

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC CLARITY IN ENGLISH PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE  
BASED ON STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES  
(A QUANTITATIVE CASE STUDY OF GEORGIAN HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTION)**

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**Abstract**

While rubric-based assessment is widely recognized as essential at the tertiary level, students' perspectives on its value and utility remain underexplored. Previous studies (Chan & Ho, 2019; Taylor et al., 2024) indicate that students do not pay close attention to rubrics. Mostly they claim that there is no point in using one, since professors evaluate students subjectively; or rubrics in general do not explain the criteria or components in a clear or fair way. To address these concerns, a public speaking rubric (PSCR) was given to students to determine and evaluate rubric clarity, usefulness, and fairness in a public speaking course based on their perceptions.

The aim of this study was to measure how the rubric helped them throughout the course. In order to find out what challenges the students faced when utilizing the rubric and what kind of changes they were willing to see in the rubric, specifically for the public speaking course, a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire was designed and a semi-structured interview was conducted among 25 students who completed the course. Pre-test survey results outlined specific problems, such as clarity, excessive number of components, and language used in criteria description. Therefore, the researcher modified the rubric based on the most problematic issues identified by the students. The same 25 students were asked to fill out the post-test survey after the rubric modification in the middle of the studying semester. Follow-up survey findings revealed that students' perceptions of the rubric have changed, as it was rated much higher in comprehension, clarity and usefulness.

**Keywords:** Assessment rubrics, student perceptions, public speaking, rubric clarity, higher education

**Introduction**

Rubric-based assessment is not a new phenomenon in educational field, especially at higher education institutions (HEI) around the world, however students' awareness of its necessity and general understanding of rubric-based assessment is quite poor even in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Rubric-based assessment is one of the most transparent assessment techniques, which allows educators to evaluate their students fairly, under equal conditions; as well as helps students to have a clear grasp of their performance and its grading. The reason for students' lack of awareness of rubric necessity could be attributed to their indifference, neglecting its vitality in the educational field, or a lack of enthusiasm and motivation to scrutinize all the given details in it. However, studies (Chan & Ho, 2019; Taylor et al., 2024) reveal that the majority of reasons that students complain about the lack of rubric's utility are the following: vague criteria descriptions, too many components within the rubric, complicated and unclear language, lack of instruction on how rubrics can be used by students, or how fair they are in grading the students' performance. Moreover, students do not fully analyze the role that rubrics play in peer and self-assessment, having the impression that they are still subjectively assessed. They believe that even

though rubric might provide reasonable grading framework, professors rarely evaluate students' performance solely based on rubric but their subjective and biased attitudes towards them. As a result, this skepticism around the issue made the gap between students and rubric usage even wider than ever before, leaving room for misconceptions or misunderstanding among students raising the question whether rubric is truly transparent, necessary or powerful means of evaluation and grading their performance.

To start with, it has to be mentioned that the first emergence of rubric-based assessment dates back in 1970s, when it was viewed quite skeptically as it had many flaws (Popham, 1997). Later on, rubric based assessment became one of the most crucial and integral part of higher education, and it was widely accepted in various disciplines and subjects among American and European universities, as it was acknowledged to be a measurement tool not only for students' performance standards but also used as a tool for learning enhancement from pedagogical perspective (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). However, the most impactful implementation of rubric-based assessment in teaching/learning procedure was accelerated along with the Bologna Process and Bologna Declaration in 1999, which highlighted its assessment transparency and coherent learning outcome alignment with modern standards in educational systems around the world (Reddy & Andrade, 2010). The benefits and useful impact of rubric-based teaching/learning on academic performance have been proved many times based on numerous researches (Brookhart & Chen, 2015; Greenberg, 2015; Lipnevich, McCallen, Miles, & Smith, 2014; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Reddy & Andrade, 2010; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).

There are various interpretations of the word "rubric". However, the most general and commonly accepted definition of it is a tool for outlining the main features of the assignment and assessing its level of performance quality (Reddy & Andrade, 2010). The main aim of the rubric is to provide students with constructive feedback on their work and evaluate their final performance. Rubric is designed according to three main characteristics: criteria used to evaluate students' performance, different levels of performance quality and a scoring strategy (Popham 1997). Additionally, rubrics are of two different types: analytic and holistic. Analytic rubrics outline evaluation criteria as distinct components, whereas holistic rubrics merge these criteria into comprehensive descriptions of overall performance levels (Brookhart, 2013). Therefore, holistic rubrics are mostly used when assessors/ teachers want to present a student's thorough evaluation of their performance. In other words, holistic rubrics are used for summative assessment, while analytic rubrics are more detail-focused and used for formative assessments, aiming at identifying students' action points that need to be worked on for future performances (Brown, 2018). Rubrics also differ in terms of generic and specific descriptive style depending on the assignment they assess and score. General ones focus on broader competences while specific ones orient on detailed description of the competences tailored to the task (Brookhart, 2013; Tierney & Simon, 2004). However, the style which is more common in educational field is "task-type rubrics" which implies using the same rubric for multiple tasks (Dawson, 2017). Furthermore, there are rubrics which are never shared with students and are used by assessors only. Mainly these types of rubrics are used in summative assessment when the teacher has to decide the final grade for the students, though it remains a debatable issue among educationalists and scholars (Torrance, 2007). Moreover, there are some arguments against sharing rubrics with students due to its complicated structure and nature, claiming that the details in the components and criteria descriptions are sometimes vague and misunderstood by students (Sadler, 2014). Another claim against sharing rubrics with students is that it may disorient students from actual learning and push them towards focusing too much on meeting the criteria on the rubrics and therefore losing the chance of independent and autonomous thinking (Torrance, 2012). In contrast, some rubrics are developed with the help of students, so that teachers and students take equal share and responsibility leading to actual use of the rubrics on almost every lecture. This way students are more aware of the components and the criteria is clearer for them (Reddy & Andrade, 2010). However, it is not always possible due to the lack of expertise in a specific field where students just need to follow teacher-designed guidelines. Therefore, under current research conditions the ready-made rubrics were distributed to the students at the beginning of the course. Despite the fact that the rubric used during the course is well-tested, ready-made guideline for public speaking assessment which has been widely used by different tutors around the world, the research has revealed that there were some minor issues that needed adjustment and improvement based on students' needs and specific requirements in terms of cultural background, proficiency level and the course on offer. The rubric that was chosen for the public speaking course was designed by Lisa Schreiber, with the

name “public speaking competence rubric” (PSCR) (Schreiber et al., 2012). See the appendix A. The same rubric was utilized by the researcher when working on PhD dissertation on public speaking during which interrater reliability was examined. The results showed that the rubric is trustworthy and well interpreted by the assessors (Gadakhbadze, 2022). However, the current research aims to identify the rubric’s comprehensibility from students’ perspective and since it was used as a tool for assessing students’ performance as well as self and peer-assessment, determining practical value of it was essential.

### Methods

There is no ideal rubric that is equally well-adjusted to all types of tasks and can be used in every situation. However, there are some mandatory features that all rubrics should have in common, such as analytical scoring strategy, clear and understandable quality levels, applicability to similar tasks, more descriptive language rather than evaluative one (Jonsson and Panadero, 2016; Brookhart, 2018). As already mentioned above, despite the fact that rubrics are considered as one of the most reliable, objective and transparent means of assessment, many of them fail to be fully exploited equally by students as well as professors. Several studies have revealed students’ negative attitudes towards rubrics due to the confusion and not being able to fully understand the criteria, feeling overwhelmed over the number of components, or language being too technical, vague and academic (Dawson, 2017; Jonsson, 2014; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Reddy & Andrade, 2010; Reynolds-Keefer, 2010; Andrade & Du, 2005). Therefore, the main aim of the current study was to examine how comprehensible and accessible the PSCR was for the students enrolled in the public speaking course. Ultimately, the research questions were formulated as follows: to what extent do students understand the value of the rubric, do they find rubrics helpful in self and peer- assessment and how comprehensible are the criteria in PSCR?

In order to find answers to these questions the research was carried out in one of the Georgian Higher educational institutions, specifically over a newly added course in the university curriculum, public speaking for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. 25 students were asked to read the rubric assessment criteria and reflect back on the issues that they found challenging at the beginning of the course. Since the course contained similar assignments, more specifically, public speaking performance-based tasks, the same rubric (PSCR) was used for formative as well as summative assessment. Besides, the same rubric was used for peer and self assessment. At a pre-test stage, at the beginning of the course, the respondents were asked to evaluate the rubric based on their understanding. They were provided with the questionnaire and after analyzing the criteria in the rubric, they responded to close-ended and several open- ended questions in the survey. The feedback showed that despite the fact that students acknowledged the necessity of the rubric and appreciated the crucial value of the rubric-based assessment in their academic development and self-regulated learning, they expressed similar concerns as in the studies mentioned above, such as structural complexity, vague and unclear performance descriptors and excessive number of components. Therefore, the researcher focused on refinement of certain elements to create more detailed, comprehensible and a clearer rubric for the course. As a result, 11 components of the original rubric (PSCR) were merged into 6 thematically coherent ones, complex academic language that caused confusion among students was simplified, scoring system was also altered from 0-4 to 1-5 which enhanced students’ clarity. Additionally, some cultural and EFL aspects were taken into consideration, considering the fact that the original rubric was mostly adjusted to Western academic context and did not fully reflect the specificities that Georgian students might face when communicating in a foreign language. After the fine adjustments to the rubric, it was redistributed among the same students on the course, which showed dramatic improvement in satisfaction level, proved by the data of comparative analysis collected at pre and post-test stages, at the beginning and in the middle of the course.

### Results

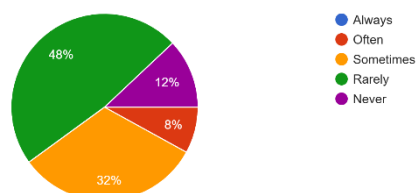
Research findings reveal that despite the fact that all 25 students were fully satisfied with the course per se at pre as well as at post-test stages, at the beginning they showed low enthusiasm in using the rubric due to the limited comprehension of it. Since the first research question (RQ1) aimed at finding out how well students understand the value of the rubric, Q.14 was asked in the google survey “To what extent do you agree with the following statement? - rubric helped me to understand why I received my grades”. The response showed that the majority of the respondents (56%, n=14) stayed

quite neutral, choosing 3 on a 5-point Likert scale, 24% (n=6) rated it at 2, which means that they negatively responded to this question and only 20% (n=5) rated it at 4, which is not very high. None of them chose 5, the highest and most positive marker, which suggests that they did not fully grasp the practical value of the rubric, claiming that the professor's remarks were much clearer and comprehensive rather than rubric descriptions. The claim can be made stronger by analyzing the responses for Q.17 "Did you feel the rubric evaluated the most important aspects of public speaking?" where only one respondent (4%) agreed completely, 20% (n=5) agreed, 48% (n=12) agreed only to some extent, and 28% (n=7) did not agree, proving the fact that they do not fully perceive importance of rubric.

As for the second research question (RQ2): "Do students find rubrics helpful in self and peer-assessment?" was checked through Q.9, which asked about the frequency of rubric usage for their own speech preparation. The results revealed that almost half of the respondents rarely 48%(n=12) and never 12% (n=3) consulted the rubric, which indicates at quite a big gap between students and rubric utilization. See the chart 1 below.

**Chart 1. Representation of the results in percentage on question N 9 from the survey- google forms.**

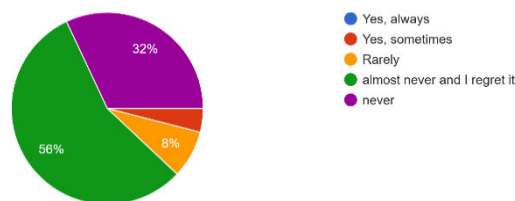
9. How often did you consult the rubric when preparing your speeches?  
25 responses



The similar results were revealed from Q.21 where students were asked whether they compared or not their self-assessment to the rubric-based scores, where the majority reported with negative markers: 56% of respondents (n=14) reported almost never did so and regretted this, 32% (n=8) said they never did so, 8% (n=2) rarely did so and only one student (4%) reported doing but sometimes not always. See the chart 2 below.

**Chart 2. Representation of the results in percentage on question N 21 from the survey- google forms.**

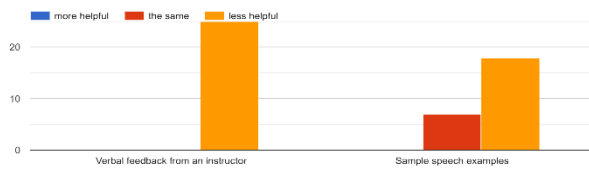
21. Did you compare your self-assessment to the instructor's rubric scores?  
25 responses



When asked Q.15 whether the rubric was more or less helpful than verbal feedback from an instructor, all 25 respondents (100%) rated it as less helpful. As for the helpfulness index of rubric compared to sample speech examples, the results showed that 72% (n=18) rated the rubric as less helpful, 28% (n=7) rated it as equivalent to it, no one found the rubric more helpful than either alternative. See the chart 3 below.

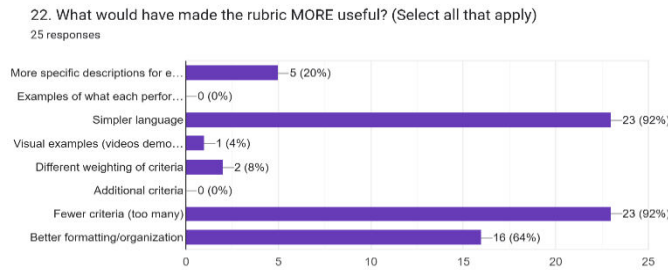
**Chart 3. Representation of the results on question N 15 from the survey- google forms.**

15. How helpful was the rubric compared to



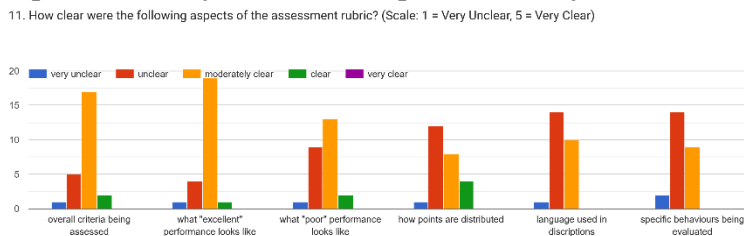
When asking “ what would have made the rubric more useful?” in Q. 22 the responses varied from simpler language 92% (n=23), requesting fewer criteria 92% (n=23), and better formatting / organisation 64% (n=16) to requiring specific descriptions for each performance level 20% (n=5). Overall evaluation of the feedback clearly indicates that the PSCR in its initial form is not helpful for students’ self and peer assessment, nor is it for their full comprehension. See the chart 4 below.

**Chart 4. Representation of the results in percentage on question N 22 from the survey- google forms.**



As expected, the RQ 3, “how comprehensible are the criteria in PSCR” turned out to be most problematic, meaning that the majority of students found the criteria incomprehensible. According to Q.11 that asked students “How clear were the following aspects of the assessment rubric? (Scale: 1 = Very Unclear, 5 = Very Clear)”, the highest-rated aspects were “overall criteria being assessed” and “what excellent performance looks like” with average Mean of 2.80 for both, “what poor performance looks like” (M = 2.64), “how points are distributed” (M = 2.60), “the language used in the descriptions” (M = 2.36), and finally the “specific behaviours being evaluated” (M = 2.28). The overall mean score of all six aspects is 2.58 out of 5, implying that students’ comprehensibility is below average level. See the chart 5 below.

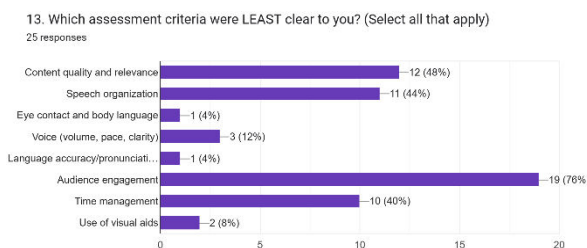
**Chart 5. Representation of the results on question N 11 from the survey- google forms.**



Q.16 clearly showed that students’ attitudes towards rubric were quite honest, claiming that it was fair and objective but their understandability of the components and descriptive language was a challenging part. On question “ How fair did you find the assessment using this rubric?” the mean score 4.28, illustrated that students did not doubt the fairness of it. Finally, the most important and vital question that was asked to students, in order to determine the specific areas which students found unclear, was Q.13 which was formulated as follows: “ Which assessment criteria were least clear to you based on PSCR? (Select all that apply)”. This question revealed the exact weak points of the rubric that

needed to be changed to make it more adaptable and understandable for students. The top three criteria that students found least clear were: *audience engagement*, *content quality and relevance*, *speech organization*. The mentioned names are the generic terms for the criteria given in PSCR. More specifically, *audience engagement* contained two aspects from the rubric “Effectively uses vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience” and “Successfully adapts the presentation to the audience” which were named as top unclear components by 76% of respondents (n=19). Second most unclear criterion, *content quality and relevance*, involved two aspects from the rubric “Locates, synthesizes and employs compelling supporting materials” and “Selects a topic appropriate to the audience and occasion,” was rated by 48% of respondents (n=12). And the last criterion, *speech organization*, which was found unclear by 44% of respondents (n=11) combined three aspects from the PSCR “Formulates an introduction that orients audience to topic and speaker”; “Uses an effective organizational pattern” and “Develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure”. See the chart 6 below.

**Chart 6. Representation of the results in percentage on question N 13 from the survey- google forms.**



**Discussion**

Based on the survey results, it was clear that some urgent changes were necessary. Therefore, it was decided to consider all the issues identified based on students’ feedback and redesign the rubric according to the mentioned requirements. It was very logical that working on RQ 3 would solve the problems identified in RQs 1 and 2, thus working on rubric clarity and making it more comprehensible for students would make them comprehend practical values of the rubric and utilize it in self and peer assessment more effectively. Consequently, the rubric was redesigned containing fewer components. Alongside the survey, a specific complaint about an excessive number of components was also highlighted during semi-structured oral interviews with students, accompanied by uneven distribution of the points on the scale 0-4, which was also one of the confusing aspects of the PSCR. Since combining some relevant aspects of the information gives clearer perspective of the concept and enhances understanding (Gobet et al., 2001), new rubric consolidated all 11 components under 6 clearly organized ones with equal distribution of points on a 1-5 scale. See the appendix B. The problem of too many components was successfully addressed by the suggested list of criteria. See the table 1 below.

**Table 1. Representation of old vs. new rubric components**

Original Components (11)	Revised Components (6)
1. Topic selection 2. Introduction 3. Organizational pattern 5. Conclusion	1. Content & Organization (Integrates topic, introduction, structure, conclusion)
4. Supporting materials 11. Persuasive message	2. Supporting Evidence (Quality, relevance, citation)
6. Word choice	3. Language & Grammar (Vocabulary, grammar, appropriateness)
7. Vocal expression & paralanguage	4. Vocal Delivery (Pronunciation, volume, pace, enthusiasm)
8. Nonverbal behavior	5. Physical Delivery (Posture, gestures, eye contact)
9. Audience adaptation 10. Visual aids	6. Audience Engagement (Adaptation, connection, visual aids)

As for the language that was also highlighted to be too academic and sometimes vague was also simplified using the terminology that was more understandable for EFL learners rather than too abstract. See the examples in table 2 below.

**Table 2. Representation of the examples from old vs. new rubric criteria**

Original Descriptor	Revised Descriptor
"Very well organized; main points clear, mutually exclusive and directly related to thesis; effective transitions and signposts"	"Logical organization with smooth transitions"
"Language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid; completely free from bias, grammar errors and inappropriate usage"	"Clear, precise, academic vocabulary; no grammar errors; language appropriate for audience and topic"
"Posture, gestures, facial expression and eye contact well developed, natural, and display high levels of poise and confidence"	"Confident posture; natural, purposeful gestures; strong eye contact with audience"

Overall, single, explicitly labeled components, simpler explanations of each aspect and easy to follow, descriptive evaluation of each criterion, equal distribution of assessment points, clear structure and organizational patterns, all the changes from old to new rubric, made it easier to navigate for students, which was clearly reflected in the results and feedback at post- test stage, where students showed wider understanding of the components and therefore started to use the rubric for efficient outcome in self as well as peer assessment. More precisely, the responses in Q9, Q11, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q22 changed dramatically. In Q. 9 while at pre-test stage the majority of students responded with negative, at a post-test stage the majority, 20 respondents, responded positively about using the rubric for speech preparation. In Q.11 pre-test stage result revealed that students mostly evaluated the criteria in the rubric as moderately clear or mostly unclear, while at post-test stage the responses varied from clear to very clear voted by the majority of the respondents  $M=4.25$ . In Q.13 the top three unclear components (mentioned above) turned into clear ones and the percentage for each decreased quite dramatically: for audience engagement 76% decreased to 20 %, for content quality and relevance it declined from 48% to 12 % and speech organization was not named as an unclear component at a post- test stage at all, decreasing from 44 % to 0%. As for the Q.14 post test stage responses revealed that the redesigned rubric helped them to understand the grades they received per public speaking performance because they already analyzed the components in it and tried to adjust and prepare accordingly, therefore on a 5-point Likert scale almost everyone, 24 students out of 25 gave the assessment point 5 to this question, meaning that the majority strongly agreed with the statement. For Q.15 the majority showed the preference for the rubric at a post-test stage, claiming it was more helpful, unlike the pre-test stage, where the majority evaluated it as less helpful. As for the Q.16, despite the fact that students did not doubt the fair system of evaluation, still the majority responded moderately at pre-test stage prioritizing 3 (middle marker) out of 5 scale system, however, at a post-test stage the result showed the full trust towards the fairness of the rubric choosing the 5 (positive marker) out of 5 by the majority of the respondents ( $n= 23$ ). And the most important question that revealed a major shift from dissatisfaction to satisfaction was represented by Q.22 where students had to select problematic elements which discouraged rubric usage and made it less efficient at a pre-test stage. However, after focusing on specific issues that had been emphasized by the respondents in Q. 22 the formulation of the questions was changed a bit, meaning to identify how well the problems were addressed and how satisfactory the changes were for them. The absolute majority of students ( $n=25$ ) were content with the changes claiming that the problems identified at an earlier stage, such as requesting simpler language, fewer, better formatting / organisation, requiring specific and detailed descriptions for each performance level were eradicated fully. And finally, the improvement of the rubric at a post-test stage and students' full involvement in its utilization for speech preparation as well as self/ peer assessments were also corroborated in post-survey interviews. The same was detected during the classwork observations by the researcher throughout the course.

### Conclusion

To conclude, despite some limitations of the research, such as relatively small sample size and its narrow focus on one of the private universities in Georgia, which restricts the possibility of generalization of the findings, still the research presents a valid replicable methodological model for future studies in the field. More specifically, the results illustrate that the above-mentioned changes in the rubric design enhanced students' comprehension level and therefore improved their performance standards. Unlike the prior experience when students had passive role of being assessed through the rubric, they became more active users of it after specific modifications and they started using it in self as well as peer assessment. During oral interviews students claimed that their comprehension of the rubric's criteria and its user-friendly format encouraged them to practice more which resulted in better

and more conscious performance in the auditorium. It has to be highlighted that the feedback understanding level was vividly increased among students after the rubric modification. Overall, it can be concluded that correct design of the rubric, criteria clarity and transparency enables students to maintain learner's autonomy, improves their self-esteem as well as enhances their comprehension of the nuances which are necessary for a good public speaking performance.

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**Appendix A. Public speaking competence rubric for evaluating Speeches. PSCR**

Performance Standard	Assessment Criteria				
	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Minimal 1	Deficient 0
The student....					
1. Selects a topic appropriate to the audience and occasion	Topic engages audience; topic is worthwhile, timely, and presents new information to the audience	Topic is appropriate to the audience and situation and provides some useful information to the audience	Topic is untimely or lacks originality; provides scant new information to audience	Topic is too trivial, too complex, or inappropriate for audience; topic not suitable for the situation	A single topic cannot be deduced
2. Formulates an introduction that orients audience to topic and speaker	Excellent attention getter; firmly establishes credibility; sound orientation to topic; clear thesis; preview of main points cogent and memorable	Good attention getter; generally establishes credibility; provides some orientation to topic; discernible thesis; previews main points	Attention getter is mundane; somewhat develops credibility; awkwardly composed thesis; provides little direction for audience	Irrelevant opening; little attempt to build credibility; abrupt jump into body of speech; thesis and main points can be deduced but are not explicitly stated	No opening technique; no credibility statement; no background on topic; no thesis; no preview of points
3. Uses an effective organizational pattern	Very well organized; main points clear, mutually exclusive and directly related to thesis; effective transitions and signposts	Organizational pattern is evident, main points are apparent; transitions present between main points; some use of signposts	Organizational pattern somewhat evident; main points are present but not mutually exclusive; transitions are present but are minimally effective	Speech did not flow well; speech was not logically organized; transitions present but not well formed	No organizational pattern; no transitions; sounded as if information was randomly presented
4. Locates, synthesizes and employs compelling supporting materials	All key points are well supported with a variety of credible materials (e.g. facts, stats, quotes, etc.); sources provide excellent support for thesis; all sources clearly cited	Main points were supported with appropriate material; sources correspond suitably to thesis; nearly all sources cited	Points were generally supported using an adequate mix of materials; some evidence supports thesis; source citations need to be clarified	Some points were not supported; a greater quantity/ quality of material needed; some sources of very poor quality	Supporting materials are non-existent or are not cited
5. Develops a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure	Provides a clear and memorable summary of points; refers back to thesis / big picture; ends with strong clincher or call to action	Appropriate summary of points; some reference back to thesis; clear clincher or call to action	Provides some summary of points; no clear reference back to thesis; closing technique can be strengthened	Conclusion lacks clarity; trails off; ends in a tone at odds with the rest of the speech	No conclusion; speech ends abruptly and without closure
6. Demonstrates a careful choice of words	Language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid; completely free from bias, grammar errors and inappropriate usage	Language appropriate to the goals of the presentation; no conspicuous errors in grammar; no evidence of bias	Language selection adequate; some errors in grammar; language at times misused (e.g. jargon, slang, awkward structure)	Grammar and syntax need to be improved as can level of language sophistication; occasionally biased	Many errors in grammar and syntax; extensive use of jargon, slang, sexist/racist terms or mispronunciations
7. Effectively uses vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience	Excellent use of vocal variation, intensity and pacing; vocal expression natural and enthusiastic; avoids fillers	Good vocal variation and pace; vocal expression suited to assignment; few if any fillers	Demonstrates some vocal variation; enunciates clearly and speaks audibly; generally avoids fillers (e.g. um, uh, like)	Sometimes uses a voice too soft or articulation too indistinct for listeners to comfortably hear; often uses fillers	Speaks inaudibly; enunciates poorly; speaks in monotone; poor pacing; distracts listeners with fillers

8. Demonstrates nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message	Posture, gestures, facial expression and eye contact well developed, natural, and display high levels of poise and confidence	Postures, gestures and facial expressions are suitable for speech, speaker appears confident	Some reliance on notes, but has adequate eye contact, generally avoids distracting mannerisms	Speaker relies heavily on notes; nonverbal expression stiff and unnatural	Usually looks down and avoids eye contact; nervous gestures and nonverbal behaviors distract from or contradict the message
9. Successfully adapts the presentation to the audience	Speaker shows how information is personally important to audience; speech is	Speaker implies the importance of the topic to the audience; presentation is	Speaker assumes but does not articulate the importance of topic; presentation was minimally	The importance of topic is not established; very little evidence of audience	Speech is contrary to audience beliefs, values, and attitudes; message is generic or canned;
<b>Additional Performance Standards (To be added to grading rubric as needed)</b>					
10. Skillfully makes use of visual aids	Exceptional explanation and presentation of visual aids; visuals provide powerful insight into speech topic; visual aids of high professional quality	Visual aids well presented; use of visual aids enhances understanding; visual aids good quality	Visual aids were generally well displayed and explained; minor errors present in visuals	Speaker did not seem well practiced with visuals; visuals not fully explained; quality of visuals needs improvement	Use of the visual aids distracted from the speech; visual aids not relevant; visual aids poor professional quality
11. Constructs an effectual persuasive message with credible evidence and sound reasoning	Articulates problem and solution in a clear, compelling manner; supports claims with powerful /credible evidence; completely avoids reasoning fallacies; memorable call to action	Problem and solution are clearly presented; claims supported with evidence and examples; sound reasoning evident; clear call to action	Problem and solution are evident; most claims are supported with evidence; generally sound reasoning; recognizable call to action	Problem and/or solution are somewhat unclear; claims not fully supported with evidence; some reasoning fallacies present; call to action vague	Problem and/or solution are not defined; claims not supported with evidence; poor reasoning; no call to action

## Appendix B. Public speaking assessment rubric (redesigned version)

Created by Ana Gadakhadze, Public Speaking Course Tutor, Associate Professor at Caucasus University

### Public Speaking Assessment Rubric

Total Points: 30 (6 Components × 5 Points Each)

Each component is equally weighted and uses the same 5-point scale

#### 1. CONTENT & ORGANIZATION (5 points)

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Topic, Introduction, Organization &amp; Conclusion</b>	Engaging topic; strong opening with clear thesis; logical organization with smooth transitions; memorable conclusion	Appropriate topic; good introduction with stated thesis; clear organization; effective conclusion	Acceptable topic; basic introduction; adequate organization; conclusion present	Unclear topic; weak introduction; poor organization; weak conclusion	Inappropriate topic; no clear introduction; random organization; no conclusion

#### 2. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE (5 points)

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Quality, Relevance &amp; Citation of Sources</b>	Excellent variety of credible sources (facts, statistics, examples); all properly cited; strong support for thesis	Good quality sources; appropriate materials; mostly cited correctly; supports main points	Adequate evidence; some relevant materials; basic citation; general support present	Limited sources; some poor quality materials; citation issues; weak support	No credible evidence; sources not cited; claims unsupported

#### 3. LANGUAGE & GRAMMAR (5 points)

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Vocabulary, Grammar &amp; Appropriateness</b>	Clear, precise, academic vocabulary; no grammar errors; language appropriate for audience and topic	Good vocabulary; minor grammar errors; generally appropriate language	Adequate vocabulary; some grammar errors but understandable; acceptable language choice	Limited vocabulary; frequent grammar errors; some inappropriate language	Very poor vocabulary; many errors making speech difficult to understand; inappropriate language

#### 4. VOCAL DELIVERY (5 points)

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Pronunciation, Volume, Pace &amp; Enthusiasm</b>	Clear pronunciation; varied pace and	Good pronunciation; adequate vocal	Understandable pronunciation; acceptable	Unclear pronunciation; too quiet/loud;	Very poor pronunciation; inaudible or too

**5. PHYSICAL DELIVERY (5 points)**

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Posture, Gestures, Eye Contact &amp; Movement</b>	Confident posture; natural, purposeful gestures; strong eye contact with audience; minimal reliance on notes; appropriate movement	Good posture; appropriate gestures; adequate eye contact; some use of notes; generally confident	Acceptable posture; some gestures; limited eye contact; frequent use of notes; somewhat nervous	Stiff or slouching; minimal gestures; poor eye contact; reads from notes; very nervous	Poor posture; no gestures or distracting movements; no eye contact; completely dependent on notes

**6. AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT & ADAPTATION (5 points)**

Criterion	5 pts Excellent	4 pts Good	3 pts Satisfactory	2 pts Needs Work	0-1 pts Weak
<b>Audience Awareness, Adaptation &amp; Visual Aids</b>	Clearly adapted to audience knowledge and interests; engages effectively; professional visual aids enhance understanding (if used)	Shows awareness of audience; attempts to connect; good visual aids support content (if used)	Some audience adaptation; basic connection established; adequate visual aids (if used)	Minimal audience adaptation; little connection; poor or distracting visual aids (if used)	No audience adaptation; generic presentation; no visual aids or very poor quality

**SCORING SUMMARY**

Component	Points
1. Content & Organization	/ 5
2. Supporting Evidence	/ 5
3. Language & Grammar	/ 5
4. Vocal Delivery	/ 5
5. Physical Delivery	/ 5
6. Audience Engagement & Adaptation	/ 5
<b>TOTAL SCORE:</b>	<b>/ 30</b>