

# Developing successful presentation skills: Using self and peer evaluations

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## Quick Guide

**Key Words:** Presentation skills, self and peer assessment, cooperative work, reflection, autonomy

**Learner English level:** Low-intermediate to advanced

**Learner Maturity Level:** High school to adult

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Self and peer assessment sheets, Reflections on peer-assessment sheets

特にスピーキングコースでの、自己及び仲間への評価に関する研究はまだ余りなされていません。発表者は自己及び仲間評価の発表能力への影響や学生のその評価に対する反応について調査しました。参加者達は大学の必修科目の28人の学生でした。彼等は発表の一週間前に発表能力の基準について議論し、次の週にその基準に基づき自己及び仲間評価を行いました。仲間に対する評価に関する態度についても自己評価しました。学生達は自分の発表能力を磨くために自己評価のリストをゴールとして利用しました。学生は最初仲間を評価したりコメントを述べたりする事を躊躇していましたが、後に喜んでするようになりました。それは「評価し助言をする事は友達を助ける事になるだろう。」という、仲間への評価に対する新しいアプローチで、友達のためになるよう積極的に評価やコメントを述べることを動機付けられたのかもかもしれません。

I have often heard that teachers who work at universities, language schools, and companies find it a formidable task to teach Japanese students to deliver high quality classroom presentations. Those teachers said that students tended to read their manuscripts and speak in subdued voices, which made it difficult to decipher what they were saying. The students must have suffered from stage fright, and they went back to their seats as soon as they finished their presentations. Students did not realize what the purpose of giving a presentation was and what they should do to make their presentation successful. Many students

are passive learners, and it has been said that to be a part of Japanese culture, people are not encouraged to stand out in a crowd. It may be considered to result from a “general shyness among Japanese students to take risks” (Hayashi & Cherry, 2004, p.8). Perhaps for that reason, when Japanese students stand up in front of others, they tend to read their manuscript in the same way that others do.

Self- and peer-assessment, however, may help students to develop presentation skills. Self- and peer-evaluations build learner awareness and autonomy (Armanet, & Obese-jecty, 1981; Balint, Bodner, & Nachi, 2003; Brown, & Hudson, 1998; McNamara, & Deane, 1995; Yada, Wakui, & Yui, 2005). Nunan (1998) states that students become aware of themselves critically and learn new skills by virtue of self-assessment (p.116). “Self-assessment, peer-involvement and peer-assessment have been viewed as having significant pedagogic value” (Patri, 2002, p.109), because teacher assessments could be augmented with peer assessment, and teachers’ time could be used more productively in this way (p.125). Teachers who do not value peer assessment may be reluctant to use peer assessment, considering that it lacks effectiveness, or due to time restrictions or previous unsuccessful experiences with this technique. Students may hesitate to offer comments on their peers’ performances. However, “well-articulated and purposeful peer response activities can be beneficial” (Hansen & Liu, 2005, p.32). This approach can be successful when there is a sufficient description of the purpose, reasons, and procedures.

In a required course entitled “Current Affairs” at Keisen University, a private university in Tokyo, 28 female students experienced self- and peer-assessments for the first time.

Students said that they had not had any prior experience with these kinds of assessments, and one said that it was interesting and that she had never experienced it before. The students spent two days, in total, discussing what they thought they should do to make their presentations successful. At the beginning of the class, the teacher offered examples of undesirable presentation techniques, and the students were expected to become aware of the qualities required of a good presenter through these. Students then discussed the qualities first in pairs, and then in larger groups of three or four students for fifteen minutes, respectively. They presented their ideas individually to the class, in sessions which lasted about thirty minutes for all the students to be able to present. They were also gradually led to realize the importance of learning on their own through repeated discussions in experiencing self- and peer-assessments. By doing so, students could discuss the weak or strong points of presenters in detail, and give them advice or suggestions, if they had any. Rollinson (2005) states that “peer feedback, with its potentially high level of response and interaction . . . can encourage a collaborative dialogue in which two-way feedback is established, and meaning is negotiated between the two parties” (p.25). I analyzed students’ comments qualitatively and analyzed the ratings that students gave quantitatively.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** A week before each presentation, have students discuss some of the best ways of giving a presentation. Write the standards that they propose on the board.

**Step 2:** Prepare self and peer assessment worksheets, based

on the standards that the students had set during the previous week, as in Appendices A and B. The two worksheets were the same except for the titles and names.

**Step 3:** Reflections on peer-assessment worksheets based on the table of Fujita (2001, p. 210) for the last day of the course, in order to facilitate students' reflections on peer-assessment.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** As it takes time for 28 students to fill in two kinds of assessments and interviews in one day, students were given two days for presentations from which they could choose.

**Step 2:** Choose assessors from groups with the same number of students. Assign a partner to each presenter to assess the presentation. Each presenter is supposed to be observed and assessed, one on one. It is not recommended that the students observe and assess all of the other students because it seems too laborious for them to concentrate on everyone in the class.

**Step 3:** Since students form groups according to interests, the number of students in a group may vary. Find volunteers to assess the groups which have more students in a group and give special points to the volunteers for their participation.

**Step 4:** Tell students that everyone is to write their name on the assessment sheet so as to accept responsibility for the assessment.

**Step 5:** Tell all of the students to assess themselves as soon as they finish their presentations. A few minutes can be given to do this.

**Step 6:** After assessing their assigned presenters, tell assessors to meet with their presenters to talk about their presenter's performance to give them advice or suggestions. At that time, instruct the students to provide comments which may be helpful to the presenters, rather than simply praising or criticizing their presentations.

**Step 7:** Each student conducts steps one through six for the first and second presentations, in total, two times during the course.

**Step 8:** On the last day of the course, distribute a questionnaire to all students to critically reflect on the peer-assessment experience (See Appendix C).

### Findings and conclusions

Overall, the ratings that students provided and the comments in the questionnaires showed positive attitudes toward this assessment system. Students wrote in their comments that they identified their next goals by checking items on the list. They discovered that giving presentations was not only for themselves, but also for their audience. They understood that visual materials were important to help people to understand and enjoy the content. Table 1, for example, shows that the students rating of visual materials was 1.42 in the first self-assessment (item 9 in Appendix A & B), and 4.07 for the second assessment. They gave ratings of 1.58 and 4.94 for the peer-assessment as shown in Table 2. During the first presentation, I observed that they simply read what they had prepared, but they looked up and smiled during the second presentation. In addition, the comments on all the questionnaires were analyzed and students offered a greater

variety of comments of the second presentation than those of the first. Also, students wrote that they learned a new approach through peer assessment, as they had been advised to assess their peers in order to help them, and they were willing to be of help to their peers by giving comments.

Using the self-assessment worksheets, the students clearly identified their goals to become successful presenters. They discovered their own weaknesses by checking items on the list on the worksheets (Yada et al., 2005, p.6), and focused on overcoming those shortcomings. They used self-assessment as an “embedded assessment,” which emphasizes effort as an aid to self-improvement (O’Keefe, 1999, p.5). The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate, but the students used the worksheets to establish goals and to make efforts to achieve these.

They found that the peer assessment was also helpful for improving their own presentations. They learned that assessing the presentations of others benefited the development of their own presentation skills. When they assessed and provided comments to others, they were expected to maintain a serious attitude and keep in mind what a good presentation is supposed to be like. Students were expected to write freely in the section marked “Any comments” at the end of “Reflections on peer assessments” (See Appendix C). Some of the examples were: I can see myself objectively; I can work on my own weakness; I can better myself; I think assessing others is beneficial to us. When we evaluated others, almost all of us got serious. In order to evaluate others; we had to listen to the presentations

Table 1. Scores and differences between the first and second self-assessments

	Items evaluated												
Presentation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Avg.
First	3.79	3.50	4.04	3.33	2.08	3.29	4.42	3.79	1.42	3.96	1.38	4.29	3.27
Second	3.85	3.19	3.78	3.00	2.00	3.07	4.37	3.78	4.07	4.19	3.44	4.26	3.58
Difference	0.06	-0.31	-0.26	-0.33	-0.08	-0.22	-0.05	-0.01	2.66	0.23	2.07	-0.03	0.31

Table 2. Scores and differences between the first and second peer-assessments

	Items evaluated												
Presentation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Avg.
First	4.35	4.35	4.65	3.92	2.46	3.88	4.69	4.38	1.58	4.12	1.77	4.88	3.75
Second	4.53	4.29	4.71	4.00	3.18	3.94	5.00	4.76	4.94	4.76	4.76	5.06	4.50
Difference	0.18	-0.05	0.05	0.08	0.71	0.06	0.31	0.38	3.36	0.65	3.00	0.17	0.74

carefully. They were reluctant to assess and give feedback to their peers after the first presentation, but they were willing to do so after the second presentation. This may have been because, at that point, they had realized the value of providing comments.

The students' comments in the questionnaires revealed that self- and peer-assessments provided them with a number of benefits in terms of learning the purpose of giving a presentation and truly understanding what constitutes a good presentation. First, the students became aware of their aims - what they were required to do in order to present their views well - by ticking off the items on the self-assessment worksheets. As they considered the items on the self-assessment lists, students wrote in their comments in the questionnaire that they became aware of what their weak points were and what they needed to do to overcome their weaknesses. The students said that they were motivated to learn more and became autonomous learners by repeatedly reflecting on their performances. As Yada et al. (2005) conclude, self-assessment was used not only for the learners to assess themselves, but also to encourage them to be aware of and to feel responsible for what they were supposed to do to improve their skills. Student comments were classified into 14 kinds related to feelings of regret and hope on the first self-assessment sheet, such as: I was tense; I did not make enough eye contact; I should have prepared visual materials. After the second presentations, there were 17 kinds of comments, with more detailed and concrete explanations than in the first self-assessments. The students had some regrets about their presentations, but they tried to find solutions through reflection. "We had to do a lot of

preparation; If I could speak more fluently, I could make a better presentation." They also felt fulfillment, as in: "Our presentation was more successful than before." In addition, they became more motivated and determined to work harder: "I want to master presentation skills."

Second, the students perceived that assessing their peers, in fact, helped them learn how to improve their own presentation skills, according to their comments. The students recognized that the purpose of giving a presentation was to convey their own messages to the audience. Through their experiences acting as assessors, the students realized that the audience wants to understand what the presenters hope to communicate, and they developed greater interest in what their counterparts were explaining than they might have if they had not been actively assessing the presentations. Many of them mentioned that they found it necessary to seriously pay attention to what messages the presenters were trying to convey. I had not mentioned the benefits of peer assessment to my students at all, but they discovered the benefits themselves and many students pointed out possible benefits.

Third, the students learned the value of giving comments to their peers. They understood that they were expected to collaborate to make their presentations successful. They learned a new way to assess others, in which giving comments would not mean simply praising or criticizing, but in fact offering help to their friends. They mentioned that the idea of helping their peers motivated them to provide comments that might be useful for their friends' future improvement. The students sought to be critical in the peer assessment so that their comments would be helpful to their friends. The students

not only ticked off the items on the list, but also provided numerous encouraging comments to their peers, as if they had been their teachers. That may have occurred because they aimed to be sincere to their peers. The students have learned that trying to help to improve the peers' presentations would benefit both their peers and themselves. At first, students said they were hesitant about assessing others, but they enjoyed the system during the second presentation. The students responded quite positively and rated it 3.79 on the average (Item 6 in Appendix C) as in Figure 1.

Attitudes toward peer Assessment							
evaluation							
Students	1	2	3	4	5	6	Avg.
1	3	4	5	4	4	2	3.67
2	5	2	4	3	5	5	4.00
3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
4	5	2	2	3	4	5	3.50
5	5	2	3	2	5	5	3.67
6	3	3	4	2	5	3	3.33
7	4	2	4	4	4	4	3.67
8	4	2	3	3	4	4	3.33
9	5	3	4	4	4	4	4.00
10	4	3	3	3	3	3	3.17
11	4	3	4	4	4	3	3.67
12	3	2	3	2	4	3	2.83
13	4	4	4	3	4	4	3.83

14	3	4	5	1	2	3	3.00
15	5	5	5	2	5	5	4.50
16	4	3	5	2	4	3	3.50
17	4	3	3	3	4	3	3.33
18	3	4	3	3	4	3	3.33
Average	3.84	3.00	3.74	2.95	4.11	3.79	3.57

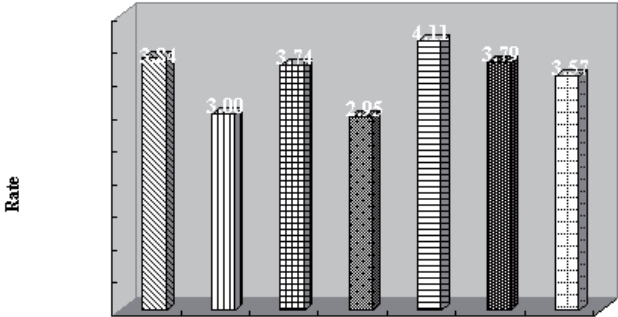


Figure 1. Reflections of the peer-assessments

The students agreed that their peers' judgment was reliable and rated it 4.11 on the average (Item 5 in Appendix C), and they consented to the proposition that the peer assessment be reflected in the final grade and marked this 3.84 in item 1 (Appendix C). They were more critical of themselves than of their peers (3.74 in Item 3 versus 2.85 in Item 4). In the last assessment the students were more critical of themselves than of their peers (compared with the first assessment). The comments were more detailed, and included ideas and additional topics. One student wrote: "Marking should be

based on a variety of opinions.” Others had learned the importance of assessing others. “What is important is the effort to evaluate someone’s performance properly.” It was great that the students also understood the aim of the peer-assessment. Some students went on to claim that they would rather hear critical comments than simple compliments. “Since only compliments are usually given, as our teacher said, I want others to evaluate my performance a little more critically.” Others became more aware of the significance of presentations: “What is important in giving a presentation is that it should be done not only for our own satisfaction, but also for others to understand.” I believe they have learned the real purpose of presentations by experiencing peer assessment. Students in each group helped each other to organize their presentations in a group and they assessed each other in order to improve their own skills and those of others. They became enthusiastically involved in making assessments and felt responsible to themselves and to their peers. One can infer from this result that all in all, the students demonstrated a high level of autonomy through the activities in the course.

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## Appendix A

1. Self-assessments 自己評価											
						Your name (貴方の名前):					
	Circle the number that matches your opinion. 当てはまると思う番号に丸を付けましょう。										
						Disagree (いいえ)		agree (はい)			
Voice Control (声の調整)											
1	The presenter's voice was clear. 発表者の声は、はっきりしていた。					1	2	3	4	5	
2	The presenter spoke fluently. 発表者は流暢に話した。					1	2	3	4	5	
Body Language (体による言語表現)											
3	The presenter had good posture (stood straight). 発表者はいい姿勢だった(真っ直ぐ立っていた)。					1	2	3	4	5	
4	The presenter used good eye contact with the audience. 発表者は観客と上手に視線を交わした。					1	2	3	4	5	
5	The presenter used appropriate gestures. 発表者はジェスチャーを上手に使っていた。					1	2	3	4	5	
6	The presenter showed her smile. 発表者はリラックスして発表していた。					1	2	3	4	5	
Organization (構成)											
7	The main topic was clear. 主題がはっきりしていた。					1	2	3	4	5	
8	The presentation was easy to understand. 発表は理解し易かった。					1	2	3	4	5	
9	The visual materials were easy to understand. 展示した物は分かり易かった。					1	2	3	4	5	
Impression (印象)											
10	The presentation was instructive and I learned a lot. 発表は有益で多くの事を学んだ。					1	2	3	4	5	
11	The visual materials were enjoyable. 展示した物は楽しめる物だった。					1	2	3	4	5	
12	The presenter was well prepared. 発表者は準備を十分にした。					1	2	3	4	5	



Appendix B

2. Peer-assessments クラスメートによる評価	
Name of presenter (発表者の名前):	Your name (貴方の名前):

Appendix C

Reflections on peer assessments (クラスメートによる評価に対する意見)						
		Your name (貴方の名前):				
	Circle the number that matches your opinion. 当てはまると思う番号に丸を付けましょう。	disagree (いいえ)			agree (はい)	
1	It is good that the final grade reflects peer assessment. クラスメートによる評価が成績に反映することは良い事だ。	1	2	3	4	5
2	It is more fair when the instructor is the only grader. 教師だけが成績をつけることが、より公平だ。	1	2	3	4	5
3	When I evaluated myself, my rating was severe. 自分の評価をした時、私の評価は厳しい。	1	2	3	4	5
4	When I evaluated other peers, I was severe. 他のクラスメートを評価した時、私は厳しい。	1	2	3	4	5
5	Including myself, classmates as raters were reliable. 私を含めて、評価をする人としてクラスメートは信頼できる。	1	2	3	4	5
6	Overall, I like this assessment system. 全体として、私はこの評価方式が好きだ。	1	2	3	4	5