## Cardinal Core Assessment of Oral Communication
### (Fall 2021 Sample)

**Cardinal Core Program**

The Cardinal Core program at the University of Louisville prepares students to do the advanced work needed for their baccalaureate degrees and prepares them to contribute to society throughout their lives through their professional work and civic engagement. The program emphasizes the development of key intellectual skills relevant to any career path: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, and the understanding of historical, social, and cultural diversity. Students will develop these intellectual skills in the following content areas of Arts and Humanities, Historical Perspectives, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Natural Sciences, Written Communication, and the competency area of Diversity in the United States and Globally. Upon completion of the program, students will be prepared to analyze complex problems and evaluate possible courses of action in an environment characterized by diversity and the need for sustainable solutions.

**Assessment Administration**

The assessment of student learning outcomes is a national expectation in higher education. Section 8.2.b of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSCOC) accreditation standards requires that the institution identify student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies in its undergraduate degree programs, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results. Further, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) states that "All Kentucky public universities and KCTCS colleges are expected to assess, in accordance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation and based upon nationally accepted standards, the student learning outcomes associated with their general education programs, indicate a relationship to the faculty-generated Statewide General Education Student Learning Outcomes, and provide evidence of ongoing assessment that ensures comparability for transfer purposes on a three-year cycle."

The Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) is charged with continued oversight of the assessment of student learning outcomes across the Cardinal Core curriculum to support the continuous improvement of the Cardinal Core program in alignment with SACSCOC and CPE requirements. The assessment operates on a three-year cycle, in which samples of student work are collected from one content area each semester and assessed by a panel of trained faculty. The CCCC began a pilot of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) Rubrics in the first cycle of the Cardinal Core Assessment. Specifically, the Critical Thinking, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Written Communication VALUE Rubrics will be used to measure the Cardinal Core program's overarching intellectual

skills of critical thinking, effective communication, quantitative reasoning, and social, historical, and cultural diversity.

The Fall 2021 assessment was focused on courses in the Oral Communication (OC) content area. Samples of student work from OC courses were assessed using the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric. The University of Louisville Outcomes, Kentucky Statewide Outcomes, and the AAC&U VALUE Rubric Measures used to assess courses in the Oral Communication content area are provided below.

**University of Louisville Oral Communication Learning Outcomes**

Oral Communication is the ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information through speech. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Speak publicly, in both formal and informal contexts, demonstrating skills such as appropriate selection of topic and materials, clear organization, effective presentation, and the ability to adapt to audience, setting, and occasion.
2. Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills to understand the intricate link between audience, speaker, and occasion.
3. Evaluate and synthesize materials from diverse sources and integrate multiple perspectives into oral presentations.
4. Analyze and critique the oral communication of oneself and others.
5. Listen effectively, using critical and reflective thinking when responding to communication events.

**Statewide Written & Oral Communication Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Write clear and effective prose in several forms, using conventions appropriate to audience (including academic audiences), purpose, and genre.
2. Listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, which may include public, interpersonal, and/or small-group settings.
3. Find, analyze, evaluate, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts.
4. Identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view; and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response.
5. Plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas.

**AAC&U VALUE Rubric Measures**

*Oral Communication VALUE Rubric*

> (OC1) – Organization
> (OC2) – Language
> (OC3) – Delivery
> (OC4) – Supporting Material
> (OC5) – Central Message

The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics use four scoring categories, with *4* indicating performance of the measure as "capstone" level, *3* indicating performance at "milestone," *2* indicating "milestone," and *1* indicating performance at "benchmark." In addition, a score of zero can be assigned to any work that does not meet the benchmark level performance. The University of Louisville further disaggregates the zero option into a "not applicable" rating that can be selected for assignments that did not provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the criterion within the rubric measure, as opposed to the student simply did not demonstrate the rubric criteria.

**Assessment Process**

For the Fall 2021 assessment of student work from the Oral Communication (OC) content area, the Cardinal Core Office collaborated with Director of the Cardinal Core program in the Communication department, as well as faculty from Political Sciences (POLS), Theatre Arts (TA), and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGST) regarding the details of the upcoming assessment to ensure faculty participation and appropriate sampling. Faculty in the Communication department were all formally notified of the upcoming assessment and reminded to use the departments Pops system to have students record speeches. The Director of Cardinal Core from the Communication department and the founder of the Pops system then helped to pull the sample identified by the Cardinal Core Office from the Pops system. The Cardinal Core office worked with faculty from POLS, TA, and WGST departments to determine the best way to capture speeches for the assessment. After the withdraw deadline for the semester passed, the Cardinal Core Office retrieved the class rosters for all OC Cardinal Core courses from the Office of the Registrar and selected a stratified random sampling, to ensure that the sample included students from all departments and courses offering OC courses in Fall 2021. Speeches and performances were collected for those students identified in the sample.

Student artifacts were collected and stored on Microsoft Teams, so that the Cardinal Core Office could grant access for assessors to view the speech videos. A panel of faculty (tenured and tenure-track faculty, term faculty, and adjunct faculty) assessed student artifacts. The AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric was applied to all student artifacts through the LiveText© electronic assessment tool.

Prior to the assessment reading, assessors completed mandatory training/rubric norming. Based on feedback from past assessments and guidance from the Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) Assessment Subcommittee the training was a hybrid model requiring all assessors to complete an online asynchronous training module and then participate in a synchronous collaborative meeting (virtual).  Training materials were developed in collaboration with the

CCCC Assessment Subcommittee and based upon UofL's long-standing general education assessment training practices, as well as AAC&U VALUE Institute training procedures. The training module consisted of an overview of the assessment process and holistic assessment practices, a dissection of the VALUE rubric, and scoring of benchmark sample assignments. Benchmarks were assignments selected to represent a wide range of content and skill development in order to give the assessors a baseline for measuring expectations of learning and evaluating student performance (Herman, Osmundson, & Dietel, 2010). The samples were also selected to represent both in-person and online courses where the mode of delivery varied to ensure all reviewers were consistent in applying the assessment rubric. Assessors were given a week to complete the training module in Blackboard and submit their scores for all benchmark samples. The results of the benchmark scoring were compiled and reviewed in the collaborative training meeting. During that session, the reviewers walked through the results of each work sample and discussed any variation on scoring. The reviewers specifically spent time discussing how to evaluate student work samples that were performances instead of traditional speeches written and presented by the student. Through this discussion it was determined that work samples that were not speeches written and designed by the student, the categories for "organization", "language", "supporting material", and "central message" could not be assessed and should be assigned a "not applicable" and only "delivery" could be assessed and assigned a rating other than "not applicable". The results from scoring benchmark samples for the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric are provided in Appendix A.

After completion of the assessment training/rubric norming, each assessor was assigned a username and password for one of three LiveText© accounts and a list of courses and sections to assess. Three readers assessed each artifact so that scores could be compared across assessors for reliability purposes. Assessors were given a week to complete all assessments.

**Data Collection Overview**

The enrollment for Oral Communication (OC) Cardinal Core courses in Fall 2021 was approximately 1395 students at the time the sample for the assessment was selected. The Cardinal Core Office collected a stratified random sample of 249 student work samples.

**Summary of Assessment Data**

For the assessment of Oral Communication (OC) outcomes, 249 student artifacts were assessed by faculty using the AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric.

Table 1 provides the percentage of work samples scored at each rubric level for the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric. All AAC&U VALUE Rubrics provide an option for a "0" score and for purposes of understanding why a "0" was assigned, the Cardinal Core Assessment provided reviewers with the option of "Not Applicable". The "Not Applicable" indicates an absence of the assessment criteria due to the type of assignment, while a "0" indicates that the student could have demonstrated the criteria and did not.

Table 1

*Percentage of Artifacts Scored at Each Rubric Level for Oral Communication (Three Reviews)*

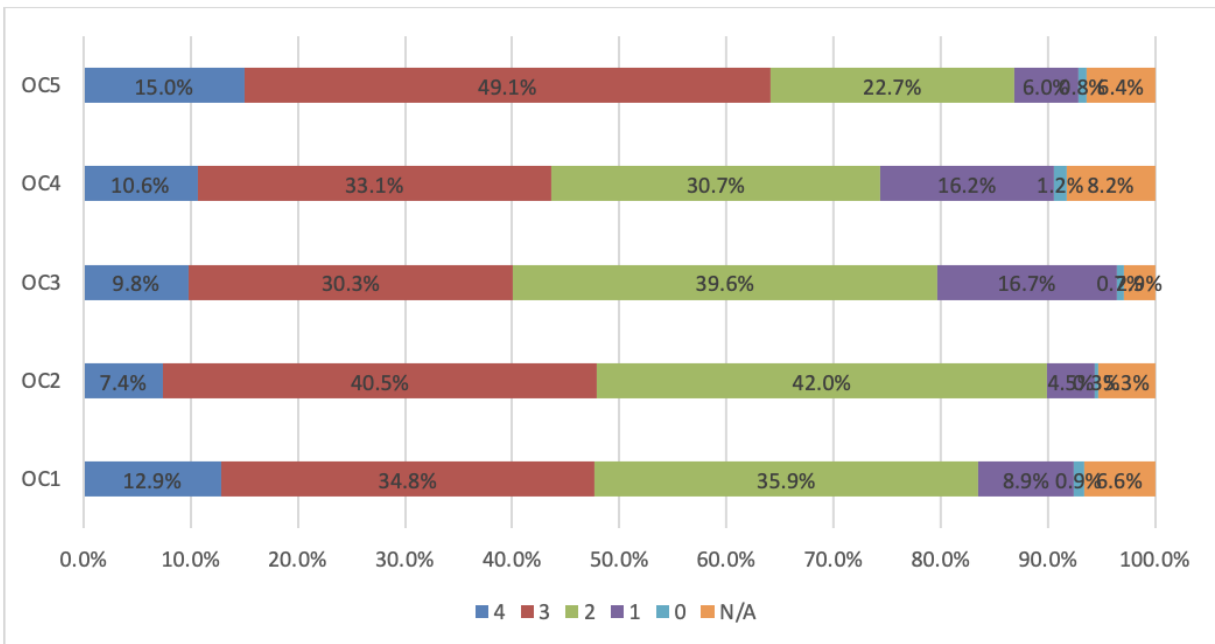|  | OC1 | OC2 | OC3 | OC4 | OC5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Capstone (4) | 12.9% | 7.4% | 9.8% | 10.6% | 15.0% |
| Milestone (3) | 34.8% | 40.5% | 30.3% | 33.1% | 49.1% |
| Milestone (2) | 35.9% | 42.0% | 39.6% | 30.7% | 22.7% |
| Benchmark (1) | 8.9% | 4.5% | 16.7% | 16.2% | 6.0% |
| (0) | 0.9% | 0.3% | 0.7% | 1.2% | 0.8% |
| Not Applicable (NA) | 6.6% | 5.3% | 2.9% | 8.2% | 6.4% |



*Figure 1. Percentage of Artifacts Scored at Each Rubric Level for Oral Communication*

In alignment with AAC&U VALUE Institute practices, scores for each individual work sample were calculated based upon scores assigned by three separate reviewers. The scores from all three reviewers were averaged and rounded to determine individual work sample scores for each rubric row. In the case that two of the three reviews for a work sample assigned a "not applicable", then the average was considered to be "not applicable". Table 2 provides the percentage of work samples scored at each level with scores averaged (one score per work sample).

Table 2

*Percentage of Artifacts Scored at Each Rubric Level for Oral Communication (Scores Averaged)*

|  | OC1 | OC2 | OC3 | OC4 | OC5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Capstone (4) | 6.4% | 4.0% | 6.0% | 4.8% | 10.8% |
| Milestone (3) | 40.2% | 43.0% | 28.9% | 35.3% | 53.0% |
| Milestone (2) | 42.6% | 46.6% | 51.4% | 44.2% | 28.1% |
| Benchmark (1) | 4.4% | 0.8% | 11.6% | 8.4% | 2.0% |
| (0) | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Not Applicable (NA) | 6.4% | 5.6% | 2.0% | 7.2% | 6.0% |



Figure 2. *Percentage of Artifacts Scored at Each Rubric Level for Oral Communication*

The mode for the individual work sample scores is provided in Table 3.

Table 3

*Mode of Individual Work Sample Scores*

|  | Mode |
|---|---|
| OC1 – Organization | 2 |
| OC2 – Language | 2 |
| OC3 – Delivery | 2 |
| OC4 – Supporting Material | 2 |
| OC5 – Central Message | 3 |

**Inter-rater Reliability**

Three separate faculty assessed each student artifact. Table 4 displays the mean score for the three separate readings of all artifacts.

Table 4

*Inter-rater Summary for Oral Communication VALUE Rubric Measures*

|  | **Assessor 1** | **Assessor 2** | **Assessor 3** | **Standard Deviation** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OC1 | 2.47 | 2.39 | 2.73 | .18 |
| OC2 | 2.57 | 2.37 | 2.65 | .14 |
| OC3 | 2.21 | 2.25 | 2.52 | .17 |
| OC4 | 2.41 | 2.18 | 2.57 | .20 |
| OC5 | 2.75 | 2.59 | 2.95 | .18 |

In addition to the descriptive statistics, Table 5 provides multiple measures of inter-rater reliability. The percentage agreement value was calculated to determine the percentage of artifacts for which all three assessors scored at either the same or within one performance level. Values for *Total Agreement* provided in Table 5 represent the percentage of artifacts for which all three assessors selected the same score (e.g., Assessors 1, 2, and 3 all selected *3*). *Agreement (within 1 level)* represents the percentage of artifacts for which all three assessors scored the artifact at the same performance level or within one level (e.g., Assessor 1 selected a score of *3*, Assessor 2 selected a score of *2*, and Assessor 3 also selected a score of *2*). If the assessor assigned "not applicable" for the artifact that was treated as a 0 for the inter-rater reliability analysis since a *0* and "not requested" would both indicate the reviewer did not see the student demonstrate any component of the rubric measure.

In addition to percentage agreement, a one-way, average-measures intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated to assess inter-rater reliability. ICC coefficients between .75 and 1.00 are considered excellent, .60 to .74 considered good, .40 to .59 fair, and below .4 is considered poor (Cicchetti, 1994).

Table 5

*Inter-rater Reliability for Oral Communication VALUE Rubric Measure*

| Competency Measure | Total Agreement | Agreement (within 1 level) | ICC | 95% Confidence Interval |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OC1 | 20.9% | 69.9% | 0.70 | .63-.76 |
| OC2 | 30.1% | 86.7% | 0.73 | .67-.79 |
| OC3 | 23.3% | 75.5% | 0.63 | .54-.70 |
| OC4 | 15.7% | 62.2% | 0.68 | .60-.74 |
| OC5 | 22.9% | 73.9% | 0.70 | .63-.76 |

**Syllabus Review**

The Provost requests that all faculty load their syllabi to Blackboard© each semester. These syllabi are then available through the university's course catalog system.  For the purpose of this review, the Cardinal Core Office collected all Oral Communication (OC) syllabi that were loaded to Blackboard in Fall 2021.

The review of syllabi sought to answer two questions:

1) Does the syllabus contain the content specific Cardinal Core learning outcomes approved for the course?
2) Are assessment methods stated that support the content-specific Cardinal Core learning outcomes approved for the course?

The syllabus review included syllabi from 64 OC Cardinal Core course sections offered in the Fall of 2021 resulting in a 98.5% sample. The review of 64 Cardinal Core syllabi identified 62 syllabi (96.9%) containing the OC Cardinal Core learning outcomes approved for the course. Further review of the 64 syllabi revealed that 59 syllabi (92.2%) also listed the assessment methods for the Cardinal Core outcomes.

The Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) has continued to emphasize the importance of incorporating the Cardinal Core learning outcomes into course syllabi. Integration of the Cardinal Core outcomes into the syllabus is one indication to the committee that faculty are incorporating the learning outcomes into the course curriculum.

**Summary and Plan for Improvement**

The results of this assessment are intended to serve as a baseline for future assessments in the Oral Communication content area and intended to help guide continuous program improvement. Of the five oral communication competencies, students performed best on "organization", "language", and "central message" and did not perform as well on "delivery" and "supporting material". It is recommended that OC courses continue to emphasize the key elements of successful delivery and effective use of sources in supporting their central message. The Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) will further define target performance levels based on the baseline findings for each of the Cardinal Core content areas for the next assessment cycle starting in the fall of 2022.

In addition to using the overall ratings from the OC Assessment, departments are encouraged to consider how students might better demonstrate exemplary delivery techniques in online courses where the student is presenting to their peers by a Teams or other online meeting format, instead of presenting to a traditional in-person audience. Reviewers noted that it was difficult to measure "delivery" when the student only appeared in a small window next to their PowerPoint. In some online courses, the student was not visible at all, which did not allow reviewers to look for delivery techniques such as eye contact, posture, and gestures.

For courses that provided performances or presentations that were not original work written by the student, the CCCC and the Cardinal Core Office will work directly with those departments and faculty to ensure that work samples that demonstrate students are meeting the Oral Communication outcomes are selected for the next OC assessment.

The adjustments made to the training process for the Oral Communication Assessment, resulted in higher inter-rater reliability for all rows of the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric as compared to the small OC pilot conducted in 2017 under the previous General Education program. All components were in the "good" range and near "excellent". It is recommended that the assessments continue to use the approach of an asynchronous training module, followed by a synchronous collaborative meeting to discuss work samples and appropriate scoring prior to engaging in the assessment scoring process.

In conclusion, the results of this assessment are intended to help faculty in identifying potential strengths and areas for growth in the Cardinal Core curriculum. The data indicate students are performing better on some measures or outcomes than others. It is recommended that faculty take this into consideration in their own curriculum and assignments to ensure that students are developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined in the Cardinal Core program.
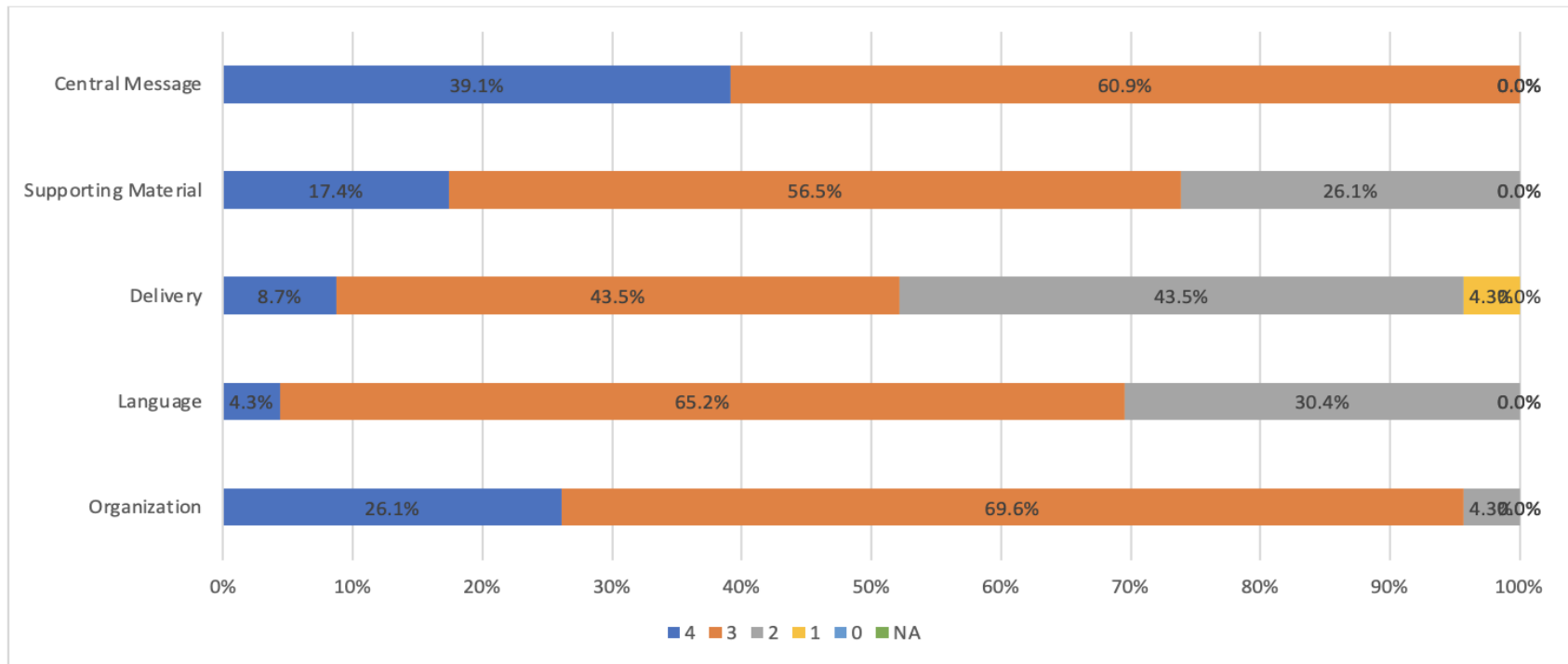
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**Appendix A. Results from Assessment Training for the Oral Communication VALUE Rubric**

**Sample 1**

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Organization** | 26.1% | 69.6% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Language** | 4.3% | 65.2% | 30.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Delivery** | 8.7% | 43.5% | 43.5% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Supporting Material** | 17.4% | 56.5% | 26.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Central Message** | 39.1% | 60.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |



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**Sample 2**

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Organization** | 4.3% | 26.1% | 43.5% | 21.7% | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| **Language** | 8.7% | 52.2% | 34.8% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Delivery** | 4.3% | 17.4% | 43.5% | 34.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Supporting Material** | 13.0% | 34.8% | 47.8% | 4.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Central Message** | 8.7% | 34.8% | 34.8% | 21.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |



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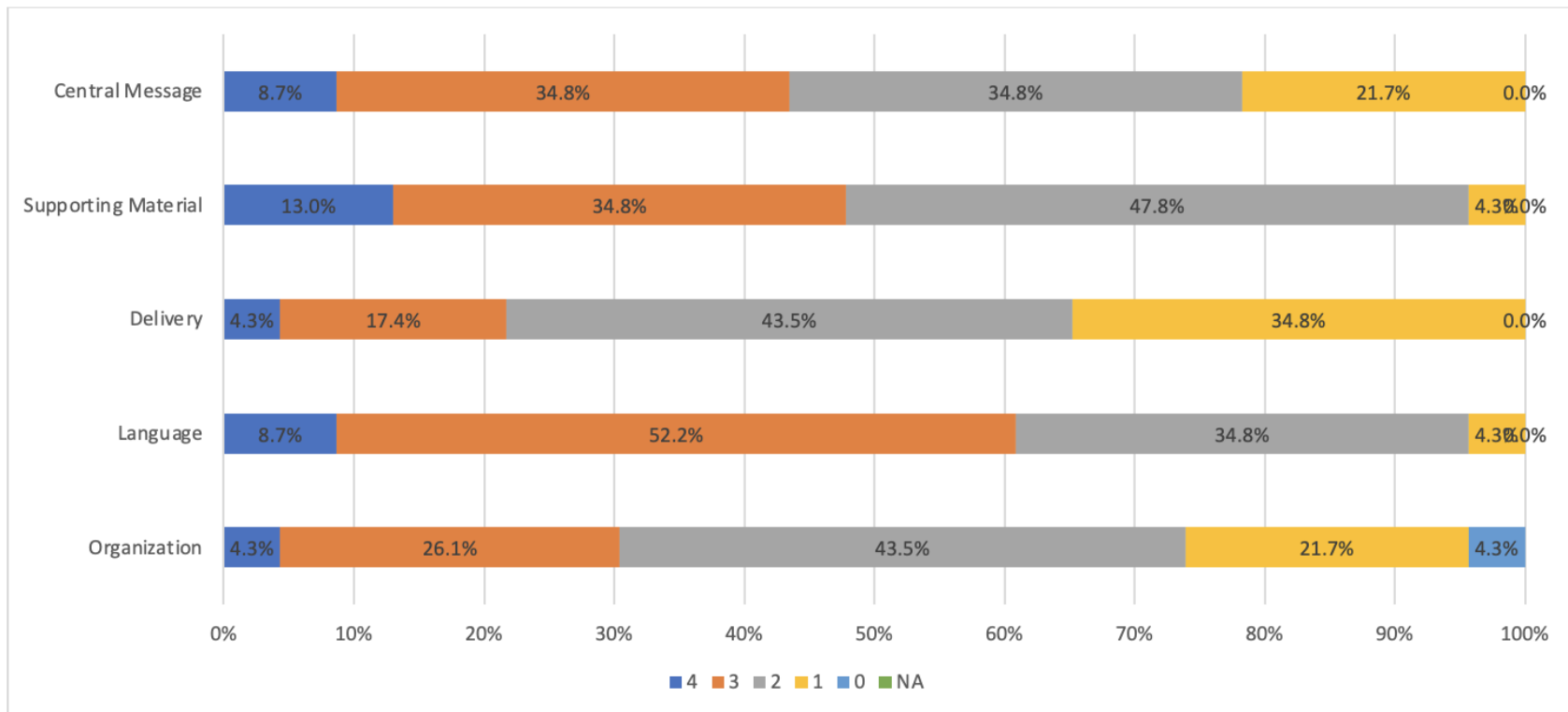
**Sample 3**

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Organization** | 0.0% | 4.5% | 13.6% | 27.3% | 18.2% | 36.4% |
| **Language** | 9.1% | 18.2% | 22.7% | 31.8% | 9.1% | 9.1% |
| **Delivery** | 18.2% | 45.5% | 22.7% | 13.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Supporting Material** | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.5% | 13.6% | 27.3% | 54.5% |
| **Central Message** | 0.0% | 13.6% | 9.1% | 36.4% | 27.3% | 13.6% |



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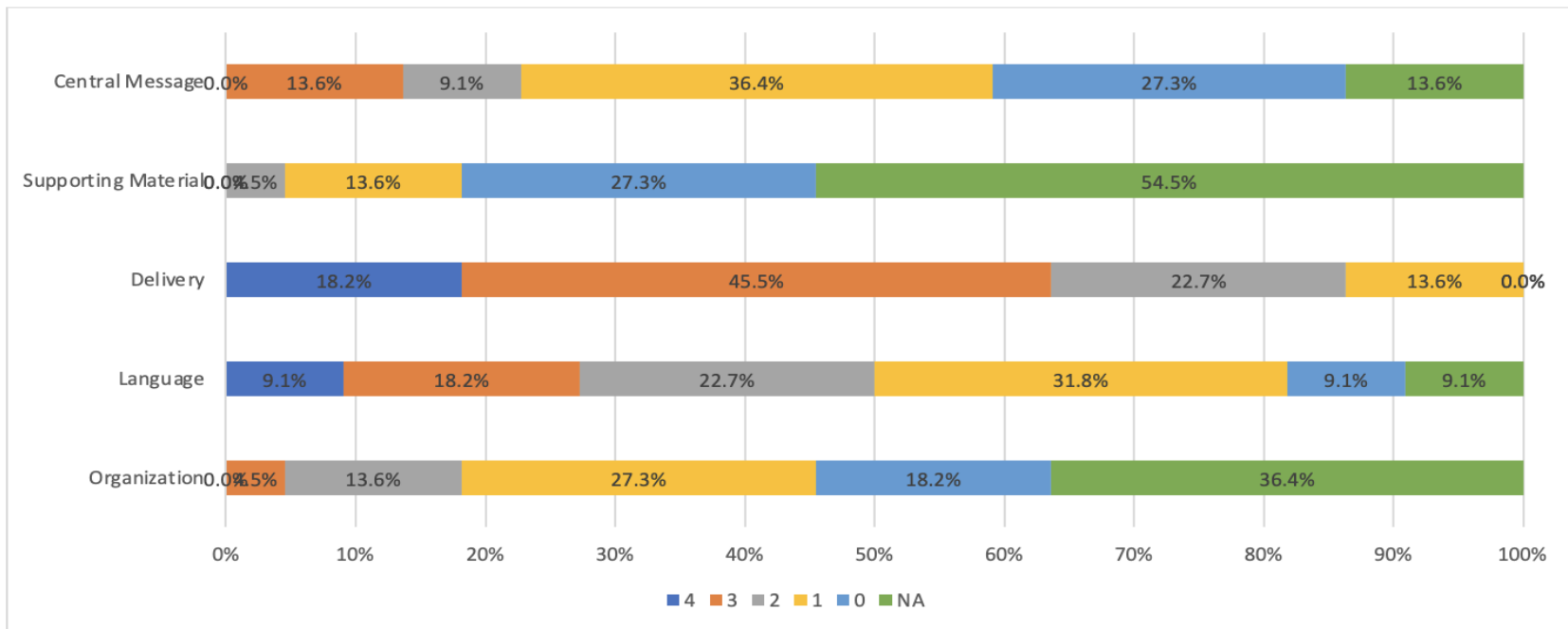
**\*Sample 3 – Rescored**

Sample 3 was a student performance instead of a traditional speech. During the collaborative meeting, the assessors determined that all aspects of the rubric should be scored as Not Applicable (NA), except for the Delivery component. Assessors felt that since the student did not necessarily select language and because the student work sample did not require the traditional organizational pattern of a speech or require supporting material these areas could not be accurately or consistently assessed.

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Delivery** | 0.0% | 70.0% | 29.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |

**Sample 4**

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organization | 4.3% | 17.4% | 60.9% | 13.0% | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| Language | 0.0% | 4.3% | 82.6% | 13.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Delivery | 0.0% | 4.3% | 34.8% | 47.8% | 8.7% | 4.3% |
| Supporting Material | 0.0% | 26.1% | 52.2% | 21.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Central Message | 8.7% | 39.1% | 43.5% | 8.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |



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