

Using Student Self-Reflections as Assessments: Expectations and Opportunities

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Furman University



Furman University

- Private, independent, liberal arts college located in Greenville, South Carolina
- Founded in 1826
- 2,700 undergraduates
- More selective

Furman's Strategic Vision: The Furman Advantage (TFA)

A PERSONALIZED, FOUR-
YEAR PATHWAY TO
GRADUATION

HIGH-IMPACT, ENGAGED
LEARNING THROUGH
RESEARCH, INTERNSHIPS
AND STUDY AWAY

A TEAM OF ADVISORS AND
MENTORS TO HELP YOU
FIND YOUR PATH

LEADING INSTITUTES AND
CENTERS TO EXPLORE
AND TACKLE IMPORTANT
ISSUES

Track throughout
student's time at Furman

- HIP Participation
- Engagement level
- Actual Impact
- Learning/Growth

Note: ELEs = Engaged Learning Experiences = HIPs

Engaged Learning Experiences

Internship

Study Away

Research

Participation

Description of Experience

Kuh's Elements of Engagement (2008; 2013)

Expected/Gained Impact & Growth

Assessing The Furman Advantage

Surveys

Engagement Checklist

Pre-ELE Survey

Post-ELE Survey

Reflective Writing

Reflective essays associated with ELE

Note: ELEs = Engaged Learning Experiences = HIPs

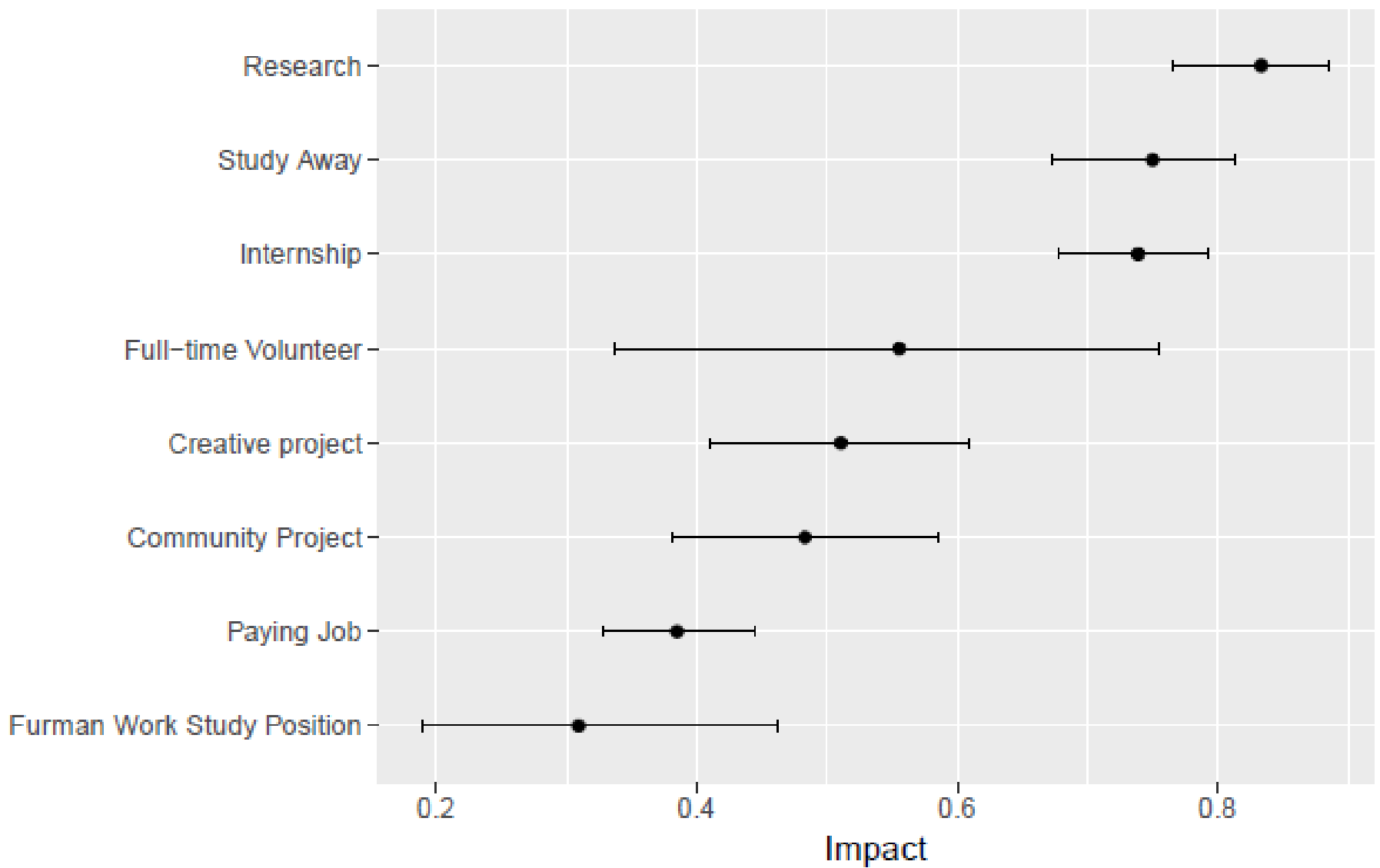
Engagement Checklist

The Furman Advantage guarantees students the opportunity to pursue an engaged learning experience that will contribute to their academic and professional goals. To ensure we deliver on this promise, Furman must track student experiences.

Please report the experiences you have engaged in during the past year using the checklist below. It is ok if you do not check off any of these experiences! Use this checklist to start a conversation with your advisor about the engaged learning opportunities available to you and which of these experience may fit best with your four-year academic, extracurricular, and professional pathway.

Place a check in the blank(s) below if you had that experience. If you check more than one experience, please **CIRCLE THE CHECK MARK** for the **ONE** experience that had the greatest impact on your learning, sense of purpose, relationships with others, or future plans.

Last Academic Year 2017-2018	Summer 2018	
_____	_____	Creative project (fine arts, music, theatre, etc. – on or off campus)
_____	_____ ✓	Research (on or off campus)
_____	_____	Study Away program (Furman or non-Furman, fall, spring, or MayX; including Study Away/Internship combo)
_____	_____	Internship (on or off campus, paid or unpaid)
_____	_____	Field experience/practicum
_____	_____	Service learning or community engagement
_____	_____	Summer or semester long, required as part of a course
_____	_____	Summer or semester long, NOT required as part of a course



Estimated Impact Probabilities based on ELEs students reported having on the Advising Checklist – and either chose as the most impactful or not.

Alumni Survey of ELE Participation & Impact

	N	2015
	426	
Conducted research with a faculty member during the summer		114 (27%) > 77 (68%)
Conducted research for a senior thesis or independent study		144 (34%) > 69 (48%)
Conducted research as part of a course		241 (57%) > 59 (24%)
Present research at a professional conference		139 (33%) > 61 (44%)
Furman faculty-led semester study-away program		130 (31%) > 120 (92%)
Furman faculty-led MayX study-away program		140 (33%) > 100 (71%)
Affiliate or exchange semester study-away program		36 (8%) > 30 (83%)
Unpaid internship during the academic year		120 (28%) > 61 (51%)
Paid internship during the academic year		70 (16%) > 35 (50%)
Unpaid summer internship		137 (32%) > 87 (64%)
Paid summer internship		142 (33%) > 80 (56%)
Community engagement NOT required for a course		84 (20%) > 19 (23%)
Service learning or community engagement for a course		94 (22%) > 20 (21%)
Creative project during the summer		15 (4%) > 3 (20%)
Creative project for a senior thesis or independent study		23 (5%) > 9 (39%)
Creative project as part of a course, not including a thesis or IS		66 (15%) > 13 (20%)
Present, exhibit or perform a creative project		58 (14%) > 18 (31%)
Work-study position		102 (24%) > 43 (42%)
Part-time job during the academic year (not work-study)		155 (36%) > 45 (29%)
Full-time job during the academic year (not work-study)		9 (2%) > 5 (56%)
Part-time summer job		107 (25%) > 15 (14%)
Full-time summer job		125 (29%) > 46 (37%)

Assessing The Furman Advantage

Surveys

Engagement Checklist

Pre-ELE Survey

Post-ELE Survey

Reflective Writing

Reflective essays associated with ELE

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Pre-ELE Survey

ELE Details

- Date, location, supervisor/mentor
- Through what resource(s) did you obtain this experience?
- Barriers to participation

Expectations for Impact

- How do you think you will perceive the impact of this experience in retrospect? (*Little or no impact to Life-changing impact*)

Pre-ELE Survey (2018)

Elements of Engagement

- Amount of interaction with mentor/supervisor
- Frequency of substantive feedback from mentor/supervisor
- Hours per week expecting to spend on experience
- Reasons for engaging in experience (e.g., preparation for grad school)
- Measures of effort, interest, motivation

Expectations for Growth in Key Areas

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Post-ELE Survey (2018)

ELE Details

Elements of Engagement

Expected Growth in Key Areas

Evaluation of ELE

Reflective writing

Pre-ELE and Post-ELE Survey Item Structure

Please indicate your expectations about the growth or change you expect to see in these areas of **communication**:

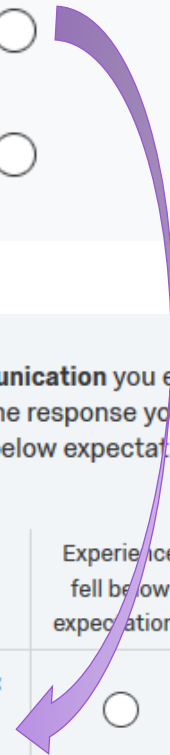
Pre-ELE Survey

	No growth	A little growth	A moderate amount of growth	A lot of growth	× Not applicable
Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate with others despite barriers (culture, language, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Before this ELE began, we asked you about the growth or change in **communication** you expected to occur as a result of this engaged learning experience. Below, you will see the response you provided. Reflecting on that response, please indicate whether your experience fell below expectations, met expectations, or exceeded these expectations.

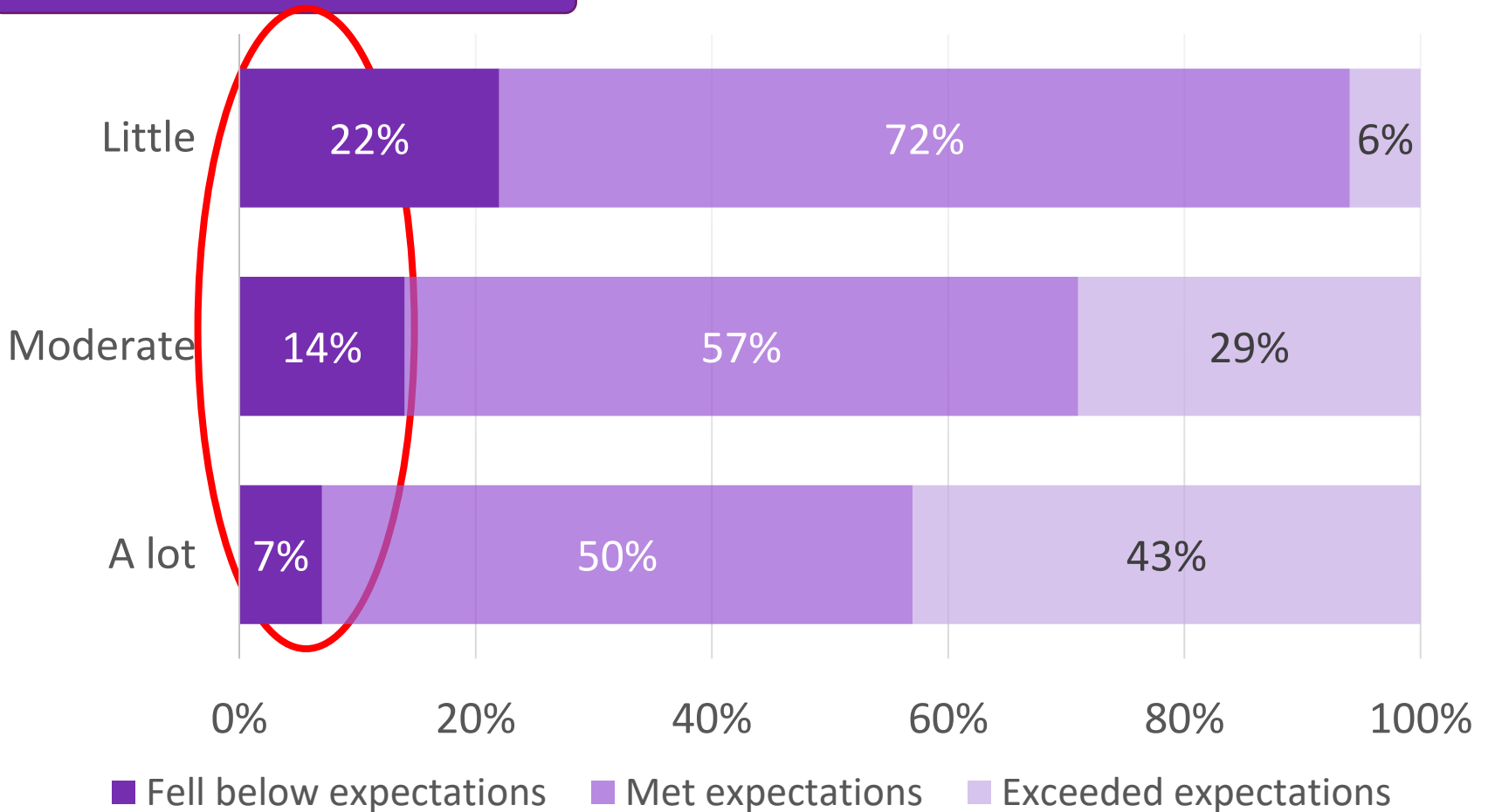
Post-ELE Survey

To the statement:	You said:	Experience fell below expectations	Experience met Expectations	Experience exceeded expectations
Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)	A moderate amount of growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communicate with others despite barriers (culture, language, etc.)	A lot of growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



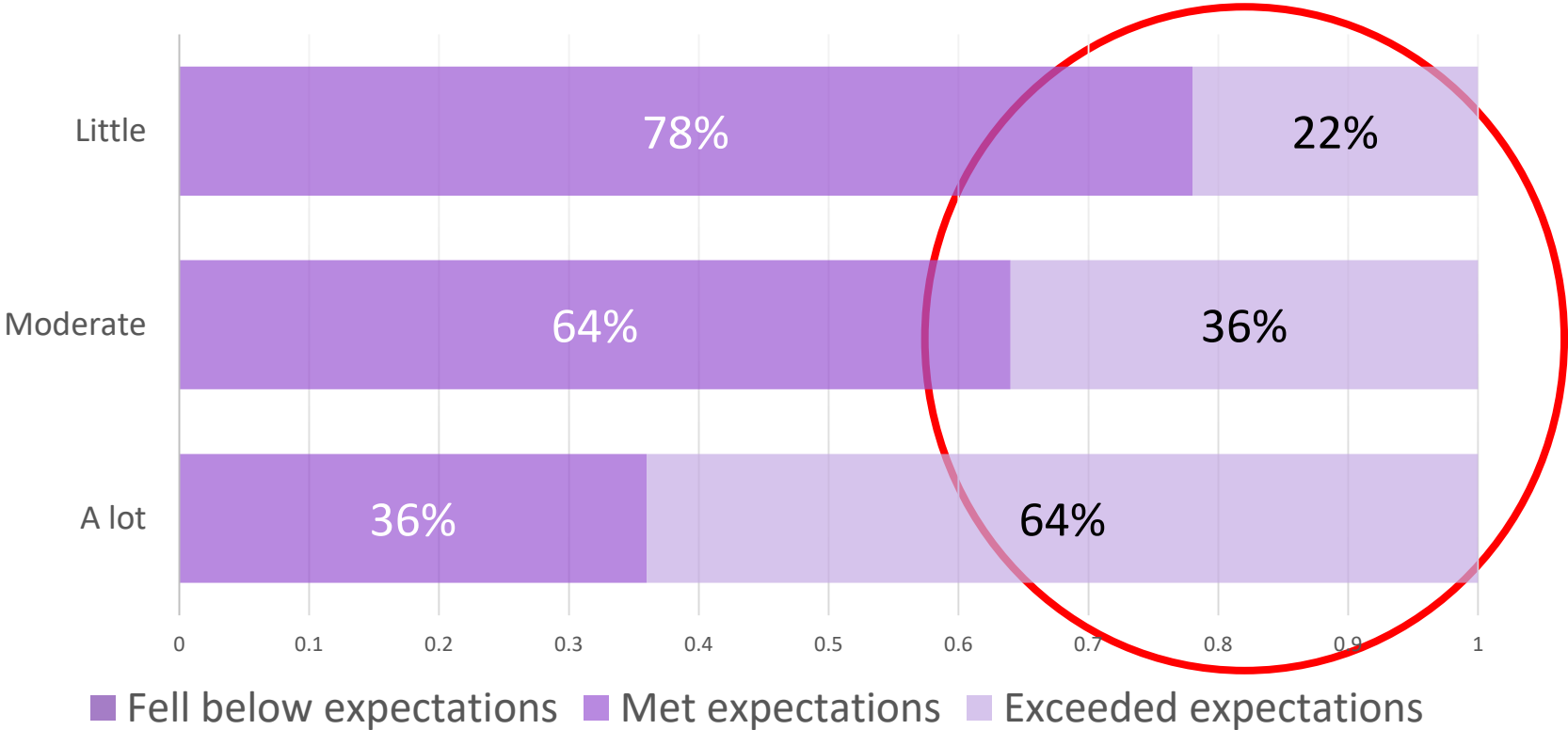
Pre-ELE Expectations	A moderate amount of growth			
	No growth	A little growth	A moderate amount of growth	A lot of growth
Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)	38%	27%	15%	19%

Post-ELE Evaluations



Pre-ELE Expectations	No growth	A little growth	A moderate amount of growth	A lot of growth
	Recognize value of diverse opinions and approaches	1%	5%	30%

Post-ELE Evaluations



Active Learning Exercise

Thinking back to your college education, choose an experience that you believe was particularly impactful.

Describe the experience and nature of the impact to the person next to you.

Categorizing Impact

STUDENT REFLECTIVE ESSAY

SLO 1: COGNITIVE
Evolving a World View

SLO 2: INTRAPERSONAL
Searching for a purpose

SLO 3: INTERPERSONAL
Growing with others

Study Away Essay #1

129-138

122-123

54-58

Internship Essay #1

68-70

Internship Essay #2

19-24

14-17

Internship Essay #3

66-70

36-39, 51-55

Research Essay #1

64-70

46-47, 52-59

Categorizing Impact

Quote from a student's reflection:

It is incredibly important to realize that the rest of the world does not necessarily think the same way, live the same way, or experience the world the same way as you do and while keeping this in mind, it's also necessary to realize that those differences don't equate to wrongness, or mean that coexisting or collaborating with others of another ethnicity is an impossibility.

Which category is this sample closest to?

1. Evolving a world view
2. Finding a purpose
3. Developing interpersonal skills

Take-home lessons

1. Ask students how they perceive the impact of ELEs
 - Given results of varying levels of impact, what are ways to improve the lagging ELEs? Can you identify reasons why some are lagging?
2. Post-ELE surveys can link to pre-ELE surveys, to remind students what they expected
3. What student brings to the ELE (e.g., their mindset and expectations) matters. Consider the interaction of student x ELE
4. Classifying student reflections can associate portions of writing with outcomes of interest (classifying impact) vs. assigning overall score using rubrics
5. Ask colleagues what was impactful about their undergrad education. What do they say?

Questions?

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