CCSU General Education Assessment

January 2024

Oral Communication Learning Outcome Results

Artifacts from Fall 2022, Spring 2023 & Fall 2023

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Central Connecticut State University

Introduction

As part of our Davis Educational Foundation (DEF) grant, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) faculty participated in assignment alignment workshops for the Oral Communication general education learning outcome (General Education Objective 5). This rubric was created in Fall 2021 by a team of five CCSU faculty from three of our schools: College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, School of Business, and School of Engineering, Science, and Technology. (Rubric attached.)

The rubric features six dimensions on a rating scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents the lowest assessable performance and 4 represents the highest performance. A score of zero is awarded in cases where a student failed to address the dimension. The rubric is grounded in the following definition:

> *To strengthen writing and communication skills. Relevant outcomes include the ability to: develop a chosen topic, organize specifics to support a main idea, use proper grammar, address a particular audience, and revise and edit to produce focused and coherent texts.*

The six dimensions of the rubric include:

- Context
- Content
- Organization
- Vocal Delivery
- Nonverbal Delivery
- Language

During Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, 21 faculty participated in DEF workshops to align existing assignments to this rubric. Working in teams, faculty helped each other align their respective assignments to ensure that each dimension of the rubric was evident in the assignment. Those assignments were then given to students and subsequently scored using a different model than that used in our traditional scoring retreats. Instead, faculty were allowed to score their own students using the Oral Communication rubric. This methodology was developed to address the complex and resource intensive process to collect and upload oral communication artifacts. As well, the artifacts were not scored by two different faculty. This decision was made in response to concerns that having a new faculty member present for an oral presentation might skew the student's performance.

Using this methodology of scoring, faculty were required to score all student work to ensure artifacts were not selected for submission. Faculty participating in our assignment alignment workshops submitted and scored 444 student artifacts for Oral Communication, representing all four student levels. In order to maintain consistency in assessment reporting, this report will only provide data for first-year and senior students, allowing for the comparison on where first-year students start and where seniors are prior to graduation.

The OC artifacts scored represented 24 first-year students and 156 senior-level students from 22 courses representing our College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, School of Business, and School of Engineering, Science, and Technology.

It is important to note that our general education learning outcome assessment model measures student learning on skills and knowledge that are gained across their courses and academic career. As such, this assessment is not reflective of a single instructor nor a single course, but rather a reflection of where students are in their academic journey.

Overall Results

As seen in Figure 1, the overall score for first-year students evaluated on Oral Communication was 2.8 and represents solid mid-level performance. The score for each individual dimension ranged between 2.5 and 3.4, with the dimension *Language* having the highest score. In comparison, students scored lowest on *Nonverbal Delivery*.

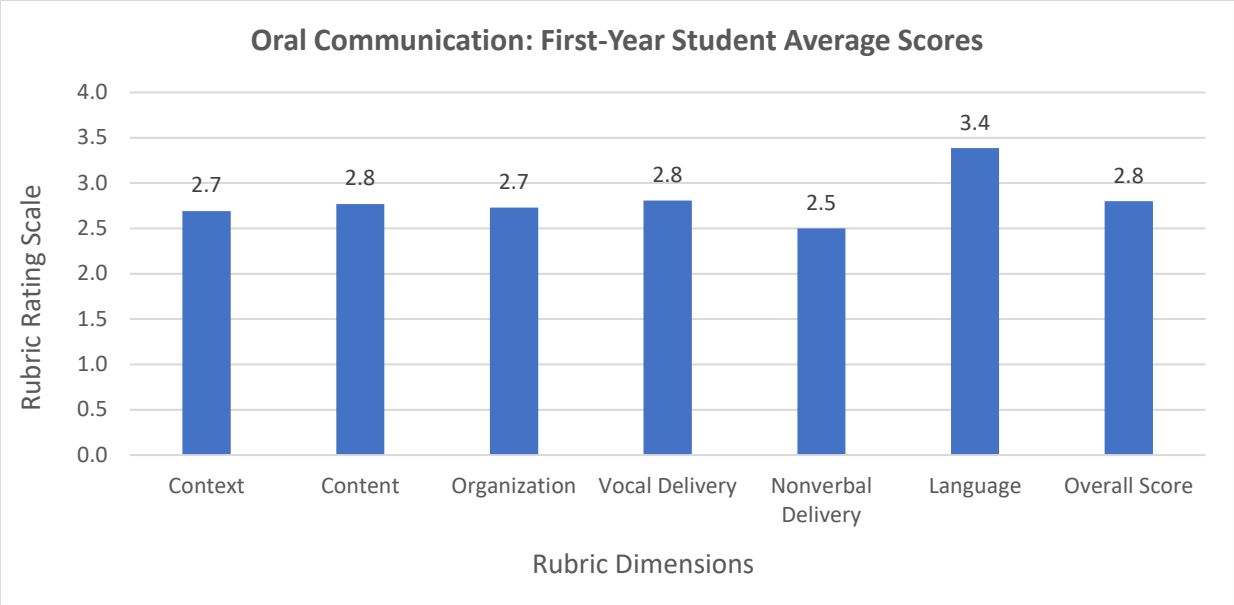

Figure 1. Overall scores of first-year students for Oral Communication Rubric, n=24

Results of senior-level students are shown in Figure 2. While seniors had a higher overall score of 3.0, they also demonstrated more consistency between all the dimensions as compared to first-year students, with a differential of only 0.2 points. Seniors performed best on *Context* and *Language* with a score of 3.1; *Vocal Delivery* had the lowest score at 2.8.

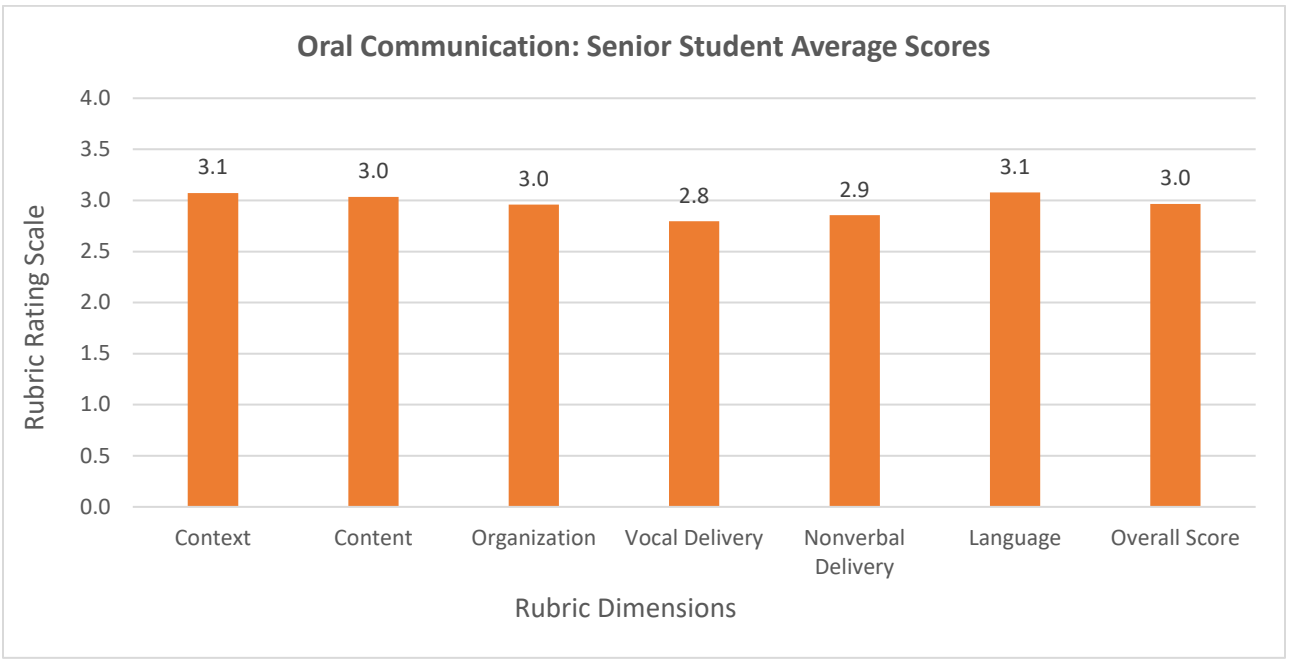

Figure 2. Overall scores of senior students for Oral Communication Rubric, n=156

Data Disaggregated by Gender

When looking at the results of first-year students by gender, female students higher scores than males on five of the six dimensions, with the largest differential of 0.7 points for *Context* and *Organization.* First-year males scored about the same as first-year females for *Vocal Delivery* and *Nonverbal Delivery*.

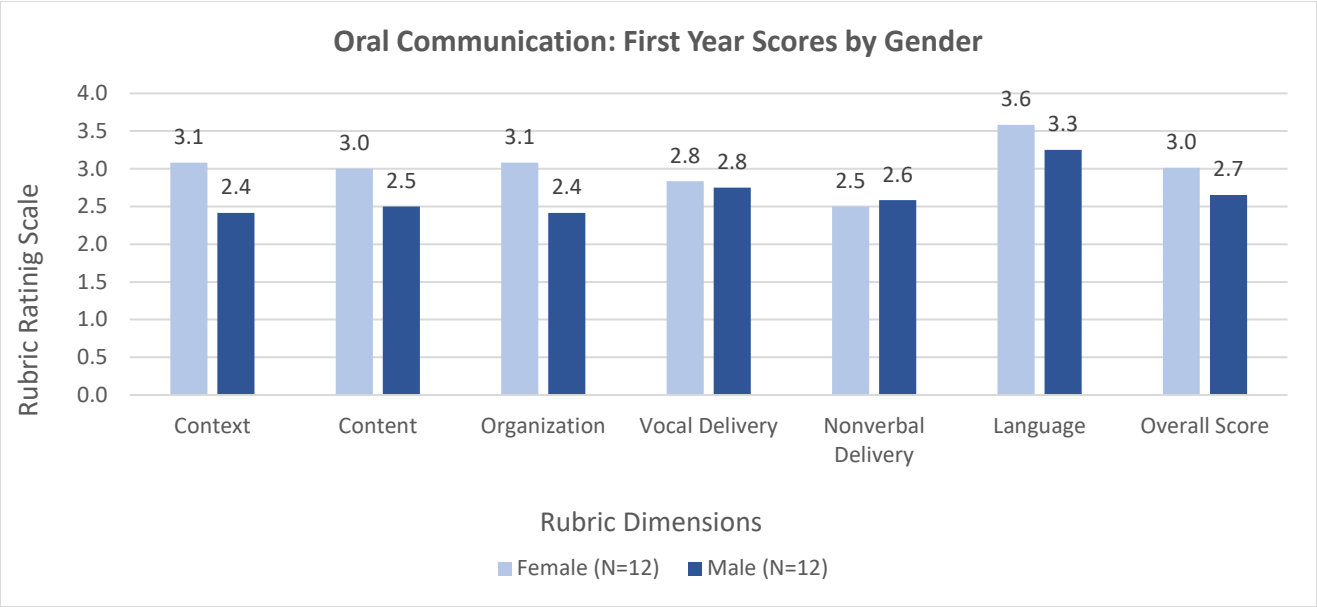

Figure 3. Scores of first-year students by gender

Like first-year students, senior-level females also scored higher than senior-level males on all six dimensions. However, the differential in scores between the two genders was smaller, with the largest differential now only 0.4 points and this was for *Context* and *Language*. For both groups, the overall score differential between females and males within the group was the similar, 0.3 points for first-year and 0.2 points for seniors.

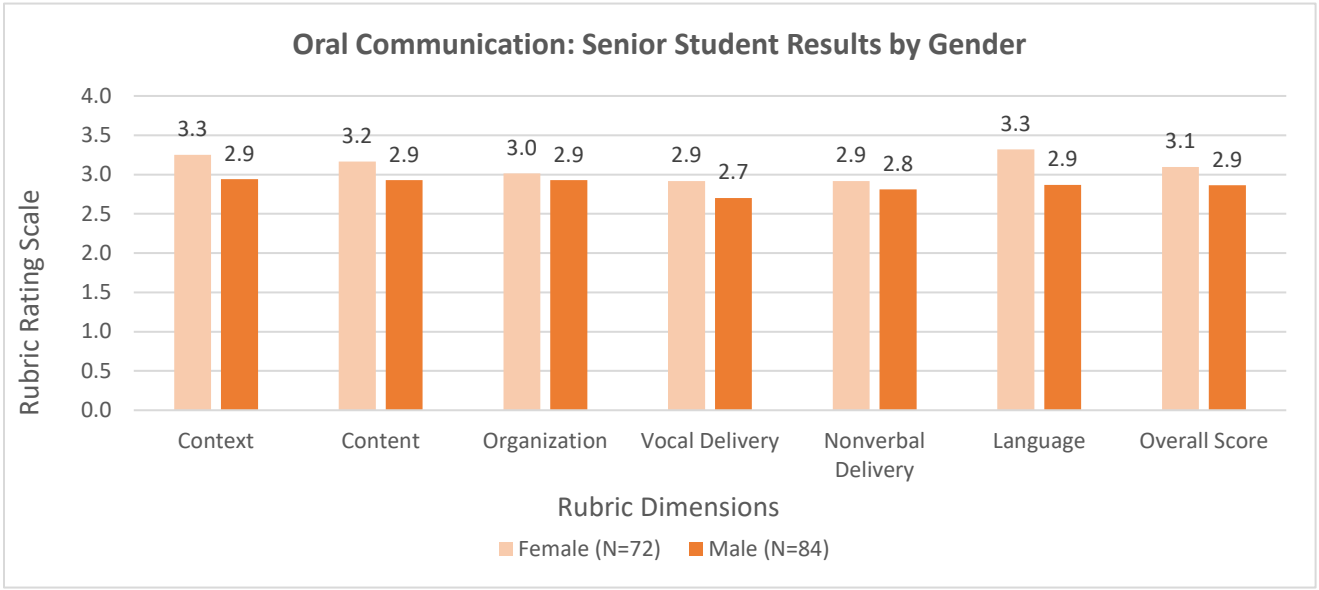

Figure 4. Scores of senior students by gender

Data Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

Results based on race/ethnicity for first-year students have sample sizes that are too small and thus are not included for privacy concerns.

When looking at the data for seniors based on race/ethnicity, the overall average scores are remarkably similar between the three groups. Within each dimension, the largest differential is 0.2 points for *Organization* and *Nonverbal Delivery*; Within each group, Hispanic or Latino and Asian had the largest differential between the six dimensions, with a range of 0.4 points, followed by White with the largest differential of 0.3 points.

Table 1. *Senior Student Results by Race/Ethnicity**

	Asian (n=11)	Hispanic or Latino (n=30)	White (n=99)
Context	3.2	3.1	3.1
Content	3.0	3.0	3.0
Organization	2.8	3.0	2.9
Vocal Delivery	2.8	2.8	2.8
Nonverbal Delivery	2.8	2.7	2.9
Language	3.0	3.1	3.1
Overall Average Score	2.9	2.9	3.0

*The sample sizes for American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Non-Resident Alien, Two or More Races, and Unknown were too small, and their data were not included in the table for privacy concerns.

Data by Distribution of Scores

Looking at the distribution of student scores within each rubric dimension, the highest level of performance by first-year students was *Language* with 50% of students earning a perfect score of 4.0. This dimension also had 96% of students scoring 3.0 or higher. The *Vocal Delivery* dimension had 71% of students scoring a 3.0 or higher. Overall, very few first-year students scored less than 2.0 in any dimension. The dimension *Context* offers the greatest opportunity for improving student learning (Figure 5).

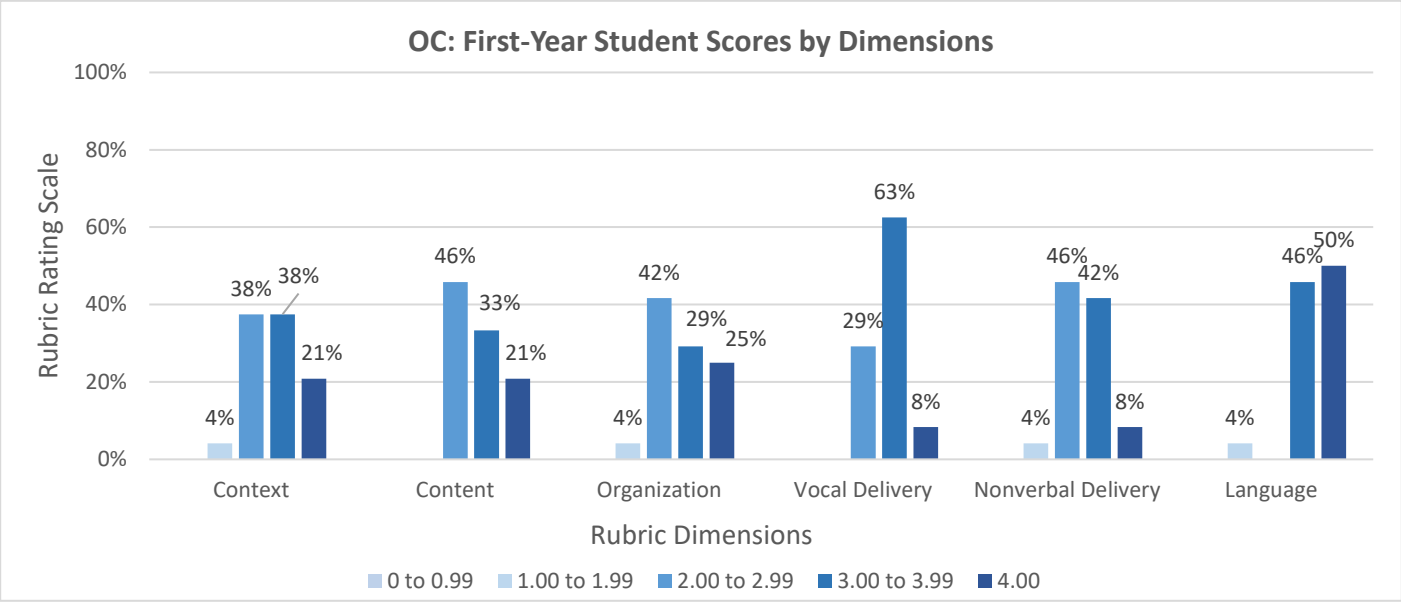

Figure 5. Distribution of first-year student scores

Figure 6 shows that seniors had the highest percentage of students scoring above 3.0 - *Language* was 86%; followed by 79% and 78% of students scoring 3.0 or higher *Context* and *Organization*. It is noteworthy that a moderate number of seniors scored 4.0 on all six dimensions; however, it is also of concern that a few seniors scored between 1.00 and 1.99 on each of the dimensions. Overall, seniors had a higher percentage of students scoring between 3.00 and 4.00 than first-year students.

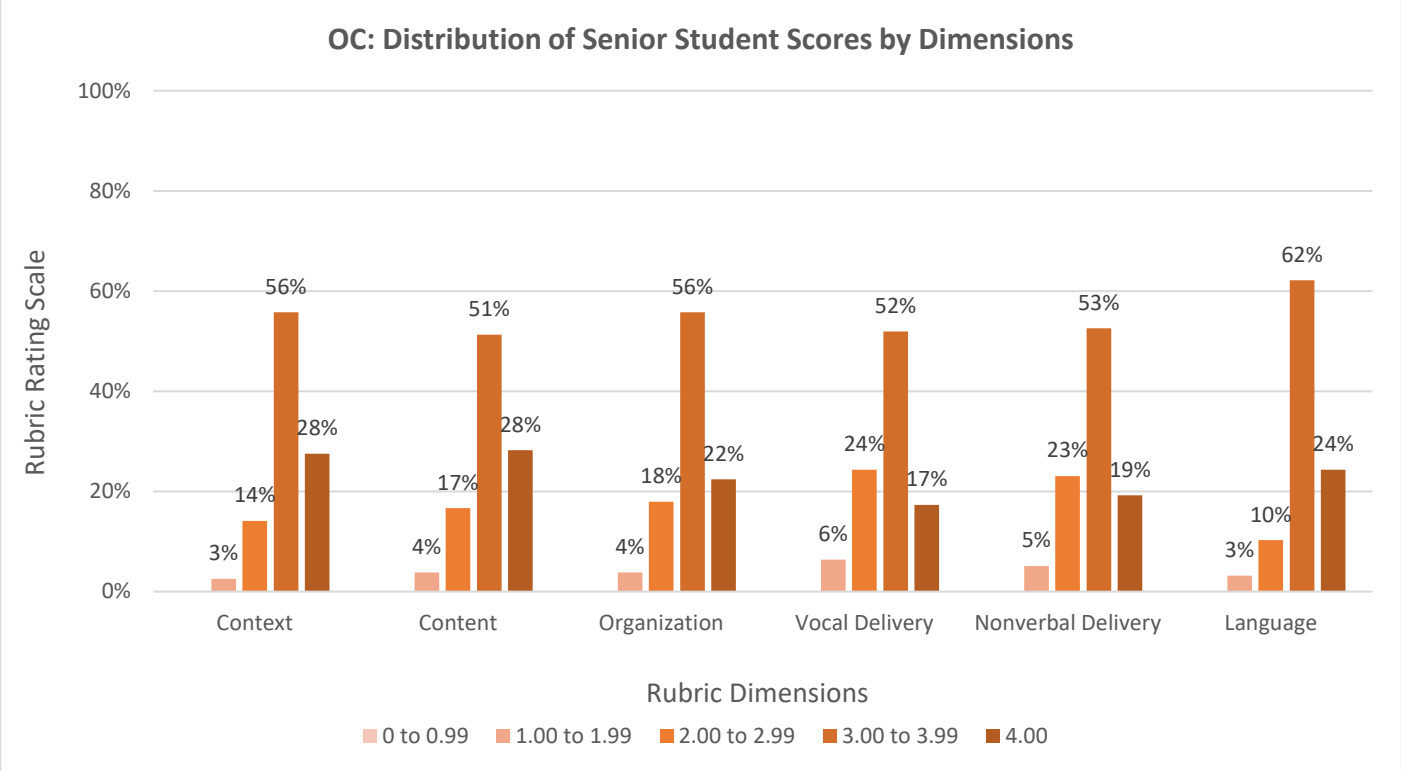

Figure 6. Distribution of senior-level student scores

Conclusion

It is our hope that you find these results both informative and valuable. As with any assessment, the results can be used to validate current practices, applaud successful outcomes, and/or identify areas for further attention.

Some faculty have found the following questions helpful as they review these data:

- Where did our students demonstrate success in Oral Communication?
- Which Oral Communication dimensions are clear areas for continued growth?
- How might these data be used to inform teaching and further students' Oral Communication learning?

To conclude, it is important to note that these scores reflect multiple factors at work and should be viewed within that context. As we continue to seek improvements on the various factors that go into scoring, our ultimate goal is to have CCSU undergraduate students demonstrate enhanced performance for our Oral Communication Learning Outcome, providing them with a solid foundation for future intellectual and personal pursuits.

Please contact Martie Kaczmarek, Assessment Coordinator, OIRA, if you would like additional information. Email: mkaczmarek@ccsu.edu or call 860-832-2304.

CCSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment January 2024

ORAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC – WORKING DRAFT

Central Connecticut State University

Definition

CCSU General Education Objective 5: To strengthen writing and communication skills. Relevant outcomes include the ability to: develop a chosen topic, organize specifics to support a main idea, use proper grammar, address a particular audience, and revise and edit to produce focused and coherent texts (https://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog/Undergraduate-General-Education-Program).

Employers and society demand that college graduates demonstrate competence in oral communication. The National Association of Colleges and Employers, in their 2016 Job Outlook report, rated oral communication as the most important skill needed in the workforce. Also included among the most desirable skills in this report listed teamwork, problem-solving, and the ability to influence others. This assertion suggests that 4 of the top 10 skills demanded by the working world are in direct relation to and demand competence in oral communication (NACE, 2017). Moreover, NACE (2019) argues that oral communication is one of 8 critical skills that students need to be career ready. Career readiness is the "attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace." A 2018 study by the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that 80% of executives and 90% of hiring managers rated oral communication skills as a priority for recent graduates.

This rubric assesses speaking behaviors, as opposed to knowledge/cognition and motivation/affect, related to the preparation and delivery of a public speaking performance (Morreale, Moore, Surges-Tatum, & Webster, 2007).

Hart Research Associates. (2018). *Fulfilling the American dream: Liberal education and the future of work.* Association of American Colleges and Universities. https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2018EmployerResearchReport.pdf

Morreale, S., Moore, M., Surges-Tatum, D., & Webster, L. (2007). *The Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form, Second Edition.* https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/pages/Assessment_Resources_Competent_Speaker_Speech_Evaluation_Form_2ndEd.pdf

NACE Staff. (2019, March 29). *The four career competencies employers value most.* https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/the-four-career-competencies-employers-value-most/

NACE Staff. (2017). JOB OUTLOOK 2016: THE ATTRIBUTES EMPLOYERS WANT TO SEE ON NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES' RESUMES. https://www.naceweb.org/career-development/trends-and-predictions/job-outlook-2016-attributes-employers-want-to-see-on-new-college-graduates-resumes/

Framing Language

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.

Glossary

Central idea/purpose: The main point/ thesis/ "bottom line"/ "take-away" of a presentation. A clear central idea is easy to identify; a compelling central idea is also vivid and memorable.

Vocal Delivery: Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker makes a concerted effort to modify speech rate, volume, and pitch to enhance audience interest and understanding.

Nonverbal Delivery: Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Nonverbal delivery enhances the effectiveness of the presentation.

Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.

Organization: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.

	Capstone - 4	3 Milestones 2		Benchmark - 1
1. **Context:** Students will demonstrate the ability to narrow a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion.	Content, style, and/or visual aids are exceptionally appropriate and targeted to audience and context. Presentation makes effective use of time and stays within parameters.	Content, style, and/or visual aids are consistently appropriate to the audience, and/or context. Presentation meets set time and content parameters.	Content, style, and/or visual aids are occasionally inappropriate to the audience and/or context. Presentation falls slightly outside time and content parameters.	Content, style, and/or visual aids are frequently inappropriate to the audience and/or context. Presentation falls well outside time and content parameters.
2. **Content:** Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate a central idea/purpose and provide support appropriate for the audience and occasion.	Central idea/purpose is vividly stated; content is accurate, thorough and directly on point; strong support is provided for each assertion through the integration of appropriate evidence.	Central idea/purpose is clearly stated; content is accurate and relevant; credible support is provided for each assertion through the integration of appropriate evidence.	Central idea/purpose is stated; content is accurate but not always relevant; support is offered but inadequate for some assertions.	Central idea/purpose is not stated; content is erroneous and/or irrelevant; support for assertions is largely absent.
3. **Organization:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use an organizational pattern appropriate to the message.	Identifiable structure is presented in a purposeful, interesting, and effective sequence. Transitions are used effectively and consistently to tie ideas together.	Identifiable structure is present and consistently executed mainly in a logical sequence. Transitions are used in most places where needed.	Identifiable structure is present but inconsistently executed; may contain statements that are not in a logical sequence. Transitions are used but not consistently.	Little or no structure present. Presentation is confusing to the audience; no logical sequence or ideas. Transitions are not used.
4. **Vocal Delivery:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use vocal variety to heighten and maintain interest appropriate to the audience and occasion.	Vocal delivery is varied and dynamic. Speech rate, volume, and pitch enhance audience interest and understanding.	Vocal delivery is clear and distinct. Rate, volume, and pitch facilitate audience interest and understanding.	Vocal delivery is audible. Rate, volume, or speech disruptions only occasionally distract from audience interest and understanding.	Vocal delivery is too soft to hear, too fast to understand and/or long unintended silences. And speech disruptions [repetitions; filled pauses, e.g., “um”] impede audience interest and understanding.

5. **Nonverbal Delivery:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use physical behaviors that support the verbal message.	Most or all of the following apply: Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement or facial expressions enhance the presentation.	Some, but not all of the following apply: Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement or facial expressions enhance the presentation.	Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement, and facial expressions neither enhance nor hinder the presentation.	Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement, and/or facial expressions are inappropriate and significantly distract from the presentation.
6. **Language:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use language that is ethical, free from bias, and at the audience's level of sophistication.	Language is exceptionally clear and vivid, free from usage that is misleading and/or biased, and appropriate for the situation and audience.	Language is appropriate to the goals of the assignment, free from conspicuous errors, with no evidence of usage that is misleading and/or biased.	Language does not consistently meet the audience's level of sophistication (e.g., jargon, slang) and is occasionally misleading and/or biased.	Language fails to meet the audience's level of sophistication, is frequently misleading and/or biased.

Note. Adapted from *Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Oral Communication Rubric.* Available online at: https://mgccc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Oral-Communication-Rubric-Rev2020.pdf.