General Education Assessment Report

AY 2022-2023

Effective Communication

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I. Prefatory

The following report covers assessment efforts for the Effective Communication Core competency over the academic year of 2022-2023. Assessment efforts include pre-assessment cycle training, annual artifact collection, scoring, and reporting, as well as end of cycle improvement plans. This report includes a narrative account of the assessment cycle as well as selected data informing the narrative. The intention of this report is to inform the UCA Core Council, or other relevant stakeholders, about the present state of the curriculum as regards the Effective Communication competency.

Assessment in higher education ought to be driven by the simple idea that reliable data can be used to inform curricular changes to improve student learning. The focus is always on student performance. But if you want to improve student performance you must know where your students are and whether or not your curricula is impactful on their intellectual development. Thus, there must be moments of assessment where student performance is measured consistently, according to an objective standard, across time. Each of these requirements poses its own challenges. When interpreting assessment data in higher education it is important to note some key points. First, the methodology used in higher education assessment is often derived from the behavioral and social sciences. However, the higher education environment makes it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the conditions necessary for reliable statistical analysis using these methods. Samples are small, or in isolated communities, there are myriad confounding variables, all of which cannot be controlled for, nor is it possible to offer control groups as withholding educational opportunities from students for experimental purposes is unethical. In addition, the data is collected and presented as discrete variables, when learning is clearly continuous. The data collected, therefore, must be interpreted in light of these structural barriers, which are endemic to the nature of the study. However, while these barriers cannot be removed, they can be ameliorated.

We can get reliable data in terms of identifying trends so long as we know wherein the problems lie and work intentionally to mitigate them. With Core assessment, we have striven to lessen these barriers where possible. We collect student work from the entire population in order to derive a representative sample. These artifacts are scored on the same rubric, by a single team of calibrated, trained, faculty scorers, thus increasing interrater reliability. We offer training to faculty on assignment design prior to artifact collection, thus allowing faculty to use individual assignments, not standardized ones, while maintaining a consistency of expectation. Thus, we can see trends and we can see high points and low points. If a general education program is to be assessed for common student learning outcomes at a university the size of UCA, the means by which we are doing so addresses, as well as can be addressed, the limitations inherent in assessment in higher education.

The report is comprised of three main parts. The first part is an introduction to the process of assessment of the UCA Core curriculum. The second part, which comprises the bulk of the report, contains selected assessment data for each component of the Effective Communication competency as well as analyses of those data and summary conclusions. The third part of the report is comprised of conclusions regarding general trends deduced from the data as well as recommendations for programmatic improvement.

The intention of this report is to be advisory to the UCA Core Council and all relevant stakeholders of the general education program at UCA. This report was compiled by Dr. Jacob Held, Assistant Provost for

Academic Assessment and General Education in his capacity as primary administrator of the UCA Core curriculum and chair of the UCA Core Council.

II.   Introduction

The UCA Core is assessed on a four-year cycle. Each year one competency area is addressed. For AY 2022-2023, Effective Communication was the area scheduled to be assessed. This is the second cycle of assessment for Effective Communication. Therefore, alongside the current data, we are able to offer a comparison with the original, first cycle data. There were slight changes, however, to the process for the present cycle.

For Goal A (Oral), this time we asked faculty to collect artifacts, but permitted them to sample from the front end, providing a minimum of 5 artifacts per section or 20% of students, which ever number was larger. During the first cycle, the Office of Assessment attempted to collect the population of artifacts by having the Office staff, Dr. Held and Mrs. McEntire, record the student presentations. This proved untenable. There were too many for two staff members to collect. Given that faculty had experience recording lectures, post-COVID, we determined that they were capable of recording student presentations on their own. This guaranteed ample staff to collect artifacts. In addition, given our past experience and recognizing both the cumbersome nature of recording all student presentations and the fact that it was unnecessary since a representative sample could be generated without the population, we allowed faculty to randomly sample their course and provide a sizeable sample of student work to the Office of Assessment.

Given that Goal B (Written) simply requires the uploading of electronic documents that faculty have already collected, for the most part, by means of Blackboard, we kept the submission process the same for this goal.

For Goal C (Collaboration), we changed our process entirely. Given the uniqueness of the area, namely, that it assesses collaboration, the rubric is designed to be applied by students to peers. However, students have no practical experience engaging in this practice, nor can they be calibrated in a way such that the numbers each student provides will be commensurate. As a result, the data provided is effectively worthless. We noted this in the previous cycle. Therefore, rather than waste time collecting meaningless data, we instead simply requested faculty provide a copy of their collaboration assignment, as well as a one-page statement articulating how they use it and the results they've noticed. Such qualitative data may be useful in evaluating the effectiveness of this area. Although all we receive in such a process is a random collocation of anecdotes. Yet, this office maintains that there is value in fomenting collaborative skills in students, but also recognizes that an effective way to do this is by means of assignment design on the front end. But one must admit that not all things of value are assessable, just as surely as not all things that can be assessed are valuable.[1] If we avoid metric fixation and instead recognize anecdotes as meaningful, and dialogue as productive, we may have a more constructive way forward with this goal.

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[1] See Jerry Z. Muller, *Tyranny of Metrics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019) passim.

Artifacts:

During AY 22-23, the Office of Assessment attempted to collect artifacts from all courses designated under the Effective Communication Core competency including all Lower and Upper division courses so designated as well as first-year seminar and capstone courses. Faculty teaching these courses were identified through ARGOS. All identified faculty were contacted multiple times by means of UCA Inform and email. They were provided with a link to a google form. The form asked for information regarding what artifact would be chosen, when it would be administered to students, and when and how it would be delivered to the Office of Assessment.

Evaluation of the artifacts took place August 9-11, 2023. The evaluation team was recruited from faculty who had participated in the assessment process. "Participation" included teaching a course in the designated area as well as having completed the survey and submitted artifacts. The evaluation team consisted of:

- Rubric A (Oral)
  - Carla Gilbreath, PhD, CHES (Health Sciences)
  - Noël Gieringer (Teaching and Learning)

- Rubric B (Written)
  - Jen Talbot, PhD (School of Communication)
  - Kyle Mattson, PhD (School of Communication)
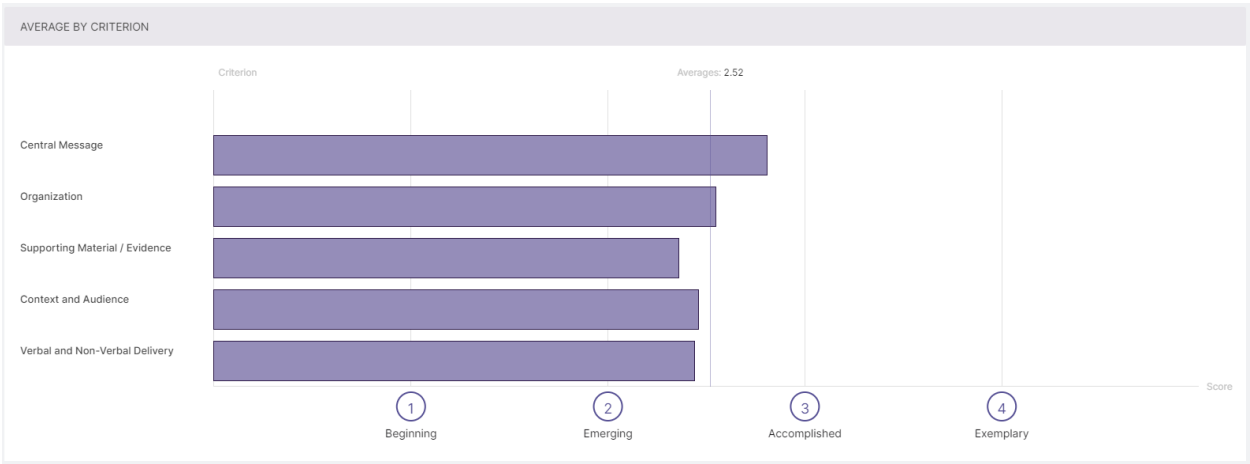 - Duston Morris, PhD, MS, CHES, CHC (Health Sciences)

Evaluators were remunerated $250 per day. During the three days evaluators participated in calibration exercises as well as artifact scoring. Days consisted of routine evaluation work from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm with intermittent breaks as evaluators deemed appropriate.
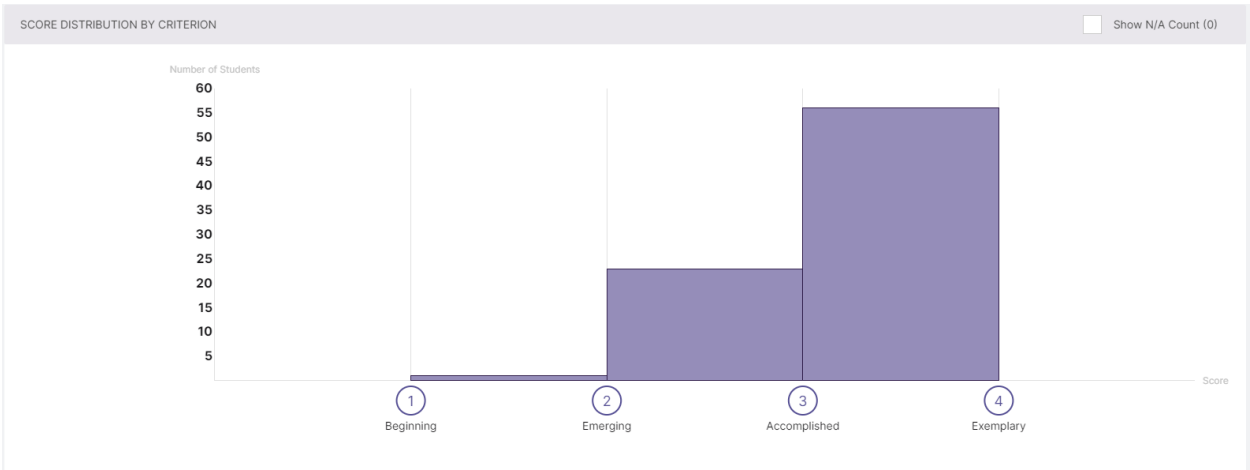
III.   Results

RUBRIC A (ORAL)

Rubric A poses a unique challenge insofar as it is difficult to collect student work. As oral presentations, each artifact is a recorded presentation. Standardizing format, assuring quality, and simply collecting work is a challenge, but one that is surmountable. This cycle we enlisted faculty, by requesting they record a random sample of student work by the process indicated above. However, given the usual issues with low participation rates the sample is only a stratified random sample of respondents, which does not reflect the full student population under this rubric as some courses failed to participate. The data below, therefore, must be interpreted cautiously.
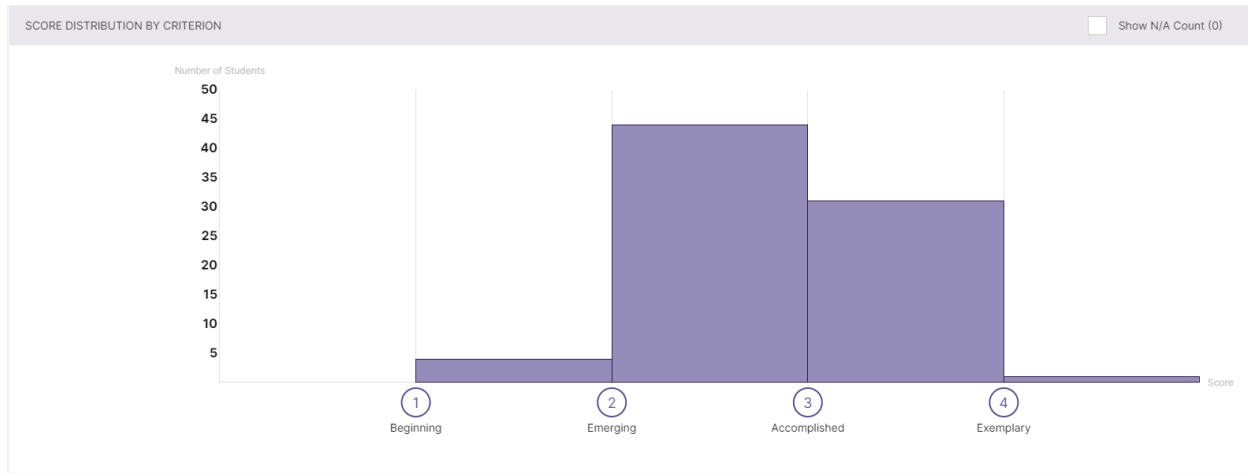
Lower Division Average by Criterion

AVERAGE BY CRITERION

Criterion   Averages: 2.52

Criterion	
Central Message	
Organization	
Supporting Material / Evidence	
Context and Audience	
Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery	

Score

1 — Beginning   2 — Emerging   3 — Accomplished   4 — Exemplary

Lower Division Central Message

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION   ☐ Show N/A Count (0)

Number of Students

60
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5

Score

1 — Beginning   2 — Emerging   3 — Accomplished   4 — Exemplary

n=80

Rubric score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	1	23	56	0

Lower Division: Organization

n=80

Rubric score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	4	44	31	1

Lower Division: Supporting Material/Evidence

n=80
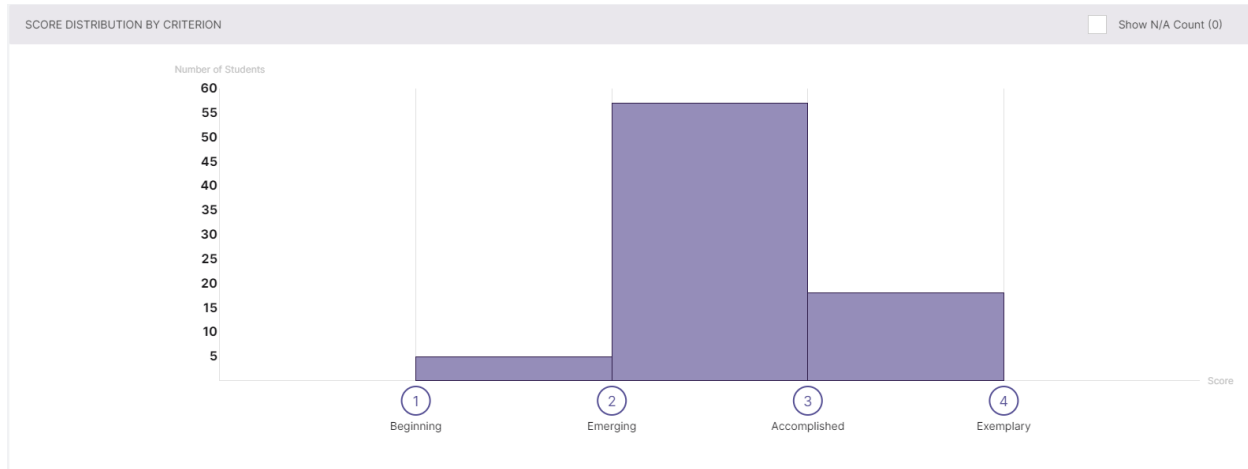
Rubric score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	5	57	18	0

Lower Division: Context and Audience

n=80
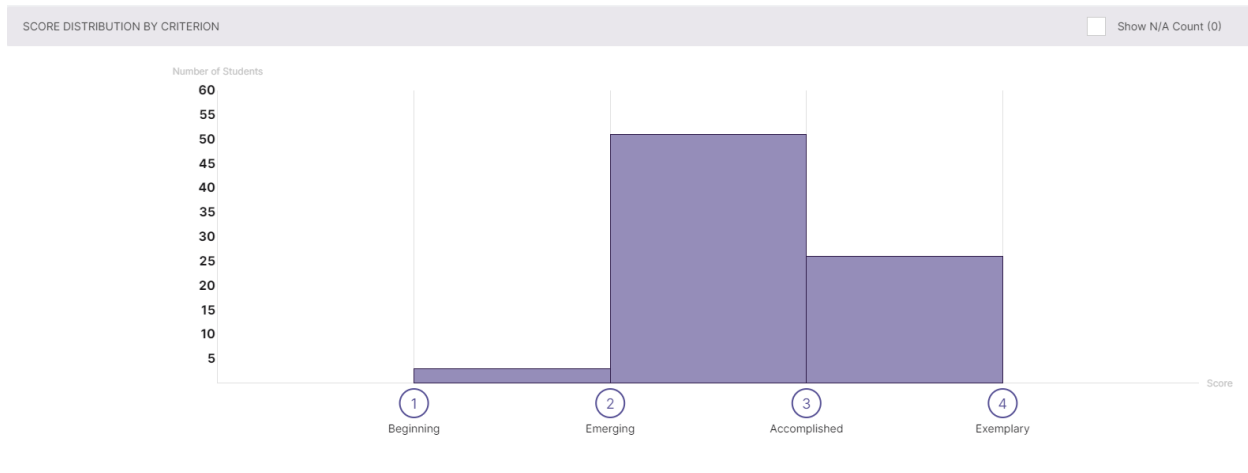
Rubric score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	3	51	26	0

Lower Division: Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery
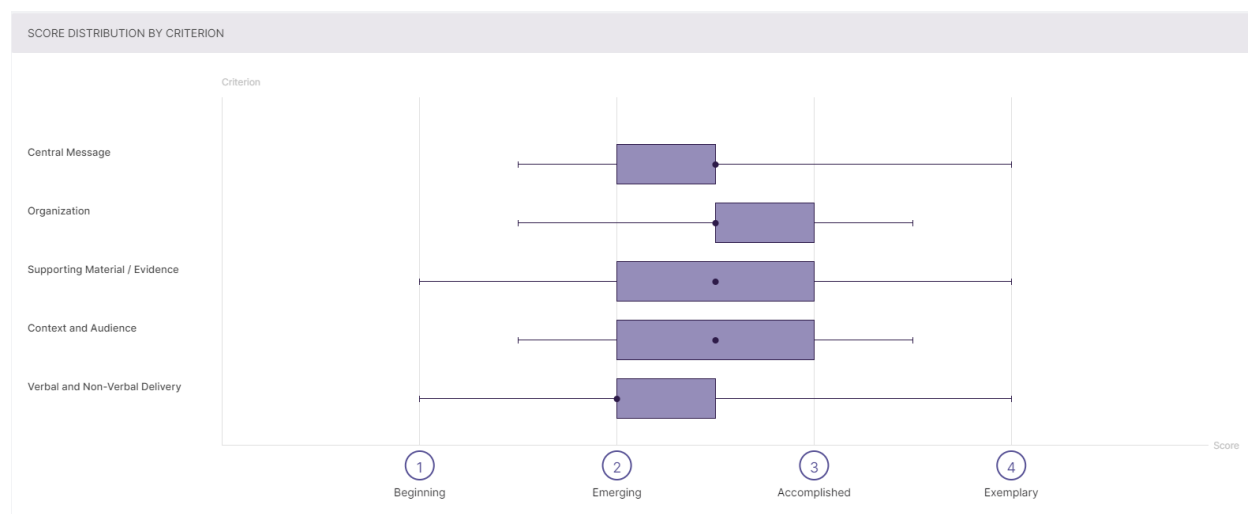

n=80
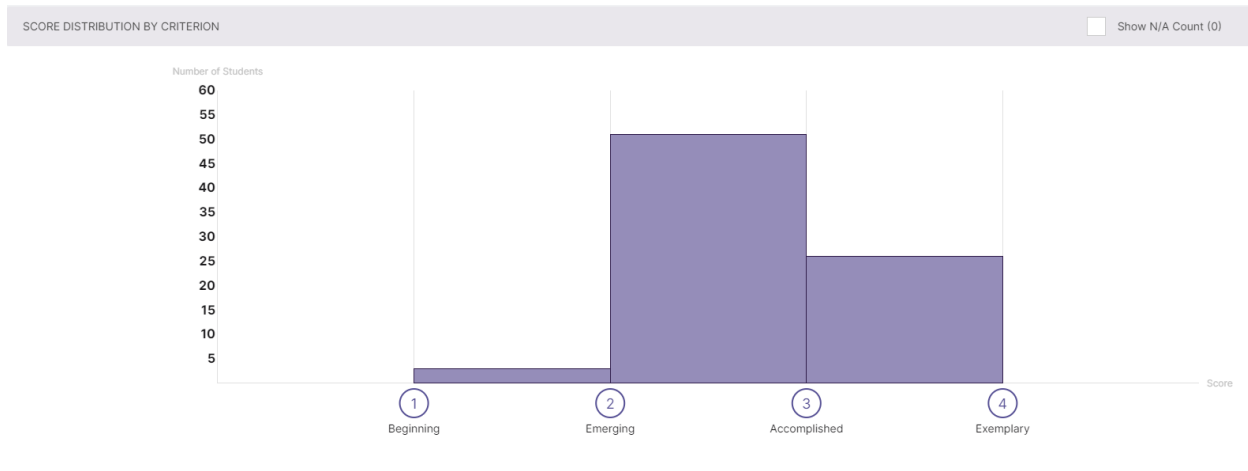
Rubric score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	9	43	25	3

At the lower division we expect to see consistent scores at low (1) to mid-level (2-3) on the rubric. We expect to see this for various reasons. First, these are lower level classes with first or second year students so one would not anticipate them to excel on a rubric designed to gauge student performance through their entire college career. In addition, the assignments in these courses are often designed to introduce and reinforce basic skills thus either not intentionally demanding or even affording students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery. As foundational courses, we would expect assignments to prompt students to demonstrate basic level competence, and we would hope students would be able to perform at this basic level. The data supports the statement that our students, at the lower level, consistently demonstrate competence across all learning outcomes for Goal A. Although we rarely see students perform exceptionally, namely receiving a 4 on the rubric, the vast majority of students score a 2 or 3, indicating skill levels at the "emerging" or "accomplished" level. We would anticipate this result, and ought to be reassured that the data verifies our hope that students at the lower level are receiving a solid education in oral communication.

Upper Division Distribution by Criterion

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

Criterion / Score — Central Message, Organization, Supporting Material / Evidence, Context and Audience, Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery

1 Beginning 2 Emerging 3 Accomplished 4 Exemplary

Assessing student performance at the upper division theoretically allows us to discern whether or not students improve from their performances at the lower division. In reality, the scores are more appropriately seen as a benchmark, or window onto student performance at point of matriculation, namely, in advanced level courses near the end of their studies. However, two factors complicate matters. First, our curriculum, although designed to be scaffolded is not in reality so. The reasons for this are twofold: 1) not all upper level courses have prerequisites. So students may be able to take upper level courses before having had the lower level variant or related experience. 2) Our Core curriculum is not rigorously aligned. That is, students do not necessarily have to take courses in the same Goal at both the lower and upper level. Students have to take a course under the competency, for example responsible living, but they can take one under goal A at the lower level and under goal B at the upper level. Thus, their performance does not reflect the effectiveness of intentional curriculum alignment. Under Effective Communication this is less of a problem. All students are required to take a class under oral communication (goal A) and written communication (goal B). So regardless of what courses they take at the upper level, they will have had a foundational experience at the lower level. Thus, we can see progress more readily in relation to this competency area. In addition, this highlights the importance of upper level instruction, or educational opportunities in this competency, since they can, more so than under other areas, intentionally build upon what was provided at the lower level.

Due to persistent issues of low levels of faculty participation, namely, a small selection of courses that turned in student artifacts, these data may be unreliable. The following courses provided usable artifacts: BIOL4195, BIOL 4V85, CHEM 4112, EXSS 4320, MATH 4301, NUTR 4339, PSCI 4328, PSYC 3340, SOC4360, SPAN 3330, USCH3320. This comprises 11 courses of all courses listed as offered during Fall 22 and Spring 23 categorized under Effective Communication Goal A (Oral). This is an approximately 10% participation rate.
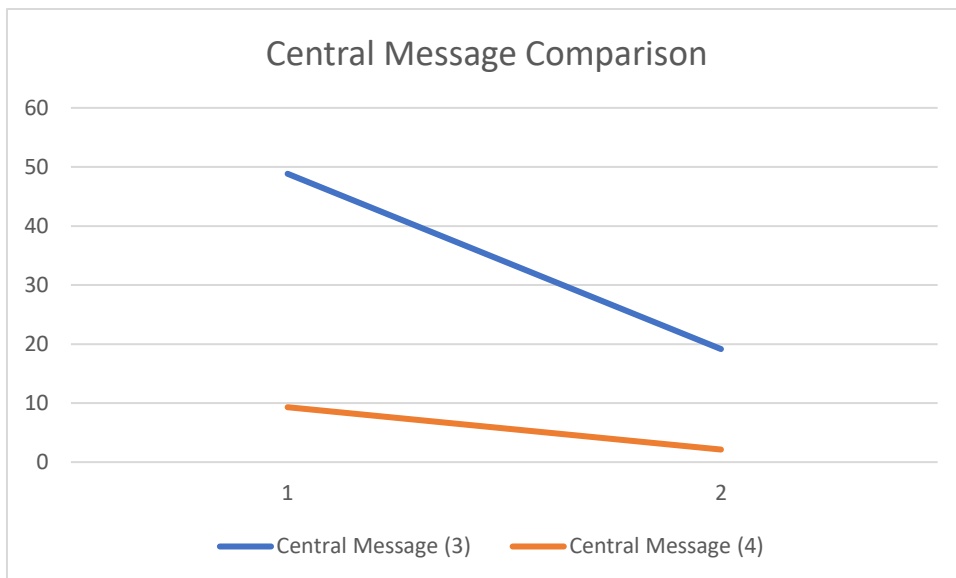
SLO 1: Central Message

Central Message: The topic, thesis, or main point of the communication that is consistent with the purpose of the assignment.
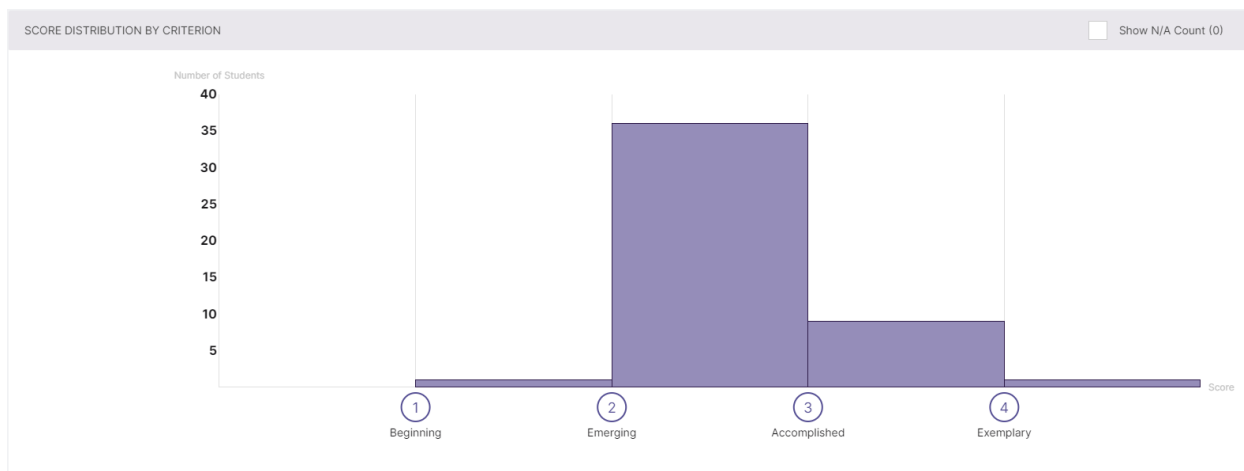

n=47
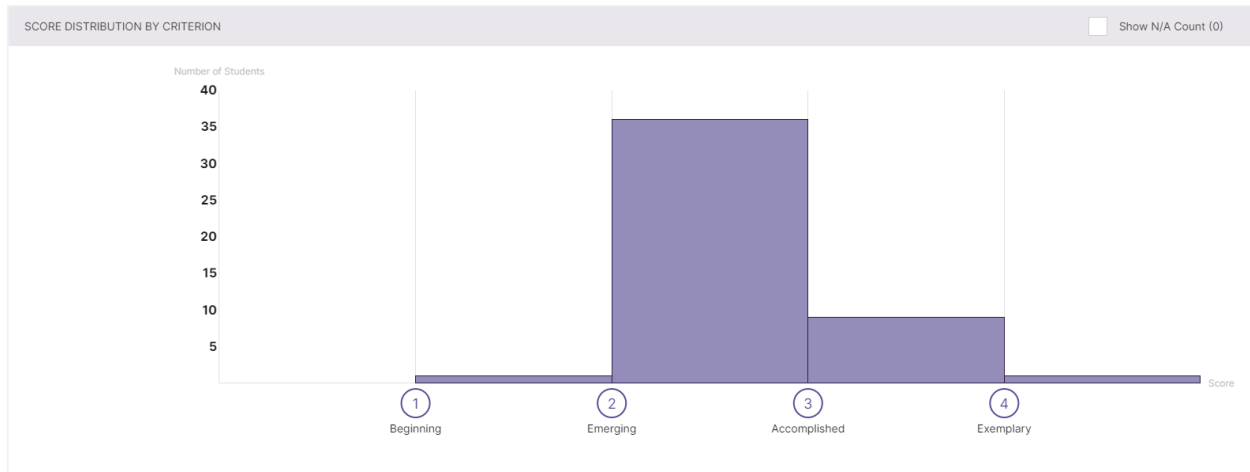
Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	9	1

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
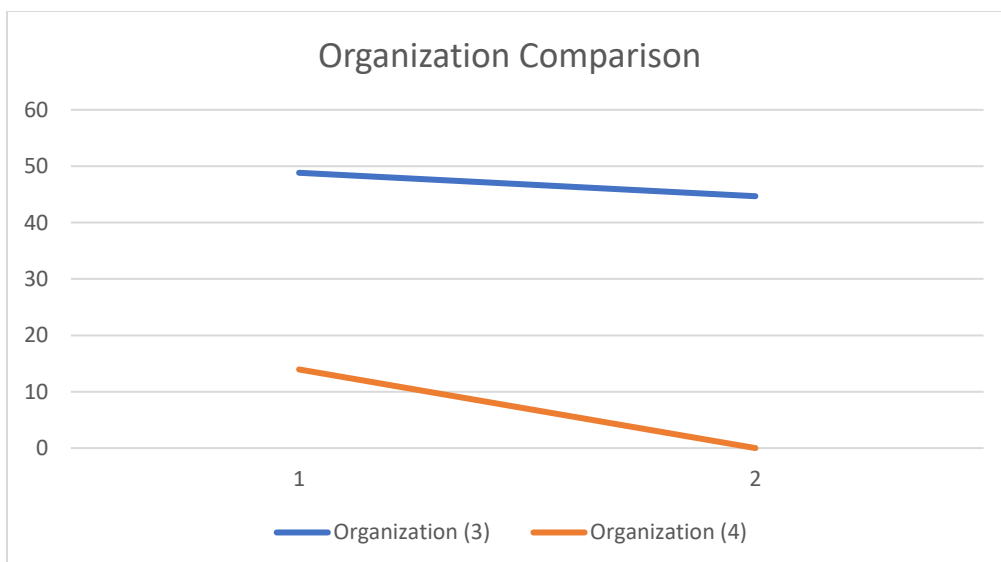
SLO 2: Organization

Organization: The grouping of material in the communication, including a specific introduction, conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions.
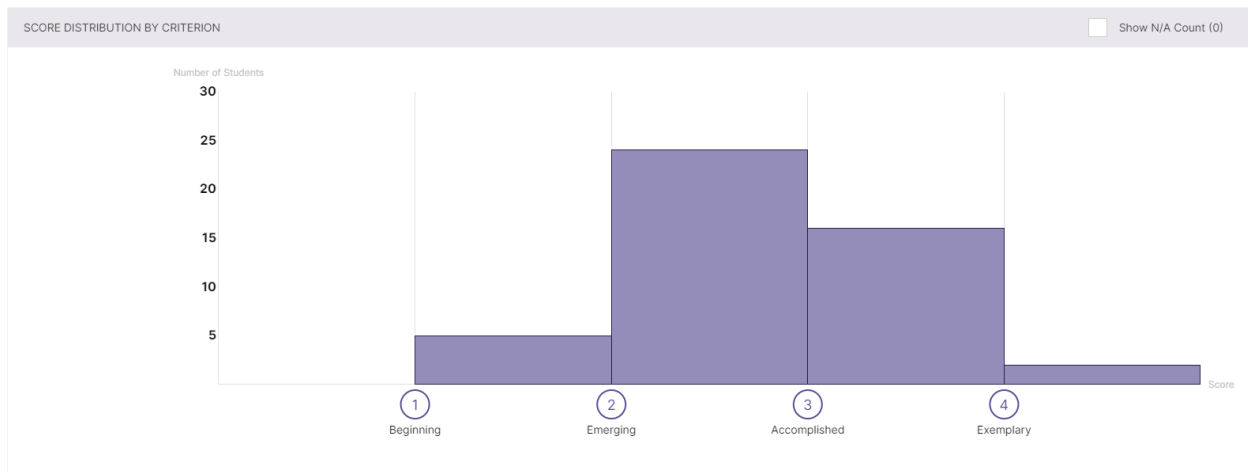

n=47

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	21	0

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
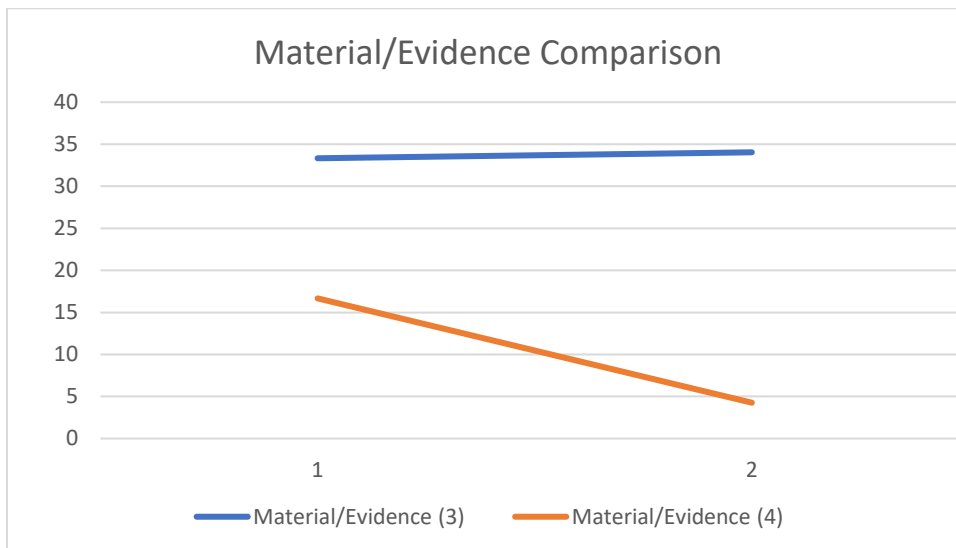
SLO 3: Supporting Material/Evidence

Supporting Material/Evidence: Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, or other kinds of information or analysis that support the central message
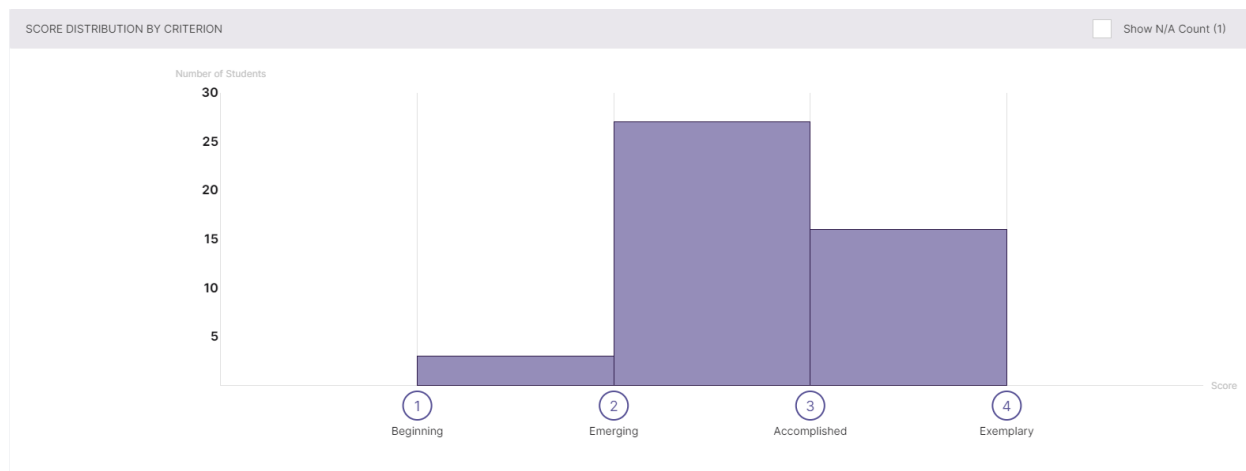
n=47

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	16	2

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
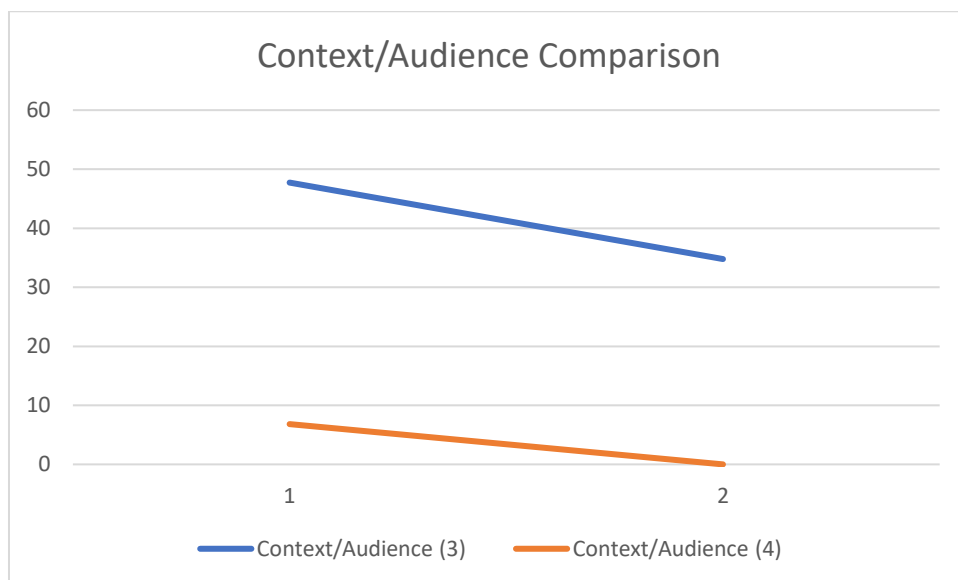
SLO 4: Context and Audience

Context and Audience: The people and situations surrounding the communication, including the cognitive, social, and cultural factors that influence the audience and communicator.
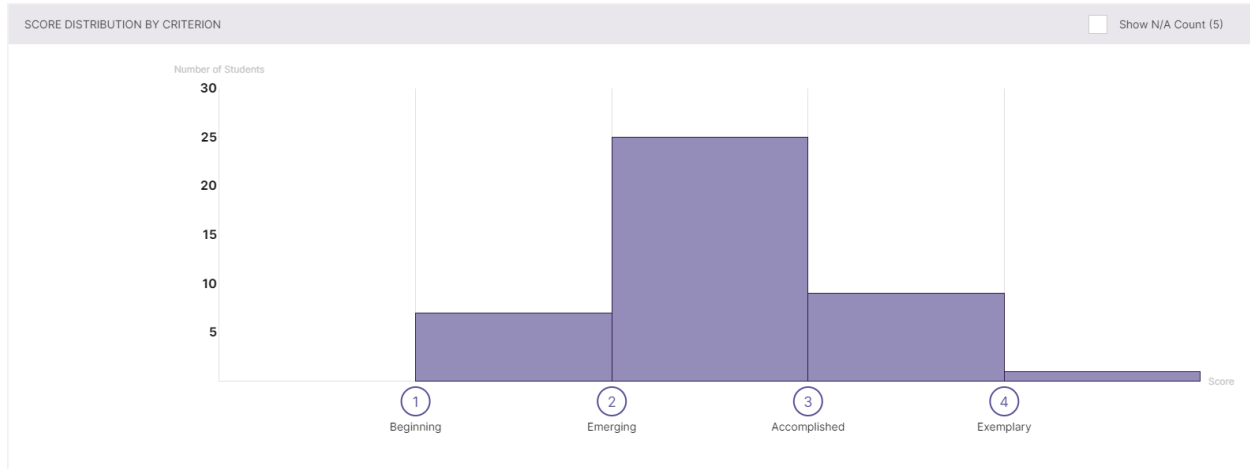

n=46

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	16	0

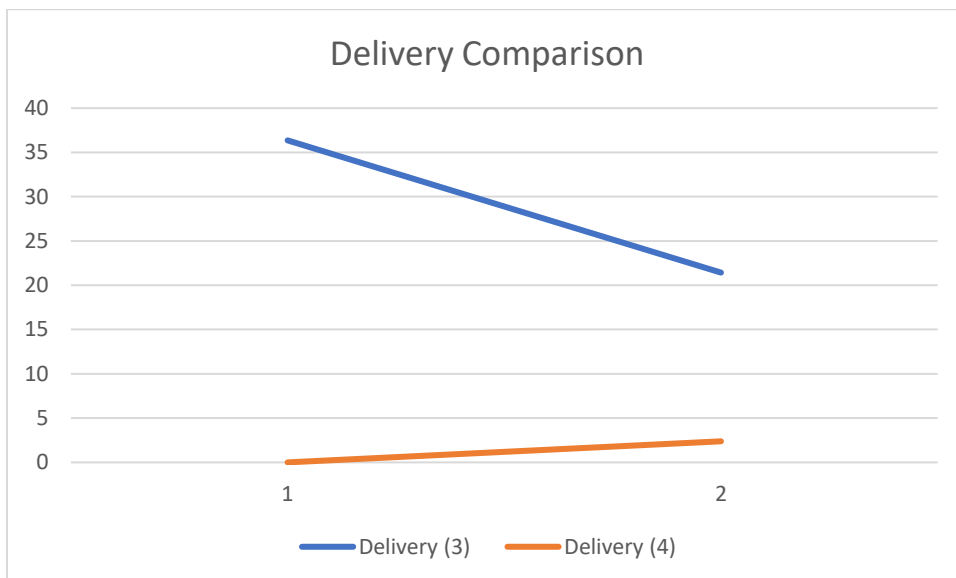By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:

SLO 5: Delivery

Verbal and Nonverbal Delivery: Posture, gesture, eye contact, vocal expressiveness (loudness, tone, emphasis), and vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).

n=42

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	9	1

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:

At all outcomes, the most notable trend is a lack of "Exemplary" scores. Not simply as raw numbers, since the numbers are small as a result of lack of faculty participation, but as a percentage of the scores derived. Thus, even though we had low numbers of artifacts at the upper division, students seemed to fail, consistently, to demonstrate "Exemplary" on any outcome. The table below provides the relevant percentages. Using the table one can see what percentage of student artifacts were scored as "3" and "4" for both the previous cycle and the current one. Two trends are of note. First, the percentage of student work being scored at a "4" has decreased significantly from the previous cycle. Secondly, and most worrisome, on no outcome did 5% or greater of our students score "exemplary."

	Cycle 1 (%)	Cycle 2 (%)
Score		
Central Message (3)	48.84	19.15
Central Message (4)	9.3	2.13
Organization (3)	48.84	44.68
Organization (4)	13.95	0
Material/Evidence (3)	33.33	34.04
Material/Evidence (4)	16.67	4.26
Context/Audience (3)	47.73	34.78
Context/Audience (4)	6.82	0
Delivery (3)	36.36	21.43
Delivery (4)	0	2.38

The commensurate numbers for Cycle 1 are:

Central Message (n=43)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	21	4

Organization (n=43)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	21	6

Support Material (n=42)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	14	7

Context (n=44)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	21	3

Verbal (n=44)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	16	0

RUBRIC B (WRITTEN)

Lower Division Average by Criterion
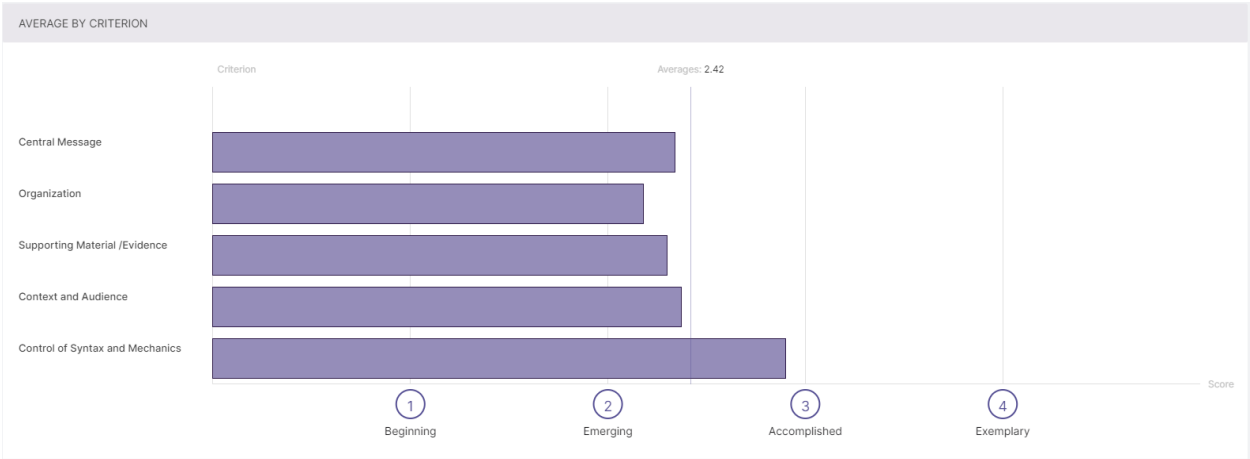
Lower Division Central Message
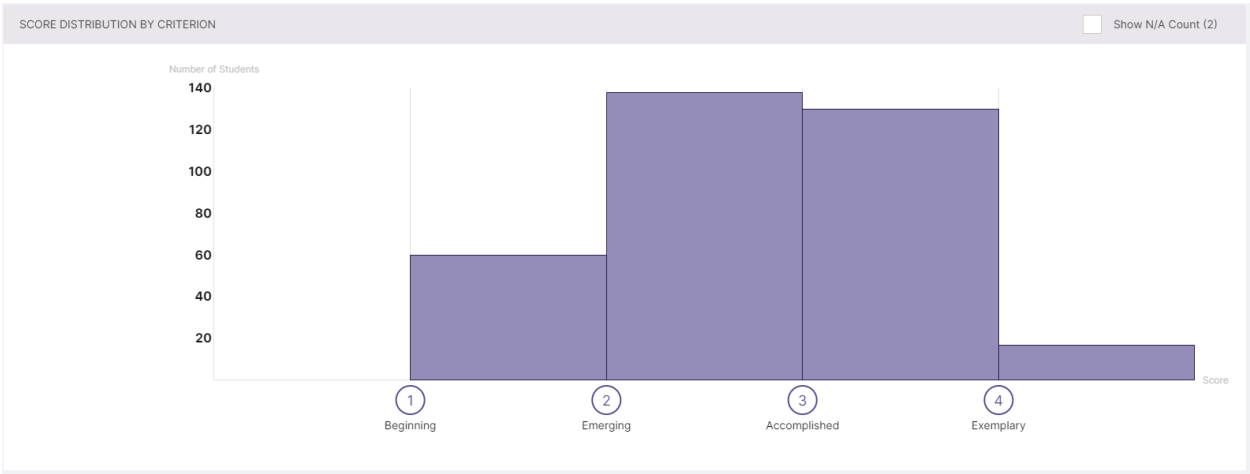
n=345

Rubric Score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	60	138	130	17

Lower Division: Organization
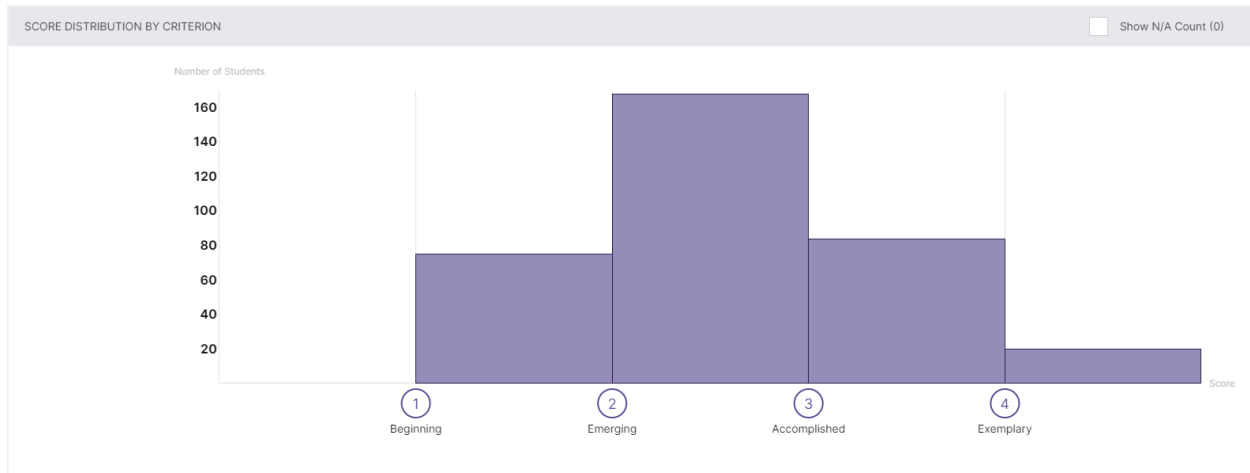
n=347

Rubric Score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	75	168	84	20

Lower Division: Supporting Material/Evidence
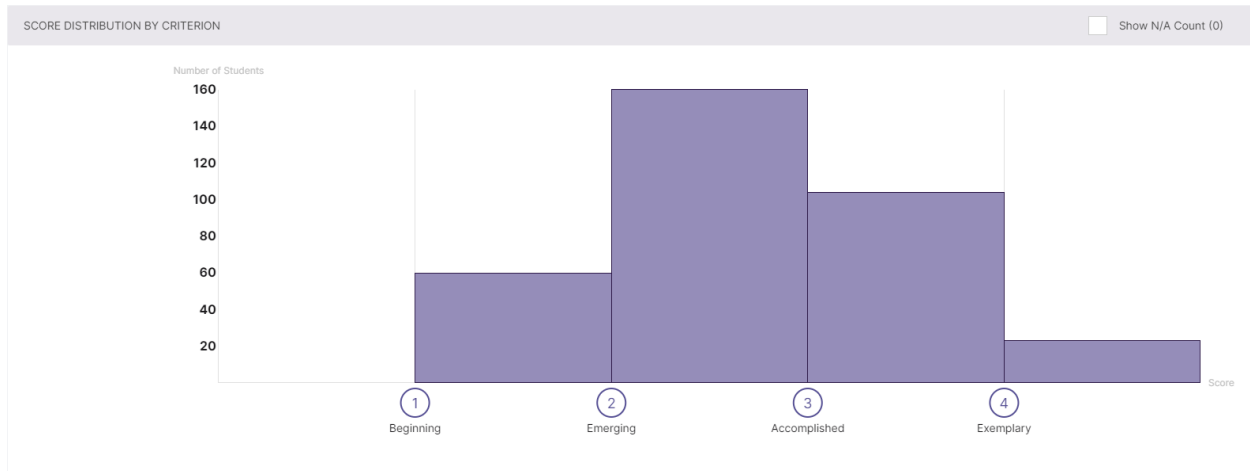
n=347

Rubric Score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	60	160	104	23

Lower Division: Context and Audience

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

Show N/A Count (0)
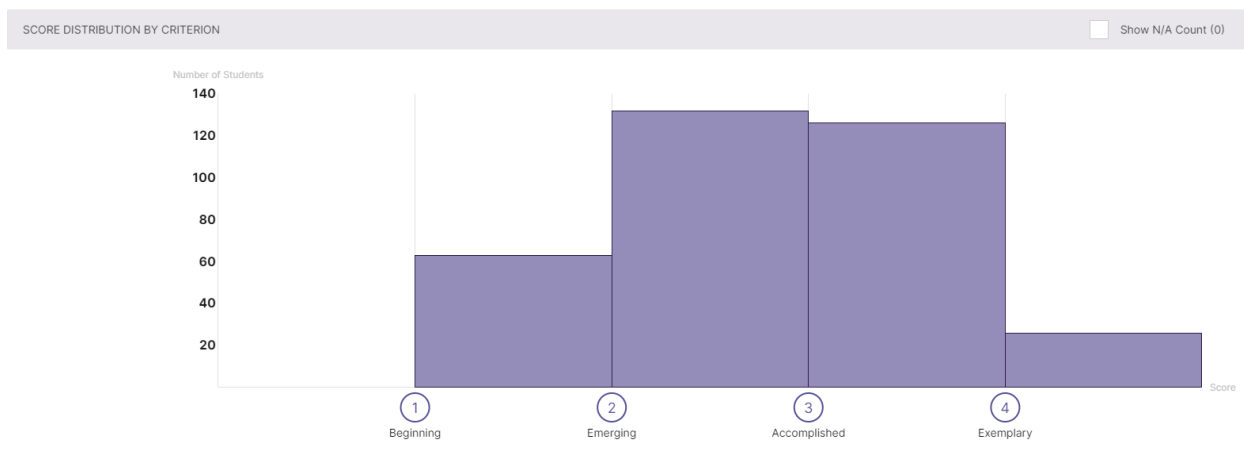
n=347

Rubric Score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	63	132	126	26

Lower Division: Syntax and Mechanics

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

Show N/A Count (0)
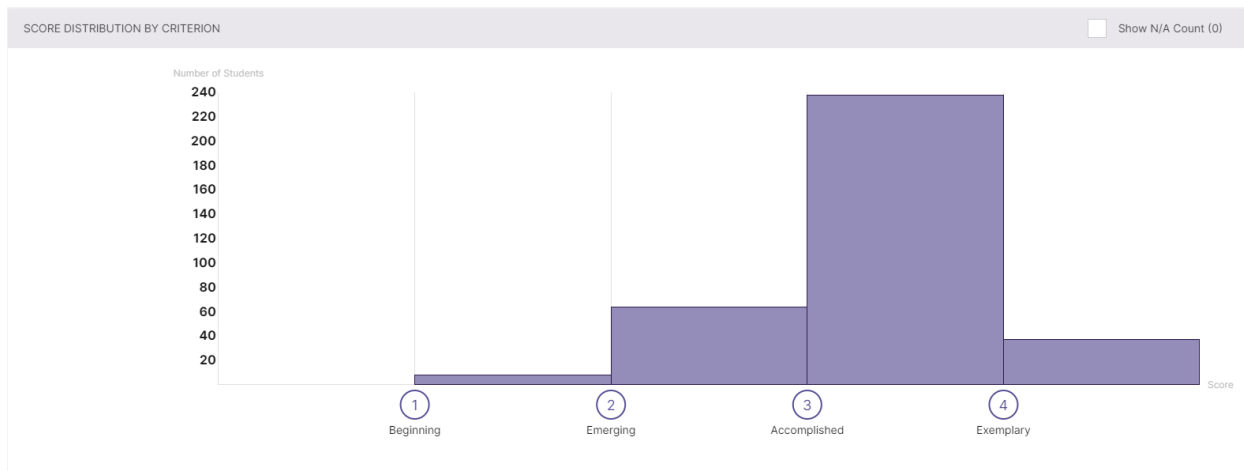
n=347

Rubric Score	1	2	3	4
# of scores	8	64	238	37

As with goal A, at the lower division we expect to see scores at low (1) to mid-level (2-3) on the rubric. The data supports the statement that our students, at the lower level, consistently demonstrate competence across all learning outcomes for Goal B. In fact, students frequently, and in significant numbers perform at a "3" or "Accomplished." This may be explained by the fact that at the lower level

students are required to take courses in written communication, namely WRTG 1310 and 1320, which demand students develop the skills in this area through an iterative process of drafts and revisions, thus developing and reinforcing these skills. The assignments are designed intentionally to this end and are by their design well aligned to the outcomes of this goal. It is reassuring that the data verify that our lower level writing courses are instilling in our students a firm foundation in written communication.

Upper Division Distribution by Criterion

As noted above, assessing student performance at the upper division theoretically allows us to discern whether or not students improve from their performances at the lower division. The same issues raised in relation to goal A also pertain to goal B.

Due to persistent issues of low levels of faculty participation, namely, a small selection of courses that turned in student artifacts, these data may be unreliable. The following courses provided usable artifacts: ACCT4317, BIOL 4195, BIOL 4V85, CRWR4324, ECON4380, GEOG3315, MATH4301, MGMT3315, MGMT4348, MUS 4102, NURS 4315, NUTR4339, PHIL3360, PSCI3316, PSCI 4328, SOC3320, SPAN33300, USCH 3320, WRTG 3310. This comprises 19 courses of all possible courses listed as offered during Fall 22 and Spring 23 categorized under Effective Communication Goal B (Written). This is approximately a 13% participation rate.

Upper Division Average by Criterion

SLO 1: Central Message

Central Message: The topic, thesis, or main point of the communication that is consistent with the purpose of the assignment.
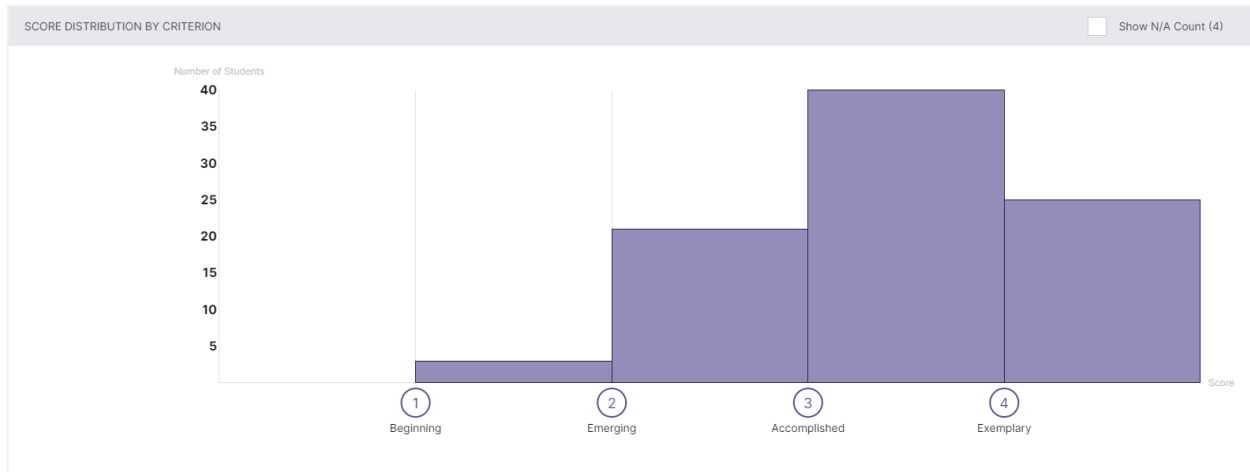
n=89

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	40	25

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
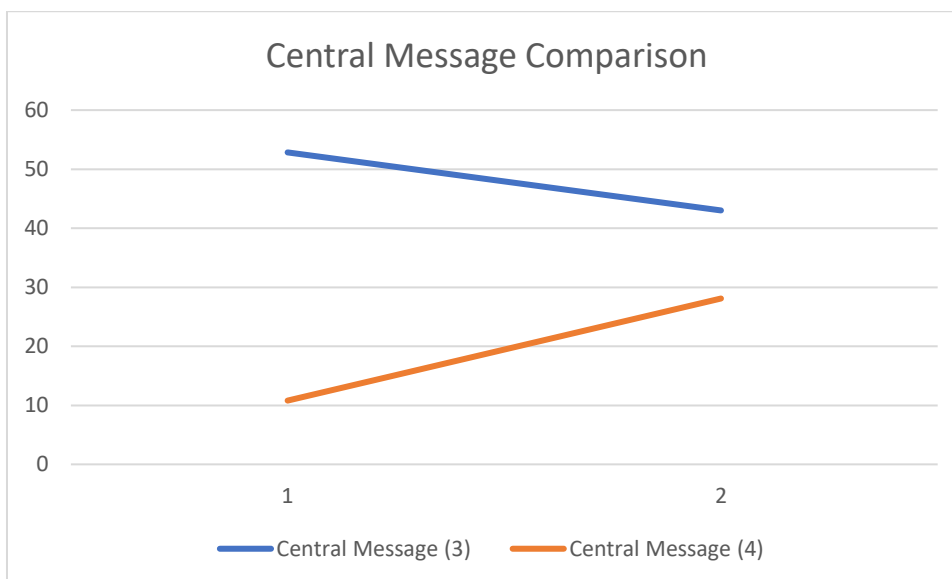
SLO 2: Organization

Organization: The grouping of material in the communication, including a specific introduction, conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions.

n=93
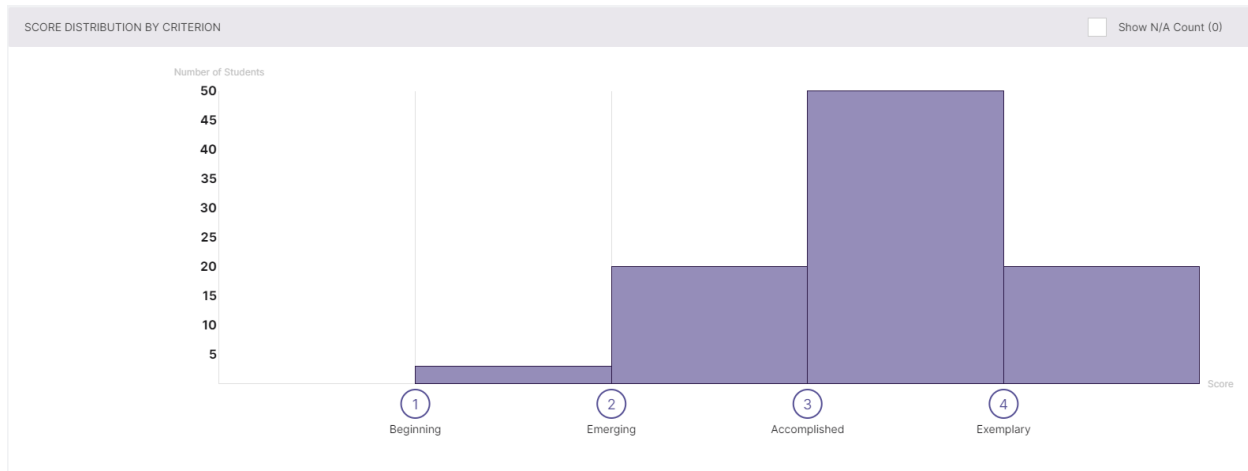
Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	50	20

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
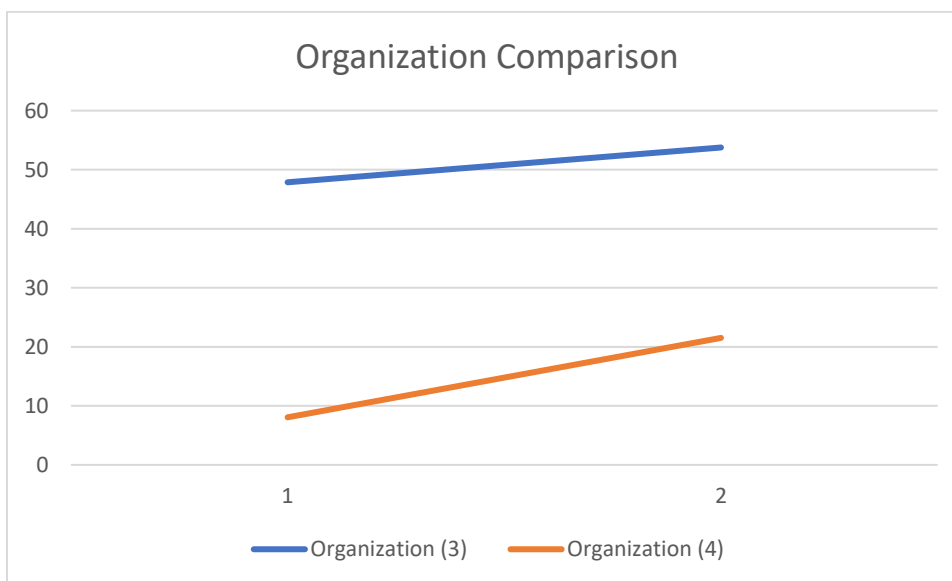
SLO 3: Supporting Material/Evidence
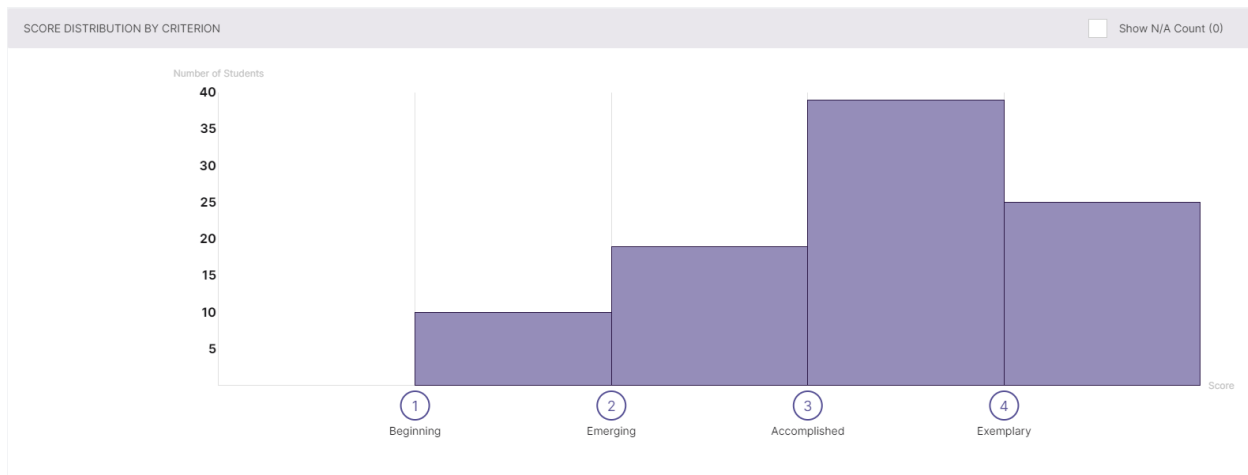
Supporting Material/Evidence: Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, or other kinds of information or analysis that support the central message

n=93

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	39	25

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
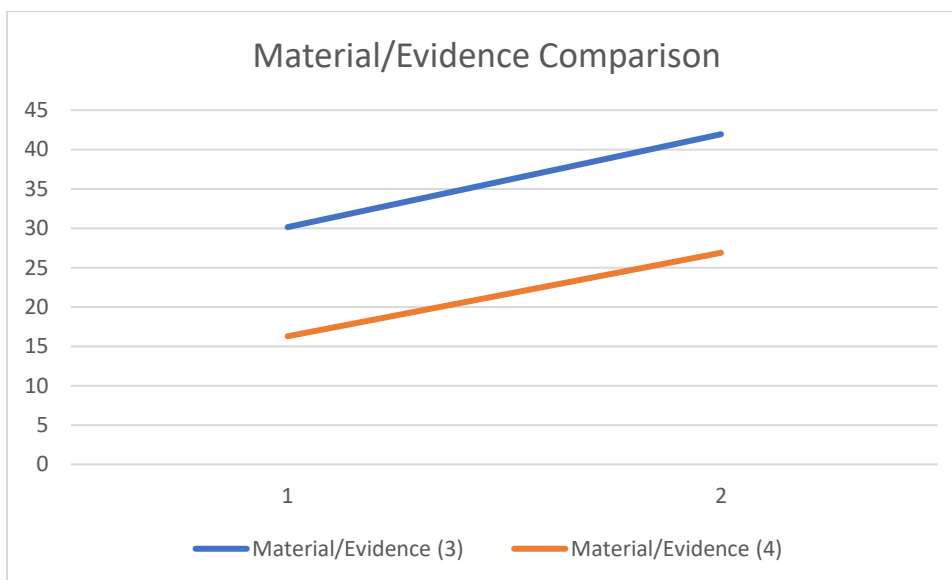
SLO 4: Context and Audience

Context and Audience: The people and situations surrounding the communication, including the cognitive, social, and cultural factors that influence the audience and communicator.

n=93
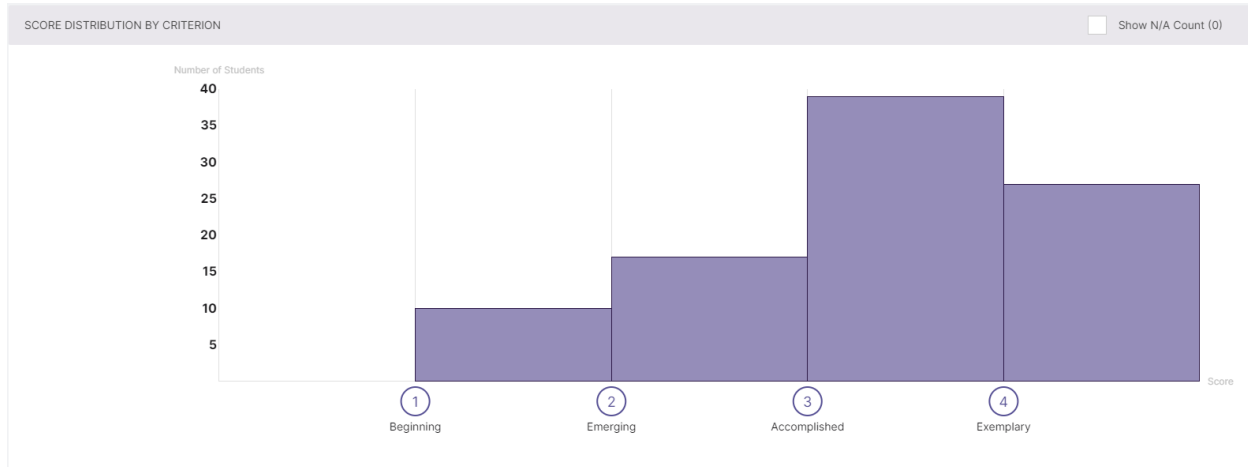
Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	39	27

By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:

SLO 5: Syntax and Mechanics

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

n=93
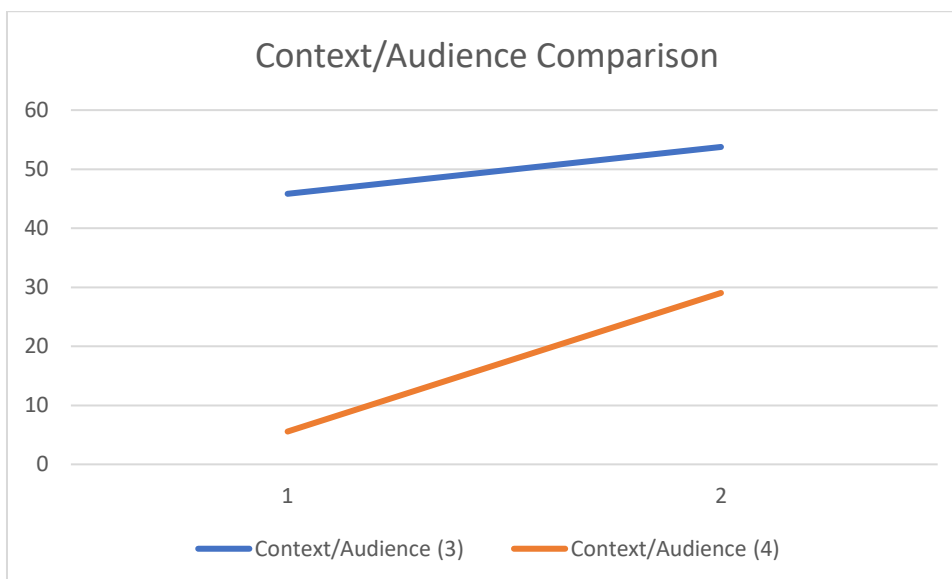
Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	57	25

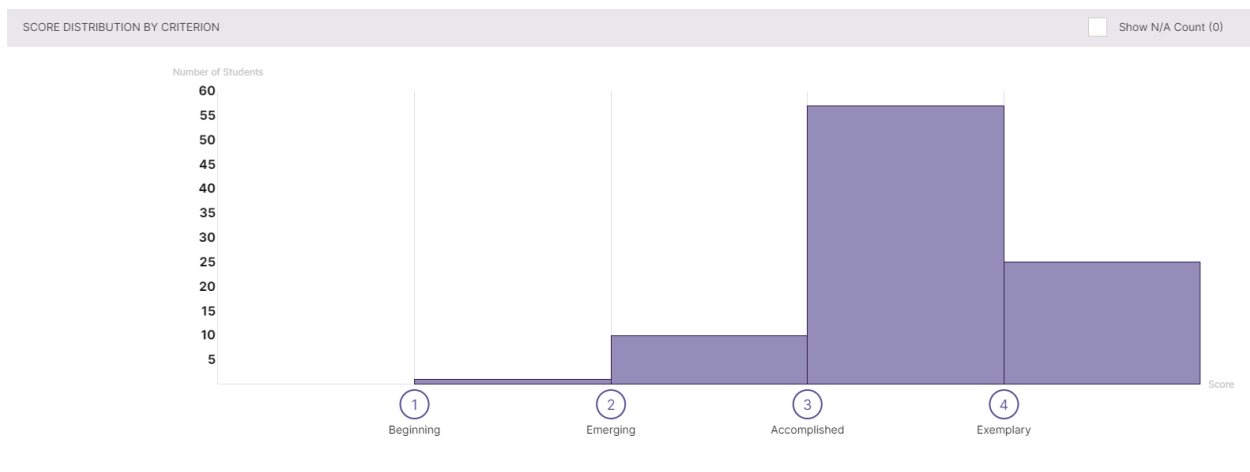By Comparison, with the UD scores of the first (AY 2020) cycle we see:
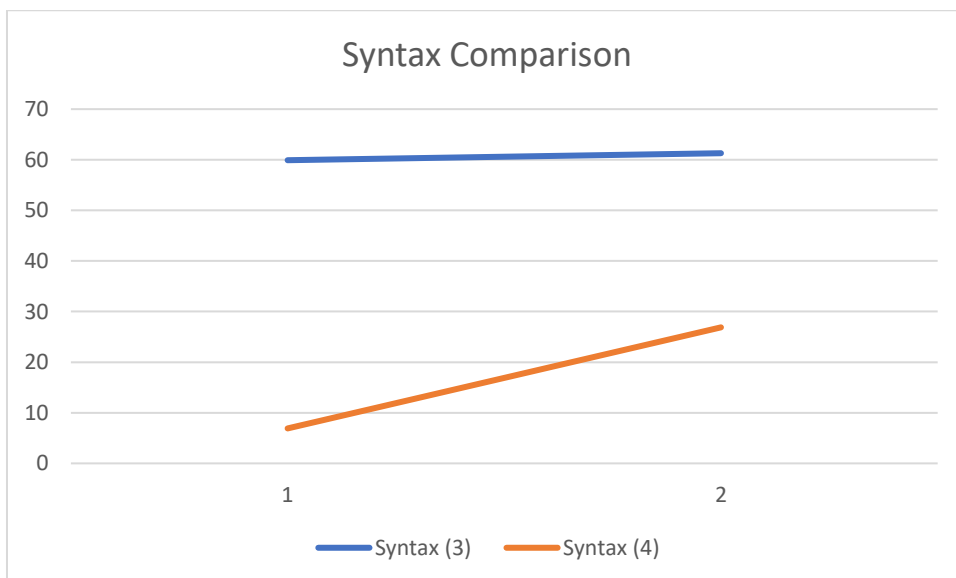
At all outcomes, the most notable trend is significant increases in "Exemplary" scores. The table below provides the relevant percentages. Using the table one can see what percentage of student artifacts were scored as "3" and "4" for both the previous cycle and the current one. Two trends are notable. First, the percentage of student work being scored at a "4" has increased significantly from the previous cycle. Secondly, and most promising, on all outcomes 20% or greater of our students scored "exemplary." This is marked improvement from the previous cycle.

	Cycle 1 (%)	Cycle 2 (%)
Score		
Central Message (3)	52.84	43.01
Central Message (4)	10.8	28.09
Organization (3)	47.87	53.76
Organization (4)	8.06	21.51
Material/Evidence (3)	30.14	41.94
Material/Evidence (4)	16.27	26.88
Context/Audience (3)	45.83	53.76
Context/Audience (4)	5.56	29.03
Syntax (3)	59.91	61.29
Syntax (4)	6.91	26.88

The commensurate numbers for cycle one are:

Central Message (n=176)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	93	19

Organization (n=211)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	101	17

Support Material (n=209)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	63	34

Context (n=216)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	99	12

Syntax (n=217)

Rubric Score	3	4
# of scores	130	15

RUBRIC C (COLLABORATION)

Rubric C (Collaboration) of the Effective Communication competency area is defined as:

Goal C: Students will apply appropriate verbal and nonverbal strategies to promote collaboration.

This rubric assesses the following two specific skill or knowledge areas related to Goal C:

• Individual Contributions: The contributions of a single student that advances a group project, including the timely completion of assigned tasks, thorough and comprehensive work, articulating the merits of alternative ideas or proposals, building constructively upon the contributions of others, and being punctual, focused, and prepared.

• Fosters Constructive Team Climate: Student behaviors that promote collaboration among group members, including being respectful and positive, motivating and assisting teammates, and engaging with teammates in ways that facilitate their contributions.

This rubric was designed to be applied by students to peers. This is both intuitive and inopportune. It is intuitive insofar as if you want to evaluate a student on their performance in a group, the only individuals with intimate knowledge of those performances would be other members of the group. It is inopportune insofar as the reliability of scores will be suspect. It is impracticable to calibrate all students on the rubric to assure that interrater reliability is within an acceptable level. One simply cannot train all students on the rubric and its application, not to mention that the scorer is scoring a member of their own group thus adding an element of bias into the process. Thus, this process is fundamentally flawed.

The data collected during the previous cycle bear out the observations noted above. The overall average on this rubric was a 3.68, with median scores at both the LD and UD levels of assessment being a 4, the topmost score. Students, thus, scored their classmates remarkably high suggesting one of several possible hypotheses. First, students filled out the rubric to be the best of their ability and indicated a stellar performance by everyone. This interpretation would be indicative that students weren't critical in their discernment since, it is unreasonable to presume that everyone is excellent. Second, the consistent high scores may indicate a lack of interest in completing the rubric thus scoring all members a 4 out of ease. Third, students may have scored their classmates as exceptional out of courtesy motivated by empathy or a misunderstanding that this score may impact a classmate's grade, thus a 4 indicates an act of charity. Regardless, the scores, and the method by which they were obtained, indicate a fundamental flaw in assessing these outcomes by the method adopted.

Given the results and the hypotheses proffered accounting for the results, this past cycle we changed our procedure for assessing "collaboration." Instead of approaching the area as we do other outcomes, that is, looking at performances and scores and comparing LD to UD Core performances to adjudge relative improvement, we adopted a "qualitative" approach. Although there are serious limitations to "qualitative" assessment, as it functionally elevates anecdotes to data, there is a benefit to having faculty think through collaboration beforehand, so they might be more intentional when initiating collaboration exercises. Thus, what we asked for this assessment cycle was 1) a description or copy of the assignment and 2) a short (1 page) explanation of how this assignment intentionally addresses and reinforces collaboration. Unfortunately, as with most areas of Core assessment, we had a faculty

participation problem. In this case a meagre handful of faculty submitted materials. Below are relevant snippets of that was provided.

1) Group Project
   - You will be randomly split into seven groups in the beginning of the semester. This group will not only be helpful for studying but will also be the group that you will be in when presenting your project.
   - Your group will present your project on one class day; Then the next class, the rest of the groups will do a mock review of your grant and justify the score that they give.
   - Everything will be completed and turned in as a single (Word or PDF) document via Blackboard.
   - A rubric will be provided some time in the beginning of the semester.

2) Asked to create a Unit that works across their disciplines.

Candidates must communicate to find a common theme that will work for everyone in the

group. This takes time and requires all students to look back at their teaching standards and to

come to a consensus on the grade level, theme/topic, and the length of the unit. This helps to

foster a constructive team climate, as indicated on the CORE rubric. This also reinforces the fact

that they will need to work together with their fellow teachers, once they have their own

classrooms.

Students must not only do their part for the project, but they must also work together to

create a final presentation that they will share with the class during finals week. The instructor

creates an environment to allow for groups to have time in class to work on the project, so

attendance is critical. The instructor is also able to see how the groups interact and ensure that

everyone is making an effort to contribute.

3) Having taught this class regularly since 1990, I can easily speak to the effectiveness of these three assignments in their current collaborative form. In the early years, students would complete the survey research assignment, and then complete on their own additional detailed research proposals for the experiment, field, and content analysis chapters. Needless to say, students did not do well on reconceptualizing the variables and how they could be effectively measured using these new methodologies. They continued to use the operationalizations and methodologies that were used in survey research. Once I changed these into small group, in-class collaborative assignments, they did a much better job because they are able to bounce

ideas off each other, and there tends to be at least one student in the group that can guide them in the right direction. Additionally, I am present and can give hints to keep them on track.

During the class activities, students are broken into groups of three. They discuss their variables that are used in their survey project, and then the group identifies which variables would work better for the methodology that is being proposed on that day (some variables will work better for some methodologies than will others). … Working together, the students then propose a new research project reconceptualizing variables that were first used for a survey project while, at the same time, demonstrating that they understand the requirements and conditions of the new methodology.

4) …Alongside this main project, I also utilize several opportunities for group work during the semester, including small and large group discussions, games, and competitive events that encourage collaboration between students. For these activities, most students work within their table group and partners do not change throughout the semester.

Some common themes see in these narratives are faculty adjusting and revising assignments in response to students to best provide collaborative exercises and create collaborative environments. That's promising. Ideally, that's what we would see. Not everything valuable can be measured, and collaboration is probably one of those things. But what we can do is reinforce successful practices, revise unsuccessful ones, and continuously improve our classroom exercises and environment to better support this invaluable skill.

IV.   Conclusions and Recommendations

RUBRIC A: At the lower decision, we see students performing as expected. That is, they are solidly scoring across all outcomes demonstrating that at the lower division a good, foundational education is being provided. Students are being expected to perform across all outcomes, and they are doing so at the level one would expect in an introductory level course, such as COMM 1300, where most of this work is, in fact, done. Yet, at the upper level we have a more troublesome trend. Not only are students seemingly performing more poorly than they did in the last cycle, but they are not demonstrating exemplary skills in oral communication. As a fundamental skill, this is worrisome. Our students need to be better educated in oral communication. When this type of result was noted last cycle, with respect to written communication, we recommended that we adopt a "writing across the curriculum" style approach to written communication. We provided funds for a course release for a content area expert (Dr. Jen Talbot) and thus provided resources to faculty to better develop and evaluate writing in different disciplines and across all levels, from introductory to advanced level course work. If the numbers indicated above under Goal B, and alluded to below, reflect a real trend, then one conclusion is that the WAC/WID approach has, indeed, worked. Operating under this assumption, we strongly recommend we adopt a similar approach to oral communication, namely, a communication across the curriculum (CAC) approach. After consultation with Drs. Nelle Bedner and J. J. McIntyre, we are convinced this is feasible. We recommend consulting with Drs. Bedner and McIntyre further to consider: 1) Broadening the scope and mission of the Center for Writing and Communication to explicitly include Oral Communication. 2) Considering the viability of a full-time position to direct CAC, or oral communication resources, as well as to direct/coordinate Oral Communication courses in general. 3) Working with Dr. Talbot (WAC/WID) and Dr. Carey Clark (CWC) to consider necessary, or viable, infrastructure to implement improvements in communication resources and curricula within the School of Communication and across campus.

RUBRIC B: The data is indicative of general improvement across all learning outcomes, both from the lower to upper division and from the first cycle to the most recent. This would suggest that not only are students improving from introductory level course work to upper level, thus developing more advanced written communication skills, but that they are also doing so at a greater rate of success than they did four years ago. The most notable change in curriculum since the first cycle is the addition of a WAC/WID program on campus, directed by Dr. Jen Talbot. Whether one could demonstrate a causal link between the two is doubtful, as higher education assessment doesn't afford much opportunity of demonstrating such a connection between a singular intervention and broad outcomes over time. But the addition of a WAC/WID program on campus is a significant change that co-occurred with improved scores. One need not fall victim to the *post hoc ergo prompter hoc fallacy* to simply recognize a feasible connection between the two. Of note are the facts that: 1) Almost fully a quarter of all students scored at the UD level scored "exemplary" on all the outcomes under written communication, 2) this is a marked increase from the past cycle where less than 10% of students were scored at this level. And 3) there is an increase in the percentage of students scoring a "3" at the upper level. Thus, if the data is reliable, our students are outperforming the previous cohort significantly.

RUBRIC C: This area needs to be revisited. We need to re-evaluate assessment in this area, entirely. Does it need to be assessed? If so, what is an effective way to do so? If not, what is the alternative: 1) Mandated faculty development? 2) Online resources? 3) Voluntary participation in CETAL activities? 4) Nothing? These are issues that will be revisited during the 10-year review.

OVERALL: Compliance continues to be an issue. Faculty participation this cycle was shameful. Poor compliance means a skewed sample from which to derive data, which in turn means unreliable data and corrupted results. Poor results lead to distrust of the process and a cycle begins that foments increasing distrust and distaste for assessment reinforcing a self-fulfilling narrative of the lack of value of assessment. Increased participation would lead to better results, more useful results, and thus increase support for assessment. In addition, the more faculty participate in, and come to understand the process of, assessment the less likely they are to be hostile towards it. Some may even begin to find value in it. At least that has been the experience of this Office in the past. Compliance is crucial.

Appendix A

AQUA Performance Summary - Rubric A

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (A) Oral

AVERAGE BY CRITERION

Criterion   Averages: 2.51

Central Message

Organization

Supporting Material / Evidence

Context and Audience

Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery

Score

① Beginning ② Emerging ③ Accomplished ④ Exemplary

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (A) Oral
Average by Criterion chart details

Central Message
Average Score: 2.68
Number of Submissions: 127
Number of Scores: 227

Organization
Average Score: 2.59
Number of Submissions: 127
Number of Scores: 227

Supporting Material / Evidence
Average Score: 2.43
Number of Submissions: 127
Number of Scores: 227

Context and Audience
Average Score: 2.48
Number of Submissions: 126
Number of Scores: 226

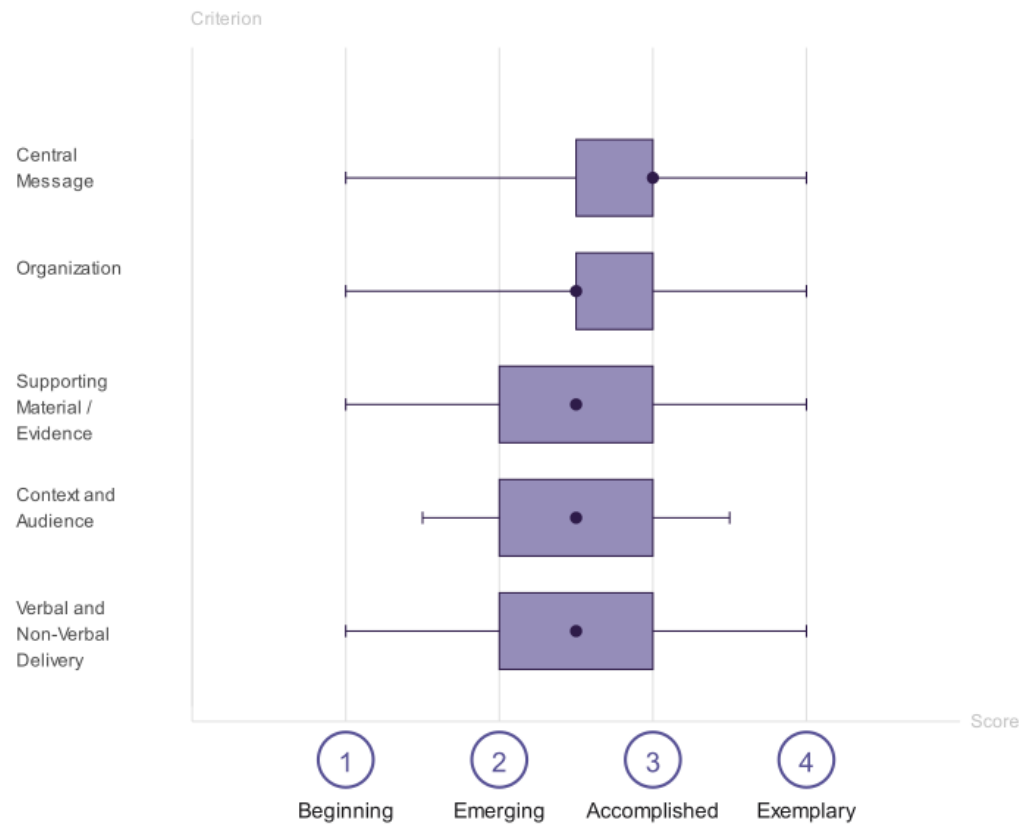**Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery**
Average Score: 2.39
Number of Submissions: 122
Number of Scores: 207

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (A) Oral

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (A) Oral

Score Distribution by Criterion chart details

Central Message

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 3

Number Of Submissions: 127

Organization

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 127

Supporting Material / Evidence

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 127

Context and Audience

Maximum Score: 3.5

Minimum Score: 1.5

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 126

Verbal and Non-Verbal Delivery

Maximum Score: 4
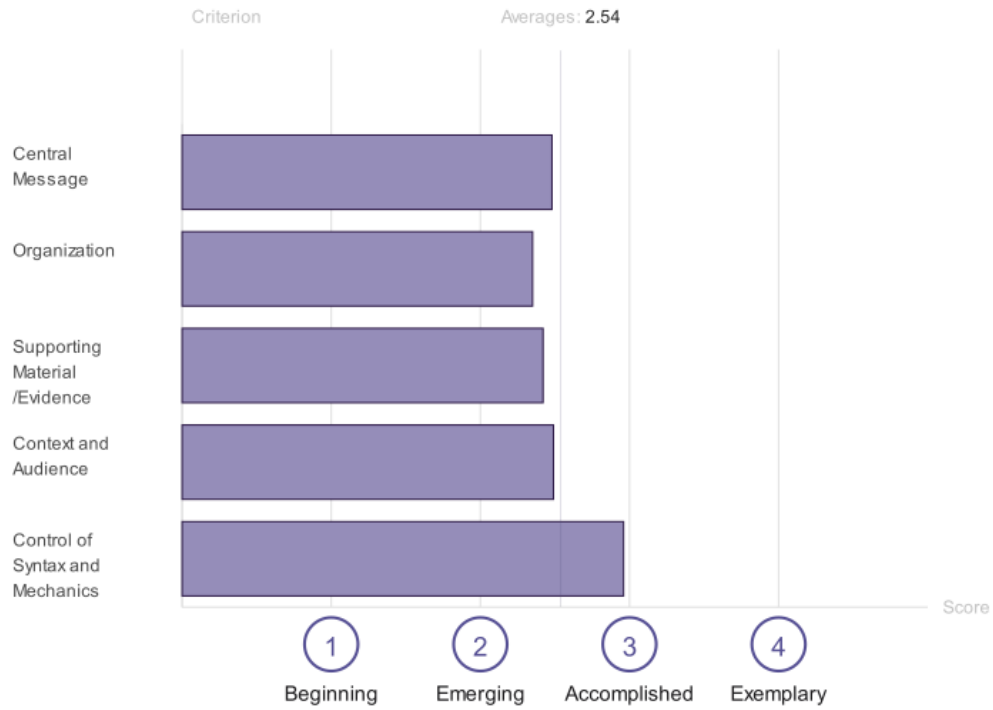
Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 122

Appendix B

AQUA Performance Summary - Rubric B

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (B) Written

AVERAGE BY CRITERION

Criterion   Averages: **2.54**

	1	2	3	4
	Beginning	Emerging	Accomplished	Exemplary

Criteria: Central Message, Organization, Supporting Material /Evidence, Context and Audience, Control of Syntax and Mechanics

Score

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (B) Written
Average by Criterion chart details

Central Message
Average Score: 2.48
Number of Submissions: 434
Number of Scores: 498

Organization
Average Score: 2.35
Number of Submissions: 440
Number of Scores: 507

Supporting Material /Evidence
Average Score: 2.42
Number of Submissions: 440
Number of Scores: 507

Context and Audience
Average Score: 2.49
Number of Submissions: 440
Number of Scores: 507
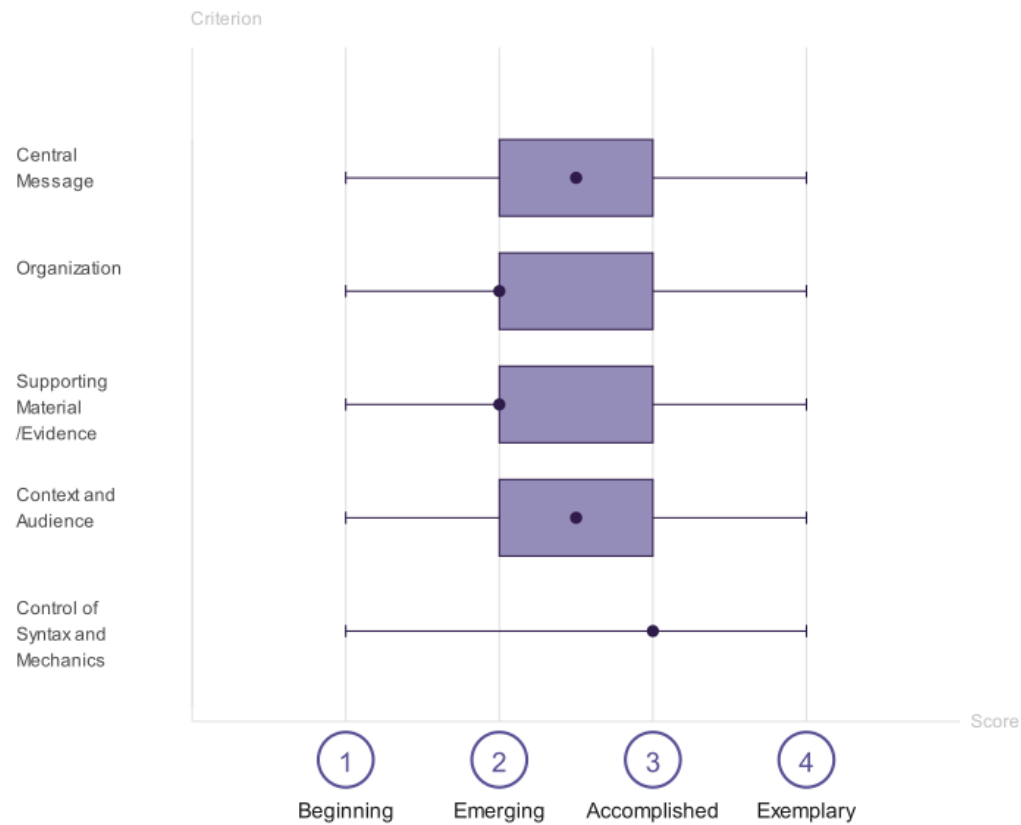
Control of Syntax and Mechanics
Average Score: 2.96
Number of Submissions: 440
Number of Scores: 507

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (B) Written

SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY CRITERION

Outcome Performance Report: Effective Communication: (B) Written

Score Distribution by Criterion chart details

Central Message

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 434

Organization

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2

Number Of Submissions: 440

Supporting Material /Evidence

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2

Number Of Submissions: 440

Context and Audience

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 2.5

Number Of Submissions: 440

Control of Syntax and Mechanics

Maximum Score: 4

Minimum Score: 1

Median Score: 3

Number Of Submissions: 440

Appendix C

Scorer Feedback Rubrics A and B

Goal A

None

Goal B

The assignment sheet here called for two deliverables: a lengthy lit review and a slide deck. The lit review was not included, so only the slide deck was assessed.

This assignment should have included two artifacts, one an overview of three potential topics and the other an actual research paper. The second artifact, which would have been the one more readily assessed by rubric B, did not upload. The instructor was a scorer, so he emailed the assignment sheets, which also did not upload to the system.

We suspect that this artifact might be the product of generative AI, based on the tone and structure of the text. We were also unable to find some of the sources, which is a hallmark of ChatGPT.