



Measuring impact as part of validation

A study of the impact on learners of an employability-focused, externally assessed oracy qualification

Qualifications and scope of this study



ESB Level 1 Award in Speech (Grade 2) Speech for Employability (13 minutes)

- Employability Talk
- Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views
- Interview
- Prepare and Deliver a Pitch



ESB Level 2 Award in Speech (Grade 4) Speech for Employability (15 minutes)

- Employability Talk
- Listening, Responding and Exchanging Views
- Interview
- Telephone Call

Background

We need to look at a broad range of evidence from every stage of the assessment cycle, to validate the inferences that we derive from the scores of the assessments.

Messick's sixth source of validity evidence is to scrutinise and appraise the intended and unintended outcomes of the assessment (Messick, 1989).

Test providers measuring impact need to collect enough data to 'investigate how and to what extent an assessment system affects stakeholders, processes and systems in all the contexts in which it operates – both at macro and micro levels' (Saville and Khalifa 2017).

What we measure in our oracy assessments

Successful learners:

- Use Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal situations
- Use role, intonation, tone, volume, mood and silence to add impact
- Speak confidently, audibly and fluently
- Listen effectively - participate in formal debates/discussions, summarising and building on what has been said
- Speak persuasively
- Conduct effective research

Data Collection

2 Qualifications

3 Centres

408 Learners

Teachers completed internal assessments of 382 learners before they started preparing and after the assessment. Teachers could assess learners' competencies as 'Not Competent (NC)', 'Competent (C)', or 'Highly Competent (HC)' in 6 statements drawn from the National Curriculum for spoken language and reading for the relevant key stage.

408 learners completed pre-assessment questionnaires and 214 completed post-assessment questionnaires measuring how they felt about their communication skills and personal development. Learners rated the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with 6 statements, on a Likert scale.

Teachers and learners answered 2 open questions in each questionnaire, which were analysed thematically.

Results

Pre-Assessment Level 1 Speech for Employability (Teachers' Assessments)



Post-Assessment Level 1 Speech for Employability (Teachers' Assessments)



Learners' comments

Thematic analysis and interpretation using the framework of learner agency by Manyukina and Wyse (2019).

Intrapersonal agency

- Being able to talk about my ideas
- Pushing myself to speak in front of an audience
- Getting the chance to talk about a product that I created

Interpersonal agency

- Letting everyone have a voice
- Being able to talk with my friends about my ideas and improve on them
- Answering questions on the spot is something that I have never done before.
- Having somebody interested in listening to my interests and ambitions that also has had them and wants me to succeed

Temporal agency

- Well, I know it could give me a higher possibility of getting a job and just knowing that was good.

Contextual agency

- It was very nerve racking so I think it could have been 1-to-1s for a shorter amount of time
- I think if I went 3rd or something I wouldn't have been so nervous

Self-reflection

- I think I should've been more confident on speaking and using facial expressions.
- I could've tried to look up more and use more body movements during my PowerPoint

Learners' self-assessments

% Change from pre- to post-assessment	Strongly Disagree/Disagree	Strongly Agree/Agree
I can give a short talk on a job or course I am interested in	-3%	+8%
I can use body language, facial expression and vocal control to keep the listener interested	-6%	+7%
I can join in a discussion, answering questions in detail and building on others' ideas	-5%	+6%
I am a confident speaker	-10%	+6%
I feel like my voice matters	-4%	+5%
I get to explore my own interests at school	-3%	-1%

Limitations & lessons learnt

Attrition – fewer responses were collected after the assessments than at the beginning.

Scale – the number of centres, learners and qualifications made it difficult to manage.

Focus on targeted centres and one or two qualifications at a time.

Teachers' time – the data collection was probably too demanding for time-short teachers.

Focus on fewer learners and take a snapshot from the top, middle and bottom of the cohort.

Accuracy – some teachers and learners weren't motivated to complete the questionnaires with care.

Manageability – make it easier for learners and teachers to access the data collection tools and the links to the online questionnaires.

Personal contact – visit the centres in person to get engagement and set up the study.

Teachers' comments

1. Learners gained confidence

Students came out of the assessments brimming with confidence.

2. Personal choice is important and effective

By giving the students a chance to practise their speaking and listening in an assessment that was not run by school staff, students learned to step up, overcome their fears about presenting, and talk about something they chose.

3. There was an impact on attitudes to learning

The award has developed the following students' skills: time management, team building, researching, confidence about themselves, giving them time to think about themselves and what they would like to do as a career and profession, having courage, being proud about their achievements. Students worked with greater independence than usual.

4. There was an impact on learner behaviour

Many completed more work outside of school than they had done throughout the year.

5. The qualification fitted in with the curriculum

The employability unit was linked to their PSHE unit but more importantly, the students valued the wider context such an experience gave them.



For more information

Our impact report for 2021-22 is on our website here

References

- Manyukina, Y. and Wyse, D. (2019). Learner agency and the curriculum: a critical realist perspective. *The Curriculum Journal* 30:3, 223–243.
- Messick, S. (1989). Meaning and values in test validation: the science and ethics of assessment. *Educational Researcher* 18:2, pp5-11.
- Saville, N. and Khalifa, H. (2017). The impact of language assessment in Tsagari, D., Banerjee, J. (eds) *Handbook of Second Language Assessment*. Berlin: De Gruyter.