

Adjust oral assessments for student success

Summary

Some students may find presenting oral assessments difficult for a variety of reasons. These could include social anxiety, stuttering, or language difficulties and may lead to students avoiding and/or underachieving when making oral presentations. Being flexible about how students present oral tasks can make the difference between accurate or inaccurate assessment performance. Offering alternatives, such as having the student audiotape or video their presentation at home or present to the teacher alone, will assist these students to accurately demonstrate their academic abilities.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers related to this practice

- 1.5 – differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 4.1 - support student participation
- 5.1 - assess student learning

For further information, see [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers AITSL page](#)

Preparing to Teach

By taking away the oral presentation part of the assessment, students are better able to demonstrate what they have learnt.

When identifying which adjustments you will discuss with the student, take into account the students' strengths, their level of language ability, their anxiety and self-confidence.

Examples of adjustments include:

- submit a script of their PowerPoint presentation
- submit a PowerPoint presentation only
- have a peer present the presentation that the student has prepared.

Once a student has gained confidence, use a 'step ladder' approach, and discuss the following options with the student:

- the student presents a shorter presentation to the class
- the student films the presentation at home and submits it as a digital file
- the student presents the assignment only to the teacher or to a small group of peers that the student trusts.

Remember to explicitly teach students how to prepare for and conduct the adapted oral presentation.

It is also worthwhile considering some of these options for a variety of students who typically would avoid oral assessments.



- Consider if an oral presentation is suitable. To facilitate student success, it may be more appropriate to meet the learning outcomes through alternative assessment options.
- Write down the adjustments that students can choose between.
- Use exemplars of the assessment adjustments while presenting these as choices to the student (see practice: [Create assignment exemplars](#)).

It works better if...

- students are provided with regular feedback and corrective opportunities
- students are consulted about the types of assessment tasks they prefer.

It doesn't work if...

- students feel inferior or stigmatised for not doing oral assessments
- students are not offered a choice of assessment options.

In the classroom

Step 1: Discuss options

Present the possible options for adjustments:

- script with their PowerPoint presentation
- PowerPoint presentation only
- shorter presentation to the class
- film the presentation at home
- present to the teacher only
- present to a small group of safe peers.

Students choose their preferred way to present the oral assignment.

Step 2: Provide written task instruction

Provide a written task instruction outlining the adjusted task.

Step 3: Provide explicit instruction

Provide explicit instruction on how to plan and structure oral presentations to all students. For example, how to prepare prompts.

Step 4: Provide feedback and positive reinforcement

Provide feedback and positive reinforcement for students who attempt oral assessments (see practice: [Respond constructively to student behaviour](#)).





inclusion ED
supporting diverse learners

PRACTICE BRIEF

Materials informing this practice

Article: [Sample accommodations for anxious kids](#), WorryWiseKids.org. Brought to you by The Children's and Adult Center for OCD and Anxiety.

Article: [Anxiety at school: autistic children and teenagers](#), (last updated 24 August 2021) Raising Children network.

