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Bringing The Outside World In
Using Mixed Panel Assessment Of Oral Presentations
With Electrical And Electronic Engineering Students

Oral presentations are an important skill for engineering students to master. As well as helping develop oral fluency, presentations provide an opportunity for students to explain their work in a clear and meaningful manner. A mixed panel of assessors was used – a group consisting of engineering lecturers, business lecturers and language experts – because when engineers enter the workplace, they will have to communicate with a wide variety of stakeholders. Students have to consider how to explain complex ideas in a way that technical and non-technical audience members can understand.

The Assignment Assessment
For the assessed presentation, students had to design and implement a circuit and were asked to create a possible application/product for the circuit. They were told that there would be a business person and other non-technical members in the audience and to expect questions related to the product. As well as encouraging them to consider the business application aspect of engineering, it also forced them to take a holistic view of their project as opposed to simply focusing on the component level, which had been a perceived problem. The presentations were assessed on:

Presentations Skills (20%)
- Structure and Linking Points
- Eye Contact and Body Language
- Visual Aids and Reference to Visual Aids
- Holding Audience Attention

Content & Mastery of Subject (50%)
- Content (Research and Delivery)
- Referencing and Citations
- Questions and Closing

Language Skills (15%)
- Language Use (Grammar & Vocabulary)
- Fluency, Pace, and Volume
- Pronunciation (Clarity, Stress and Intonation)

Business Contextualisation (15%)
- Innovativeness
- Ease of Commercialization
- Technical Feasibility
- Economic Feasibility

Student Feedback
“It is a really hard task, to combine the business field with the technical field in a presentation.”

“The type of audience definitely serves as an impetus to shift the focus of the presentation.”

“For those non-specialists, it is hard to determine to what extent they can understand.”
References


