

## Learning to Speak in the Disciplines

### Overview:

This exercise asks students to reflect on which norms for oral presentations are shared between multiple academic disciplines, and which are more discipline specific. The exercise uses the discipline filters on the PASS website's primary Scholarly Speaking Archive, which allow students to easily identify videos from different academic disciplines. It can be used as a reflection exercise in the preparation phase for an oral presentation project

The assignment has two main learning outcomes:

- 1) *Students will become familiar with the norms of academic oral presentations in two disciplines.* Research on comparative judgment suggests non-experts make better qualitative evaluations when given a pairwise comparison rather than a single example.
- 2) *Students will reflect on the purpose of specific scholarly speaking norms and academic disciplines.* The activity exposes students to scholarly speaking norms from multiple disciplines, inviting them to think through why things are done the way they are within a certain discipline—and how they *are* and *could be* done differently.

### Instructions for students:

For this exercise, you will be asked to compare two academic oral presentations from the PASS website's Scholarly Speaking Archive. The goal is to become familiar with the norms and expectations of scholarly speaking, but also to recognize how and why some norms are particular to certain academic disciplines—and, ultimately, to question whether they need to be.

- 1) Choose two presentations from the Scholarly Speaking Archive on the PASS website. Using the filters, make sure that these videos are from different disciplines—but try to choose presentations with the same format and approximate length.
- 2) Create a table with two columns to track your comparisons (see sample on next page). Consulting the PASS Student Guide, choose six common elements of academic oral presentations to compare. Here's a freebie to get you started: Use of Slides. Fill out your chart with a description of what strategy each presenter used for each element.
- 3) Looking over your chart, identify two commonalities between the presentations. Why do these strategies work similarly across disciplines?
- 4) Looking over your chart, identify two differences between the presentations. Is there a reason that each strategy is better suited to its particular discipline?
- 5) Are there any strategies from one video/discipline that you think *would* work well in the other discipline? Why?
- 6) If you gave your own oral presentation in one of these disciplines, which strategy do you think it would be most important to use? Why? Which norm might you choose to challenge? Why?

