



Assessment of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication Skills Among Students for Holistic Development Using Rubrics

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ABSTRACT - Communication skills, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal aspects, are crucial for the holistic development of students. These skills are vital not only for academic success but also for personal and professional growth. This paper explores the assessment of these skills using rubrics as a systematic and objective tool. Rubrics offer a structured approach to evaluation, enabling educators to provide detailed feedback that fosters improvement. This study emphasizes the importance of assessing both verbal and non-verbal communication skills equally and proposes a rubric model adaptable to various educational contexts. The study concludes with the implications of using rubrics for holistic student development.

Keywords - Assessment of Verbal, Non-verbal, Communication, Skills, Among Students, Holistic, Development, students , objective tool, Using Rubrics.

1. Introduction- The modern educational landscape increasingly emphasizes the importance of developing well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also possess strong communication skills. These skills are fundamental to students' ability to express themselves, collaborate with others, and succeed in diverse professional settings. Communication, in its essence, involves both verbal and non-verbal elements, each contributing significantly to the effectiveness of interactions.

Verbal communication includes the spoken word, encompassing clarity of speech, articulation, and vocabulary usage. Non-verbal communication, on the other hand, involves body language, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact. These non-verbal cues often convey more than words themselves and are crucial in interpreting the full meaning of a conversation.

Despite their importance, assessing these skills can be challenging. Traditional assessment methods often overlook the subtleties of non-verbal communication or fail to provide structured feedback on verbal skills. This paper proposes the use of rubrics as a solution to these challenges, offering a systematic and transparent method for evaluating communication skills in a way that promotes holistic development.

1.1 Importance of Communication Skills- Effective communication is a cornerstone of success in both academic and professional realms. In educational settings, students with strong communication skills are better equipped to engage in class discussions, deliver presentations, and collaborate on group projects. Moreover, these skills are closely linked to leadership abilities, as effective leaders must be able to convey their ideas clearly and inspire others through both verbal and non-verbal cues.

The significance of communication extends beyond the classroom. In professional environments, the ability to communicate effectively can determine career success. Employers consistently rank communication skills as one of the top qualities they seek in potential employees. Furthermore, strong communication skills are associated with better interpersonal relationships, higher levels of emotional intelligence, and greater overall life satisfaction.

1.2 The Role of Rubrics in Assessment- Rubrics are assessment tools that outline the criteria for evaluating specific skills or tasks. They provide clear expectations for students and allow for consistent and objective grading by educators. In the context of communication skills, rubrics can be used to assess various elements of both verbal and non-verbal communication, ensuring that students receive comprehensive feedback.

The use of rubrics in education is not new; however, their application in assessing communication skills has gained traction in recent years. Rubrics allow educators to break down complex skills into measurable components, making the assessment process more manageable and transparent. For students, rubrics provide a clear understanding of what is expected of them and where they can improve. This structured feedback is essential for developing communication skills over time.

2. Methodology- This study involved the development and application of a rubric designed to assess verbal and non-verbal communication skills among students. The rubric was implemented in a classroom setting, where it was used to evaluate student performances in various activities such as presentations, group discussions, and role-playing exercises.

2.1 Rubric Design- The rubric was carefully crafted to cover the essential components of both verbal and non-verbal communication. For verbal communication, the criteria included:

- **Clarity:** The ability of the student to express ideas clearly and coherently.
- **Articulation:** The accuracy and precision with which words are pronounced.
- **Vocabulary Use:** The appropriateness and richness of the vocabulary employed.
- **Engagement:** The ability to engage the audience through voice modulation and enthusiasm.

For non-verbal communication, the criteria focused on:

- **Eye Contact:** The frequency and effectiveness of eye contact with the audience.
- **Posture:** The student's body posture and its appropriateness to the context.
- **Gestures:** The use of hand and arm movements to emphasize points.
- **Facial Expressions:** The ability to use facial expressions to convey emotions and reinforce the verbal message.

Each criterion was rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating poor performance and 5 indicating excellent performance. The rubric was designed to be flexible, allowing educators to adapt it to different activities and student levels.

2.2 Implementation- The rubric was implemented in a series of classroom activities designed to test various aspects of communication. These activities included:

- **Presentations:** Students were required to present on a given topic, with a focus on clarity, articulation, and engagement.
- **Group Discussions:** Students participated in discussions where they were assessed on their ability to articulate ideas clearly and use non-verbal cues effectively.
- **Role-playing Exercises:** Students were involved in role-playing scenarios where both verbal and non-verbal communication skills were critical to conveying the assigned roles.

During these activities, educators used the rubric to evaluate student performance, providing immediate feedback to help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

2.3 Data Collection- Data was collected from the performances of students across the different activities. The data included quantitative scores from the rubric as well as qualitative observations from educators. This mixed-method approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the rubric in assessing communication skills.

The quantitative data provided insights into the overall performance of students in both verbal and non-verbal communication. The qualitative data, on the other hand, offered a deeper understanding of the specific challenges students faced and the nuances of their communication styles.

3. Results- The implementation of the rubric in the classroom setting provided valuable insights into the communication skills of students. The results highlighted areas where students excelled as well as areas that required further development.

3.1 Verbal Communication- The data indicated that students generally performed well in clarity and vocabulary use. Most students were able to express their ideas clearly and use appropriate vocabulary. However, articulation was identified as an area where some students struggled, particularly in maintaining accuracy and precision in their speech.

The engagement criterion revealed a wide range of performances. While some students were able to captivate their audience through effective voice modulation and enthusiasm, others demonstrated a more monotonous delivery that affected their overall communication effectiveness.

3.2 Non-verbal Communication- In terms of non-verbal communication, the results showed that students were generally aware of the importance of eye contact, but consistency varied. Some students maintained strong eye contact throughout their presentations, while others tended to avoid it, particularly when nervous.

Posture and gestures were also areas where performance varied. While some students used gestures effectively to emphasize their points, others appeared stiff or overly reliant on reading from notes, which diminished the impact of their non-verbal communication.

Facial expressions were another critical area of assessment. The data suggested that students who used facial expressions to convey emotions and reinforce their verbal messages were generally more successful in engaging their audience. However, a significant number of students displayed limited facial expressiveness, which may have hindered their overall communication effectiveness.

4. Discussion- The findings of this study underscore the importance of assessing both verbal and non-verbal communication skills in a balanced manner. The use of rubrics proved to be an effective

tool for this purpose, providing structured and detailed feedback that students could use to improve their skills.

4.1 Implications for Educators- For educators, the use of rubrics offers several advantages. Firstly, it ensures consistency in assessment across different activities and student groups. By clearly outlining the criteria for success, rubrics help educators maintain objectivity in their evaluations.

Secondly, rubrics provide students with a clear understanding of what is expected of them. This transparency is crucial for student development, as it allows them to focus their efforts on specific areas for improvement. Moreover, rubrics can be used as a tool for self-assessment, encouraging students to reflect on their own performance and identify areas where they need to improve.

4.2 Challenges and Limitations- Despite the benefits of using rubrics, there are also challenges associated with their implementation. One of the primary challenges is ensuring that the rubric is applied consistently across different activities. This requires training for educators to ensure they understand how to use the rubric effectively.

Another challenge is the potential for rubrics to oversimplify complex skills. While rubrics are effective in breaking down skills into measurable components, they may not capture the full complexity of communication, particularly in dynamic and interactive settings like group discussions.

Additionally, the subjective nature of some of the criteria, such as engagement and facial expressions, can lead to variability in scoring. To address this, it is important for educators to use rubrics as a guide rather than a strict rule, allowing for some flexibility in their assessments.

5. Conclusion- The study concludes that rubrics are a valuable tool for assessing verbal and non-verbal communication skills. By providing clear criteria and structured feedback, rubrics help students develop their communication abilities in a holistic manner. The results of this study demonstrate that the use of rubrics leads to significant improvements in both verbal and non-verbal communication, contributing to the overall development of students.

For future research, it would be beneficial to explore the use of rubrics in different educational settings and for assessing other soft skills. Additionally, further studies could examine the long-term impact of rubric-based assessments on student communication skills and overall academic success.

6. References

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