

Designing an Assessment Instrument for Communication and Collaboration Competency of Fifth-Grade Vietnamese Students in Teaching Speaking and Listening

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ABSTRACT: Communication and collaboration are one of core competencies that need to be developed in students according to the 2018 General Education Program. However, the assessment of both competencies in teaching speaking and listening in primary schools still lacks appropriate instruments. Based on the analysis of the program requirements, the characteristics of speaking and listening activities, and the competences of fifth-grade students, this paper proposes a system of assessment instruments including a rubric, checklist, and scale. The instruments are built with a process-oriented assessment approach, contributing to supporting teachers in objectively and comprehensively assessing and improving the effectiveness of developing communication and collaboration competency for students.

KEYWORDS: Communication and Collaboration Competency, Assessment; Rubric, Speaking and Listening, Fifth-Grade Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Competency-oriented assessment is one of the key requirements of Vietnam's 2018 General Education Program, and the development of appropriate assessment instruments is crucial for the quality of teaching and learning. In Vietnamese language studies, Speaking and Listening content provides many opportunities to develop students' communication and collaboration skills through exchange, discussion, and presentation activities. However, in practice, the assessment of this competency is still mainly based on teacher observation and comments, lacking instruments with specific criteria that are appropriate to the program's objectives and the characteristics of fifth-grade students. Based on this reality, this paper focuses on developing a system of instruments to assess the communication and collaboration competencies of fifth-grade students in Speaking and Listening instruction, contributing to supporting teachers in implementing competency-oriented assessment.

2. RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1. Concept of communication and cooperation competency

2.1.1. Communication competency

Communication is a process in which participating parties create or share information and emotions with each other to achieve communication goals [1, p.184]. Communication competency is assessed through appropriateness and effectiveness [2], [3], [4]. The process of building communication competency for students can go through three stages: 1) Knowing about communication competency; 2) Wanting to develop communication competency; 3) Demonstrating communication competency [4]. According to Gordon (2008), effective communication requires a combination of many skills, including listening, understanding context, responding and adjusting the way information is conveyed based on the listener's response [5]. Communication skills refer to an individual's ability to use language and non-verbal means to effectively and appropriately exchange information, ideas, emotions, and attitudes with others in various situations.

b. Cooperative competency

Collaboration is working together to help each other in a job or field for a common purpose [6]. According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), collaboration is an interactive process in which two or more people work together, support and encourage each other to achieve a common goal [7]. Collaborative competency is designed based on the principles of social construction, assessed through the ability to cooperate in different processes to solve specific problems [8], [9, p. 325]. Thus, collaborative competency is the ability of an individual to work with others to achieve a common goal. This includes the ability to work in a group, share responsibilities, listen to and respect the opinions of others, and contribute ideas and solutions to solve problems. In an increasingly

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connected and globalized world, communication and collaboration skills are essential skills that students need to succeed in their studies as well as in life later on. Research by Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) emphasizes that communication and collaboration skills are an important part of the skills needed for the 21st century, helping students adapt to diverse and complex work and social environments [10]. Therefore, communication and collaboration skills play an important role in the holistic development of students in general and primary school students in particular, namely:

- Enhancing learning effectiveness: Slavin's (1995) research indicates that cooperation in learning helps students gain a deeper understanding of learning content, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When working in groups, students have the opportunity to exchange and reinforce knowledge with each other, thereby improving learning outcomes [11].

- Developing social skills: According to Wentzel and Watkins' (2002) research, primary school students with good communication and cooperation skills tend to have better social integration, build healthy friendships, and have a positive attitude towards learning [12, p.366-377].

- Developing self-management skills: Students who are trained in communication and cooperation skills from an early age will have better self-management and work management skills. According to Bandura (1986), these skills help students become more confident in resolving conflicts, making decisions, and working independently as well as in groups [13].

In summary, developing communication and collaboration skills in primary school students not only helps them succeed academically but also equips them with important life skills for integration and development in society.

2.2. Required achievements in communication and cooperation skills in Vietnam's 2018 General Education Program

In the overall General Education Program, the required achievements in communication and cooperation skills of primary school students are presented as follows [14]:

No.	Component capacity	Manifestations
1	Identify the purpose, content, means, and attitude of communication.	Recognizing the importance of communication in meeting one's own needs. - Receiving texts about life, nature, and society that use language combined with images, such as comic books and simple articles. - Beginning to use language combined with images and gestures to present information and ideas. - Focusing attention during communication; recognizing the attitude of the communication partner.
2	Establishing and developing social relationships; adjusting and resolving conflicts	- Knowing how to make and maintain friendships. - Recognizing disagreements and conflicts between yourself and your friends, or between friends themselves; knowing how to yield to your friends or persuade them.
3	Defining the purpose and methods of cooperation.	They have a habit of exchanging ideas and helping each other in their studies; they know how to work together to complete learning tasks as instructed by their teachers.
4	Identify your own responsibilities and activities	Understanding the team's mission and one's own responsibilities and roles within the team after receiving instructions and assignments.
5	Determine the needs and capabilities of your collaborators	Recognize some of the outstanding characteristics of group members to propose appropriate work assignments.
6	Organize and persuade others	Be willing to complete assigned tasks and share and help other members complete their assigned work.
7	Evaluate collaborative activities	Report on the results of the group's tasks; self-assess one's strengths and weaknesses according to teacher guidance.
8	International integration	- Have initial knowledge of some countries in the region and around the world. - Be able to participate in some international integration activities as guided by the school.

2.3. Teaching speaking and listening in the Vietnamese language subject

2.3.1. Speaking and listening skills in teaching Vietnamese language

Speaking and listening are two closely interconnected language activities that together constitute a unified process of communication. Speaking is the act of transforming thoughts into linguistic signals to convey information, whereas listening involves receiving, processing, and responding to linguistic information. In contemporary language education, speaking and listening are viewed not merely as separate skills but as communicative acts that occur within specific contexts, serving particular

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purposes, involving defined participants, and following established communicative conventions. Therefore, developing speaking and listening skills in primary education plays a crucial role in fostering students' communicative competency.

At the primary level, particularly for grade 5 students, speaking competency is reflected in several components:

(1) Pronunciation competency: The ability to pronounce Vietnamese consonants, vowels, and syllables accurately, ensuring appropriate sound discrimination, rhythm, and intonation.

(2) Sentence construction and idea expression competency: The ability to construct grammatically correct sentences, use vocabulary accurately, express ideas coherently and completely, adapt language to different communicative contexts, and convey appropriate emotions.

(3) Speech act competency: The ability to perform various communicative functions, such as storytelling, presenting, reporting, asking and answering questions, making requests, giving advice, explaining, and providing information in different communicative situations.

(4) Dialogue and monologue competency: The ability to participate effectively in different forms of communication, including group discussions, classroom presentations, collaborative discussions, and oral presentations.

(5) Persuasive communication competency: The ability to express ideas clearly and concisely, construct logical and coherent arguments, and communicate in a manner that is appropriate to the intended communicative purpose.

These competencies enable students to strengthen their ability to communicate clearly, coherently, and effectively, thereby establishing a solid foundation for the development of communicative competency.

Parallel to speaking skills, listening skills play a crucial role in the communication process. Listening is not merely the reception of sounds; it also involves analyzing, processing, and comprehending information. For Grade 5 students, listening skills encompass the following fundamental requirements:

(1) Recognizing and distinguishing linguistic sounds, including phonemes, tones, stress, and rhythm;

(2) Retaining information by temporarily storing what has been heard for processing and responding;

(3) Identifying word boundaries and sentence structures;

(4) Determining the main and supporting ideas, as well as the speaker's purpose and attitude;

(5) Providing appropriate responses according to the communicative context;

(6) Supporting speaking skills, thereby contributing to the development of effective communicative competency.

Based on these characteristics, the teaching of speaking and listening in primary education should foster a communicative environment that is supportive, flexible, and highly interactive. Teachers should create opportunities for students to engage in a variety of communicative situations, such as conversations, group discussions, storytelling, expressing opinions, and delivering presentations. Through these activities, students not only develop their ability to use Vietnamese effectively but also build confidence, initiative, and communicative competency for both academic learning and everyday life.

2.3.2. Indicators of communication and collaboration competencies in teaching speaking and listening to grade 5 students in Vietnam

Based on the expected learning outcomes of the 2018 General Education Curriculum for Vietnamese language subject, the psychological and cognitive characteristics of Grade 5 students, and the communication and collaboration competency framework outlined in the Overall General Education Curriculum, the indicators of communication and collaboration competencies in speaking and listening instruction can be identified as follows:

Table 2.1. Indicators of communication and collaboration competencies in teaching speaking and listening to grade 5 students in Vietnam

No.	Criterion	Specific indicators
1	Ability to listen and receive information	- Pays attention while others are speaking. - Understands the content of the discussion. - Does not interrupt others while they are presenting. - Provides appropriate responses after listening.
2	Ability to express personal opinions	- Expresses ideas clearly and coherently. - Uses appropriate vocabulary and tone of voice. - Speaks confidently in front of a group or the class. - Gives simple reasons to support his/her opinions.
3	Ability to participate in discussion and exchange	- Actively participates in discussions with peers. - Asks and answers questions appropriately. - Shares personal ideas with the group. - Respects peers' differing opinions.
4	Ability to collaborate in group activities	- Participates in completing the group's shared tasks. - Cooperates effectively with group members when carrying out tasks. - Demonstrates willingness to support and assist peers.

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		- Completes assigned responsibilities.
5	Ability to self-regulate in communication	- Controls emotions during discussions. - Uses polite and appropriate language. - Acknowledges mistakes and accepts constructive feedback. - Adjusts communication style when it is inappropriate.

2.4. Designing the rubric, checklist, and rating scale to assess communication and collaboration competencies of grade 5 students in Vietnam

2.4.1. Rubric design

Based on the expected learning outcomes specified in the 2018 General Education curriculum for Vietnamese language subject, the psychological characteristics of Grade 5 students, and the nature of speaking and listening activities, the performance levels of communication and collaboration competencies were developed at three levels:

Level 1: Does not meet or only partially meets the expected requirements; students remain passive and require substantial support.

Level 2: Meets the basic requirements; students demonstrate the competencies, but their performance is not yet consistent.

Level 3: Meets the requirements well; students demonstrate the competencies proficiently, independently, and effectively.

Table 2.2. Rubric for assessing the communication and collaboration competencies of grade 5 students in Vietnam

Performance Indicator	Level 1 (0.5 point)	Level 2 (0.75 point)	Level 3 (1.0 point)
1. Ability to listen and receive information	- Does not pay adequate attention while listening. - Frequently engages in side conversations or interrupts others. - Does not fully understand the speaker's message. - Responses are off-topic or inappropriate.	- Pays attention most of the time but is occasionally distracted. - Understands most of the information being communicated. - Provides responses, but they are often brief or lack clarity. - Occasionally interrupts others while they are speaking.	- Listens attentively and stays focused on the speaker. - Correctly understands the information being communicated. - Does not interrupt others during their presentation. - Responds appropriately and demonstrates respect for the speaker.
2. Ability to express personal opinions	- Hesitant to speak and lacking confidence. - Presents ideas in a fragmented and difficult-to-understand manner. - Uses inappropriate or inaccurate vocabulary. - Unable to express ideas fully or clearly.	- Able to express personal opinions. - Communicates ideas with reasonable clarity, though not always coherently. - Uses appropriate vocabulary in some situations. - Still relies on prompts or support from the teacher or peers.	- Expresses personal opinions clearly and coherently. - Speaks confidently in front of a group or the class. - Uses appropriate vocabulary and tone of voice. - Provides simple reasons to support and defend personal opinions.
Ability to participate in discussions and exchanges	- Rarely participates in discussions or exchanges. - Does not actively share ideas. - Rarely asks questions or responds to peers' opinions. - Does not consistently respect others' speaking turns.	- Participates in discussions when prompted. - Shares personal ideas, though they may lack depth. - Can ask and answer simple questions. - Begins to respect differing opinions.	- Actively participates in discussions and exchanges. - Asks questions, provides feedback, and builds on peers' ideas. - Listens attentively and respects different viewpoints. - Is able to sustain discussions effectively.
4. Ability to cooperate in group activities	- Not actively participating in group activities. - Not completing assigned tasks. - Limited collaboration with peers. - Lack of awareness in supporting other members.	- Participates in group activities but is still dependent on you. - Completes tasks at a basic level. - Knows how to coordinate with members in some activities.	- Actively participate in group activities. - Proactively accept and complete assigned tasks. - Know how to coordinate, assist, and share with team members.

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		- Provides support to you but not regularly.	- Demonstrate a sense of responsibility for the group's shared tasks.
5. Ability to self-regulate in communication	- Prone to losing temper during exchanges. - Uses inappropriate language. - Fails to accept feedback. - Displays argumentative or blaming behavior toward others.	- Adjusts speech in certain situations. - Accepts feedback but with limitations. - Occasionally struggles to control emotions during debates.	- Manages emotions effectively in communication. - Uses polite and appropriate language. - Accepts and responds positively to feedback. - Demonstrates respect and cooperation toward others.

To comprehensively assess grade 5 students' communication and collaboration competencies in speaking and listening instruction, in alignment with the competency-based orientation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum, it is necessary to divide the assessment into two components: speaking-listening content and communication and collaboration skills. Specifically, speaking and listening content is allocated 5 points, while communication and collaboration skills are assessed through a rubric accounting for the remaining 5 points.

The allocation of 5 points to speaking and listening content aims to evaluate the extent to which students understand and fulfill the requirements of the communication task. Content reflects students' thinking ability, their capacity to select relevant information, and their understanding of the topic under discussion. Through this component, teachers can determine whether students address the assigned topic appropriately, present complete and relevant ideas, organize their responses logically, and communicate persuasively. For Grade 5 students, who are beginning to develop the ability to express personal opinions and viewpoints, assessing content plays an important role in fostering language thinking and oral expression.

The remaining 5 points are allocated to assessing communication and collaboration skills through a rubric. The use of a rubric enables teachers to evaluate students systematically, objectively, and according to different levels of competency performance. The assessment criteria extend beyond speaking proficiency to include students' interaction during speaking and listening activities, such as active listening, providing appropriate responses, expressing opinions, participating in discussions, cooperating with peers, and self-regulating their communication. This approach is consistent with the 2018 General Education Curriculum, which identifies communication and collaboration as core competencies that primary school students are expected to develop.

Furthermore, the equal distribution of scores (5–5) ensures a balanced assessment between communication content and communication performance. In speaking and listening instruction, students are expected not only to say the right things but also to communicate effectively, listen attentively, and collaborate with others. Focusing solely on content while neglecting communication skills would fail to fully reflect the objectives of competency-based instruction. Conversely, emphasizing communication techniques without considering content may lead students to produce lengthy but superficial responses that lack coherence and communicative effectiveness.

Therefore, allocating 5 points to speaking and listening content and 5 points to communication and collaboration skills assessed through a rubric represents an appropriate, scientifically grounded, and practical assessment approach for Grade 5 speaking and listening instruction. This assessment model not only enables teachers to monitor students' learning outcomes effectively but also supports the simultaneous development of language competency and communication and collaboration competencies for both academic learning and everyday life.

2.4.2. Checklist design

A checklist is a set of assessment requirements that can be answered with yes or no questions, facilitating the recording of evidence of student progress toward a specific learning objective. In particular, this instrument allows learners to self-assess their own and their peers' levels of achievement against the set requirements. Through this, learners can adjust or supplement any missing or limited skills, knowledge, or content. Therefore, checklists are considered an effective instrument for assessing student progress. To understand the current situation and assess students' progress in communication and collaboration skills, teachers can use the checklist we propose below to assess or organize self-assessments by students before and after experimental teaching.

Table 2.3: Checklist of manifestations of communication and collaboration skills in grade 5 students

No.	Content of the Assessment	Yes	No
1	Confidently presenting opinions in front of the class or group;		
2	Speaking clearly, coherently, and appropriately to the topic;		
3	Knowing how to listen to others during communication or discussion;		
4	Knowing how to respond and exchange opinions appropriately to the discussion;		
5	Actively participating in speaking and listening activities in the group;		

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6	Knowing how to cooperate with members to complete common tasks;		
7	Having a sense of sharing and supporting friends during group work;		
8	Respecting differing opinions of others during exchange and discussion;		
9	Knowing how to control emotions and speak politely during debates;		
10	Completing assigned tasks in group activities;		
11	Knowing how to give and receive feedback positively and appropriately;		
12	Having the ability to self-assess and assess others in speaking and listening activities.		

2.4.3. Scales

A scale is a instrument for communicating assessment results through observation, self-assessment, or peer assessment. Its value in evaluating students' learning activities depends on whether it is well-constructed and used appropriately. Like any other measurement instrument, a scale must be built on criteria that serve specific assessment objectives. It should only be used when the observer has sufficient information to record on the scale. If these two conditions are met, the scale will offer many benefits in assessment, such as: guiding observation towards specific behaviors; providing a common reference table for comparing students on the same type of quality or ability; It provides a convenient method for recording observer assessments... For example, when organizing group activities for students in teaching, to contribute to the development of communication and collaboration skills, teachers can use a scale for students to self-assess and assess each other.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PEER-ASSESSMENT FORM

Group:..... Student's Assessment:.....

After collaborating to complete the task, please self-assess and assess your group members according to the criteria in the table and use the following scoring scale:

- + Better than others = 3 points
- + Equal to others = 2 points
- + Not as good as others = 1 point
- + Did not help = 0 points
- + Hindered the group's work = -1 point

Member Name	Enthusiastic and serious about work	Provides new opinions and ideas	Creates a collaborative and friendly environment	Organizes and guides the entire team	Completes tasks effectively;	Total Score
1.....						
2.....						
3.....						
4.....						
5.....						

Therefore, enhancing process-based assessment in teaching speaking and listening skills to fifth-grade students is crucial for developing their communication and collaboration abilities. Through regular assessments throughout the learning process, teachers can monitor student progress, adjust teaching activities accordingly, and support students in perfecting their speaking, listening, discussion, and collaboration skills. Assessment instruments such as rubrics, checklists, and scales not only make assessment more specific and objective but also facilitate self-assessment and peer assessment. This contributes to fostering self-confidence, responsibility, listening skills, and respect for others' opinions in communication. Simultaneously, the diverse use of assessment instruments allows teachers to more comprehensively evaluate students' achievement in speaking and listening activities, thereby improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning oriented towards developing qualities and competencies.

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the requirements of Vietnam's General Education Program 2018 and the characteristics of teaching speech and listening, the paper proposed a system of instruments to assess communication and cooperation skills of fifth grade students including rubrics, tables and scales. The instrument system contributes to the specification of assessment requirements in the direction of capacity development, while supporting teachers to evaluate the learning process objectively and comprehensively. The research results are the basis for the design and use of assessment instruments in Vietnamese language teaching in primary schools. In further studies, experiments are needed to verify the reliability and value of the instruments, while continuing to adjust, refine and extend the scope of application to class blocks and other language activities.

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