Using Student Self-Reflections as Assessments: Expectations and Opportunities

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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
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Academic Year</th>
<th>Summer 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-ELE Survey</th>
<th>No growth</th>
<th>A little growth</th>
<th>A moderate amount of growth</th>
<th>A lot of growth</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with others despite barriers (culture, language, etc.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the statement:</th>
<th>You said:</th>
<th>Experience fell below expectations</th>
<th>Experience met expectations</th>
<th>Experience exceeded expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)</td>
<td>A moderate amount of growth</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with others despite barriers (culture, language, etc.)</td>
<td>A lot of growth</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pre-ELE Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speak a foreign language (for immersion programs)</th>
<th>No growth</th>
<th>A little growth</th>
<th>A moderate amount of growth</th>
<th>A lot of growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Post-ELE Evaluations

- **Little**:
  - Fell below expectations: 7%
  - Met expectations: 72%
  - Exceeded expectations: 22%
  - Total: 100%

- **Moderate**:
  - Fell below expectations: 14%
  - Met expectations: 57%
  - Exceeded expectations: 29%
  - Total: 100%

- **A lot**:
  - Fell below expectations: 7%
  - Met expectations: 50%
  - Exceeded expectations: 43%
  - Total: 100%
### Pre-ELE Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognize value of diverse opinions and approaches</th>
<th>No growth</th>
<th>A little growth</th>
<th>A moderate amount of growth</th>
<th>A lot of growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Post-ELE Evaluations

- **Little**
  - Fell below expectations: 78%
  - Met expectations: 22%

- **Moderate**
  - Fell below expectations: 64%
  - Met expectations: 36%

- **A lot**
  - Fell below expectations: 36%
  - Met expectations: 64%
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT REFLECTIVE ESSAY</th>
<th>SLO 1: COGNITIVE Evolving a World View</th>
<th>SLO 2: INTRAPERSONAL Searching for a purpose</th>
<th>SLO 3: INTERPERSONAL Growing with others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Away Essay #1</td>
<td>129-138</td>
<td>122-123</td>
<td>54-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Essay #1</td>
<td></td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Essay #2</td>
<td></td>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>14-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Essay #3</td>
<td>66-70</td>
<td></td>
<td>36-39, 51-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay #1</td>
<td>64-70</td>
<td></td>
<td>46-47, 52-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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References


