



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

National Survey of Student Engagement, 2013

Loyola NSSE Respondents Report Regularly Engaging in Skills That Transfer to the Workplace and the Community

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research

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The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is based on the rationale that student engagement can serve as a proxy for the student learning and personal development that lead to positive student outcomes such as student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation. It is administered online to freshmen and seniors during spring semester, usually from late February through May.

Beginning with the 2013 administration, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) introduced a set of six supplementary topical modules created for institutions to survey students about topics of specific interest or concern. Along with the main NSSE instrument, Loyola students received the Development of Transferable Skills (DTS) module, which NSSE adapted from the Degrees of Preparation Survey of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Although NSSE describes the module as examining “engagement in activities that develop useful and transferable skills for the workplace”, many of the skills covered also relate to community and civic engagement.

The DTS module comprises a total of 11 items, grouped into two questions. The questions ask students to report how frequently during the academic year they had engaged in a range of useful skills that are transferable to the workplace and the community. The range includes skills such as analytic inquiry; critical thinking; capacity to work effectively with diverse others; and verbal and written fluency. These skills are not only components of a high quality undergraduate education; they are also integral elements of the Jesuit tradition that plays such an important role in Loyola’s mission to educate students both academically and as citizens.

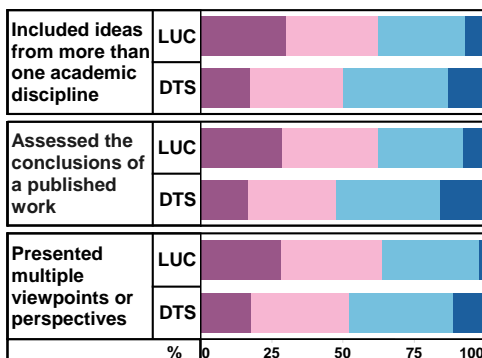
This report discusses the results of the 2013 Development of Transferable Skills (DTS) module for Loyola freshmen and seniors, compared to freshmen and seniors at 14 other institutions (see Appendix A for list). Freshmen and seniors are discussed separately, for two reasons. First, they contain different mixes of students (for example, seniors include students who transferred in after their freshman year, and do not include students who entered as freshmen but left before achieving senior status). Second, and most importantly, freshmen and seniors are at different stages of their college experience and have had the time and opportunity to engage in, by both learning and practicing, different kinds of skills at different levels.

FRESHMEN

Engagement in writing skills

- Loyola freshman respondents reported more often practicing three of the four DTS module writing skills during their current academic year than did their peers at the reference institutions (see table in Appendix B). As shown in Figure 1 to the left, those three writing skills were: including ideas from more than one discipline, assessing conclusions of published work, and presenting multiple perspectives.

Figure 1: Freshman frequency of engagement in writing skills*



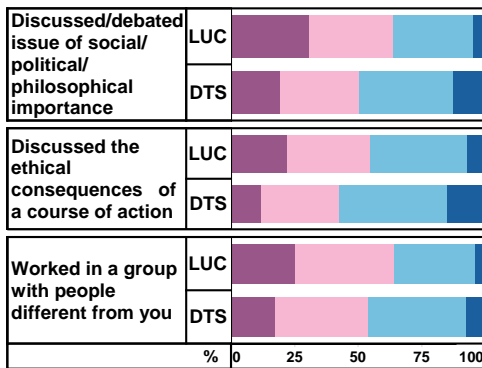
* See table in Appendix B.

Very often (purple), Often (pink), Sometimes (light blue), Never (dark blue)

Engagement in skills in other contexts

- The only skill that Loyola freshmen reported engaging in less often than did their DTS peers was making a speech, and the difference was very small.
- As shown in Figure 2 below, compared to their DTS institution peers, Loyola freshman respondents reported more frequent discussions of issues of social, political, or philosophical importance (31% vs. 19% very often) and of discussing ethical consequences of actions (22% vs. 12% very often). They also reported working more often in diverse groups of people (25% vs. 17% very often).

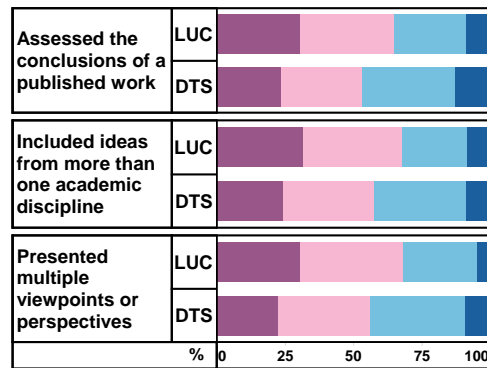
Figure 2: Freshman frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts*



* See table in Appendix B.

Very often Sometimes
Often Never

Figure 3: Senior frequency of engagement in writing skills*



* See table in Appendix C.

Very often Sometimes
Often Never

SENIORS

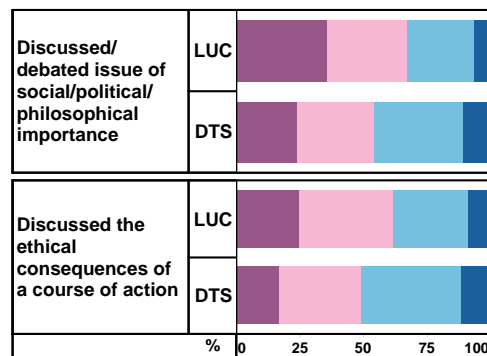
Engagement in writing skill

- Compared to their DTS peers, Loyola seniors reported more often practicing in their written work the skills of assessing conclusions of published work, including ideas from more than one discipline, and presenting multiple perspectives, as shown in Figure 3 to the right (see also table in Appendix C).

Engagement in skills in other contexts

- As shown in Figure 4 below, Loyola senior respondents reported more often discussing issues of social, political, or philosophical importance than did their DTS peers (36% vs. 24% very often), and more often discussing ethical consequences of actions (25% vs. 17% very often).

Figure 4: Senior frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts*



* See table in Appendix C.

Very often Sometimes
Often Never

CONCLUSIONS

- Although differences were usually small, in written work and in other contexts both freshman and senior respondents at Loyola reported at least as frequently, and often more frequently, engaging in virtually all of the DTS module skills than did their DTS peers.
- The skill both freshman and senior respondents at Loyola reported practicing least often was making a speech (20% and 50% often/very often, respectively), but across the curriculum there are probably fewer opportunities for students to practice public speaking than there are to engage in other skills.
- Both Loyola freshmen and seniors more often discussed the ethical consequences of actions than did their DTS peers.
- Especially relative to their DTS counterparts, two key skills often practiced by both freshmen and seniors at Loyola were related to the ability to think beyond one's own outlook on life: presenting multiple perspectives in written work and discussing issues of social, political, or philosophical importance.
- As with all survey results, application of these findings to full populations should be made with caution, especially with low response rates. With the results of the DTS module, however, there is another caveat. The other 14 colleges and universities that administered the module vary widely in institutional characteristics, and students self-select into different kinds of institutions according to their own individual characteristics. Thus, a priori, we would expect dissimilarities in average results between Loyola and other DTS institutions, but that is not a concern per se. The caveat is that few of the institutions are peers appropriate for a Loyola comparison group.
- The fact that the overall patterns in the results are fairly consistent, however, does suggest that it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that Loyola consistently facilitates our students in developing skills that will serve them both in the workplace and in lifelong community engagement.

Appendix A
Other institutions administering NSSE
Development of Transferable Skills module in 2013

N = 14

Chapman University (Orange, CA)
College of William & Mary (Williamsburg, VA)
Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI)
Iowa State University (Ames, IA)
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College (Baton Rouge, LA)
Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)
University of Nebraska at Kearney (Kearney, NE)
University of Nebraska at Lincoln (Lincoln, NE)
University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)
University of North Carolina Wilmington (Wilmington, NC)
University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND)
University of Northern Iowa (Cedar Falls, IA)
University of South Carolina Columbia (Columbia, SC)
York College of Pennsylvania (York, PA)

Appendix B: Table 1
Development of Transferable Skills Module: Frequency of Engagement in Skills
Loyola and Other Development of Transferable Skills Module Institutions, Freshmen 2013

		Other DTS		Loyola	Other DTS
		Loyola	institutions	Loyola	institutions
				Avg.	Avg.
		%	%	0 (never) to 3 (very often)*	
Frequency of engagement in skills in written work [†]					
Used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	Never	3	6	2.0	1.9
	Sometimes	27	28		
	Often	33	37		
	Very often	37	30		
	Total	100	100		
Assessed the conclusions of a published work	Never	8	16	1.8	1.5
	Sometimes	29	36		
	Often	34	31		
	Very often	29	17		
	Total	100	100		
Included ideas from more than one academic discipline	Never	7	13	1.9	1.5
	Sometimes	31	37		
	Often	32	33		
	Very often	30	17		
	Total	100	100		
Presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	Never	2	11	1.9	1.6
	Sometimes	34	37		
	Often	35	34		
	Very often	28	18		
	Total	100	100		
Frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts [†]					
Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	Never	5	12	1.9	1.6
	Sometimes	31	37		
	Often	33	31		
	Very often	31	19		
	Total	100	100		
Made a speech to a group	Never	31	27	0.9	1.1
	Sometimes	48	45		
	Often	16	20		
	Very often	4	8		
	Total	100	100		
Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	Never	4	7	1.9	1.6
	Sometimes	32	39		
	Often	39	36		
	Very often	25	17		
	Total	100	100		

continued...

Appendix B: Table 1, continued					
Development of Transferable Skills Module: Frequency of Engagement in Skills					
Loyola and Other Development of Transferable Skills Module Institutions, Freshmen 2013					
		Other DTS		Other DTS	
		Loyola	institutions	Loyola	institutions
				Avg.	Avg.
		%	%	<i>0 (never) to 3 (very often)*</i>	
Frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts [†] , continued					
Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	Never	7	15	1.7	1.4
	Sometimes	39	43		
	Often	33	31		
	Very often	22	12		
	Total	100	100		
Creatively thought about new ideas or about ways to improve things	Never	3	6	1.9	1.8
	Sometimes	31	33		
	Often	39	39		
	Very often	26	22		
	Total	100	100		
Critically evaluated multiple solutions to a problem	Never	2	6	1.9	1.7
	Sometimes	33	34		
	Often	39	40		
	Very often	26	20		
	Total	100	100		
Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	Never	3	9	1.8	1.6
	Sometimes	36	38		
	Often	37	35		
	Very often	24	18		
	Total	100	100		

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement, Development of Transferable Skills Module, 2013

Note: See Appendix A for comparison group institutions (administered Development of Transferable Skills M

* Full scale: 0 = never; 1 = sometimes; 2 = often; 3 = very often

[†] Refers to academic year during which student responded to survey.

Appendix C: Table 2
Development of Transferable Skills Module: Frequency of Engagement in Skills
Loyola and Other Development of Transferable Skills Module Institutions, Seniors 2013

		Loyola	Other DTS institutions	Loyola	Other DTS institutions
				Avg.	Avg.
		%	%	<i>0 (never) to 3 (very often)*</i>	
Frequency of engagement in skills in written work [†]					
Used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	Never	4	4	2.2	2.1
	Sometimes	15	23		
	Often	34	34		
	Very often	47	39		
	Total	100	100		
Assessed the conclusions of a published work	Never	9	13	1.9	1.6
	Sometimes	27	34		
	Often	34	30		
	Very often	30	24		
	Total	100	100		
Included ideas from more than one academic discipline	Never	9	9	1.9	1.7
	Sometimes	24	33		
	Often	36	33		
	Very often	32	24		
	Total	100	100		
Presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	Never	5	9	1.9	1.7
	Sometimes	27	35		
	Often	38	34		
	Very often	31	22		
	Total	100	100		
Frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts [†]					
Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	Never	6	11	2.0	1.7
	Sometimes	26	35		
	Often	31	30		
	Very often	36	24		
	Total	100	100		
Made a speech to a group	Never	11	13	1.6	1.5
	Sometimes	40	42		
	Often	28	28		
	Very often	22	16		
	Total	100	100		
Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	Never	3	5	2.0	1.8
	Sometimes	28	32		
	Often	36	39		
	Very often	33	25		
	Total	100	100		

continued...

Appendix C: Table 2, continued					
Development of Transferable Skills Module: Frequency of Engagement in Skills					
Loyola and Other Development of Transferable Skills Module Institutions, Seniors 2013					
		Loyola	Other DTS institutions	Loyola	Other DTS institutions
		%	%	Avg.	Avg.
		<i>0 (never) to 3 (very often)*</i>			
Frequency of engagement in skills in other contexts [†] , continued					
Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	Never	8	11	1.8	1.5
	Sometimes	30	40		
	Often	37	32		
	Very often	25	17		
	Total	100	100		
Creatively thought about new ideas or about ways to improve things	Never	5	4	2.0	2.0
	Sometimes	22	25		
	Often	41	39		
	Very often	32	32		
	Total	100	100		
Critically evaluated multiple solutions to a problem	Never	3	4	2.0	2.0
	Sometimes	25	25		
	Often	42	40		
	Very often	30	32		
	Total	100	100		
Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	Never	5	5	1.9	1.9
	Sometimes	30	28		
	Often	34	38		
	Very often	31	29		
	Total	100	100		

Source: National Survey of Student Engagement, Development of Transferable Skills Module, 2013

Note: See Appendix A for comparison group institutions (administered Development of Transferable Skills Module)

* Full scale: 0 = never; 1 = sometimes; 2 = often; 3 = very often

[†] Refers to academic year during which student responded to survey.