

DIVERSITY IN DELIVERY

Speaking training for NCEA and Speech New Zealand assessments

The 21st century has seen the restructuring of secondary school qualifications from the old system of School Certificate, University Entrance and Bursary for 5th, 6th and 7th formers, to Levels 1, 2 and 3 for Year 11, 12 and 13 students. Although this introduction of NCEA has been contentious, new innovations are emerging and being absorbed into our national curricula. One of these is the introduction of public speaking credits as a component of English Internal Assessment. It is critical that teachers training their students for Speech New Zealand examinations in all syllabi recognise the fundamental differences in the expectations of NCEA and Speech New Zealand.

In 1964 the New Zealand Speech Board was established to develop versatility in the use of language and oral presentation and performance skills. Thus began the quest for a natural indigenous speaking style that was easily understandable and free from any affectations or habits that would cause ambiguity or embarrassment. Our goal was to foster spoken English language skills that are unique to our human species – that natural conversational style that we see emerging in the kindergarten environment.

Spoken or Written Language

Once a child enters the formal schooling system, they are introduced to the written channel of communication. Thus they learn to become proficient at two entirely different genres of communication – spoken language and written language. Each has its place and its own set of criteria. Not only **do** the two styles differ, they **should** differ. A listener hears a speech only once and must move at the same rate as the speaker delivers it. A reader has time to absorb the information at their own pace and to re-read it where necessary.

Throughout the grade examinations all **Speech New Zealand** students are assessed on their ability to be proficient at **spoken language**. DeVito (2000, p311) says that “spoken language consists of shorter, simpler and more familiar words than does written language”. It has a greater number of personal pronouns, and more personal observation.

However for NCEA assessment school students learn how to craft a speech. The achievement standard requires all Level 1 students to “prepare and present a presentation to the class”. (English 1.7 Internal Assessment Resource, 2008, p2). The Student Instructions state “You will prepare and deliver an oral presentation of at least three minutes to your class and teacher where you explain step by step how to complete a task of your choice”. (p3) There are five tasks the first of which is to choose a demonstration topic. The second task requires students to prepare their script. The third task requires them to write up their script. In Eng/1/7_D6, also for Level 1 Task 3 instructs students to “Write the text of your presentation.” Later on p10 it says “Write

out a final draft of your presentation. Set it out on paper that you have ruled with a 5cm column down the right hand side. When you have written out the presentation you can note the delivery techniques....” This means that all New Zealand school children are taught to script a speech and then work from that written language. In the following Year 12 fewer students elect to do English 2.7 but those who do again are required to write their speech, transfer those words to cue cards and then deliver it to the class. In Year 13 those students who wish to specialise in oral presentations enter for English 3.7 which again requires them to write an essay or research report.

There are four methods of delivery:

- Manuscript speaking
- Memorised speaking
- Impromptu speaking
- Extempore speaking

What our schools are training is speech making or oratory which utilise the first two methods. Students who enter **Speech New Zealand** examinations must be able to demonstrate the second two methods.

Impromptu speaking is where a presentation is given with little or no time for preparation.

Extempore speaking requires preparation, planning, practice but delivery in the speaker’s own words in a conversational manner and with appropriate formality. Words must not be written and memorised.

Students who are fortunate enough to be trained in all four methods of delivery have the advantage of being fitted for any speaking occasion throughout their lives. However, responsible teachers will clarify which of the four methods are required for which assessment. One is not better than the other, but the diversity in delivery must be made clear to the student and then assistance given to help them achieve the required goal for the specific occasion.

References:

DeVito, J.A. (2000). *The Elements of Public Speaking* (7th ed.). New York: Longman.

Ministry of Education (2006, 2007, 2008). *Internal Assessment Resources. English 1.7, 2.7 3.6.*

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