



UNIVERSITY  
*of* DALLAS

# *The* ART *of* ORATORY

## IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH RHETORIC AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

### Part 1 - Executive Summary

The focus of the University of Dallas' Quality Enhancement Plan, *The Art of Oratory: Improving Student Success Through Rhetoric and Public Speaking*, is the liberal art of rhetoric as the foundation for and realization in public speaking. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion oriented toward truth. The Art of Oratory hopes to improve, in a para-curricular way, instruction in all five canons of the rhetorical tradition—invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery—with sustained attention to delivery or public speaking. All of the disciplines rely on students being able to speak publicly—in class discussions, in group projects, and in presentations—and the five canons inform and are informed by the subjects of the curriculum.

The goal of the QEP is to ensure that all of our students, in any rhetorical situation, can invent true, credible and humane appeals in an orderly, articulate presentation well remembered, and can deliver that invented, ordered, articulate, remembered presentation well through public speech.

The QEP task force worked with faculty, staff, and students to identify broad but comprehensive learning outcomes which could adapt to a variety of disciplines across the university. Through this work, the task force identified the following learning outcomes:

## QEP Learning outcomes

1. Students will be able to invent a true, credible and humane appeal in any rhetorical situation that demonstrates the five canons of the rhetorical tradition - invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery—with sustained attention to delivery or public speaking.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to support their spoken appeal, analyses or arguments with appropriate evidence and examples.
3. Students will effectively use rhetorical communication techniques (such as eye contact, appropriate language, voice modulation, and confident delivery) tailored to the topic, setting, and audience and of appropriate length.
4. Students will respond in fitting and meaningful ways to questions and/or comments from the audience.

Over the course of the QEP, the following key actions will assist the university in meeting these outcomes.

- Create a Center for Rhetoric and Public Speaking, directed by a faculty member experienced in the teaching and practice of rhetoric and public speaking, Develop a one-credit course on rhetoric and public speaking to be offered each semester, taught by the Center faculty, which will teach the basics of rhetoric, speech, topic development, and communication techniques.
- Create public speaking fellowships for current members of the faculty whose courses have a public speaking component who will further develop their courses to teach public speaking as part of the curriculum.
- Through the Center for Rhetoric and Public Speaking, offer faculty development activities to support teaching and assessment of the concepts included in this QEP.
- Provide co-curricular activities for students to improve their public speaking skills, including speech contests, student colloquia, and research presentations.

A QEP dedicated to the art of rhetoric with a focus on public speaking supports and helps the University fulfill its stated mission, which is a dedication to the pursuit of wisdom, of truth, and of virtue as the proper and primary ends of education. The University seeks to educate its students so they may develop the intellectual and moral virtues, prepare themselves for life and work in a problematic and changing world, and become leaders able to act responsibly for their own good and for the good of their family, community, country, and church. Strong public speaking and presentation skills are essential to this pursuit. These skills allow students to bring their UD education and experience to the wider community and will help them thrive in their life after graduation.

## UD Speaking Assessment Rubric

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Course name \_\_\_\_\_  
Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one number (1-5) for each category with 5 being the highest. This form may be helpful at the end of term when the final Assessment Report is submitted to the QEP Implementation Committee. Please see the following pages for details on how to assess each category.

### **Invention (SLO #1, 2, 3)**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Clarifies the topic or question at hand.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Offers credible response to topic or question.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Supports the response with specific examples from primary texts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Considers and responds to insights from secondary scholarship.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Relies on coherent logic.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Topic addresses concern that is relevant to occasion.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Average Score** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Organization (SLO #1,2)**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Has a clear beginning, middle and end.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Offers and follows a concise outline.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Structure has a logical arrangement.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Includes clear transitions between points. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Appropriate length for the assignment.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Average Score** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Style (SLO #1)**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Uses correct grammar.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Employs varied sentence structures.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Uses appropriate word choice for the topic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Prose is concise and clear.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Utilizes vivid language.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Average Score** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Memory (SLO #1,4)**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Limits referral to notes when speaking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Average Score** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Delivery (SLO #1,3)**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Maintains appropriate amount of eye contact.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Modulates voice at appropriate volume and pitch throughout.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Speaks clearly and confidently with proper diction.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Body language and posture are confident and professional.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Paces speech in a manner that is easy to understand.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Uses gestures to clarify and emphasize ideas.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Demonstrates attentiveness to the audience's response.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Responds thoughtfully and respectfully to audience questions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Average Score** \_\_\_\_\_

# Speaking Assessment Rubric Details

## Invention:

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Average (3)	Above Average (4)	Excellent (5)
<b>1. Clarifies the topic or question at hand.</b>	No sense of purpose	Purpose/thesis/preview vague	Purpose/thesis understandable	Thesis statement/preview clear	Thesis statement/preview clear and smoothly integrated
<b>2. Offers credible response to topic or question.</b>	Provided no credibility	Provided some credibility	Proved credibility	Provided reason why you can speak on this topic	Proved authority to speak on this topic
<b>3. Supports the response with specific examples from primary texts</b>	Sources not credible; no sources; details and figures incorrect	Some sources lacked credibility; sources not integrated; details and statistics sketchy; examples general or vague	Sources integrated; details and statistics understandable	Sources credibility established and somewhat integrated; details and statistics relevant, accurate, and appropriate	Sources fully integrated and added credibility; clearly enhanced speech; details and statistics effectively used
<b>4. Considers and responds to insights from secondary scholarship.</b>	Does not appear to have considered or responded to any insights. Lacks reference to or acknowledgment of relevant scholarly work.	Consideration of insights from secondary scholarship is minimal and inconsistent. Not effectively integrated into presentation.	Engagement with secondary scholarship is moderate. Some insights are incorporated but not consistently strong.	Good level of consideration and response to insights. Evidence of integration and thoughtful response. Enhances depth and credibility.	Engagement with secondary scholarship is exemplary. Effectively considers and responds to wide range of secondary sources, demonstrating deep understanding of relevant scholarly work.
<b>5. Relies on coherent logic.</b>	Lacks any discernible logical flow. Appears disorganized and disjointed. Ideas are presented randomly. Difficult to follow speaker's line of thought.	Logical flow is minimal. Some organization but inconsistent and at times confusing.	Attempt at logical flow is evident, but flow is not consistent throughout the presentation. Audience may struggle to follow.	Commendable effort at logical flow. Majority of ideas and points are logically connected, providing clarity and coherence to audience.	Organization of thoughts and ideas is exemplary. Logical flow is apparent, making it easy for audience to follow speaker's line of thought. High level of coherence.
<b>6. Topic addresses concern that is relevant to the occasion.</b>	The topic is unrelated to the occasion and fails to address any concerns or issues at hand.	Topic loosely related to occasion, but lacks clear connection to concerns or topics at hand. Choice of topic may be out of place.	Topic has some relevance and touches on some issues of concern but does not full address or engage with them.	Topic is relevant. Addresses concerns that are relevant to the context, creating a connection that is appropriate.	Topic is highly relevant to the occasion. Effectively addresses specific concerns and issues that are of utmost relevance.

**Organization:**

	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Above Average (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
<b>1. Has a clear introduction, middle and end.</b>	Failed to convey a coherent introduction, body, and conclusion.	Not clear when the introduction ends, when the argument begins, and when the end approaches.	Introduction, middle, and end are distinguishable as parts.	Introduction establishes a problem, middle demonstrates a solution, and end offers significance of that solution.	Introduction captures attention, middle offers convincing solution, and end offers unique insight into significance of solution.
<b>2. Offers and follows a concise outline.</b>	No outline provided at beginning of speech and none followed thereafter.	Outline provided but not followed.	General outline provided and possible to follow.	Specific outline provided, and parts correspond in order.	Specific outline provided concisely with key terms emphasized, and parts with those terms correspond exactly to that order.
<b>3. Structure has a logical arrangement.</b>	No clear logic to the arrangement.	Logic to arrangement exists, but not sufficiently easy to follow.	Arrangement is logical and easy to follow.	Arrangement is logical, easy to follow, and persuasive.	Arrangement is logical, easy to follow, persuasive.
<b>4. Includes clear transitions between points.</b>	Transitions not used or transitions are abrupt.	Transitions not fully developed or sometimes abrupt.	Most transitions effective	All transitions effective	Transitions masterfully tied ideas together
<b>5. Appropriate length for the assignment.</b>	Presentation is far too long or far too short.	Presentation is just a bit long or just a bit too short.	Presentation is about the right length.	Presentation falls within the allotted time.	Presentation falls within the allotted time and covers all necessary insights to secure a persuasive argument.

**Style:**

	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Above Average (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
<b>1. Uses correct grammar.</b>	Failed to use proper grammatically structured language; Audience is distracted by multiple grammatical errors that obscure the meaning of the presentation	Frequent grammatical errors are still present; Grammatical errors at times still obscure the meaning of the presentation	Oral language is mostly clear of grammatical errors and slang, but some errors are still present; Little variety in grammatical structures	Little to no errors in grammatical structure are present and those that are do not obscure the meaning of the presentation	Presentation includes accurate and variety of grammatical structures; No grammatical errors are present
<b>2. Employs varied sentence structures.</b>	Sentences are incomplete and halting. Rambling. Sentence structure is limited and inappropriate	Sentences are inconsistent in using precise structures; Presentation is not well executed due to the lack of flow between one sentence to the next	For the most part, sentences are complete and grammatical structured well but do not include a precise use of language in the structure of the sentences	Sentences are complete and varied for the most part and flow together smoothly, but are not consistent in their expression of the intended meaning	Sentences are well structured, complete, and flow together smoothly and express the intended meaning precisely

<b>3. Uses appropriate word choice for the topic.</b>	Word choice is unfamiliar or unrelated to the topic; Jargon, slang, and misused words are present and acronyms are overused or undefined; Many words are mispronounced	Word choice is limited; Some unfamiliar words, jargon, and misused words are present; Acronyms are not defined and there are too many subject/verb errors and mispronounced words	Presentation includes suitable word choices; Acronyms are defined as needed and there are little to none subject/verb errors; Few mispronounced words	Good, diverse word choice is present throughout the entire presentation; Action verbs and nouns convey ideas well and there are little to no mispronounced words	Presentation uses strong and appropriate word choice; There are no mispronounced words or undefined acronyms;
<b>4. Prose is concise and clear.</b>	Presentation does not follow a natural flow of speaking and uses informal expressions of language; Lacks clarity; Presenter does not demonstrate an understanding of the meaning or mood or tone of the topic.	Little natural flow of speaking is followed and multiple uses of informal or inappropriate language are present; Some understanding of meaning and mood/tone are present but not well placed throughout the presentation	Some of the presentation is concise and clear but is disjointed in its expression of language and movement of speaking.	Most of the presentation offers clarity, coherence, and organization but is not fully developed. Overall movement of speaking flows well.	Presentation is fully developed in clarity, coherence, and organization; Natural flow of speaking is present and enhances the communication of the topic and informs/entertains the audience.
<b>5. Utilizes vivid language.</b>	Presentation offers weak language control and what is used does not match the topic or task of the presentation	Presentation lacks vivid and diverse language with some thought lacking in choosing vocabulary that matches the presentation's topic	Adequate language control is present in most parts of the presentation but overall vocabulary range is lacking	Vocabulary range is good overall and includes some well chosen vocabulary but is not as diverse as it could be	Presenter has excellent control of language that includes a wide-range of well chosen vocabulary

#### Memory:

	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Above Average (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
<b>Limits referral to notes when speaking.</b>	Read the entire speech.	Mostly reading the speech.	Frequent referral to notes.	Some referral to notes.	Occasional referral to notes.

**Delivery:**

	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Above Average (4)</b>	<b>Excellent (5)</b>
<b>1. Maintains appropriate amount of eye contact.</b>	Little or no eye contact.	Eye contact with one part of the audience; many people left out.	Eye contact systematic; nearly all included.	Eye contact involved everyone but favored some.	Eye contact direct and impartial.
<b>2. Modulates voice at appropriate volume and pitch throughout.</b>	Much too loud or quiet; poor pace.	Pitch or volume too low or too high; monotone; problem pace.	Some variation of rate, pitch, volume and pace.	Good variation of rate, pitch, volume and pace.	Excellent mix of rate, volume, pitch and pace; used for emphasis.
<b>3. Speaks clearly and confidently with proper diction and avoids "fillers."</b>	Fillers very distracting. Speech lacks clarity.	Fillers often distracting.	6-7 fillers.	2-3 fillers; detracted little.	Planned pauses only; no fillers.
<b>4. Body language and posture are confident and professional.</b>	Rocked back and forth; lectern bound; stiff	Paced; movement without purpose; constant movement to and from the lectern	Most movement purposeful	Movement with purpose	Body movement free and purposeful; used the space
<b>5. Paces speech in a manner that is easy to understand.</b>	Much too loud or quiet; poor pace	Pitch or volume too low or too high; monotone; problem pace	Some variation of rate, pitch, volume and pace	Good variation of rate, pitch, volume and pace	Excellent mix of rate, volume, pitch and pace; used for emphasis
<b>6. Uses gestures to clarify and emphasize ideas.</b>	No gestures; hands locked on hips, lectern, notes or in pockets	Gestures poorly timed; appeared preplanned; distracting	Gestures adequate	Gestures helped clarify and show emphasis; most were natural	Gestures used to clarify and emphasized ideas natural
<b>7. Demonstrates attentiveness to the audience's response.</b>	Reading the room...Lacks connection with audience, speaks at them, not engaging	little connection with audience, does not read audience cues	some adjustments to increase connection with audience	some resonance, makes some adjustments to the particular audience	Resonates with audience, speaks to them and adjusts speaking as necessary, audience is engaged
<b>8. Responds thoughtfully and respectfully to audience questions and remarks.</b>	Doesn't answer the question or acknowledge remarks.	Responds too briefly to comments or questions.	Responds appropriately to audience questions/remarks.	Answers questions thoroughly but doesn't inspire further remarks.	Answers questions and expands upon thoughts/ideas by incorporating audience remarks. Invites dialogue.