use of communication” (p. 42).

By suggesting future research studies that primarily focus on student instead of instructor behaviors, communication educators are provided with several directions of study that can fill a research void in the communication discipline. Examining the basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form from a student perspective not only can shift the focus of research studies, as suggested by Canary and MacGregor Istley (2008), from instructor to student communication, but also it can facilitate the further clarification of the core communication competencies that can maximize students’ performance gains and benefit student evaluation practices.

Third, based on the research findings reported since the time of Carlson and Smith-Howell’s (1995) study, evaluation standards beyond reliability and validity, such as clarity, objectivity, consistency, credibility, adaptability, scalable, and efficiency have been recommended or reiterated. Therefore, it is reasonable to examine in greater detail what effects these evaluation standards may have on students’ performance improvement. Accordingly, studies conducted on these evaluation standards and their effects may provide a renewed starting point for reexamining the basic public speaking course presentation evaluation form, may regenerate interest in student evaluation, and may be viable for helping to define and assess the basic public speaking course evaluation standards and core communication competencies.

## **Future Research**

The simplest research that can be conducted on the student presentation evaluation form can be accomplished in the basic public speaking course classroom. In this case, the instructor can initiate a student discussion about the evaluation process and the objectives of the student evaluation form. Students can comment about which type of evaluation form (those designed like A, B, C, or D) they believe would help them best understand

content and delivery criteria; which form might help them improve their presentations the most; and how students made their choices.

This student feedback can assist instructor student evaluation form development and selection after which he or she can monitor the form's effectiveness and formulate his or her own conclusions about which form's design is most effective and how the form can be modified further to improve his or her students' presentational speaking performances the most. This type of fundamental research can assist instructors in clarifying assessment in their classrooms and at their institutions. However, in order to generate more substantial assessment data on student evaluation that can assist the communication discipline, more formal research studies that are shared beyond one institution are necessary (Morreale, Backlund, Hay, and Moore, 2011).

Therefore, communication scholars can conduct and share a variety of research that compares student presentation evaluation forms designed such as Forms A, B, and C to evaluation forms designed like Form D. Studies comparing evaluation forms may confirm which form design affects the quality of students' presentations and may more accurately determine which type of form most reliably serves students' "reflection and consequence cognitions" (Duran & Spitzberg, 1995, p. 270). Research also can explore which suggestions for improvement in the areas of content, organization, development, and delivery most frequently occur when instructors evaluate student presentational speaking performances and whether or not these suggestions should be included on the student evaluation form.

Besides addressing reliability and validity, studies that focus on student presentation evaluation forms also can include questions like, "Should the evaluation form criteria content be standardized or adapted for a particular basic public speaking course's audiences' needs?" "Does additional evaluation form content criteria detail that students can review before the presentation versus adding limited or extensive written comments during an evaluation that students review after their presentations make a significant difference on the quality of initial or subsequent student presentations and students' overall performance gains?" "Does including quality gradations, students' common mistakes, and suggestions for improvement significantly contribute to feedback intervention in terms of face-saving or threats to students' self-identities?" "Does sharing with students directly and clearly the purpose of performance feedback and reinforcing the positive aspects of the performance evaluation process affect students' perceptions of self-identities as they review instructor feedback?" "Is consistency in the amount of evaluation form content detail that appears on the form an additional performance evaluation standard that needs to be considered when designing a course evaluation form?"

In addition, research can be conducted that examines the quality of instructor concentration on students while assessing their presentations and if or how clarity, consistency, or objectivity affect student perceptions of rater bias, student anxiety, and student-perceived physicality. Specifically, "How does the degree of instructor attention on the presentation evaluation form affect student evaluations?" "Does more detailed presentation evaluation form content help instructors more fully direct their attention on the student presentation itself instead of evaluating it?" "Does more detailed evaluation form content significantly affect student perceptions of rater bias?" "Are students who experience mild to high anxiety or those students who excessively focus on physicality

while sharing information significantly influenced by the amount of specific content detail included on a presentation evaluation form?”

Overall, the research suggested here and additional studies on communication assessment and presentation evaluation form standards have the potential to contribute to the extant literature by analyzing the communication assessment approaches that are employed for students in both face-to-face and computer mediated evaluations. By exploring assessment through these types of future studies, more comprehensive findings and more consistent recommendations concerning the amount, the quality, and the effectiveness of instructor focus on student core communication competencies and their effects on student performance behaviors can result and the pressures that are associated with communication assessment may be reduced.

### **Conclusion**

During this millennium, with the increasing importance of effective presentational speaking skills and a greater emphasis on demonstrating a viable communication assessment approach at the majority of academic institutions, examining the basic public speaking course student evaluation form appears to be one particularly critical task. By focusing basic public speaking course instructors' attention on the student evaluation form they choose or design and implement and by conducting future research on the effects of evaluation form standards and content detail on student presentations, the pedagogical potential exists to enhance more fully students' understanding of the performance criteria and skills necessary to become consciously and consistently competent communicators.

Moreover, by concentrating on the presentation evaluation form content used in the basic public speaking course, communication educators may become more certain about what constitutes basic public speaking course core competencies, how to evaluate them most effectively, and how to become most successful at improving them, tasks that continue to be central to the heart of the communication discipline and necessary for the course's endurance.

### **References**

- Almeida, E. P. (2004). A discourse analysis of student perceptions of their communication competence. *Communication Education*, 53, 357-364.
- Applbaum, R. L. (1974). Intra-rater reliability: A function of scale complexity and rater training? *Central States Speech Journal*, 25, 277-281.
- Backlund, P. (1983). Methods of assessing speaking and listening skills. In R. B. Rubin (Ed.), *Improving speaking and listening skills* (pp. 59-73) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Becker, S. L. (1962). The ratings of speeches: Scale independence. *Speech Monographs*, 29, 38-44.
- Behnke, R.R., & Sawyer, C.R., (1998). Perspectives on norm-referenced and criterion-referenced grading in introductory speech performance courses. *Journal of the Association of Communication Administration*, 27, 147-153.
- Bock, D. G. (1970). The effects of persuasibility on leniency, halo, and trait errors in the use of speech rating scales. *The Speech Teacher*, 19, 296-300.
- Bock, D. G. (1972). Reliability and validity of speech rating scales: Some error effects. *Central States Speech Journal*, 23, 145-151.
- Bock, D. G., & Bock, E. H. (1984). The effects of positional stress and receiver apprehension on leniency errors in speech evaluation: A test of the rating error paradigm. *Communication Education*, 33, 337-341.

- Bohn, C. A., & Bohn, E. (1985). Reliability of raters: The effects of rating errors on the speech rating process. *Communication Education*, 34, 345-351.
- Bowers, J. W. (1964). Training speech raters with films. *Speech Teacher*, 13, 228-231.
- Brooks, K. (1957). Some basic considerations in rating scale development: A descriptive bibliography. *Central States Speech Journal*, 9, 27-31.
- Carlson, R.E. & Smith-Howell, D. (1995). Classroom public speaking assessment: Reliability and validity of selected evaluation instrument. *Communication Education*, 44, 87-98.
- Canary, D., & MacGregor Istley, M. (2008). Differences that make a difference in assessing student communication competence. *Communication Education*, 57, 41-63.
- Clark, R.A., & Jones D. (2001). A comparison of traditional and online formats in a public speaking course. *Communication Education*, 50, 109-124.
- Clevenger, T. (1963). Retest reliabilities of ten scales of public speaking performances. *Central States Speech Journal*, 14, 285-291.
- Clevenger, T. (1964). Influence of scale complexity on the reliability of ratings of general effectiveness in public speaking. *Speech Monographs*, 31, 153-156.
- DiSalvo, V., & Bochner, A. P. (1972). The use of simulated profiles and the Prof Technique in capturing the policies of speech raters. *The Speech Teacher*, 21, 273-280.
- Duran, R.L., & Spitzberg, B.H., (1995). Toward the development and validation of a measure of cognitive communication competence. *Communication Quarterly*, 43, 259-275.
- Duran, R. L., & Zakahi, W. R. (1989). Communication performance and communication satisfaction: What do we teach our students? *Communication Education*, 36, 13-22.
- Engleberg, I.N., Emmanuel R.C., Van Horn, T., & Bodary, D.L. (2008) Communication education in U.S. community colleges. *Communication Education*, 57 (2) 241-265.
- Gibson, J. W., Hanna, M. S., & Huddleson, B. M. (1985). The basic communication course at U. S. colleges and universities IV. *Communication Education*, 34, 281-292.
- Gunderson, D. F. (1978). Video-tape modules as a device for training speech raters. *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 43, 395-406.
- Huber, M.T. & Morreale, S.P. (Eds.). (2001). *Disciplinary styles in the scholarship of teaching and learning: A conversation*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Johnson, R. J., & Szczupakiewicz, N. (1987). The public speaking course: Is it preparing with work and related public speaking skills? *Communication Education*, 36, 131-137.
- Kelly, W. D. (1965). Objectivity in the grading and evaluating of speeches. *Speech Teacher*, 14, 54-58.
- Lawton, B.L., & Braz, M. (2011). A grade-norming exercise to increase consistency and perceived consistency in grading among public speaking instructors. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 23, 29-60.
- McCrosky, J.C. (1982). Communication competence and performance: A research and pedagogical perspective. *Communication Education*, 31, 1-7.
- McCroskey, J. C. (2007). Raising the question #8 assessment: Is it just measurement? *Communication Education*, 56, 509-514.
- Miller, G. R. (1964). Agreement and the grounds for it: Persistent problems in speech rating. *Speech Teacher*, 13, 257-261.
- Miller, J. G. (2010). Student evaluations for the online public speaking course. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 22, 153-171.
- Mino, M. (1999). Will the dazzling promise blind us? Using technology in the beginning public speaking course. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 11, 79-106.
- Mino, M. (2007). "I already learned how to talk: Why do I need a communication course?" In L. W. Hugenberg, S. Morreale, B. Hugenberg, & D.A. Worley (Eds.), *Basic Communication Course Best Practices: A Training Manual For Instructors* (pp. 9-24). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Mino, M. (2012). Clarifying communication competencies through an interdisciplinary approach to communication pedagogy. *Journal of the Association of Communication Administration*, 31 (1), 14-28.
- Mino, M., & Butler, M. N. (1995). Improving oral communication competency: An interactive approach to basic public instruction. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 7, 36-58.

- Mino, M., & Butler, M. N. (1997). A traditional lecture approach versus a collaborative approach: A comparison of student performance outcomes. *Communication Research Reports*, 14, 493-507.
- Morlan, D. B. (1993). The history and development of the basic course. In L. W. Hugenberg, P. L. Gray, and D. M. Trank (Eds.), *Teaching and directing the basic communication course*, (pp. 1-8). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Morreale, S., Backlund, P., Hay, E., & Moore M. (2011). Assessment of oral communication: A major review of the historical development and trends in the movement from 1975 to 2009. *Communication Education*, 60, 255-278.
- Morreale, S., Hugenberg, L., & Worley, D. (2006). The basic communication course at U.S. colleges and universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Communication Education*, 55, 415-437.
- Morreale, S.P., Osborn, M.M., & Pearson, J.C. (2000). Why communication is important: A rationale for the centrality of the study of communication. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration*, 29, 1-25.
- Morreale, S., Worley, D., & Hugenberg, L. (2009). Follow-up to the NCA basic communication course survey VII: Using learning objectives in the course. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 21, 91-127.
- Mottet, T., & Beebe, S. (2006). The relationship between student behaviors, student sociocommunication style, and instructors' subjective and objective assessment of student work. *Communication Education*, 55, 295-312.
- Pearson, J. C., Child, J.T., Herakova, L. L., Sendlak, J.L., & Angelos, J. (2010). Competent public speaking: Assessing skill development in the basic course. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 22, 39-86.
- Reisetter, M., & Lapointe, L.K.J. (2007). The impact of altered realities: Implications for online delivery for learners' interactions, expectations, and learning skills. *International Journal of ELearning*, 6, 55-80.
- Reynolds, D., Hunt, S., Simonds, C., & Cutbirth, C. (2004). Written speech feedback in the basic communication course: Are instructors too polite to students? *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 16, 36-71.
- Rubin, R. B. (1990). Evaluating the product. In J. A. Daly, G. W. Friedrich, & A. L. Vangelisti (Eds.), *Teaching communication: Theory, research, and methods* (pp. 379-401). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Schreiber, L.M., Paul, G.D., & Shibley, L.R. (2012). The development and test of the public speaking competency rubric. *Communication Education*, 61, 205-233.
- Simonds, C., Meyer, K., Hunt, S., & Simonds, B. (2009). Speech evaluation assessment: An analysis of written speech feedback on instructor evaluation forms in the basic communication course. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 21, 65-90.
- Spitzberg, B.H. (1991). An examination of trait measures of interpersonal competence. *Communication Reports*, 4, 22-29.
- Spitzberg, B.H. (2011). The Interactive Media Package for Assessment of Communication and Critical Thinking (IMPACCT). *Communication Education*, 60, 145-173.
- Stiggins, R. J., Backlund, P. M., & Bridgeford, N. J. (1985). Avoiding bias in the assessment of communication skills. *Communication Education*, 34, 135-141.
- Stitt, J., Simonds, C., & Hunt, S. (2003). Evaluation fidelity: An examination of criterion-based assessment and rater training in the speech communication classroom. *Communication Studies*, 54 (3). 341-353.
- Tiemens, R. K. (1965). Validation of informative speech ratings by retention tests. *Speech Teacher*, 14, 211-215.
- Trees, A. R., Kerksen-Griep, J., & Hess, J.A. (2009). Earning influence by communicating respect: Face work's contributions to effective instructional feedback. *Communication Education*, 58, 397-416.
- West, R. (2012, May). Message from the president, *Spectra*, 1.
- Wiemann, J. M., & Backlund, P. (1980). Current theory and research in communication competence. *Review of Educational Research*, 50, 185-199.

**Appendix**

**FORM A**  
**Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995**  
**INFORMATIVE SPEECH EVALUATION FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction (15 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

Gained audience's attention  
Established speaker's credibility and good will  
Revealed topic  
Clear informative central idea  
Prepared audience for rest of speech (preview, need, definitions).

**Body (40 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

Main points clearly identified  
Each main point developed with appropriate details  
Topic development appropriate for assignment  
Logical arrangement of ideas  
Transitions used effectively  
Appropriate support (examples, testimony, statistics) used  
Clear source citation  
Relation to and inclusion of audience  
Appropriate use of visual aid (if used)

**Conclusion (15 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared audience for end  
Vivid ending used  
Reinforced central idea

**Presentation and Delivery (30 points)** \_\_\_\_\_

Extemporaneous delivery	Eye contact	Vocal variety
Enthusiasm for subject	Pronunciation	Fluency
Gestures/movement	Appropriate word choice	
Facial expressions	Vivid word choice	

**Additional Comments:**

---

**FORM B**  
**Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995**  
**INFORMATIVE SPEAKING EVALUATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

	POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
INTRODUCTION: (capture attention relate to audience; introduce topic)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ORGANIZATION: (speech easy to follow; clear progression of ideas)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
DEVELOPMENT: (clear explanation; use of supporting material; visual aids enhance presentation)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
CONCLUSION: (provides closure; summary; vivid)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
DELIVERY: (eye contact; understandable; use of gestures/ facial expression; conversational)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS:

Rating Scale: (A) Excellent = 90-100; (B) Good = 80-89; (C) Average = 70-79;  
(D) Fair = 60-69; (F) Poor = 50-59

Overall Rating (50-100): \_\_\_\_\_

---

**FORM C**  
**Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995**  
**INFORMATIVE SPEAKING EVALUATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	SCORE (+, 0, -)	COMMENTS
Appearance		
Self-confidence		
Enthusiasm		
Body Vitality		
Contact Vitality		
Voice Vitality		
Speech Clarity		
Evidence of Planning		
Explanations		
Visual Aids		
Interest		
Content Material		
Support		
Logical Development		
Introduction		
Body		
Conclusion		

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

(-17 to +17 possible)

Percentage Equivalent: \_\_\_\_\_%

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Letter Grade: \_\_\_\_\_



**FORM D**  
**Validated Based on Carlson & Smith-Howell, 1995**  
**INFORMATIVE SPEAKING EVALUATION FORM**

**Name:**  
**Subject:**

**Speech No:**  
**Date:**

**SUBJECT CHALLENGING:**

- ☐ Intellectually challenges the audience-Excellent
- ☐ Provides some level of challenge-Very good
- ☐ Basic and/or obvious
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Challenge your audience members

**PURPOSE:**

**Clear General Purpose:**

- ☐ Informative Purpose ☐ Excellent ☐ Unclear
- ☐ Clarify your purpose

**Thesis Statement or  
Message Accuracy:**

- ☐ Very accurate; Matches outline or structure sheet— Residual
- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Clear-Excellent
- ☐ Different in design than in execution
- ☐ Incorrect or unclear
- ☐ Have a clear message

**AUDIENCE ANALYSIS:**

- ☐ Adapted specifically to this audience-Excellent
- ☐ Some audience adaptation—Very good; Good
- ☐ Showed clear tie-in to audience's needs based on general purpose—Excellent
- ☐ Adapted generally to this audience
- ☐ Weak; unclear
- ☐ Review audience analysis notes and apply them

**INTRODUCTION:**

Gained attention:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Builds suspense;** Use effective vocal delivery here; Vague; Begins with "Today I'm going to talk about" or "According to my audience;" Missing; Build suspense; Look at your audience; Use a stronger attention-getter-startling fact or, statistic, relevant example, or quote

Established Credibility:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Clearly established;** Somewhat established; States another's credibility; Missing; Clearly state your credibility

Previewed main points:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Clearly stated;** Talked around; Changed words; Missing; Clearly preview main points

Thesis Statement or  
Residual Message Stated:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Clearly stated; Matches Outline or Structure Sheet;** Changed from design; Stated mechanically- "I want my audience to know. ....;" Different from design; Unclear; Missing; Clearly state residual message

Reasons to care given:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Effective adaptation; Specific;** Somewhat established; Vague; General; Not tied to this audience; Unrelated to purpose; Unclear; Attempted but need more detail; Missing; Clearly tie the topic to this audience

Transition present:

**Excellent; Very good; Good; Present and effective;** Present but vague; Missing; Use a clear transitional word or phrase here

**BODY**

Organization Clear:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Clear and matches design;</b> Different than design; Vague; Unclear; Emerges as the speech progresses; Missing; You need to have clear organization
Clear Previews of Sub Points:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Present and clear;</b> Partial preview; Unclear; Used different words; Missing; You need to preview your main points
Clear and Effective Development:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good;</b> Attempted; Doesn't include sub points; Different than sub points on outline or structure sheet; Not sub point development but rather evidence (definitions, examples used or listed instead of sub points developed by evidence); Further narrow the topic down; Tailor the topic more to this audience; Effectively develop your topic
Transitions Present:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Clear and varied phrases and/or sentences;</b> One word; Choppy; Repetitive; Predictable; Missing; You need clear and varied transitional words or phrases
Developed Internal Summaries:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Very Clear; Somewhat clear; Repeated main and sub point words and repeated the highlights of sub point development;</b> Attempted but needs development; Missing; You need to provide developed internal summaries
Clear Transition Between Body and Conclusion:	<b>Excellent; Present and effective;</b> Present but vague; Missing; You need to use a transition here

**SUPPORTING MATERIAL**

Use of Supporting Material::	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good ; Appropriate and varied supports; Speaker used Example(s); Definition(s); Visual Aid(s); Statistic(s); Illustration(s); Testimony; Other-</b> Inappropriate supports; Personal opinion; Unclear materials; Missing; Use appropriate and varied supporting materials; <b>Adequate number of supports;</b> Increase your supporting materials; Use more appropriate supporting material
Quality of the Supports:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Adapted specifically to this audience based on general speech purpose;</b> General and not tailored for this specific audience; Needed to be expanded; Needed to be more clearly developed; Vague; Seem like parts of articles and /or books were tied together and presented; Adapt your supports to your audience
Quality of Ethos, Pathos, Logos:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Strong; Adequate; Weak; Strengthen ethos, pathos, logos</b>
Quality of Adaptation through Supporting Material:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good;</b> Was attempted but needed expansion; Missing; Adapt your supporting materials to your audience
Use of Visual Aids:	None used; Needed a visual aid(s) to clarify; <b>Excellent; Very good; Good;</b> Did not analyze setting; Were not prepared in advance; Position off; Print too small; Print not clear; Print not dark enough; Busy; Did not give audience time to process; Did not talk with audience; Looked at visual aid instead of audience; Did not sufficiently explain the visual aid; No source and/or year present; Use visual aids effectively
Clarity and Quality of Sources:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Clearly attributed;</b> Did not include dates; Lumped together so that specific sources were unclear; Speaker incorrectly asserts all of my sources come from...; Outdated; Were insufficient to effectively support thesis statement or residual message and /or purpose Stated source and year at the end of a sentence as in written communication; Be sure sources are varied and clearly attributed

## CONCLUSION

Summary of Main Points:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Effectively summarized by stating main point words, stating sub point words, and repeated the highlights of each sub point;</b> Reiterated main and sub point words only; Choppy; Needed to be more thoroughly summarized based on main point development; Missing; Develop a summary
Clear Thesis Statement or Residual Message:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Very clear; Restated exactly as designed and stated in intro and on the outline/structure sheet;</b> Closely related to design; Changed from outline or structure sheet; Changed from Intro; Emerged as the speech progressed; Missing; Restate your residual message clearly
Strong Final Note:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Effective;</b> Use delivery here; Vague; Did not strongly support purpose; Gave audience little to think about; Changed speech purpose—advocated action while informing; Speaker incorrectly added new material to conclusion—new source(s) or audience analysis; Missing; Use a stronger final note

## DELIVERY

The Overall Delivery:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Conversational and extemporaneous;</b> Somewhat conversational; Read; Sounds memorized; Be natural when sharing your presentation
Appropriateness of Volume :	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Loud enough; Varied for effect;</b> Not loud enough; Not varied; Too loud; Work on speaking loudly enough and varying your volume where appropriate; Speak loudly enough; Vary your volume to sound more interesting
Pitch Quality:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Nicely varied; Appropriate for general speech purpose- established mood;</b> Sounds monotonous; Vary your pitch to sound more interesting
Appropriateness of Rate:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Appropriate and engaging;</b> Too slow; Too fast; Choppy; Uhs, ums, Oks inserted; Phrasing was predictable; More emphasis needed; Less emphasis needed; Vary your rate to sound more interesting
Clear Articulation:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Clear;</b> Unclear- difficult to understand words, sentences; Fast rate or mispronunciation affected understanding of words; Work on clearer articulation
Appropriate Grammar:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Appropriate;</b> Incorrect grammar; Inappropriate- ain't, younz, yous, or the word, _____, or sexist language was obtrusive; Be sure your grammar is correct
Eye contact with Audience:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Established and maintained with audience;</b> Established and maintained with note cards, floor, ceiling, walls, windows; students in certain areas of the room only; Looked at the instructor most of the time; Establish eye contact with different audience members throughout the presentation
Posture, Gesture Use, Facial Expressions:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good;</b> Stand up straight; Don't sway; Don't fidget; <b>Gestures match message;</b> All gestures need to match message; <b>Facial expressions match message;</b> All facial expressions need to match message; Focus on your posture; gestures; facial expressions
General Appearance:	<b>Lovely attire; Appropriately dressed;</b> Take off your hat; Take off your coat; Get rid of your gum; Keep both feet on the ground; Work on your weakness here
Note cards used effectively:	<b>Excellent; Very good; Good; Used note cards effectively;</b> Used notecards somewhat; Needs to use note cards; Excessive reliance on notecards; No Manuscript! No Reading! Use note cards effectively

**OVERALL AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** Carefully review each section of this critique sheet! **Positive performance behaviors are in bolder and larger print.** Need for improvement and suggestions to improve areas indicated in smaller and no bold print. Some brief additional comments are below. **See the instructor for more specific comments than are present here.**

Your overall speech: Below Average   Average   **Good**   **Very Good**   **Excellent**   (35% Content; 35%; Development; 30%; Delivery)

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_   (**Good**; Over; Under--Develop; Met time constraint but needed more development to fulfill purpose)

**Grade:**     /100       (**Nice work:** More focus on audience; More focus on development; More sources; More rehearsal)

---