Oral Testing: Developing Essential Skills with a Focus on Student Involvement

Merkos Chinuch Office Webinar Conference
8 Elul, 5773 / August 14, 2013

Presented by Rabbi Naphtali Hoff, M. Ed
President, Impactful Coaching and Consulting
Let’s get to know one another

- Please take a moment to share your name, the name of your school, and your position
Questions for you

1. What interested you about this session?
2. What are you hoping to gain by participating?
Objectives

1. To introduce participants to a unique method of oral testing
2. To present the rationale for using oral testing as an alternative or complimentary form of assessment
Why Test Orally?

- Improved textual skills
  - Reading
  - Punctuation
  - Translation
  - Explanation

- Alternative method of assessing student knowledge

- Bonus: Increased student motivation and success!
Process – Pre-test

- Pre-determined selections
  - Removes surprise / anxiety

- Scoring rubric and checklist
  - Clear understanding of expectations
  - Puts the students in control
  - Minimum number of required pieces
## Rubric

### Willing to Read (# of Pieces)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 Points</th>
<th>3 Points</th>
<th>2 Points</th>
<th>1 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Willing to Read (# of Pieces)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Displays a firm grasp of the Gemara’s context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>8 Points</th>
<th>6 Points</th>
<th>3 Points</th>
<th>0 Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Displays a firm grasp of the Gemara’s context</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Establishes clear link to previous discussion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Clear presentation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 0-1 content errors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Establishes fairly clear link to past discussion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fairly clear presentation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 2-3 content errors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Establishes weak link to past discussion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Unclear, but somewhat accurate presentation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ 4-5 content errors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Establishes no link to past discussion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Unclear, inaccurate presentation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Numerous content errors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reads Clearly; Punctuates Properly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 Points</th>
<th>3 Points</th>
<th>2 Points</th>
<th>1 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Reads Clearly; Punctuates Properly</td>
<td>0-2 errors</td>
<td>3-5 errors</td>
<td>6-8 errors</td>
<td>9-11 errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Translates Correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 Points</th>
<th>3 Points</th>
<th>2 Points</th>
<th>1 Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Translates Correctly</td>
<td>0-1 mistranslations</td>
<td>2-3 mistranslations</td>
<td>4-5 mistranslations</td>
<td>6-7 mistranslations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(100 = 20; 95 = 19; 90 = 18; 85 = 17; 80 = 16; 75 = 15; 70 = 14; 65 = 13; 60 = 12; 55 = 11; 50 = 10; 45 = 9, etc.)
Name: __________________

Check off the components that you are prepared to be tested on. (Remember: If you do not check the box I will assume that you are not prepared to read that piece)

1) _____  

2) _____  

3) _____  

4) _____  

5) _____  

6) _____  

7) _____  

8) _____  

9) _____  

10) _____  

11) _____  

12) _____  

13) _____  

14) _____  

15) _____
A Word About Rubrics

“Rubrics are excellent assessment tools. They make assessing student work quick and efficient, and they help teachers justify to parents and others the grades they assign to students... Rubrics, at their very best, are teaching tools that support student learning and encourage the development of sophisticated thinking skills.”

Heidi Goodrich Andrade, from The Project Zero Classroom: Views on Understanding, eds. Hetland, Lois and Shirley Veenema, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, 1999
What Research Says

- “Success in most domains in life has more to do with how effectively people understand their strengths and needs, and how strategically they use their capacities and abilities to achieve their goals, rather than the abilities themselves.”

“People want control. It’s a basic need for survival... If we are in control, our survival is not threatened (sic), we are free to learn, create and grow. The easiest way to allow students to feel control in the classroom is through choice. When students get to make choices in a classroom, they feel in control. When they feel in control, they take ownership of the activity and the behaviors…” (italics mine).

Process – Review / 组擦

- 组擦 / Group review
- “Rotating Seats” Exercise
Process – Test

- “Russian Roulette” Format
  - Creates controlled intrigue / anticipation
  - Limits testing time

- Each student is responsible to read and explain one piece from the text, including background information
Gemara Oral Exam Individual Scoring Synopsis

Name: _________________________

1. Number of checked pieces:

Point Value: __________

2. Context:

Point Value: __________

Comments:


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________

3. Reading / Punctuation:

Point Value: __________

Comments:


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________

4. Translation:

Point Value: __________

Comments:


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________


________________________________________________________________________

Total Score: __________
Additional Benefits

- Individual negotiations with weaker students
  - Limit requirements to the point where success can be **guaranteed** with appropriate preparation
  - Promotes self-esteem and future investments of time and effort
  - One of our most important goals in 守住三多

![Handshake image]
Benefits cont’d

- Flexibility in scheduling
  - Test over multiple days
  - No concerns over cheating
- Bulk of the work is in advance
  - Grading on the spot
  - Students LOVE instant feedback!
Some Extra Testing Tips – In Advance

- Keep other students within the room
  - Can’t leave them unattended
  - Get a substitute if necessary

- Prepare worksheets for time after the test
  - Can use pre-test time to review
  - Otherwise, either assign work or allow other productive work
Tips – Testing

- Allow students post-selection, pre-test review (2 – 4 minutes)
- Have all students in given group select before the 1st student reads
  - Speeds up the testing process
- Be warm & inviting
  - Students should feel that you expect success
  - Reduces tension
Tips cont’d

- Be prepared to provide students with guide questions or translations to help things move along
  - Don’t leave him hanging – can’t proceed
  - Allow them to review and clarify before moving forward
- Record errors / issues *as they read* – avoids later issues
Conclusion

- Introduced an approach to oral testing
- Discussed the benefits of using this method in lieu of or in addition to the standard assessment process
- Reviewed applications and related tips

Thank you for participating!