Evaluation of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum
Pilot Project Spring 2018: Oral Communication

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The purpose of this project was to conduct a pilot assessment of student learning in the area of Oral Communication (CORL) in the Core Curriculum. To achieve this, a sample of student speeches was collected from several CORL-designated courses. Student speeches were then scored against a rubric and the summary results are presented here.

The main goals of this pilot project were to:

• Establish standard procedures for use that consider the unique challenges associated with Oral Communication assessment (e.g., consent forms for video recorded speeches, the video recording process, method for scorers to access the large video recorded files, etc.),
• Collaborate with the CORL Core Area Representative to write an appropriate rubric, given that one was not included in the ATF report, and
• Obtain preliminary data on possible larger trends/results pertaining to the ability of our students to meet desired levels of achievement in Oral Communication.

This is the second Evaluation of Student Learning Report presented to the CCC since implementation of the Fall 2017 Core. We are still at the pilot phase of this assessment process; focusing on logistics of collecting student assignments, minimizing disruption to students and faculty during class time, and establishing a solid foundation for the scoring of student work, and analysis of data, in a manner that includes faculty input and feedback.

You are receiving this report because suggestions and recommendations from the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) will inform how these assessment results are used as well as the design of the full-scale assessment of student learning in CORL, to be implemented within the next three years.

During the CCC meeting on 29 November 2018, the Core Assessment Team (CAT) will present the major findings detailed here and solicit your discussion and feedback. The CCC will then be asked to vote to endorse the recommendations listed at the end of this report.

CORL Definition and Learning Outcomes
In the Area Task Force (ATF) report ratified by faculty vote CORL has the following definition and learning outcomes (LO):

CORL Definition
We define oral communication as a prepared, purposeful, presentation for an audience designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, and/or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

List of Student Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:
  a) deliver a central message that is compelling and appropriate to the audience (Central Message)
     a. precisely stated
     b. imaginative language
c. appropriately repeated

d. memorable

e. strongly supported

b) construct presentations with clear and consistent organizational patterns (Organization)

a. specific introduction and conclusion

b. sequenced material within the body of the speech

c. transitions

d. application of a variety of supporting materials: explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities

e. established credibility and authority on the topic through appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation

c) demonstrate techniques of verbal and nonverbal delivery that evoke confidence from the speaker, make the presentation compelling, and fully engage the audience (Delivery)

a. volume

b. expressiveness

c. pauses

d. posture

e. gestures

f. sustained eye contact

The ATF report also specifies, “These learning outcomes are to be applied to the oral presentation of an individual speaker who has constructed a presentation of sufficient length to be judged on its own merit. If presentations will be evaluated through a group assignment each speaker should be evaluated separately.”

Pilot Project Methods

For this pilot project, 62 oral presentations containing 150 students were video-recorded from eight CORL-approved courses. Only those students who had signed video recording consent forms were recorded. These oral presentations were part of the normal course work occurring late in the semester after students had already received feedback on earlier oral presentations.

In keeping with the ATF report requirements, a system was established to score each student individually, even if they presented as part of a group. Each presentation was given a coded file name, and speakers giving group presentations were designated as “speaker 1”, “speaker 2”, etc., for student confidentiality. For the purposes of this report, the term “student speech” refers to one student speaking, regardless of whether or not they were part of a group. Thus, a total of 150 student speeches were video-recorded. Three were used for the norming-scoring session and two were disqualified due to incomplete video-recording or scoring, so a total of 145 student speeches make up the final data set.

Volunteer scorers were solicited in late Spring 2018. The eleven scorers included a diverse group of tenure-line and adjunct faculty across a range of disciplines and colleges as well as one scorer from a non-academic unit, whom has experience in the assessment of student learning.

In August 2018, the eleven scorers attended a seven-hour norming session to calibrate the scorers to the rubric. Scorers received written and verbal instructions, a copy of the CORL rubric, a sample scoring sheet, and copies of the assignment prompts from the courses (with course identifiers removed for anonymity). During the norming session, scorers experienced firsthand the three types of scenarios they
would encounter when scoring: 1) an oral presentation given by only one speaker; 2) an oral presentation given by a group of students, with each student speaking only once; 3) an oral presentation given by a group of students, where each student spoke multiple times.

During the initial part of the norming session, scorers made minor refinements to the rubric and agreed upon a final rubric to be used for scoring (Appendix A). These five criteria were assessed:

A: **Central Message.** Deliver a central message that is compelling. [CORL LO1]
B: **Language.** Delivery is appropriate to audience. [CORL LO1]
C: **Organization.** Construct presentations with clear and consistent organizational patterns. [CORL LO2]
D: **Supporting Materials.** Application (selection and use) of a variety of supporting materials to establish credibility/authority on topic. [CORL LO2]
E: **Delivery** Demonstrate techniques of verbal and non-verbal delivery. [CORL LO3]

Each student speech was observed by at least two scorers resulting in 290 sets of scores (145 speeches each scored twice). Discrepancies between scorers were tracked during the scoring process. In cases where scorers differed by two or more points in any of the five criteria, the student’s speech was sent to a third scorer, and the best pairing between two scorers was used. In the end, each scorer scored a total of 29 - 30 student speeches. Appendix B contains the scorer discrepancy comparisons both before and after accounting for third scorings.

After all scores were compiled, the scoring team was invited to meet for a scorer feedback session. The team was also asked to complete a survey; from these the Core Assessment Team was able to capture detailed feedback on the scorers’ experiences and recommendations.

**Findings**

Each criterion was scored on a scale of 0-4 with 4 being the highest level of achievement. Table 1 summarizes the frequency of each score, for each criterion, as well as each criterion’s mean and standard deviation. Figure 1 charts these results. Appendix C contains Figure A-1, which is the same graph as Figure 1, but separated by each criterion for easier viewing.

**Table 1. Frequency Table of Scores for each Criterion.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A: Central Message</th>
<th>B: Language</th>
<th>C: Organization</th>
<th>D: Supporting Materials</th>
<th>E: Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean:</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev:</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Frequency of scores achieved by students across each criterion in the CORL rubric. 145 student speeches, each viewed by two scorers (290 viewings).

In conversations during the norming and feedback sessions and in the survey responses, scorers agreed that:

1. Variations in assignment prompt instructions impacted the presentations – students may or may not have been given explicit guidelines for things such as: (a) the intended audience; (b) what constitutes “good delivery”; and (c) exactly how the presentation should be structured.

2. Group presentations were difficult to score. It was particularly difficult to score the “Central Message” and “Organization” criteria in the group speeches, given that each student was not charged with pulling together a cohesive talk, but rather one subsection.

3. The “Delivery” criterion was easiest to score for all speeches.

4. In general, scores for the “Delivery” criterion were most concerning, for a variety of reasons:
   a. It was unclear how much practice many students devoted to their presentations.
   b. Students, in general, need more practice/feedback on certain aspects of delivery including:
      i. effective use of supporting materials (for example, pointing to a specific area on a slide when referencing it);
      ii. how to comport oneself in a group presentation during intervals where you are not speaking;
      iii. body language and use of verbal fillers such as “um”.

5. It would be useful to disaggregate the scores by “presentation type” (group, individual) to see if any notable trends exist.

6. Faculty teaching the CORL-designated courses need to be more aware of the CORL outcomes and they also need the CORL rubric.

7. The norming session was valuable in giving the faculty scorers deeper insight into possible challenges with presentation formats as well as how to best prepare their own students for an upcoming presentation. Scorers commented that “all faculty teaching a CORL-designated class should participate in some type of training process [like they experienced in the norming session].”
The overall scores were then disaggregated by presentation type:

- Individual speeches
- Group presentations where each student speaks only once during the presentation
- Group presentations where each student speaks multiple times

Table 2 provides the mean scores with standard deviations for each criterion. This data appears graphically in Appendix D. While differences in scores across presentation type were not assessed for statistical significance, scorers did notice that across all five criteria, presentations in which students spoke multiple times had the lowest mean score. Furthermore, the “Delivery” criterion had the lowest average score across all presentation types.

### Table 2. Mean scores with standard deviations for each criterion disaggregated by Presentation Type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation Type</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>A Central Message</th>
<th>B Language</th>
<th>C Organization</th>
<th>D Supporting Materials</th>
<th>E Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.8 (+/- .69)</td>
<td>2.8 (+/- .54)</td>
<td>2.6 (+/- .76)</td>
<td>2.8 (+/- .65)</td>
<td>2.4 (+/- .69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group, students speak once</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.9 (+/- .70)</td>
<td>2.8 (+/- .60)</td>
<td>2.7 (+/- .69)</td>
<td>2.5 (+/- .58)</td>
<td>2.6 (+/- .74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group, students speak multiple times</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2.4 (+/- .62)</td>
<td>2.4 (+/- .55)</td>
<td>2.4 (+/- .68)</td>
<td>2.4 (+/- .61)</td>
<td>2.2 (+/- .72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary and Recommendations**

Given that this is a pilot project, and the number of courses participating is a small subset of the total CORL courses offered, it is important to avoid drawing conclusions from this data. However, even at this early stage, scorers were still able to offer suggestions for improving student presentations across all CORL-designated courses. CORL faculty could consider implementing strategies to assist students in meeting the evaluation criteria. Such strategies might include 1) coaching students on effective delivery methods, 2) showing students the CORL rubric, and/or 3) providing additional feedback for students on earlier oral presentations, such as filming and critiquing presentations with the goal of improvement.

The focus of this pilot project was to establish procedures for the collection of student speeches and further refine the collection and analysis of data evaluating student learning in the Core, with a particular emphasis on faculty participation. For example, during this round of assessment the CAT added a scorer feedback survey in order to anonymously obtain more specific feedback and recommendations from the faculty scorers, which were useful in compiling the recommendations made here.

This pilot project provided important information on the logistics of evaluating oral communication skills of our students in Core classes and will inform the CAT’s procedures as we move forward to upscale this into a full project evaluating student competency in Oral Communication.
We were able to establish general protocols for many of the unique challenges associated with evaluating Oral Communication, with the exception of collecting the video recordings. The challenges were the following:

1. **Videographers.** We had anticipated that Academic Technology Services would be able to conduct the video recordings, but they were not able to provide support they lacked the staffing to allow for this, so, in the end, the Core Assessment Team and two related core support staff recorded all 62 presentations during the last few weeks of the Spring 2018 semester.

2. **Quality of video recordings.** Scorers commented that the quality of the video recordings – specifically in the area of being able to see the detail on projected slides – needs improvement. This can be easily remedied if an experienced technician is recording all the presentations.

The Core Assessment Team and faculty scorers thus make the following recommendations:

1. **Approve the Oral Communication Rubric that was used for this project’s norming and scoring.** This rubric was reviewed and approved by the Core Area Representative for Oral Communication and the team of scorers refined it during the norming session.

2. **Request support infrastructure from Academic Technology Services or other appropriate unit to record all student presentations used in future CORL assessment projects.** The recordings are needed as the student artifacts used for scoring, and the CAT lacks the equipment and expertise for high-quality recordings. Furthermore, the CAT and CAT staff frequently juggling their own teaching and support schedules when speeches need recording. This request is fundamental to the success of future CORL assessment projects. It is known well in advance when the next CORL Assessment will take place, a budget and time allocations for ATS staff to record the presentations is needed.

3. **Provide extra support to faculty teaching CORL-designated classes, particularly in the area of ‘Delivery’ by Approving Faculty and Student “Tips” documents to be posted on the Core website.** Even though this was only a pilot course, we can see it would be helpful to students to have extra information and/or feedback regarding presentation delivery. The Core Assessment Team and the Core Area Representative used the scorer feedback to construct “Faculty Tips for CORL-Flagged Courses” and “Student Tips for Oral Presentations” documents to support faculty teaching the CORL courses (Appendices E and F) to be posted on the Core website. Additionally, the Core Director will provide these resources to all faculty teaching CORL-approved courses, with the recommendation to review the faculty document and provide the student document to students in their CORL classes prior to giving their oral presentations in class.
Appendix A: Rubric Used in CORL Spring 2018 pilot scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Central Message</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LO1)</td>
<td>Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)</td>
<td>Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.</td>
<td>Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.</td>
<td>Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Language</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LO1)</td>
<td>• Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling.</td>
<td>• Language choices intentional.</td>
<td>• Language choices are mundane/commonplace.</td>
<td>• Language choices are unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language is significantly appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>• Language is generally appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>• Language is partially appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>• Language is not appropriate to audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Organization</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LO2)</td>
<td>Organizational pattern is: clearly and consistently observable AND: skillful makes the content of the presentation cohesive</td>
<td>Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern is intermittently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Organizational pattern is minimally observable within the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A rich variety of supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly: supports the presentation establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>A reasonable variety of supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally: supports the presentation establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Minimally adequate supporting materials make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially: supports the presentation establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Insufficient supporting materials make reference to information or analysis that minimally: supports the presentation establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Supporting Materials</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LO2)</td>
<td>Delivery techniques make the presentation compelling Speaker appears polished and confident.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques make the presentation interesting.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques make the presentation understandable. Speaker appears tentative.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques detract from the understandability of the presentation. Speaker appears uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery techniques make the presentation interesting. Speaker appears comfortable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If audience is specified in the assignment prompt, consider that audience when scoring.

**For the bullet points shown in this particular criterion, we believe that one cannot occur without the other, but included both because: a) it may be easier to observe one than the other, and b) it is important to us that the “presenter's credibility” portion is explicitly stated.

Developed from the CORL ATF Report and the AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Oral Communication; reviewed by Core Area Representative 8/22/18; refined by CORL Norming & Scoring Team on 8/29/18.
Appendix B: Scorer Discrepancy Comparison

Scorer Discrepancy Comparison

(Goal is discrepancy of 0 at least 50% of the time, with no discrepancies >1)

- 145 speeches were scored: 150 speeches total minus 3 for norming minus 2 disqualified

Summary Counts of Discrepancies by Criterion in First Round,
Prior to Third Scorings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Total % Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 3:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 2:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 1:</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 0:</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noteworthy:
- 32 speeches, or 22% (32/145), had a discrepancy >1, and thus required a 3rd scoring
- 50 total counts across all 5 criteria, or 7% (50/725*), had a discrepancy >1 prior to 3rd scorings.
  *725 total counts exist across all criteria that were scored (145 speeches x 5 criteria)

Summary Counts of Discrepancies by Criterion in Final Compilation
(Incorporates best two of three scores for each speech that required a third scoring)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Total % Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 3:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 2:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 1:</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy of 0:</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>101% (rounding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noteworthy:
- 4 speeches, or 3% (4/145), still had a discrepancy >1
- 5 total counts across all 5 criteria, or 1% (5/725*), had a discrepancy >1
Appendix C

**Criterion A: Central Message**
Deliver a central message that is compelling
Mean = 2.6 (+/- .68)

**Criterion B: Language**
Delivery is appropriate to audience
Mean = 2.5 (+/- .59)

**Criterion C: Organization**
Construct presentations with clear and consistent organizational patterns
Mean = 2.5 (+/- .71)

**Criterion D: Supporting Materials**
Application (selection and use) of a variety of supporting materials to establish credibility/authority on topic
Mean = 2.5 (+/- .63)

**Criterion E: Delivery**
Demonstrate techniques of verbal and non-verbal delivery
Mean = 2.3 (+/- .73)

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**Figure A.1:** Frequency of scores achieved by students across each criterion in the CORL rubric, separated by criterion. 145 student speeches, each viewed by two scorers (290 viewings)
Appendix D

**Scores for Criterion A: Central Message**
- Individual: Mean score 2.8
- Group, Speaks Once: Mean score 2.9
- Group, Speaks Multiple Times: Mean score 2.4

**Scores for Criterion B: Language**
- Individual: Mean score 2.8
- Group, Speaks Once: Mean score 2.8
- Group, Speaks Multiple Times: Mean score 2.4

**Scores for Criterion C: Organization**
- Individual: Mean score 2.6
- Group, Speaks Once: Mean score 2.7
- Group, Speaks Multiple Times: Mean score 2.4

**Scores for Criterion D: Supporting Materials**
- Individual: Mean score 2.8
- Group, Speaks Once: Mean score 2.5
- Group, Speaks Multiple Times: Mean score 2.4

**Scores for Criterion E: Delivery**
- Individual: Mean score 2.4
- Group, Speaks Once: Mean score 2.6
- Group, Speaks Multiple Times: Mean score 2.4

*Figure A-2: Scores disaggregated by type of speech for each criterion. (For individual speeches, n = 33 students; for Group Speaks Once speeches, n = 22 students; for Group Speaks Multiple Times speeches, n = 90 students.)*
Appendix E: Faculty Tips for CORL-Flagged Courses

Faculty Tips for CORL-Flagged Courses

A compilation of tips from the CORL 2018 Assessment Pilot Project scorer insights and the CORL Core Area Representative to share with faculty.

1. **Outcomes and Rubric.** Be sure you are familiar with the Oral Communication learning outcomes and rubric. *Share these with your students.* The rubric was devised to align well with the CORL learning outcomes. Be sure to train your students on the five criteria listed in the rubric.

   The CORL scorers noticed that across all types of presentations, students would benefit from more training in the area of “Delivery”. In addition, for group presentations, the CORL scorers found that it was difficult to ascertain a given student’s “Central Message” and rate their “Organization” – two other rubric criteria. The ATF report specifies that even in group presentations, we must evaluate all five criteria for each student. Scorers provided suggestions to help with this problem. The suggestions are detailed in the “Student Tips for CORL-Flagged Courses”.

2. **Provide materials on effective presentations.** Students should be able to reference written materials on how to construct and deliver presentations. Watch examples of effective and ineffective speeches in class and point out the qualities that make them particularly effective or ineffective. Then ask students to evaluate a speech on their own and facilitate a class discussion.

3. **Provide an opportunity for Practice and Feedback.**
   a. Have students record their speeches, watch their speech, conduct a self-evaluation, and receive instructor feedback before they’re officially graded so that they can compare their observations with instructor remarks.
   b. Allow time for both peer feedback as well as instructor feedback. Train students in best practices for offering feedback to their peers. After students give their speech allow one minute for class comments. Consider assigning one student per speaker to begin the feedback. You can create comment cards that asks students to evaluate the speaker on different learning outcome criteria (central message, verbal communication skills, nonverbal communication skills, etc.) Ask students to comment on at least one area of strength and one area for improvement.

4. **Teach delivery skills.** Spend time in class talking about each element of verbal and nonverbal delivery. Discuss best practices.

5. **Utilize “Student Tips for Oral Presentations” handout.** See handout on next page.
Appendix F: Student Tips for Oral Presentations

Student Tips for Oral Presentations

A compilation of tips from the CORL 2018 Assessment Pilot Project scorer insights and the CORL Core Area Representative to share with students.

All Presentations

1. **Relevance.** Having the ability to give a speech or present research results will enhance your confidence and credibility, make you more socially engaged, and develop your marketability as a potential employee. Communication skills are one of the most important skills that employers seek in new hires. They are also essential to a well-functioning democracy.

2. **Oral Communications Core Rubric.** Use this rubric – posted on the Core website – as a guide for your presentation. The details in this rubric align with the learning outcomes for the Oral Communication competency in your core curriculum.

3. **Supporting Materials (a category on the rubric).** Practice in advance how you will use your supporting materials effectively – if you are referring to something on a PowerPoint slide, be sure to point to the exact spot on the slide where you want the audience to focus their attention. It helps the audience follow your presentation if you are explicit. If you are using a prop, have it ready to use, and avoid looking at it when you are not using it. Maintain eye contact with the audience.

4. **Observe yourself with and without sound during a practice run. (Delivery is another category on the rubric.)** Each viewing should provide you with valuable insight on how you can improve. Use your phone to record yourself when you rehearse a 2 – 3 minute segment of your presentation. Watch the recording twice – the first time watch it without the sound, and focus on your nonverbal skills. How are your posture, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, use of space? Do you have any movements that will be distracting to the audience, such as rocking back and forth or excessive hand motions? Then, listen to the speech with sound, but don’t watch yourself. Do you sound engaged in your topic? Confident? Do you use a lot of verbal fillers, such as “um” or “like”? Practice your delivery skills and repeat this process to see how you improve.

Special Notes for Group Presentations

1. **Body Language:** Keep in mind that you are “in the spotlight” even when someone else in your group is speaking. Maintain good posture, avoid pacing/rocking, and show a general interest/engagement (as opposed to apathy) at what the speaker is saying.

2. **Transitions:** Smooth transitions between speakers will increase the overall quality and professionalism of a group presentation. Smooth transitions will clarify each speaker’s central message and organization within their portion of the overall presentation. When transitioning from one speaker to the next, provide the segue to connect the two speakers – for example, “I just told you about XYZ, and now Samantha is going to tell you about ABC”. Then, Samantha can pick up and provide a clear central message for her portion of the presentation and lay out its organization.