

## Comparison of General Education Report Data and Data from Over-Sampling of Students Who Took at Least One Service Learning Course

### The Study

At the direction of the Thayne Center for Service and Learning, the ePortfolio office conducted an assessment designed to test whether students with Service-Learning experience were more likely than average students to display stronger reflection skills and civic engagement. This study compares the results from two separate samples of students:

- **Gen Ed Report**—A random sample of 100 students who received an AS or AA degree from SLCC (without any transfer credits) in May of 2014. The ePortfolio Office hired 11 teams of faculty to score the sampled ePortfolios using a holistic rubric that covered all of the General Education learning outcomes.
- **SL Sample**—A random sample of 100 students who had taken at least one course at SLCC where Service-Learning was required in either 2013 or 2014. This sample included students who may have transferred in credit to SLCC. The ePortfolio Office hired 1 team of faculty from History and Anthropology to score the sampled ePortfolios on the Critical Thinking (Reflection) part of the holistic rubric mentioned above. Another team of full-time staff scored the ePortfolios using the Community Engagement portion of the holistic rubric.

### Student Reflection

Does student reflection improve over time? Review teams examined the first three reflections placed in the ePortfolio—“Freshmen” reflections—and the final three reflections placed in the ePortfolio—“Sophomore” reflections. As Figure 1 demonstrates, it’s clear that the mean for the quality of Freshmen reflections is higher than for Sophomore reflections in both of the samples. Also of note: mean scores for reflection in the SL Sample were lower than for those in the sample of graduating students.

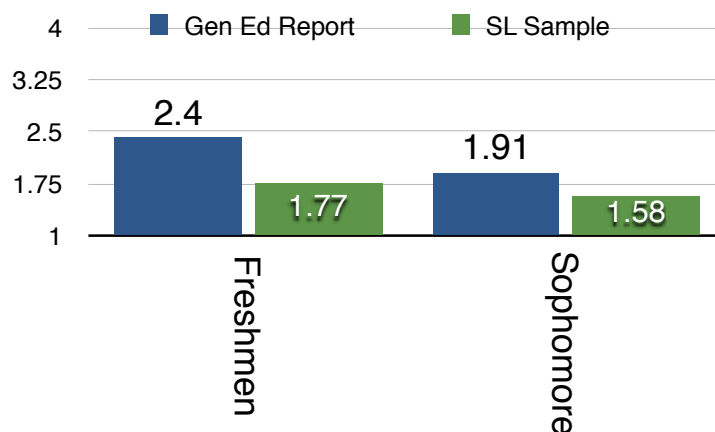


Figure 1: Mean Scores for Quality of Reflection for Freshmen vs. Sophomore Reflections.

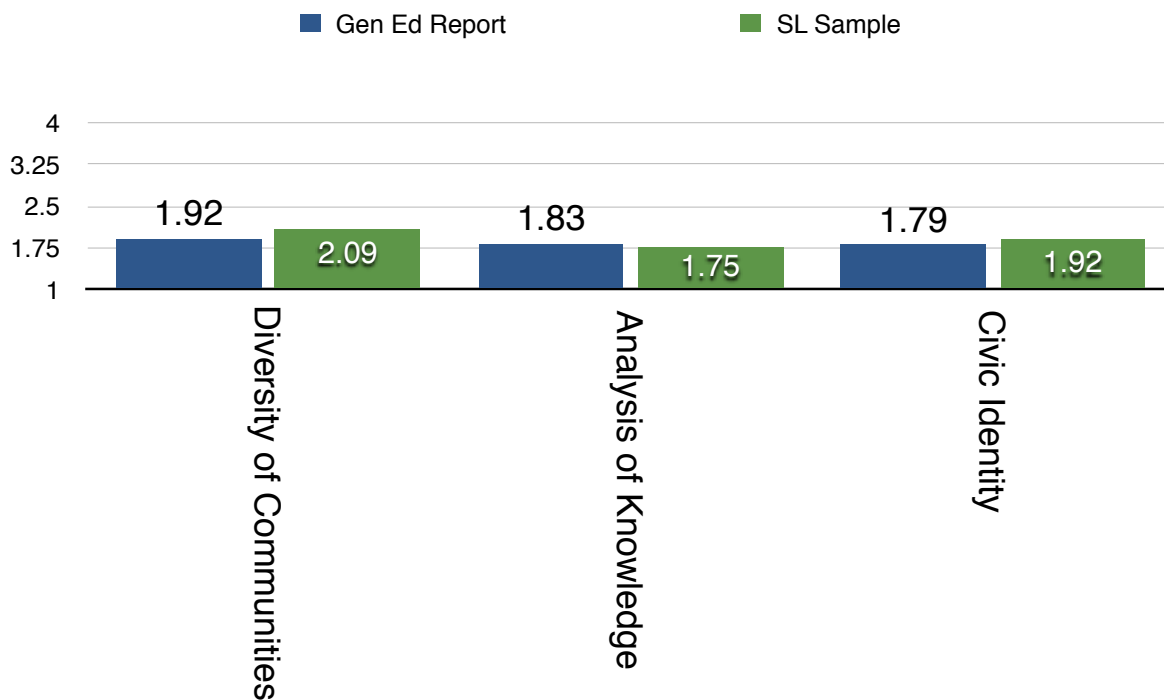
## Civic Engagement

The reviewers also used a modified VALUE rubric to understand the actual civic and community engagement of the typical SLCC graduate. The rubric has the following three dimensions, and scores range from 1.0 to 4.0:

- **Diversity of Communities & Cultures**—Student provides evidence of adjustment in own attitudes and beliefs due to working within and learning from diversity of communities and cultures. Promotes others' engagement with diversity.
- **Analysis of Knowledge**—Student's coursework and/or reflections connect and extend knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from their own academic field to engagement and to one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
- **Civic Identity, Contexts, and Reflection**—Student reflections provide evidence of experience in engagement activities, describes what they have learned about themselves in connection with a reinforced and clarified sense of civic identity and continued commitment to public action through collaboration to achieve a civic aim.

Figure 2 depicts the results of the Civic Engagement assessment. The pattern for the three dimensions of Civic Engagement was similar for the two samples. Mean scores for Diversity and Civic Identity were higher for the SL Sample, whereas the mean for Analysis was higher for the Gen Ed Report sample.

**Figure 2: Mean Scores for Three Dimensions of Civic and Community Engagement.**  
(Note: the mean is calculated only for those ePortfolios that had relevant artifacts and reflection.)



## **Recommendations**

1. The Service Learning and ePortfolio Offices should collaborate to ensure that all faculty teaching Service Learning courses receive training from the ePortfolio Coordinator.
2. All current and future Service Learning courses should apply a strong ePortfolio pedagogy in their curriculum (deep reflection, signature assignments, showcasing of work, multimedia where appropriate, clear page design, etc.). We want all Service Learning students to operate under the expectation that they will be showcasing and reflecting upon their work in all SL-designated courses. EPortfolio pedagogy is similar to Service Learning pedagogy, and can be used to create awareness and better show each student's civic and community engagement.
3. Faculty who teach SL-designated courses should encourage students to utilize their ePortfolios as digital spaces to showcase engagement and create awareness to audiences beyond their SL faculty and outside of SLCC.
4. Faculty who teach SL-designated courses should encourage students to more intentionally use multi-modal forms of communication to represent and reflect on their civic and community engagement—both while in the process of doing that work and retrospectively after that work is completed. This will help them become reflective practitioners in their majors and careers.

## **Assessment Teams**

- Critical Thinking Team: Ted Moore and Melissa Schaefer
- Civic Engagement Team: Lucy Smith and Jennifer Seltzer-Stitt