Understand speaking in Prep–Year 10

The Australian Curriculum achievement standards describe the learning expected of students at each year level or band and can be demonstrated by multiple means.

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Reflect on practice

Compare the following two definitions. How does an understanding of the difference between *speak* and *vocal effects* support:

- teachers to provide the curriculum with rigour and fidelity in a way that responds to the diversity of learners?
- students to access and participate in learning, and demonstrate the full extent and depth of learning against achievement standards?

Speak

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines speak across all eight learning areas of the curriculum as:

'convey meaning and communicate with purpose. Some students participate in speaking activities using communication systems and assistive technologies to communicate wants and needs, and to comment about the world.'

Vocal effects

The Australian Curriculum: English glossary defines vocal effects as:

selecting and using *'particular vocal qualities including volume, tone, pitch, pace and fluency to engage and impact upon their audience.'*

(Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2021)

Understand access to speaking in the Australian Curriculum

Students can demonstrate speaking by multiple means, including the use of:

- a voice over;
- aided or unaided alternative or augmentative communication (AAC), such as a speech generating device; picture-based communication system or signed communication (for example, Auslan);
- multimodal communication;
- pre-recorded, rather than live presentation to an audience;
- the voice.

Understand how vocal effects differ to speaking

Vocal effects rely on using the voice. The speaking aspects of the English achievement standard do not rely solely on the use of the voice. Unless the use of vocal effects is being assessed, a student does not need to produce a verbal response to an assessment task. Teachers have the autonomy to plan or adjust assessment tasks that respond to the diverse needs of their students by providing options and choices in how students demonstrate speaking.

If a student cannot demonstrate[1] vocal effects, they may not need to be assessed against the aspects of the achievement standard where vocal effects are being assessed. The student is assessed against the remainder of the achievement standard with this decision not affecting their overall level of achievement or opportunity to progress to the next achievement standard.

Consider an example

The following is one example of how a classroom teacher might plan to adjust the mode of speaking in an assessment task. The differentiation or adjustments made to assessment are also reflected in the teaching and learning sequence[2].

A Year 3 English assessment task asks students to **present** an adaptation of a poem to an audience of peers.

- To support **all students** to present, the teacher can offer options such as students delivering a multimodal presentation or pre-recording a video of the student delivering their poem.
- To support **an individual student** who does not use verbal communication to present, a communication app on a smart device can be used to enable the student to type their poem and then present to their peers using the built-in text-to-speech functionality.

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[1] A decision that a student cannot demonstrate an aspect of the achievement standard is made when the aspect being assessed demands the production of a skill that if adjusted would impact what is being assessed. For example, a student who does not use verbal communication does not need to be assessed against the English aspect: orally blend and segment sounds in words in Prep.

[2] Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for cohorts are recorded in the Year/Band plans, and/or Unit Plans. Differentiation and/or adjustments planned for identified groups and/or individual students can be recorded in the OneSchool Support tab.