

## **Assessing Oracy at the Beginning and End of Year 7**

The materials that follow are designed to enable a teacher to make an assessment of students' oracy skills at the beginning and at the end of Year 7. They enable students' progress to be assessed and specific skills for development to be identified. Thus, the initial tasks provide a teacher with an insight into the range of oracy ability in their classes, together with some specific data on the skills that need development across the year if oracy is to be improved. The end tasks provide evidence that such improvement has taken place.

There are three initial and three end tasks that are designed to ensure that a range of skills across the skills framework are assessed in appropriate contexts for talk. Each pair of initial and end tasks assesses the same group of skills through a comparable activity, ensuring a valid comparison of performance. The tasks are:

### *Presentation*

The students are asked to prepare and deliver individual presentations, of no more than 2 minutes' duration, on a subject that does not require specialist knowledge.

### *Talking Points*

Working in groups of three, the students are asked to consider a list of statements and to discuss each of them in turn. Again, the statements do not require any specialist knowledge so that participation is possible by all students.

### *Knowledge gap instructions*

Working in pairs, one member of the pair is given a photograph of a Lego model. Their partner is given some Lego pieces, including all those to make the model and some distractors. Sitting back to back, the pair must share information so that the model in the photograph can be created; the roles of the pair are then reversed.

## **Structure of the tasks**

The tasks are structured to provide:

- a teacher introduction to the nature of each task and instructions for administration;
- an instruction sheet for students, to ensure that all students receive the same information about how to carry out the task;
- an assessment proforma linked to the skills framework, and space for notes.

## **Administration of the tasks**

Assessing all students using all three of these tasks would take considerable time. An alternative is to use a sample of students as an 'oracy focus group'. This group can provide assessments for a cross section of students at the start and end of the year and can be assessed either in class or separately from the class.

## **Assessment of the tasks**

A typical assessment form looks like this one for the Talking Points task:

<b>Oracy Skill</b>	<b>Student A</b>	<b>Student B</b>	<b>Student C</b>
<b>Physical</b>			
1 c) clarity of pronunciation			
2 b) facial expression and eye contact			
<b>Linguistic</b>			
4 a) register			
<b>Cognitive</b>			
7 b) building on the views of others			
8 b) summarising			
9 a) maintaining focus on task			
10 a) giving reasons to support views			
10 b) critically examining ideas and views expressed			
<b>Social &amp; Emotional</b>			
12 a) guiding or managing the interactions			
12 b) turn-taking			
13 listening actively and responding appropriately			
<b>Overall assessment</b>			

In using the form, the intention is to find out how the students are performing in relation to the specific skills identified for each task. This should be done using a simple Gold, Silver and Bronze system, where:

GOLD means 'consistently demonstrates this skill'.

SILVER means 'demonstrates this skill some of the time'.

BRONZE means 'rarely or never demonstrates this skill yet'.

Teachers have adopted a variety of approaches to completing these sheets and there is no 'correct way'.

Some teachers have given a rating for each skill as the task has been carried out, later providing an overall oracy rating for the student after considering their individual skills ratings. Other teachers have made much greater use of the notes sections during the task, given an overall oracy rating at the end, and retrospectively considered which skills were evidenced, and to what extent, by individual students during the task. The point is that the information should be useful and, in the case of the initial tasks, a formative influence on teaching.

*Assessing in more detail*

Whilst a simple Gold, Silver and Bronze assessment makes the system easy to use, some teachers have found that it does not discriminate sufficiently for their purposes. The following + and – augmentation may therefore be helpful in discriminating between students, and between their performances in the initial and end assessments:

Gold	Gold -	Silver +	Silver	Silver -	Bronze +	Bronze
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A further way of making assessments more rigorous is to have more than one person making the assessments at a time; this may be possible in some schools and with some classes, though clearly it will not be possible in all cases.