

NO, AN ORAL PRESENTATION IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU PREPARE AT HOME! ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PRACTICES SUPPORTING PREPARATION OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

In elementary school, oral presentations are among teachers' favorite activities. From the pupil's perspective, this activity can have a major impact, as the skills it calls for will prove useful later throughout his/her career and life. While instruction for the presentation generally happens in class, the same is not true for the preparatory work, which is mostly carried out at home with or without parental support, thus creating inequalities between students (Sénéchal, 2017). However, teacher support is essential to help elementary school students prepare their oral presentation.

Our research question is: what kinds of support do teachers offer to students to help them prepare oral presentations? To answer this question, we interviewed 16 teachers from the French-speaking part of Belgium who ask their students to make oral presentations and who say they offer support before the presentation. Their declared practices show a wide variety of types of accompanying support. The practical implications of our study relate to progressive teaching of a complex task, rebalance between time devoted to oral and to written preparation, attention to the speaker and the audience, collection of artifacts, introduction of training modules for teachers, and best practices to be highlighted.

Keywords: oral presentation, complex task, supporting, elementary school, declared practices

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the course of one's life, one is required to speak in public in many situations. Among these speaking situations, an oral presentation invites the speaker to develop a subject in front of others who are listening. Oral presentation in this sense is an activity that takes place in everyday, academic and professional life (Simonet, 2000). Not being able to present content in front of an audience can cause major difficulties within one's course of study as well as in professional life, communicating being one of the soft skills valued by employers (Robles, 2012).

For this reason, teachers ask students to give oral presentations starting in elementary school (Millard & Menzies, 2019). In fact, it is one of the most popular oral activities for elementary school teachers (Colognesi & Deschepper, 2019; Dumais & Soucy, 2020; Sales-Hitier & Dupont, 2020). Thus, for a variety of reasons, teachers ask their students to prepare and deliver presentations, even though it has been shown that they also give little to no instruction on how to do so (Colognesi & Deschepper, 2019). This makes this speaking task even more complex for students (Dumortier et al., 2012). This is especially the case insofar as the presentation is mostly prepared at home, where some children do not have the benefit of family support (Sénéchal, 2017). This creates inequalities in the classroom (Ha, 2021).

Thus, in addition to the societal challenge of getting people to be able to give oral presentations, there is a pedagogical challenge to be addressed. From a pedagogical alignment perspective (Biggs & Tang, 2007), oral presentation cannot be an activity evaluated by the school when it has not been taught. However, teachers feel that oral speaking is a more complicated subject to teach and evaluate than others (Wurth et al., 2022), for which they report lacking the training and tools needed to do so (Colognesi & Dolz, 2017; Dumais et al., 2017; Sénéchal, 2017; Wiertz et al., 2021). In addition, they say they do not have the school time for oral language teaching in their school schedule (Sénéchal, 2020). Added to this are difficulties related to coaching and evaluating students' oral performances (Mercer et al., 2017; Simard et al., 2019), notably of the components related to verbal, non-verbal (posture, gestures, gaze, etc.), and paraverbal aspects (rate, volume, intonation, articulation, etc.) and of the student himself through his voice, his posture, and his look, considered as identity elements (Gagnon et al., 2017; Lavoie & Bouchard, 2017).

Therefore, it seems necessary to look into the issue of supporting students in making oral presentations, because it is one of the most common activities in school. It is also widely used currently in higher education, as a "means" of evaluation, although students have not been taught to succeed in this task before in their schooling (Colognesi & Dumais, 2020). That is the ambition of this contribution: to bring to light what can be done to support speakers in being successful in an oral presentation.

Our research question is: what support do teachers offer their students to help them prepare their oral presentation? To answer this question, we interviewed 16 elementary teachers in French-speaking Belgium who ask their students to give presentations and who say they offer them support before the presentation. It is all

the more important to have this knowledge because making oral presentations is included in school requirements, as with the *Pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence* (Pact for Teaching Excellence; 2017) in our context, which specifies that "disciplinary skills - listening/reading, speaking/writing - must be of equal importance" (p. 48).

In the following, we present (1) our theoretical framework, (2) the methodology we used, (3) the main results and (4) a discussion and conclusion opening up perspectives for research and practice.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses first, the definition of oral competence as a teaching/learning object, then information about oral presentations in schools. The final topic concerns aspects related to support for success on complex tasks, such as oral presentation.

There are several possible approaches to oral competence that can be found in particular in table 1: those that fall under linguistics (vocabulary, structure, rhetoric), the body (voice and nonverbal), the cognitive aspect (content, clarification, self-regulation, reasoning) and the socio-emotional aspect. These characteristics of spoken language are interrelated, so that some overlap is inevitable (Maxwell et al., 2015). These skills are important for children and youth "to succeed in education, employment and life" (Oracy Cambridge and Voice 21, 2019), and to develop reasoning and understanding (Mercer, 2008).

We did not favor one approach over another, but considered oral competence as a teaching object in these different components through oral genres (Dolz & Schneuwly, 2016), specifically the oral presentation, which is one of the tasks most frequently assigned by teachers, with a strong societal impact for the student.

2.1 Oral competence as a teaching/learning object

"Oral competence (oracy) allows humans to express themselves clearly and understandably and to exercise their rights in a democratic society as well as in their personal lives" (Kaldahl, 2019, p. 2). At the school level, oral competence corresponds to what the school needs to work on to develop students' language abilities when they express their thoughts and when they want to communicate with others in speech, in school and in life (Alexander, 2012). There are two sides to oral language: the one side of speech production and the other side involving understanding of the messages listened to (Colognesi & Deschepper, 2019). Speaking cannot be considered simply as a whole, but must be viewed through its multiple components (Colognesi & Hanin, 2020; Dolz et al., 1993; Dumais, 2016). Effectively, there is a consensus around oral competence as composed of four domains or dimensions: physical dimensions, cognitive dimensions, linguistic dimensions, and social and emotional dimensions (Kaldahl, 2019; Maxwell et al., 2015; Mercer et al., 2017; Millard & Menzies, 2019; Oracy Cambridge & Voice 21, 2019). Table 1 presents those

dimensions, as developed by Mercer et al. (2017). Note that Millard and Menzies (2019) classified structure within the cognitive dimension and audience awareness in the social-emotional dimension.

Table 1. Oracy skills framework (Mercer et al., 2017, p. 54)

Generic skills	Relevant skills	Particular tasks
Physical	Voice	Fluency and pace of speech Tonal variation Clarity of pronunciation Voice projection
	Body language	Gesture and posture Facial expression and eye contact
Linguistic	Vocabulary	Appropriate vocabulary choice
	Language variety	Register Grammar
	Structure Rhetorical techniques	Structure and organization of talk Rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, humor, irony and mimicry
Cognitive	Content	Choice of content to convey meaning and intention Building on the views of others
	Clarifying and summarizing	Seeking information and clarification through questions Summarizing
	Self-regulation	Maintaining focus on task Time management
	Reasoning	Giving reasons to support view Critically examining ideas and views expressed
	Audience awareness	Taking account of level of understanding of the audience
Social and emotional	Working with others	Guiding or managing interactions Turn-taking
	Listening and responding	Listening actively and responding appropriately
	Confidence in speaking	Self-assurance Liveliness and flair

Teaching oral language, with the different components presented above, remains a challenge for teachers, who must also create a safe learning environment for students to speak up (Wurth et al., 2022). On the basis of a review of the literature combined with an analysis of teachers' practices and their students' results, Colognesi & Hanin (2020) highlighted a number of effective practices for teaching oral language: allowing time in the school learning agenda; setting up a space where students feel safe to speak; and allowing them to re-orally (repeat their oral presentation; Colognesi & Dolz, 2017) several times in order to improve, both from specific scaffolding offered to students according to the difficulties they encounter and from providing peer assessment. These authors drew attention to the question of the

emotions felt by students who expose themselves by speaking out (Merz et al., 2019) and to the potentially wider impact of this learning on academic performance. This was re-enforced by Dumais (2016), who put emotions and emotion regulation as an object of oral instruction in their own respect, and by Pasquier et al. (2021), who worked on the identification and expression of emotions in primary school as a way to improve oral production.

2.2 The school oral presentation: a complex and hybrid task

Oral presentation is defined as "a relatively formal and specific public textual genre in which an expert presenter addresses an audience in an (explicitly) structured manner to convey information, describe, or explain something" (Dolz & Schneuwly, 2016, p. 143), with or without audience interaction and with or without the use of "audio-scripto-visual supports" (Chamberland et al., 2006, p. 37).

Some curricula specify that students have to develop skills in spoken language through argumentation, participation in discussions, oral presentations, role-playing, improvisation and debate. This involves working on gaining and maintaining the attention of listeners, choosing the right language register for effective communication, and prosody through volume and fluency to master the language (Millard & Menzies, 2019).

Dolz and Schneuwly (2016) highlighted five dimensions of an oral presentation: (1) it is a monologue, (2) it concerns informational content to be transmitted, (3) it has a precise internal organization (opening phase, introduction, presentation of the plan, thematic development, summary phase, and conclusion), (4) it requires the elaboration of aids for oneself (personal notes) and for the audience (poster, slides, etc.), and (5) involves the textualization of the oral with linguistic elements (e.g., rephrasing, paraphrasing, etc.) and paralinguistic elements (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, eye contact).

In school, an oral presentation may take the form of a presentation in front of peers (Sales-Hitier & Dupont, 2020), more rarely in front of the whole school (Millard & Menzies, 2019). It may also be a videotaped presentation (Colognesi & Dumais, 2020; Stordeur & Colognesi, 2020). Usually, the instructions for the presentation are given in class, but the preparation occurs at home, without prior teaching about this in school (Dumortier et al., 2012; Sénéchal, 2017). However, the presentation is a complex task for both the speaker and the listener. Indeed, it requires the progressive mastery of a series of types of knowledge (five in all for the speaker), skills (12 for the speaker and five for the listeners) and interpersonal skills (11 for the speaker and three for the listeners; Dumortier et al., 2012).

All students need to learn these aspects (Dumortier et al., 2012), but they are complex to teach and assess, notably because oral presentation engages oral and written skills simultaneously. Generally considered an oral genre, oral presentations nevertheless make extensive use of writing to support the speaker and listeners. Indeed, any student who has to make an oral presentation will inevitably go through

written language, first, in the preparation (such as documentary research, making a visual support and creating notes for the speech), and then also during the oral presentation itself (such as the use of a visual support and notes; Dolz et al., 2006; Pfeiffer-Ryter et al., 2004).

Dumortier and colleagues (2012) questioned 50 elementary teachers about their classroom practices on oral presentation. In their declared practices, more than 55% of the elementary school teachers who participated in the survey said that they asked their students to give an oral presentation at least once a year, 25% said that they did not do so, and 20% said that they asked for 3 or 4 oral presentations per year. The authors of the study showed that there was no developmental progression envisioned by teachers for students between the ages of 8 and 18. While the teachers recognized that the teaching of language skills was useful for making an oral presentation, the tasks they gave students to acquire language skills were independent of the presentation itself. Teachers reported teaching few procedures for finding and processing information. Nor did they specify what the speaker and listeners should do during an oral presentation. When it came to the oral performance itself, the elementary-level respondents gave importance to articulation (25%), followed by intonation (18.5%), rhythm (12.5%), vocabulary (6.5%) and to textual cohesion (6.5%), less to the contact between the speaker and his/her audience (5%). With regard to the text of the oral presentation to be handed in to the teachers, they looked first at syntax (15.5%), punctuation (9.5%), spelling (6.5%) and content (6.5%). Eight teachers collected the text of the presentation.

2.3 Helping students complete a complex task

As mentioned above, oral presentation is a complex task. The young “speaker” requires support to be able to perform it to the best of his or her ability (Dolz & Schneuwly, 2016; Dumortier et al., 2012; Sales-Hitier & Dupont, 2020). For this purpose, teachers can offer scaffolding. The theory of scaffolding was developed by Bruner (1996), following the work by Vygotsky (1934/2006) linked to the concept of the zone of proximal development. Scaffolding refers to how teachers organize their interventions to ensure students' learning and to allow the students to gradually become able to complete a task independently that the student did not know how to complete at the beginning. Bruner's six principles are (1) enrolment, (2) reducing the degrees of freedom, (3) maintaining orientation, (4) signaling dominant features, (5) controlling frustration, (6) demonstrating or presenting solution models.

Bucheton (2009) explained that scaffolding is part of a teacher's professional skills. She identified three types of functions that scaffolding can take:

- support functions, where “the teacher accompanies the students in their learning process (support on knowledge and experience, screening-focusing, how to do, synthesizer as sub-categories)” (Bucheton, 2009, p. 271);
- in-depth functions, where the teacher focuses on a particular aspect of the process to help them master this specific aspect;

- control functions, where the teacher ensures the correctness of the students' answers, and validates them.

Ultimately, scaffolds refer to all assistance that can be offered to the student to complete the task (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018), including the development of tools and resources to support learning (Puntambekar & Hubscher, 2005).

3. METHOD

This contribution aims to show the variety of supports offered to students for preparing their oral presentation in elementary school. For this purpose, a qualitative approach with a comprehensive perspective was chosen (Van der Maren, 2004).

3.1 *Participants*

We interviewed 16 elementary school teachers working in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (FWB) of Belgium. They were selected because they said they plan at least one oral presentation during the year and help students with it. Recruitment took place during the March 2020 lockdown via social networks, teachers from pedagogical colleges in contact with former students, and via teachers from the collaborative oral research group of which we are a part. Table 2 shows the 16 participants by seniority, starting with the novices. They were all between 23 and 57 years old. The majority (12 of 16) were women. In the Belgian system, Primary 3 (P3) students are approximately 9 years old, Primary 4 (P4) students are 10 years old, Primary 5 (P5) students are 11 years old, and Primary 6 (P6) students are 12 years old.

3.2 *Data collection*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted between April and June 2020. This gave us access to the representations, intentions, choices and decisions of individuals (Lefebvre et al., 2008). The strict confinement in effect at that time in Belgium forced us to conduct these interviews at a distance by phone or using applications such as Teams, WhatsApp or Skype. We did not consider this as an obstacle to our study. Indeed, in agreement with Soyer and Tanda (2016), who highlighted the advantages of a semi-structured interview via Skype (or other synchronous online service), we deemed it appropriate to use these digital tools to collect the data.

At the beginning of the interview, the objective of the study was explained to the participant. This was done while establishing the necessary framework of trust and ethics. Then, questions related to the support offered to students in the preparation of oral presentations were asked (see Appendix A). We recorded and transcribed the 16 semi-structured interviews, which constituted a corpus of 101 pages, 55,669 words. During the interview, if the teacher talked about the instructions that he gave to his students for the presentation, he was asked if he distributed a document. If so, he was asked to send it. We proceeded in the same way for the evaluation grids.

We assumed that these documents would provide us with additional information to consolidate the validity of the data collected (De Ketele & Maroy, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 2003; Van der Maren, 2006). In the end, we collected 4 sheets of instructions and 9 evaluation grids.

Table 2. Details for participants in the semi-structured interviews

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Years of teaching experience	Age of students	Number of students per class	Years of experience at this level	Socio-economic level of the school	Other information
Magdelene	F	26	2	6-12	27	2	medium	Master of Science in Education in progress
Paul	M	49	3	11	24	3	high	Was a lawyer for 17 years
Tom	M	23	3	9	22	3	medium	
Victor	M	26	3	11	23	3	high	Master of Science in Education in progress
Charlotte	F	31	7	11	24	4	high	Master of Science in Education
Geneviève	F	30	9	10	18		high	
Carine	F	33	9	10	23	5	high	
Mary	F	34	13	11	19	4	medium	
Sandra	F	43	21	11-12	17	13	medium	
Martine	F	42	22	11	19	2	medium	Cooperating teacher for student teachers during practicum
Viviane	F	47	25	12	23	25	medium	
May	F	49	29	9	26	1	medium	
William	M	52	29	11-12	24	4	medium	
Bernadette	F	57	31	11-12	23	30	high	
Natasha	F	56	35	12	25	10	high	
Christina	F	56	36	11	24	12	high	

3.3 Data analysis

A content analysis was applied to the collected data. For this, the six steps presented by L'Écuyer (1990) were followed: (1) reading the verbatim transcripts until we had

an overall view of the material, discovering the type of units and identifying the salient features; (2) choosing exemplary statements in which teachers explained their practices; (3) categorizing and classifying our statements with "in vivo" codes following an inductive logic using categories induced from the material; (4) quantifying and organizing the occurrences; (5) qualitatively analyzing the occurrences and (6) interpreting them to reach the deep meaning of the investigated facts.

Stages 2 and 3, namely the choice of exemplary statements and the formulation of codes to be grouped, were enriched by triangulation between 11 researchers, thanks to the members of a collaborative research group on speaking (GCEO). This group is made up of primary and secondary school teachers, trainers of future teachers, and researchers in the psychological and educational sciences. In order to analyze the instructions documents received and the teachers' evaluation grids, we developed categories and sub-categories on the basis of the verbatim transcripts of the participant interviews, that is, without categories linked to a pre-existing theoretical framework. We then used the categories in a triple-entry table to get a comparative view of the data in the 16 interviews, the 4 instructions sheets and the 9 evaluation grids.

4. FINDINGS

This section contains the results relating to our research question on the support that elementary teachers can offer to students to help them prepare their presentation. The practices presented below are illustrated by examples of quotes from the transcripts, which have been translated for this purpose.

To fully understand the results, readers should be aware that according to the current curriculum in French-speaking Belgium, teachers must teach the French language through four major skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening. The Pact for Teaching Excellence (2017) even stated that "the disciplinary skills - listening/reading, speaking/writing - must be of equal importance" (p. 48). Yet, in reality, teachers allocate more time to reading and writing skills, resulting in more research in these two areas compared to the other two (Colognesi & Deschepper, 2019, p. 1).

Yet, the competency bases detail the skills to be acquired in speaking and listening skills. These include: (1) orienting one's speaking and listening to the communication situation, (2) elaborating meanings, (3) ensuring and clarifying the organization and coherence of the message including verbal means and (4) using and identifying non-verbal means.

4.1 The presentations in the participants' classrooms

Before starting the detailed description of the coaching practices emerging from the analysis, it seems necessary to present some general information on how presentations were planned in the participants' classrooms.

All of the participants said that they asked their students to give presentations to enable them to develop skills related to the French curriculum. Ten teachers added that it was also to develop more cross-curricular skills, such as daring, collaborating, searching for information, developing creativity, and so forth. Two teachers also explained that asking students to make presentations prepares them for secondary school. In spring 2020, three teachers continued assigning their presentation project during the strict lockdown by converting it into a recorded presentation from home, so that the students would continue to learn.

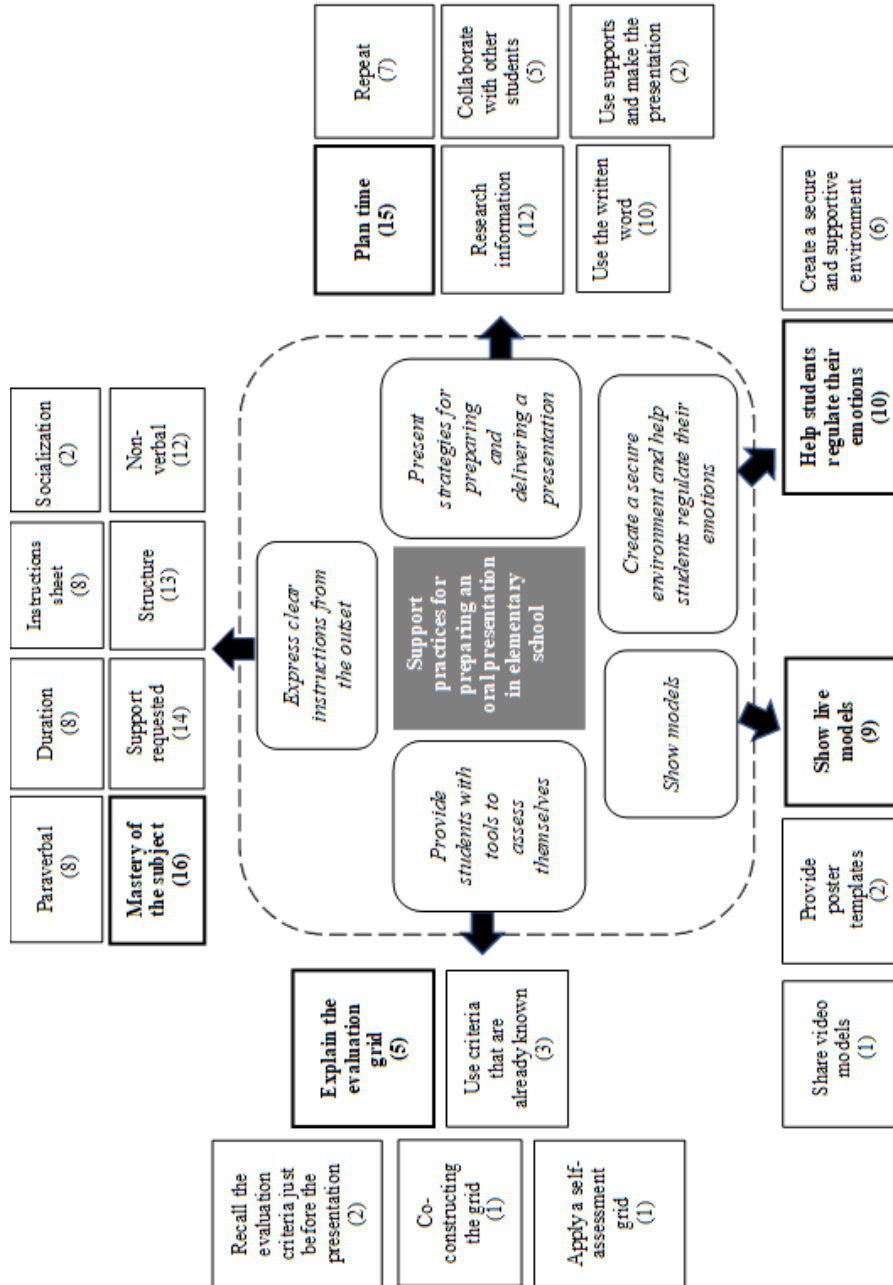
As for the preparation of the presentations, four teachers felt that it was necessary to devote school time so that the students could prepare their presentations entirely at school, while the others relied on preparation partly at home. In this respect, nearly all participants (15 out of 16) discussed the role of parents. The teachers said that many parents naturally provided help in preparing the presentation: choice of subject, documentary research, preparation of materials for the presentation, "moral" support and encouragement. However, three participants pointed out that some students were helped and others were not, which created inequalities. Moreover, when parents were too involved in the preparation, this could be a form of pressure (four participants) or even be detrimental to the students during the presentation, when they were less familiar with the content (one participant). Faced with this unequal and sometimes excessive involvement of parents, four of the teachers interviewed decided to change their arrangements so that the majority of students prepared for their oral presentations in class.

4.2 Support for students in preparing their presentations

Figure 1 shows in detail the support that our 16 participants offered to their students in preparing their presentations. It shows the categories and sub-categories that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The most frequently reported practices are indicated in bold and shaded. The number of teachers reporting each practice during the interviews is shown in parentheses, with the more frequent ones located closer to the center.

Teachers reported practices regarding their support before the oral presentation. These support practices were grouped into five categories: giving clear instructions at the outset, presenting strategies for preparing for a presentation, creating a safe environment and helping students regulate their emotions, showing role models, and giving students tools to assess themselves. These are discussed in detail below and illustrated by examples of quotes from the transcripts.

Figure 1. Teachers' support practices for preparing an oral presentation in elementary school



Note. (n) = number of teachers who mentioned this practice; higher frequency types of support are bolded and closer to the center).

4.2.1 *Express clear instructions from the outset*

The analysis of the transcripts showed that all 16 teachers were eager to give clear instructions to their students. This was to ensure that they understood what was expected of them in preparing the presentation.

If it is not clear, the children will ask a lot of questions and get lost. We will waste time answering when it could have been written down and clear. The instructions have to be top-notch. Even more so, because there is a part at home. The children must be able to be clear about what they have to do. That's something that has been refined. (Charlotte)

All 16 of the teachers interviewed highlighted expectations concerning mastery of the subject. More specifically, they wanted students to use precise language without being too scientific (five participants), to understand everything they say, to be able to explain everything and to answer questions after their presentation (three participants).

They also talked about the supporting materials that were required (14 participants) or not required (two participants). When it was required, many teachers (10 out of 16) left the choice of medium free: PowerPoint, video, play, object, writing on the board, a Lego model, a short film. Only one teacher explained that he taught his students to develop a particular type of digital medium.

Thirteen teachers explained their expectations in terms of the structure to be respected and the aspects to be addressed.

First there is the introduction, with the key stages. There were always two contexts that they have to put in, a historical context. [...] As well as a geographical, situational context. Their motivation. A description with three themes, then three questions. And finally a conclusion. (William)

They also explained what they want or do not want to see regarding students' non-verbal behavior (12 participants), with a strong emphasis on looking at the audience (six participants).

Looking at the audience, not just the teacher: there are often some, but that's out of shyness. He talks to me, I always tell them I'm not here, you don't look at me. You look at the audience. You imagine it's an audience as for a TV presenter. (Vivian)

Regarding non-verbal behavior, teachers said that they asked students to have a good presence (three participants), to stand up straight (three participants), to avoid awkward gestures (two participants), to show ease (two participants) and to position themselves well in relation to the poster (two participant). One teacher did not take into account small body tics, as she knows that some students are shy.

Eight teachers spoke about their expectations regarding paraverbal aspects. They said they gave instructions on volume (seven participants), articulation (two participants), flow (one participant), intonation (two participants; for example, Carine told her students, "Vary your voice, modulate it, don't be in a monotone all the time, otherwise it's tiring for everyone"), expressing oneself correctly (two participants) and avoiding language tics (one participants). Some teachers emphasized the need

to captivate the audience (four participants), as it was important to learn how to express oneself in front of others (two participants): "I say: 'You must try to catch everyone's eye. You have to want people to listen to you'" (Mary). Only one teacher did not express any particular expectation about paraverbal aspects.

Eight teachers also told their students the expected length of the presentation, which differed according to the topic, and the type of presentation (classical presentation or masterpiece). The last is a more substantial presentation that marks the end of the primary school cycle and is attended by other students and teachers at the school. It can last up to 20-30 minutes. Sometimes the length was precise (5 minutes, 15 minutes) or it could be "extendable" when the teacher agreed to double (from 10 to 20 minutes), triple (from 5 to 15 minutes) or even quintuple (from 2 to 10 minutes) it. One teacher left the length completely free and the student could exceed 30 minutes without being forced to stop.

In order for the students to have a record of expectations, eight teachers prepared an instructions sheet. Three teachers included aspects relating to the time required, documentary research and the visual medium, with instructions on the choice of medium, the placement of words and images, the use of photos, the fact that not everything said should be written down, and so forth. In her instructions sheet, one teacher specified that the medium should be pleasant to look at. Another teacher specified that the medium *must* be pleasant to look at. Other written instructions related to deadlines (two participants); the choice of subject, for which two teachers gave advice, and the plan to be drawn up: introduction, five aspects and conclusion (one participant); structuring what is to be said (one participant); selecting surprising/funny information and details to be said (one participant); not saying everything on the document but circling the essential information (one participant); the importance of practicing (two participants).

When students were working in groups, two teachers expressed expectations related to socialization: teaching students to negotiate, not to reject anyone, to find solutions together, or to get along better with students from another class.

4.2.2 *Present strategies for preparing and delivering a presentation*

Participants suggested several strategies to help students prepare their presentations, related to: planning time during the preparation of the presentation; searching for information; writing a summary, posters or slides; rehearsing; collaborating with other students; and for preparing and giving a successful presentation.

First, the strategy most invested in by our participants was planning (15 participants). They explained that it is important for them to help the students to schedule the different steps involved in preparing their presentation (eight participants). To do this, they show their students the steps one by one and check that the students have completed each step before moving on to the next. Others (six participants) noted that it is important to remember that preparing a presentation takes a lot of time for the students and that the time needed for preparation depends highly on

each student's pace. For example, one teacher used explicit teaching to enable students to plan a presentation on a current topic:

At the beginning of the year, I present the objective, which is to present a news story in the long term, and I model with them how to prepare a news story: How do I do it? Where do I go to look for information? I will look for important information: the date. Who is it about? Where is it happening? What are the main facts and what are the consequences? (Martine)

Second, 12 teachers helped students in searching for information. To do this, they reported several practices, sometimes implemented simultaneously:

- give an outline to complete or questions to answer (nine participants);
- present possible sources of information, while drawing attention to choosing among them and their reliability (nine participants);
- specify the content aspects to be addressed (eight participants);
- tell students to compare sources (seven participants);
- ask students to consult sources other than the Internet (six participants; see quote below);
- go to the school computer room with their students to gather information on the Internet (four participants);
- suggest that they seek out resource people (four participants);
- give a list of sites not to be consulted, as the information and vocabulary are too complex (one participants).

They will have to go somewhere else than the Internet. Check their information on the Internet. [...] We're talking about Wikipedia, the information is not always accurate. That they should be wary. That they can go to libraries, they can find books, but sometimes also books that are not so recent. (Mary)

Third, 10 teachers provided students with ideas about how to use the strategy of writing. To do this, they suggested that students write a summary of what they are going to say, an identity card, a mind map, a plan and they suggested checking the content that students will present to be able to give personalized feedback. Teachers reported that they explain how to present the information on a poster (two participants), and how to create and use supporting materials (three participants): a poster, flashcards, PowerPoint.

They have to make a plan. So, the introduction, their motivation, the three key points. And also a table of contents for their presentation. As well as writing down the elements in a written way. There are preparatory steps, with a piece of work to be handed in each time. And depending on that, I give them some ideas to clarify, so that they can move forward. (William)

The instructions sheet was also an opportunity to give precise advice in order to prepare the writing for the oral presentation (two participants). One teacher particularly insisted on the fact that the documentary source should not be copied as it is, but students should be able to explain everything in their own words.

But eight out of the 10 teachers stressed that this writing cannot be read during the presentation, because the presentation is not reading aloud and because it is essential to look at the audience. They then presented strategies for using the written word to serve the spoken word.

You don't have to read, you have to express. That is very, very difficult. In fact, despite their age, they are highly conditioned to "I want to do it perfectly well and I don't want to forget anything", whereas we would like it to be more spontaneous. (Natasha)

I'm a fan of little cards in my own practice. I always explain to them how I do it. I put in key words so I don't have to read all my sentences, etc. (Charlotte)

In one class, students were asked to write reflectively to become aware of their progress and the strategies they need to put in place.

There is indeed a research follow-up sheet with "where I am in the stages of my research". And in this tracking sheet, there is a point on presentation that leaves room for "what kind of support will I choose? How am I going to arrange my information, etc.?". (Victor)

Fourth, seven teachers highlighted rehearsal as a winning strategy for preparing and giving a successful presentation, and they scheduled these rehearsals during school. This took place in small groups (three participants), in front of the whole class (two participants) or just with the teacher (two participants). One teacher encouraged the use of video during rehearsals so that the speakers could see themselves and improve:

They could see a little bit of the tics they might have. It's true that I didn't think about that or the language mistakes they could make or the fact that they always say uh... uh... uh... Or the fact that when they make a poster, sometimes they put themselves right in front of the poster. (laughs). Some people talk to the board. (Geneviève)

Fifth, the strategy of collaborating with others was highlighted by five teachers. It is a question of supporting each other and giving feedback during rehearsals, but also of being able to help each other to overcome difficulties during preparation:

The group gives hints on how to overcome difficulties: Let them also tell about the difficulties they have encountered. And that they find a way to overcome the difficulties. And sometimes the way is not me, but maybe the others. To state in front of others that I am there and I have to go there. I have such and such a difficulty. And sometimes it was the group that had the answer to the difficulty. (William)

Six, two other teachers also give strategies for presenting well:

[I] like my poster on the board and present my talk in a few sentences, [I] speak loudly enough, [I] present and explain the material on my poster, share the task if more than one, I know the vocabulary used and know how to explain it, [I] know how to answer questions. (Tom)

One teacher said:

Before you start: hang your poster on the board, set up your materials and take your notes (if you have some). Be careful, don't take all your written work, the best is to

prepare small cards with the essentials (the plan and some key words). (extract from Charlotte's written instructions)

4.2.3 *Create a safe environment and help students regulate their emotions*

For 10 teachers, helping students prepare for a presentation also meant supporting them in the emotional aspect of having to present orally to an audience. They did this in different ways:

- invite students to put into words what they are feeling (four participants);
- answer students' questions and re-explain things if they ask, to reduce anxiety / calm worries (three participants);
- let them choose when they present to the class (two participants);
- encourage them orally, tell them to have confidence in their abilities (two participants);
- give them more tools, for example, by proposing games that help them remember the content they will have to present (two participants);
- build confidence (one participant);
- invite discussion with other students (one participant).

I see with them when they want to come over and make them talk about what stresses them: [...] In general, I follow the rhythm and I adapt myself. And then there are the little elements of listening as we do on a daily basis, the elements of psychology: what is stressing you? How are you, are you comfortable? Do you need anything? What can we do to help you? In these elements, depending on the moment and the child, but the child is never left to his own devices. No, there is always a moment of regulation. (Martine)

Just before the presentation, teachers said they encouraged their students, but they reported that some speakers were still stressed to the point of paralysis. Many helped their students to be relaxed to start their presentation (nine participants). For example, when students were too excited, they invited them to go out for two minutes and "go outside and shout a lot and come back calmly. If they are too excited, it doesn't work either" (Carine). Another calmed down euphoric students verbally and with humor. Other approaches were also suggested to relieve stressed students: doing relaxation and/or breathing exercises with the teacher, with "mediating" peers or alone: "Breathe, if you need to, take 2 or 3 minutes while everyone is settling down to go to a quiet corner and do some relaxation exercises" (extract from Charlotte's instructions). They reassured their students by telling them that they know the subject better than the audience (one participant), by putting a hand on their shoulder (one participant), or by introducing the presentation with the pupil to encourage him or her to start: "If a child is not well, I present with him or her if I have to. All this I am ready to do to help him" (Victor). Some teachers told the student that they understood and gave them time to calm down:

Calm down, take your time, if you don't feel comfortable. I act directly because I know that it can be really... not traumatic, but for some it is really not pleasant at that moment. (Magdelene)

Six teachers also explained that it is essential to set up rituals. Some of them set up a secure and benevolent framework before starting, for example, by reminding the audience of the rules of good living together, of listening and of respect for the speaker (four participants):

I remind the audience of the rules of living well in class, of listening and really of respect. It's especially in relation to the others who are listening to the presentation, so that they respect the child's work so that he/she is not too stressed, not to make gestures, not to start talking, not to manipulate objects, not to read, really to listen. (Carine)

4.2.4 *Show models*

To help students to be able to give a presentation, nine teachers felt that students needed to have an idea of what it looks like, to have examples of "good presentations". To do this, they choose to show the students models. These could be "live" models, where the teacher serves as a model by doing the first presentation on the topic himself/herself (one participant), external speakers who come to talk about the topic (one participant), or their own peers, especially the "good students", who go first and get feedback (two participants).

The first ones who start at the beginning of the year, I choose, it's not good, but I choose. I choose students who are going to do it correctly. And those "serve as examples" for the others. [...] I think like that. They do it by imitation, I will say. I'm not giving a lesson [...]. (May)

Other types of models were shown, such as posters (two participants):

We also showed different kinds of posters that it was possible to make and we also gave them the choice, if they wanted to do it differently, but we showed them that they had to make a big title so that we could see each other from far enough away and pictures that were not too small so that we could also see them from far away. (Carine)

Or even video templates for students who had to produce a recorded presentation:

What I also did was sending YouTube tutorials for camera positioning showing how most Youtubers and other video creators did to make their videos more or less enjoyable to watch. (Paul)

4.2.5 *Provide students with tools to assess themselves*

Five participants gave students tools to evaluate themselves by explaining the evaluation grid that would be applied:

So I go through the evaluation grid, I only do it once, I don't do it every time and we say: "Well, here are the parasite gestures" (she imitates) by twisting her fingers, swinging. I also say: "We don't have a train to catch when we present". We talk very fast. I always say that we breathe twice at a period and once at a comma. (Charlotte)

The idea here was to allow the students to have a to-do list before the presentation to the class:

It's really to help them and it's also a little "to do list" of "Well, I've done everything, I've followed everything," because here they are filling in the grid with knowledge of the criteria, etc. And then, it's also for me, to know how they feel before they present and to be able to reassure those who are not reassured. (Charlotte)

For the sake of continuity and consistency, three teachers used criteria already in use in other grids, so that the students would refer to known criteria. One teacher co-constructed an observation grid with his students and developed it each time there was a presentation, while another adapted the grid to the subject of the presentation:

These observation grids are evolving, really. That's the aim too, it's to say to myself: what challenge do I give myself? And we are becoming more and more expert, so it has to evolve too. In co-construction with the students. (Victor)

I don't just say on the day of the evaluation: "Yes, it was not bad, I'll give you 8 out of 10". We really have a fairly detailed grid for each thing, which is different depending on whether it is a geological phenomenon or a famous monument. Of course, the grid will not be the same. There are elements that will necessarily be the same. (Mary)

One teacher, having explained to the students how to produce a piece of writing for oral expression, then suggested that they use the self-correction grid presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Writing instructions and self-corrections for the text to be orally presented (translation of Carine;s document)

Step 3		
On a sheet of pad paper I make sentences with all the key words I wrote down in step 2. I try to make my sentences make sense and link them together!		
Be careful, I don't copy sentences from my magazines but I explain them in my own words!		
Self-correction grid	Yes	No
I used the key words from step 2 to make sentences		
I used logical connectors to arrange my sentences		
I checked that my sentences make sense		
I checked that my sentences are connected		
I checked the spelling of my sentences		
I did not copy sentences from my magazines but reworded them correctly		

At the time of the interview, one teacher suggested that his students make a first recorded presentation at home, which could be improved by feedback from peers and the himself:

I would like to see a first draft of the presentation, on which feedback could be given. This would be a kind of draft of the speech. This feedback will be given to the student. [...] Once there has been this feedback, the student can make his speech in its final form.
(Paul)

Finally, some of them recalled the evaluation criteria just before the presentation so that the speaker would have them well in mind during his or her presentation (two participants).

Table 3 compares the stated practices identified by our participants with the types of supports from the literature (Bruner, 1996; Bucheton, 2009).

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We wanted to show how teachers can support students in preparing an oral presentation in class. This is because we know that this activity is very popular with teachers (Colognesi & Dechepper, 2019; Dumais & Soucy, 2020; Sales-Hitier & Dupont, 2020), even though there is little or no help and instruction on how to do it in the classroom (Dumortier et al., 2012), and students must therefore prepare their presentations at home (Sénéchal, 2017). We were able to identify a variety of support practices offered by teachers to their students to carry out this complex task. It was both diverse and unequal from one teacher to another. And, in the end, teachers explained more than they taught their students how to make a presentation. Nevertheless, five types of support categories were highlighted: express clear instructions from the outset, present strategies for preparing a presentation, create a safe framework and help students to regulate their emotions, show models, and give students tools to evaluate themselves.

The instructions were most often aimed at mastering the subject, support for oneself and for the audience, and the plan. The oral aspect was present, but it was mainly the non-verbal dimension that was emphasized and less the paraverbal, although the linguistic, cognitive and socio-emotional dimensions are important for developing high-quality speaking (Mercer et al., 2017). While the triangulation of the data showed consistency between the declared practices and the instructions sheets, this was not the case with the evaluation criteria, where paraverbal (rate, volume, intonation, articulation, etc.) and non-verbal (posture, gestures, gaze) aspects were most frequently mentioned.

We identified six strategies for preparing a presentation: planning of time, searching for information, writing, rehearsing, collaborating with other students, and preparing and giving a successful presentation. Indeed, preparing a presentation requires working in stages to reduce the complexity of the task (Bruner, 1996). Above all, teachers talked about the written aspect of the complex task: first of all, documentary research based on a form to be completed to guide the student through a

mass of information, and the necessary passage through the written word for oneself and others, thus showing the non-negligible part of writing in this oral task (Dolz et al., 2006; Pfeiffer-Ryter et al., 2004). This student-generated writing helps teachers to check the content to be presented and to give personalized guidance. On the student's side, reflective writing was sometimes requested so that the student becomes aware of his or her progress and the strategies that still need to be put in place. These strategies are interesting for supporting the student in making progress towards the objective to be reached (Bucheton, 2009; Bruner, 1996).

Table 3. Parallels between declared practices and types of supports

Funtions of scaffolding (Bucheton, 2009)	Types of support (Bruner, 1996)	Stated practices
Support functions	Enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express clear instructions on: the mastery of the subject, the support required, the structure, the non-verbal aspects, the paraverbal aspects, the duration. - Put the instructions on an instructions sheet. - At the beginning of the process, leave some autonomy and choice to the students as far as the timing of the oral presentation. - Present the evaluation grid at the outset or say that it will be co-constructed.
Support functions and in-depth functions	Reduction of degrees of freedom	Present strategies for preparing and delivering the presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan the task ahead of time, - provide tips for researching information (outline, tips for finding reliable information, etc.).
Support functions	Maintaining the orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the instructions sheet. - Plan the steps to prepare the presentation. - Co-construct the evaluation grid. - Recall the evaluation criteria just before the performance.
Control functions	Signaling dominant features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During preparation, ask for written assignments to check content and offer personalized feedback. - Return to the evaluation grid explained earlier. - Make the students actors by asking them to self-evaluate their presentation or filmed rehearsal. - Organize rehearsals at school in front of the teacher and/or peers and provide feedback.
Support functions	Frustration control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support students regularly. - Remind students that peers are possible supports. - Invite students to regulate their emotions during preparation.
Support functions and in-depth functions	Demonstration or presentation of solution models	Present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - live models (teacher, peers, outside speaker), - poster templates, - videos. But leave some autonomy to the students in the choice of information, and in the form in which it is presented.

Among the participants, seven spoke of rehearsals that allow for re-oralisation (Colognesi & Dolz, 2017), at home, in front of the class, in front of the teacher if the student requests it, or in a small group on the playground. Re-oralisation is indeed an effective practice for teaching speaking (Colognesi & Hanin, 2020). In this way, the speaker can give his speech several times without having to worry about his image in front of the class or being evaluated. In addition, supportive peer feedback frees the teacher from the task of doing it for everyone. Only one novice teacher used a camera to give the speakers the opportunity to see themselves in order to correct their speech and posture. However, this is a practice appreciated by students (Stordeur & Colognesi, 2020).

As public speaking generates many emotions, many teachers mentioned that they set up a safe framework (Wurth et al., 2022), which is another effective practice for teaching speaking (Colognesi & Hanin, 2020). They said that they regulate students when they tell them about the presentation assignment during the preparation, just before the presentation and even during the presentation. Thus, they take it to heart to reassure stressed students and calm down overexcited ones. Ritual was discussed by some, and a few gave tips on how to help students regulate their emotions when they lose their footing during the presentation.

Teachers also mobilized written models such as previously made posters, or live models such as the first students who present, or even video models for students who have to give a recorded presentation. This is in line with the presentation of solution models (Bruner, 1996).

As oral competency must be considered through its multiple components (Dolz et al., 1993, Dumais, 2016), teachers evaluated the presentation using grids, sometimes co-constructed with the students. The criteria are explained, recalled just before the presentation, and also serve as a basis for feedback from the teacher and sometimes from peers. It has been shown that people need criteria to assess speaking and that when the criteria are embedded, it is possible to do it properly (Leenknecht & Prins, 2018). However, in the interviews, although some teachers talked about the criteria for speaking, none of them discussed working on the specific objectives to be evaluated when speaking (Dumais, 2016; Mercer et al., 2017; Millard & Menzies, 2019). Moreover, it seems that oral competence was less present in the instructions given by our participants, although they mentioned it most often when they talked about their evaluation grids, ahead of mastery of the subject and the written aspect of the material that was worked on so much in class. It is as if preparing a presentation was primarily a written task, while its evaluation was more focused on the oral.

In the end, these support practices seem to us to be inspiring. On the one hand, they provide concrete guidelines for teachers who would like to do so, but say they do not know how to go about it (Colognesi & Dolz, 2017; Dumais et al., 2017; Sénéchal, 2017; Wiertz et al., 2021). On the other hand, they show that it is possible - and even necessary - to set aside school time to guide students in preparing their

oral presentation, such a complex task for students (Dolz & Schneuwly, 2016; Dumortier et al., 2012).

Our 16 participants were concerned to provide students with various types of support, whether it was supportive, probing or monitoring (Bruner, 1996; Bucheton, 2009).

Ultimately, scaffolds refer to all of the assistance that can be offered to the student to complete the task successfully (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018). It is clear that the supports primarily affect the linguistic and cognitive dimensions, and to a lesser extent the physical and social-emotional dimensions of oral competence (Millard & Menzies, 2019).

5.1 Limitations and perspectives

Like any study, this one has its limitations. First, the results presented must be interpreted with caution. We are dealing here with teachers' stated practices and not with actual practices observed in their classrooms. Further research could usefully enrich the data we have collected. This would enable us to confirm or qualify our results, particularly with regard to the teaching of oral expression and the regulation of students' emotions, in order to better support the necessary pedagogical alignment between the stated objectives, classroom practices and assessment (Biggs & Tang, 2007). The analysis of real practices drawn from observations in the field would also be useful in order to better understand and interpret what is at stake in the preparation and presentation of oral presentations: the contribution of peers, the variety of supports offered, the degree of differentiation and emotional support. The proportion of time devoted to the oral and written aspects of this hybrid oral-written task (Dolz et al., 2006; Pfeiffer-Ryter et al., 2004) could also be further investigated in order to give the oral aspect the share it deserves in the preparation process.

Second, most of our participants worked in schools with a medium to high socio-economic index. In order to have a wider range of practices according to the audience, it would be appropriate to have more schools with a low socio-economic index to see if this changes the situation in terms of preparation, particularly concerning the involvement of parents (Ha, 2021).

Third, while interviews via digital applications are an avenue that should not be overlooked in terms of saving time and travel (Soyer & Tanda, 2016), it can be more difficult to obtain the documents that teachers are talking about. In another study, it would be wise to use an interview platform asking participants to send in their documents beforehand, in order to rely on them during the meeting and have access to all of the information.

Fourth, we chose to focus on upper elementary school teaching, as this is when students learn to make presentations. It would be useful to explore the support offered by secondary school teachers to see if there is a developmental progression in learning (Dumortier et al., 2012). On the other hand, we did not take into account the career or training stages of the participants. It would be interesting to see if

teachers trained in teaching oral language with its different dimensions (Dumais, 2016; Mercer et al., 2017) function differently.

5.2 Practical implications

Several practical implications can be suggested, following our work. First, with a view to building a learning progression (Dumortier et al., 2012), developmental progression would be worth considering as a teaching team, to see how the presentations are distributed throughout the curriculum, and what progressions in terms of both theme and level of difficulty are required of the students.

Second, as our participants stated, they support their students in the preparation of the oral presentations with various strategies, but these are primarily focused on the written word. Surprisingly, they were much less focused on the oral aspect, although the presentation is a hybrid oral-written task (Dolz et al., 2006; Pfeiffer-Ryter et al., 2004). In order to rebalance the time devoted to oral and written preparation, teachers could organize their elementary school students to spend less time on documentary research and writing a text to be delivered orally, in order to gain time for oral work. For example, they could ask for a brief summary presentation on a subject that has just been covered in class, or they could provide the pupil with teacher-prepared “ready-made” notes.

Third, in connection with the two sides of oral communication - speaking and listening - it would be sensible to focus attention on both the speaker and the audience. In this way, students in the audience could be given one listening intention focused on content and another on an evaluation criterion to observe. This would help them to retain the information communicated orally and/or visually, and to be partners in giving feedback to their fellow speaker.

Fourth, it would be interesting to reflect on the collection of artifacts after the presentation (Dumortier et al., 2012). Visual aids (paper or digital) and recorded presentations could be compiled in the school library or on an online platform accessible to teachers at this level. These artifacts would be inspiring models for maintaining students' motivation throughout the task. In addition, the recorded presentations would be a bank of authentic presentations by children their own age. As students prepare for their first presentation, the teacher could engage them in identifying the characteristics of the genre.

Fifth, it seems that training programs for future teachers could include specific training modules for teaching oral presentations. In addition to providing theoretical input, strategies and tools for how to support their students in this learning process, this would personally help the student teachers themselves. Indeed, they are often required to make presentations as part of their training, without having learned to do so (Stordeur & Colognesi, 2020).

Finally, our study highlights some interesting best practices to make use of to support students in this complex oral task. First of all, throughout the process, free up school time to work on the presentations in class, ensure a safe environment and

be attentive to the students' emotions, in order to invite them to regulate their emotion so as to remain motivated and persevering. Regarding the specific time spent on preparation, it is important to (1) explain to the students the objective of the task and its importance in school and society, (2) give clear instructions, (3) present the evaluation grid from the outset or announce that it will be co-constructed with them, (4) explain the strategies for achieving these outcomes and the types of support that will be put in place to accompany them, (5) present the choices that they will be able to make, (6) talk about possible revisions as opportunities for improvement, and (7) remember that oral presentation is a complex (Dumortier et al., 2012) and hybrid (Dolz et al., 2006; Pfeiffer-Ryter et al., 2004) task which must be worked on progressively throughout schooling.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
(TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH)

Contents	Questions
Their teaching practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What instructions do you give to your students for making a presentation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>During the preparation?</i> - <i>Regarding the collection of information to be presented and its management?</i> - <i>Concerning the structuring of the information and the plan for the presentation?</i> - <i>About the materials the student can use?</i> - <i>The level of language required? The vocabulary to be used? Why or why not?</i> - <i>Do you have any physical expectations? Which ones? (voice, look, gestures, body, emotions, etc.)</i> 2. How much time do students have to prepare their presentation? 3. Where and how does this presentation take place? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How does it happen in class?</i> - <i>Can you explain this to me in concrete terms?</i> 4. Do you evaluate the presentations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>If yes: What are your criteria? How do you carry out this evaluation? (involvement of students, grid, self-evaluation, etc.)</i> - <i>If no: What are your reasons? What does the student do after the presentation to the class?</i> 5. Do you think that the preparation of a presentation requires a lot of time? Why or why not? 6. Where do your students work on their presentation? How do they do it? Do you think that parents are involved in the preparation of the presentation? 7. Do you communicate with parents about the presentations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How do you do this? (follow-up: written, oral, etc.)</i> - <i>At what time? (during the preparation, during rehearsals, after the presentation, etc.)</i> - <i>Do parents come to you with questions?</i> - <i>If yes: What kind of questions are frequently asked?</i> - <i>Do parents give you feedback on their child's experience?</i> - <i>If yes: What experiences are frequently mentioned?</i> 8. Do you ask that students prepare a poster or other visual medium for the presentation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Is this a requirement/advice from you?</i> - <i>Do they have a choice of medium? What is the most frequently used medium? (audiovisual, visual, etc.)</i> - <i>What kind of materials do they bring? (poster, photos, objects, PowerPoint, etc.)</i> - <i>How do they use it in their presentation?</i> 9. What are/would be your needs for teaching oral presentations?

The link between oral presentation and emotions

How do your students feel -

1. Before their oral presentation to the class?
 2. When you tell them that they have to do an oral presentation?
 3. When they prepare their presentation?
 4. When they rehearse their presentation?
 5. A few minutes before their oral presentation?
 6. Do you do anything to regulate their emotions at these times?
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