

Evaluating student presentations: Oral feedback from the teacher

Oral evaluation may include both positive comments and areas for improvement. Like feedback on any assignment, it is helpful to offer constructive criticism without personally attacking the character of the speaker.

Beebe and Beebe (2003) suggest the following to teachers and students for providing oral or written feedback of oral presentations:

- ❖ **Be descriptive.** Describe what you observed the speaker doing rather than passing judgment. e.g. Say "I did not hear a concluding statement" rather than "That was a stupid way to end your presentation."
- ❖ **Be specific.** Give the speaker enough information so that she/he can improve for the next presentation. e.g. Say "I would increase the font size on your PowerPoint slides because I had trouble reading the slides" rather than "Your visual aids were ineffective."
- ❖ **Be positive.** "Sandwich" comments such that you begin with a positive comment, then offer suggestions for improvement, and end with a positive comment.
- ❖ **Be constructive.** Give specific suggestions for improvement rather than simply telling the speaker what they did wrong.
- ❖ **Be sensitive.** Use tactful language in giving feedback rather than offering blunt suggestions or comments. e.g. Say "Speak a bit louder so those in the back of the room can hear you" rather than "I couldn't hear a word you said –speak up!"
- ❖ **Be realistic.** Give the speaker feedback about things that he/she can actually change. Telling a speaker that she/he is too short is not helpful.

This form is adapted from the Oral Communication Focus web site., University of Hawaii at Manoa: <http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/oc/oc.htm>