Salt Lake Community College

Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcome Assessment
Final Report
Academic Year
2022-2023

By Lucy Smith

Purpose

Each year, the Engaged Learning Office seeks to determine how well select students meet the civic literacy student learning outcome (CLSLO) at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC).

Sample and Method

For the 2022-2023 academic year, the study pulled a sample of students from community-engaged learning (CEL) designated sections that went through the course review process in the 2021-2023 academic years. A formal course review process was implemented in 2021 because of a program review recommendation. A random sample of students was pulled, and 193 assignments were reviewed. Assignments were reviewed directly from the ePortfolio. Some courses had higher rates of ePortfolio use and some had lower rates, but an average of 1/3 of the total sample were usable. Although assessment methods changed so that recently reviewed CEL courses were assessed (versus a random sample from all designated courses), other methods remained similar from previous years.

Two teams composed of two faculty assessors each evaluated the assignments. The teams met for calibration purposes to ensure consensus on grading norms before using the rubric. The teams met virtually to discuss each assignment and reach a consensus score. The assignments in a course received scores under the characteristic subcategories of each criterion, and then this score was averaged to create an overall score for each broad criterion. If a student uploaded multiple assignments within one course, the assessors reviewed all assignments and gave an overall score.

The CLSLO rubric (Appendix A) outlines each criterion and characteristic subcategory based on the SLCC Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcome.

SLCC's Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcome

SLCC's General Education CLSLO reads as follows:

Students develop civic literacy and the capacity to be community-engaged learners who act in mutually beneficial ways with community partners. *This includes producing learning artifacts indicating understanding of the political, historical, economic or sociological aspects of social change and continuity; thinking critically about—and weighing the evidence surrounding—issues important to local, national, or global communities; participating in a broad range of community-engagement and/or service-learning courses for community building and an enhanced academic experience.*

The current rubric operationalizes the CLSLO in the following manner:

- **Develop civic literacy/knowledge ("Civic Literacy")**
  - Students discuss their knowledge of political, historical, economic, or sociological aspects of social change. They describe or analyze the understanding of agencies and organizations that address social issues. They also discuss power structures, privilege/oppression, and/or systems when addressing a social issue.

- **Critical thinking surrounding social issues/capacity to become a community-engaged learner ("Critical Thinking")**

- o Students apply critical thinking to their civic knowledge. Students identify issues through a disciplinary lens and then identify, explain, or analyze facts and theories from their academic field and their impact on society. This category also includes a commitment to community engagement, which evaluates students' participation in service and intent to serve. Students also reflect on personal values, attitudes, or beliefs in relation to others.

- **Working with others ("Working with Others")**
  - o Students state, explain, or analyze their perspectives on cultural, disciplinary, and ethical issues. They express openness in interacting with others of diverse backgrounds or actively seek out interactions with diverse others.

- **Civic action/students act in mutually beneficial ways ("Civic Action")**
  - o Civic action includes the breadth or depth of community engagement and evaluates how students collaborate with community partners and identify community needs. Mutually beneficial relationships involve how the value of the experience is expressed.

The scoring rubric has evolved through the years. A modified version of the Civic Engagement Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubric from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) was used from 2014-2017. Then, components of the Civic-Minded Graduate Rubric 2.0 from Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis were incorporated in the 2017-2018 academic year. All revisions aligned with the language from the SLCC CLSLO. The SLCC assessment coordinator provided feedback during the revision process and then approved the rubric's final version for 2017-2018. The college-wide Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee evaluated the rubric in the same year, and its members suggested no changes. The assessment coordinator reviewed the rubric again in 2020 and suggested additional revisions. Minor language changes were also made in 2021. The rubric uses a scoring system of 3-High, 2-Medium, 1-Low, and 0-no evidence ranking each characteristic subcategory.

Summary of Findings
The assessment's primary findings indicate that student's midpoint between low and medium levels on the rubric. This is higher than the scores from previous years.

Results

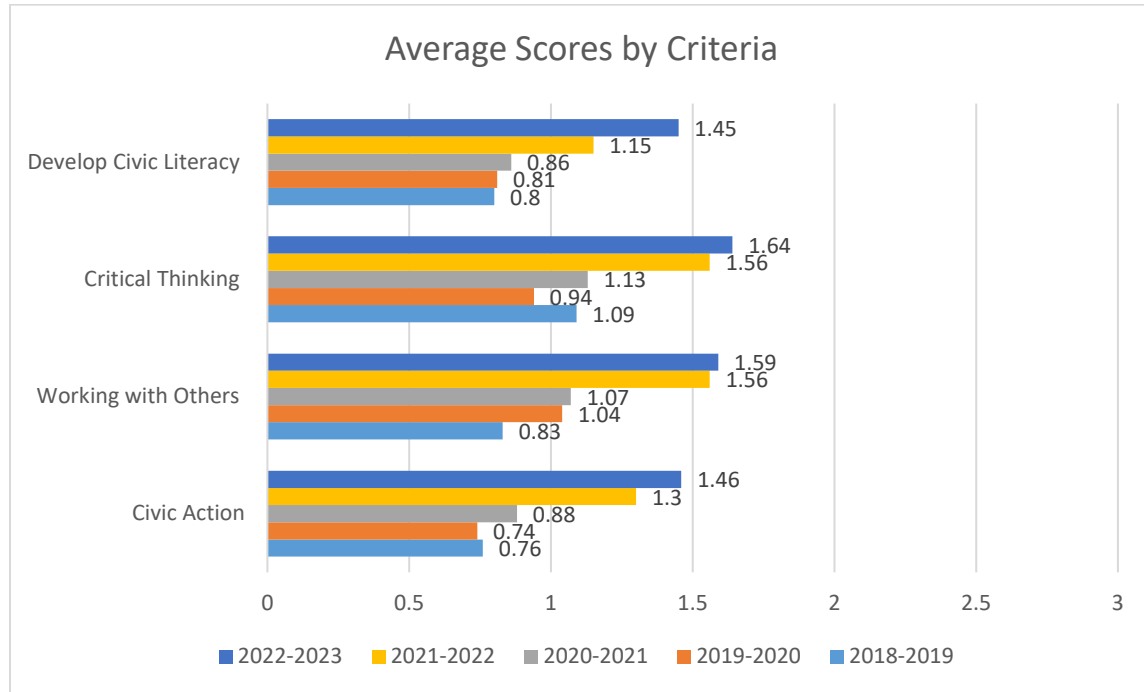**Summary of Scores by Criteria**

Figure 1 shows the scores for assessing the broad categories of Civic Literacy, Critical Thinking, Working with Others, and Civic Action for the sample, drawn from the averages of the characteristic subcategories within each criterion.

Critical Thinking Surrounding Social Issues had the highest score at 1.64, and working with others was the second highest, with scores of 1.59 each. Assessors gave students an overall score of 1.45 for the criteria focused on developing Civic Literacy. The Civic Action score was 1.46. Scores for all criteria and subcategories significantly increased from previous years.

All the scores for the broad criteria averaged between a low level and a medium level. Because these are average scores, some students may score relatively high, while others do not have any evidence. For

many students, these CEL courses may be their first exposure to civic engagement. We learned from our involvement in the AAC&U Civic Evidence project that scores at the first two levels are appropriate for students who have completed most of their coursework for an associate degree.

Figure 1: Student Scores for Overall Criteria Areas

Average Scores by Criteria

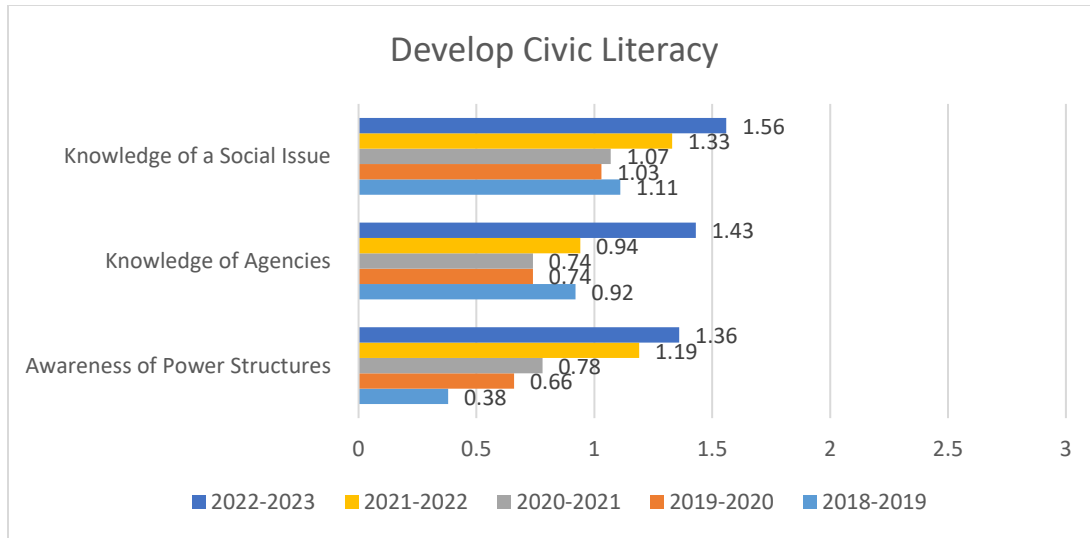| Criteria	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Develop Civic Literacy	1.45	1.15	0.86	0.81	0.8
Critical Thinking	1.64	1.56	1.13	0.94	1.09
Working with Others	1.59	1.56	1.07	1.04	0.83
Civic Action	1.46	1.3	0.88	0.74	0.76

Summary of Scores by Characteristic Subcategories

Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 show the average scores for each characteristic subcategory within the broad criteria.
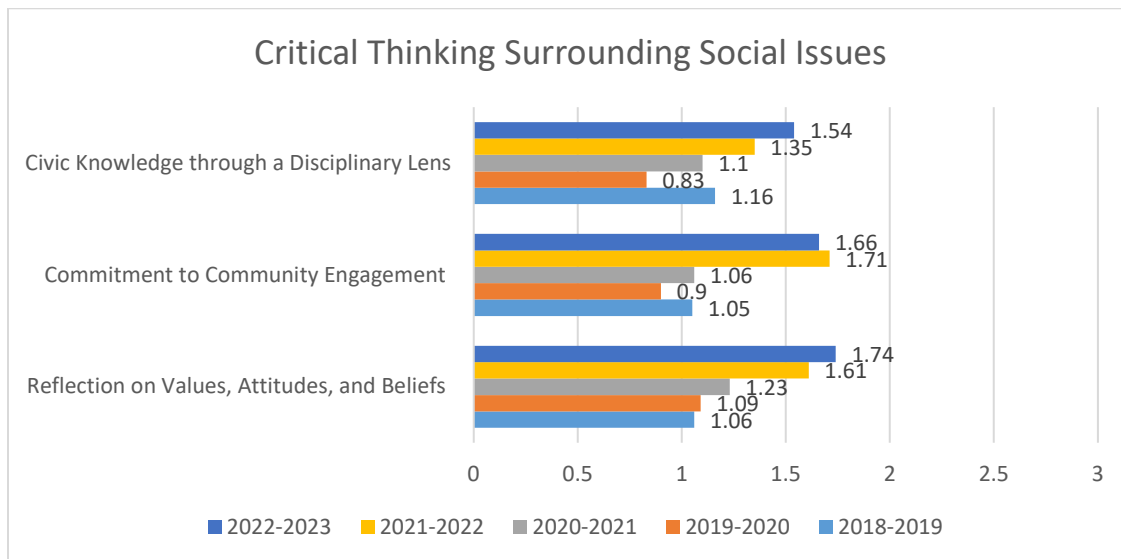
Figure 2: Student Scores for Civic Literacy Subcategories

In the Civic Knowledge category, students are evaluated on their knowledge of social issues and social change. For example, assessors determine if students discuss facts or topics such as civil rights, gender, race, disability, equity, law/order, fiscal responsibility, etc. Gaining knowledge of agencies and organizations that deal with these social issues is also a focus.

Develop Civic Literacy

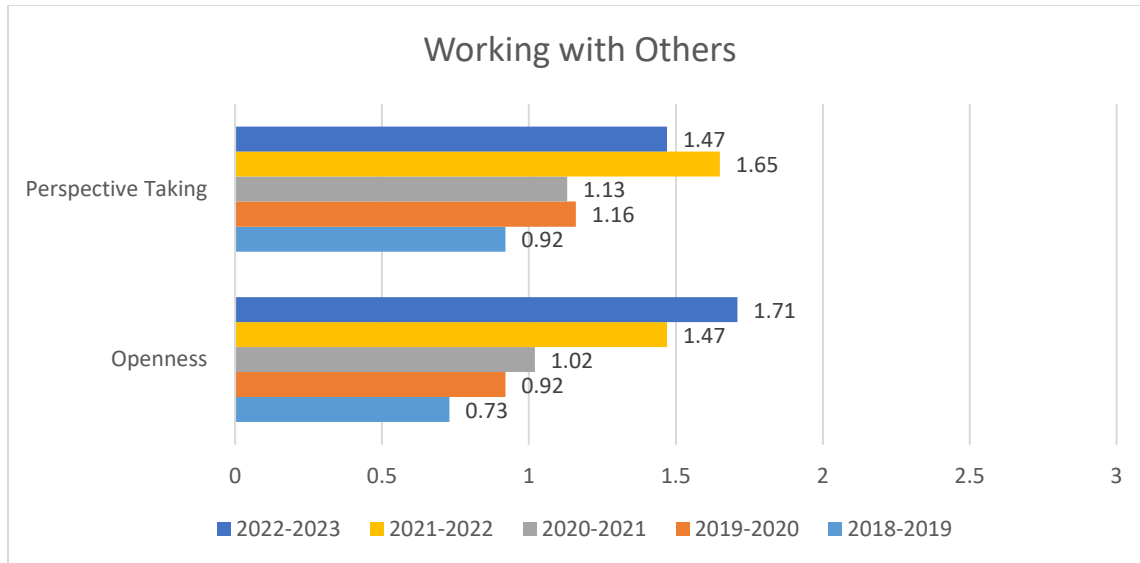| Subcategory	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Knowledge of a Social Issue	1.56	1.33	1.07	1.03	1.11
Knowledge of Agencies	1.43	0.94	0.74	0.74	0.92
Awareness of Power Structures	1.36	1.19	0.78	0.66	0.38

Figure 3: Student Scores for Critical Thinking Subcategories

Students take the knowledge gained in the Civic Literacy category and then critically analyze it in the Critical Thinking category, making relevant connections to learning in their course and their responsibility and commitment to community engagement. In this category, students also reflect on their values, attitudes, and beliefs about others.

Critical Thinking Surrounding Social Issues

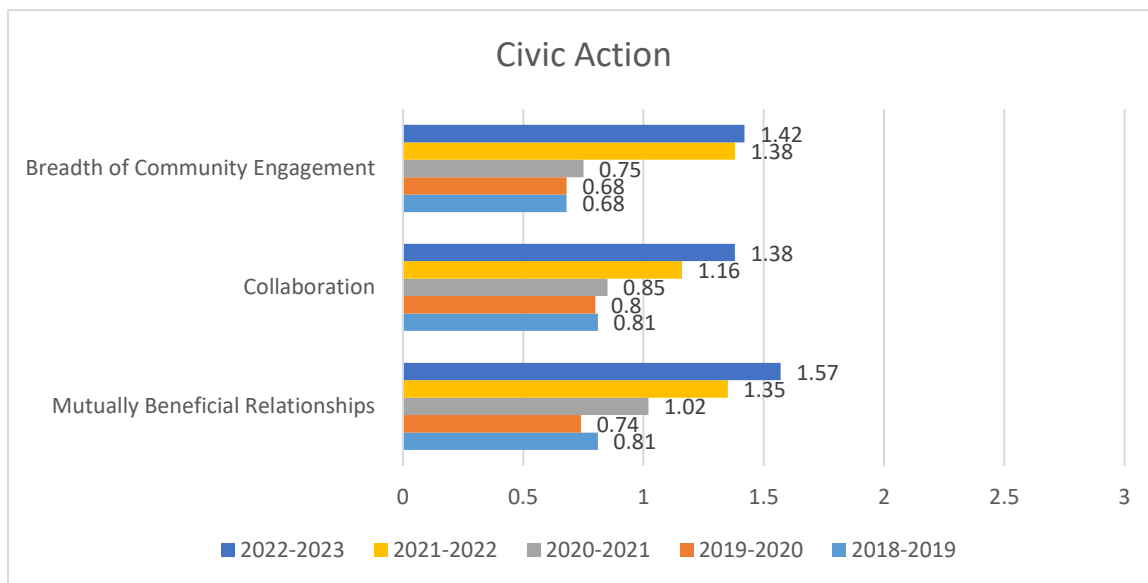| Subcategory	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019
Civic Knowledge through a Disciplinary Lens	1.54	1.35	1.1	0.83	1.16
Commitment to Community Engagement	1.66	1.71	1.06	0.9	1.05
Reflection on Values, Attitudes, and Beliefs	1.74	1.61	1.23	1.09	1.06

Figure 4: Student Scores for Working with Others Subcategories

In this category, students are evaluated on their ability to work with others. Are students able to see beyond their perspective and identify the perspectives of others? Students' ability to interact with diverse others and discuss norms and attitudes is also a focus.

Working with Others

Perspective Taking
- 2022-2023: 1.47
- 2021-2022: 1.65
- 2020-2021: 1.13
- 2019-2020: 1.16
- 2018-2019: 0.92

Openness
- 2022-2023: 1.71
- 2021-2022: 1.47
- 2020-2021: 1.02
- 2019-2020: 0.92
- 2018-2019: 0.73

Figure 5: Student Scores for Civic Action Subcategories

In this category, service in the community is evaluated. Breadth and depth are assessed based on the frequency of service and the ability to identify multiple civic engagement activities. Students can participate in direct or indirect service, advocacy, activism, research, philanthropy, policy, governance, or corporate social responsibility (Stanford Haas Center for Public Service, 2020).

Civic Action

Breadth of Community Engagement
- 2022-2023: 1.42
- 2021-2022: 1.38
- 2020-2021: 0.75
- 2019-2020: 0.68
- 2018-2019: 0.68

Collaboration
- 2022-2023: 1.38
- 2021-2022: 1.16
- 2020-2021: 0.85
- 2019-2020: 0.8
- 2018-2019: 0.81

Mutually Beneficial Relationships
- 2022-2023: 1.57
- 2021-2022: 1.35
- 2020-2021: 1.02
- 2019-2020: 0.74
- 2018-2019: 0.81

Analysis of Findings and Recommendations

Findings

- In previous years, there have been significant issues with students not posting signature assignments to their e-portfolios. This year is similar: approximately 28% of the total sample of students pulled had valid ePortfolio links.
- Student scores in each criteria area and subcategory increased significantly from the previous year's scores (but last year's and this year's scores were closer). Scores hovered between the low and med ranges. This was likely because assignments were more closely aligned with the CLSLO rubric.
- The score for Critical Thinking Around Social Issues was 1.64, the highest this year while examining the scores by criteria. The second-highest category was Working with Others at 1.59. Civic Action scored at 1.46, and Developing Civic Literacy was the lowest at 1.45. The ranking of the categories has stayed consistent for several years.
- The highest subcategory overall was Reflection on Values, Attitudes, and/or Beliefs. Students scored 1.74, indicating that when students post to their ePortfolio, they are reflecting. The second highest subcategory was Openness at 1.71. The category focused on commitment to community engagement ranked third (1.66), followed by Knowledge of a Social Issue (1.56) and mutually beneficial relationships with partners or the community (1.57). The scores for all other categories followed closely behind.
- Previously, the Civic Action criteria received the lowest ranking scores on the rubric. This was not the case this year. All students are required to do service as a part of their CEL course, and it appears that students who recently reviewed CEL courses are more effectively highlighting their service work via their ePortfolio.
- This year, demographics were analyzed by race and ethnicity. There were students who took multiple CEL classes, and the duplicates were removed from the sample, so some demographic categories were not skewed. In general, the demographics of the CEL program mirror the demographics of the college. It is unclear if this sample is similarly representative due to the criteria of courses included. Overall, the scores were comparable across most groups, excluding those with small sample sizes.
  - In the Develop Civic Literacy and Knowledge category, students' scores based on race were comparable, but Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI) student scores were lower. Most categories were comparable for ethnicity, but again, NH/PI students also scored lower. The NH/PI group had a small sample size.
  - In Critical Thinking Surrounding Social Issues, scores across race and ethnicity were comparable.
  - In the Working with Others category students' scores were comparable for race. For the breakdown of ethnicity, the scores were comparable, excluding non-resident aliens (NRA). The NRA group has a small sample size.
  - In the Civic Action category, the scores for students who identify racially as white, prefer not to say, and American Indian scored higher. In the ethnicity category, scores were comparable, but NH/PI scored lower.
- An SLCC study in July 2022 focused on CEL and student learning outcomes demonstrated that participation in CEL courses positively impacted students' grades. Perhaps this positive impact on grades influenced the scores across demographics groups.

Recommendations

The findings demonstrate that faculty who go through a formal CEL course review receive higher scores.

Given that all criteria and characteristic subcategories rank slightly above a low level, there are several additional recommendations based on the data in this report:

- **Implementation of a formal CEL course review process:** A formal review of CEL courses was implemented in the fall of 2021. This process appears to be working as intended. The process is helping faculty improve the quality of the learning occurring in their courses. From 2014-2019, we pulled a random selection of CEL courses, and scores were much lower. Scores are likely higher because the course went through a formal review, which consisted of submitting a syllabus and narrative to a committee that evaluated the course based on a rubric around CEL best practices. We also emphasized that they needed to use ePortfolio and the rubric.
- **Collect, Connect, Reflect in ePortfolio:** With the limited number of ePortfolios containing CEL assignments (28%), the assessment may not fully represent the general SLCC CEL student population. More students need to upload relevant assignments related to the CLSLO rubric to have an adequately large sample. Currently, existing CEL faculty do not always require that the signature assignment posted in ePortfolio for their class focus on the CLSLO. Faculty should have students upload multiple assignments to include civic-focused and discipline-specific items.
- **Progress:** The average scores by criteria increased from AY 19-20 to AY 20-21. This may indicate that CEL faculty are adopting the CLSLO rubric for their assignments.
- **Faculty Professional Development:** Although professional development in a formal workshop or class does not occur for faculty who have their CEL course reviewed, the faculty receive valuable feedback during the process that appears to be helping increase or maintain the quality of CEL courses.
- **The Need:** The other methods for assessing student learning outcomes on a course level through our institutional assessment office have only peripherally focused on the civic literacy learning outcome. Establishing a method to evaluate this learning outcome via the CEL program is good. These methods may be more broadly adopted for courses that generally focus on civic engagement in the future.
- **Demographic analysis:** In the future, a larger sample size could allow for better comparison between race and ethnicity. This could also help determine if the scores continue to be comparable across demographics. In the future, additional analysis needs to occur to determine if the sample's demographics mirror the college's general demographics, like the larger CEL program.

Guiding Resources:

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). Civic Engagement VALUE rubric. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/civic-engagement-value-rubric

Stanford Haas Center Pathways to Public Service. Retrieved from https://haas.stanford.edu/about/our-approach/pathways-public-service-and-civic-engagement

Weiss, H.A., Hahn, T., and Norris, K. (2017). Civic Minded Graduate 2.0: Assessment Toolbox

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Appendix A: Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcome Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Characteristic	0-No evidence	1-Low	2-Medium	3-High
Develop civic literacy/ knowledge	Knowledge of a social issue	No evidence.	**Lists** some social issues or states basic details of a political, historical, economic, or sociological aspect of social change.	**Explains** social problem(s) or the political, historical, economic, sociological aspects of social change-or lack of change based on research with a social issue.	**Compares and contrasts** different perspectives and/or ideas detailing social problems or the political, historical, economic, sociological aspects of social change.
	Knowledge of agencies/ organizations that address social issues.	No evidence.	**Identify** agency/ organization(s) focused on addressing social issues.	**Describes** surface level characteristics agency/ organization(s) responsible for addressing social issues.	**Analyzes** relevant agency/organization (s) by **explaining** in depth how they address a social issue.
	Awareness of power structures, privilege/ oppression and/or systems when trying to address a social issue.	No evidence.	**Describes** a few actions or processes (e.g., advocating, voting, boycotting, contacting elected officials, protesting) that can be taken to address social issues. Or **little to no mention** of the role of power, privilege/oppressi on, or systems (e.g., economic, administrative, social).	**Compare and contrast** the multiple actions or processes (e.g., advocating, voting, boycotting, contacting elected officials, protesting) that can be taken to address social issues. Or **describes** current or different power, privilege/oppression, or structures and systems (e.g., economic, administrative, social).	**Creates a plan** that involves multiple actions or processes (e.g., advocating, voting, boycotting, contacting elected officials, protesting) that can be taken to address social issues. Or **analyzes** current or different power structures, privilege/oppression, or systems (e.g., economic, administrative, social) in depth.

Criteria	Characteristic	0-No evidence	1-Low	2-Medium	3-High
Critical thinking surrounding social issues/ Capacity to become community-engaged learner	Civic knowledge through a disciplinary lens	No evidence.	**Identify** issues (facts, theories, etc.) from one's own academic study/field/ discipline to civic engagement or its impact on society.	**Explains** own perspective and may also identify with one other perspective on issues (facts, theories, etc.) from one's academic study/field/ discipline making relevant connections/implications to civic engagement or its impact on society.	**Analyzes multiple perspectives** on issues (facts, theories, etc.) from one's academic study/field/ discipline to civic engagement or its impact on society.
	Source(s) of responsibility or commitment to community engagement	No evidence.	Mentions that they are required to do service for a class or as a part of a group. There are **little to no statements of responsibility** to commit time, talent, or resources to make a difference.	Mentions that they are required to do service for a class or as part of a group and expresses value in it. Student states that **responsibility to serve is derived from external norms**, authority, or expectations from others.	Mentions that they want to do service to support the community or society at large. Source of **responsibility is from internal motivations**.
	Reflection on values, attitudes, and/or beliefs	No evidence.	**Reflects minimally on personal values**, attitudes, and beliefs.	**Reflects sufficiently on personal values**, attitudes, and beliefs.	**Critically examines personal values,** attitudes, and beliefs.
Working with others	Perspective-taking	No evidence.	**States** own perspective (i.e., cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).	**Explains** own perspectives and identifies perspectives of others.	**Analyses** multiple perspectives for points of commonalties and differences.
	Openness	No evidence.	**Expresses willingness** to interact with **diverse others**.	**Demonstrates a willingness** to interact with diverse others and discusses norms and perspectives of themselves and/or others.	**Actively seeks out interactions** with diverse others and expresses the value of other perspectives or explains how their perspective has shifted.

Criteria	Characteristic	0-No evidence	1-Low	2-Medium	3-High
Civic Action/ Students act in mutually beneficial ways	Breadth or depth of community engagement (e.g., direct, indirect, advocacy, activism, research, philanthropy, policy and governance, social responsibility)	No evidence.	Participated in **one type** of community-engaged activity. Or completed minimum hours without any mention of continuation.	Participated in **at least one type of community engagement and identifies one additional type(s)** of community-engaged activities. Or completed additional hours or multiple types of projects.	Participated in **at least one type of community engagement activity and explains two or more types** of community engaged activities. Or describes plans for continued civic engagement.
	Collaboration	No evidence.	Talks about the partner or community need from a **personal perspective**.	**Cites information about the partner(s)** or community need collected from a third-party or web research.	**Describes personal communication with the partner** or the community where they learned about a community need.
	Mutually beneficial relationship with partners or the community	No evidence.	**Focuses on personal benefit** of service activity and/or is only doing it because it is required.	**Expresses limited value for themselves AND can express limited value for the community** partner/community.	**Expresses how the experience influenced them AND impacted the partner** and/or community on a larger level.