

## Evaluating “Ephemeral” Work

**Rather than feel concerned about evaluating “ephemeral” speeches or group presentations, consider that student preparation of a speech provides quite a few non-ephemeral components:**

- The speaker’s audience analysis in advance of speaking can be documented by asking for a paragraph or short reflection.
- The speaker’s crafting of a clear central idea or claim can be evaluated comparably to their crafting of a thesis or claim in written communication.
- The speaker’s preparation of a well-organized outline, with supporting materials, is available to you if you make that part of the assignment.
- The speaker’s attention to stylistic word choice can be seen in a full-sentence outline.
- A bibliography provides evidence of the speaker’s ability to conduct sound research.

*All of these components comprise the majority of the classical elements of rhetoric – **invention, arrangement, and style** – of which only **delivery** is “ephemeral.”* Furthermore, these preparatory materials parallel the “scaffolded” or “process writing” components of preparing a significant paper. If you anticipate having students give oral presentations in the final two weeks of the course, there is good reason to check-in much earlier on how they are progressing in their preparatory steps.

**Consider, as well, how much of student work in other contexts is ephemeral, and how you have learned to evaluate it effectively. A few examples:**

- You observe students doing bench work in the laboratory, or field work beyond the laboratory. You see them learning and using various techniques more or less effectively and you provide feedback, based on your expertise.
- Similarly, in the therapy programs, students must learn to perform particular manipulations, lifts, or other techniques and you provide feedback to them on their progress in the moment.
- Studio and performing arts, as well, have ephemeral components – with musical instruments, at the easel or pottery wheel, on the stage – to which faculty members provide feedback.
- You listen to, cultivate, and guide student discussion in classrooms on a regular basis.

In short, you are already an astute observer and listener. With the guidance of one or more of the speech or group discussion rubrics on the CSEA website, you are prepared to **make notes** and **offer students 2-3 key suggestions** for their improvement. Combine your rubric notes with a review of the written materials you have assigned them to prepare; and, only if you have time or wish to do so, review a recording of their presentation to complete your evaluation.

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