

Spring 2002

Report on the Spring 2002 Survey of UMM Seniors: Assessment of Student Learning: General Education

UMM Institutional Research

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Report on the Spring 2002 Survey of UMM Seniors: Assessment of Student Learning: General Education

Summary by UMM Institutional Research

In April of 2002, an online survey entitled “Assessment of Your Learning Experience: General Education” was administered via the Internet to UMM seniors. The Office of Institutional Research and Reporting in the Twin Cities coded the questionnaire into HTML format and prepared the statistical report. There were 138 responses to the survey. Since the total number of graduates in the spring semester of 2002 was 287, this was a 48% response rate.

Shifts from Intended Major to Current Major

Of the 138 survey respondents, 87 (63%) indicated that they had one intended major when they entered UMM, 40 (29%) had two intended majors, and 11 (8%) intended to triple major. The respondents reported that 94 (71%) currently had single majors, 37 (24%) had double majors, and 7 (5%) had triple majors. The following table shows the proportion of students with intended and current majors in the four Divisions, interdisciplinary studies, and who were undecided on a major.

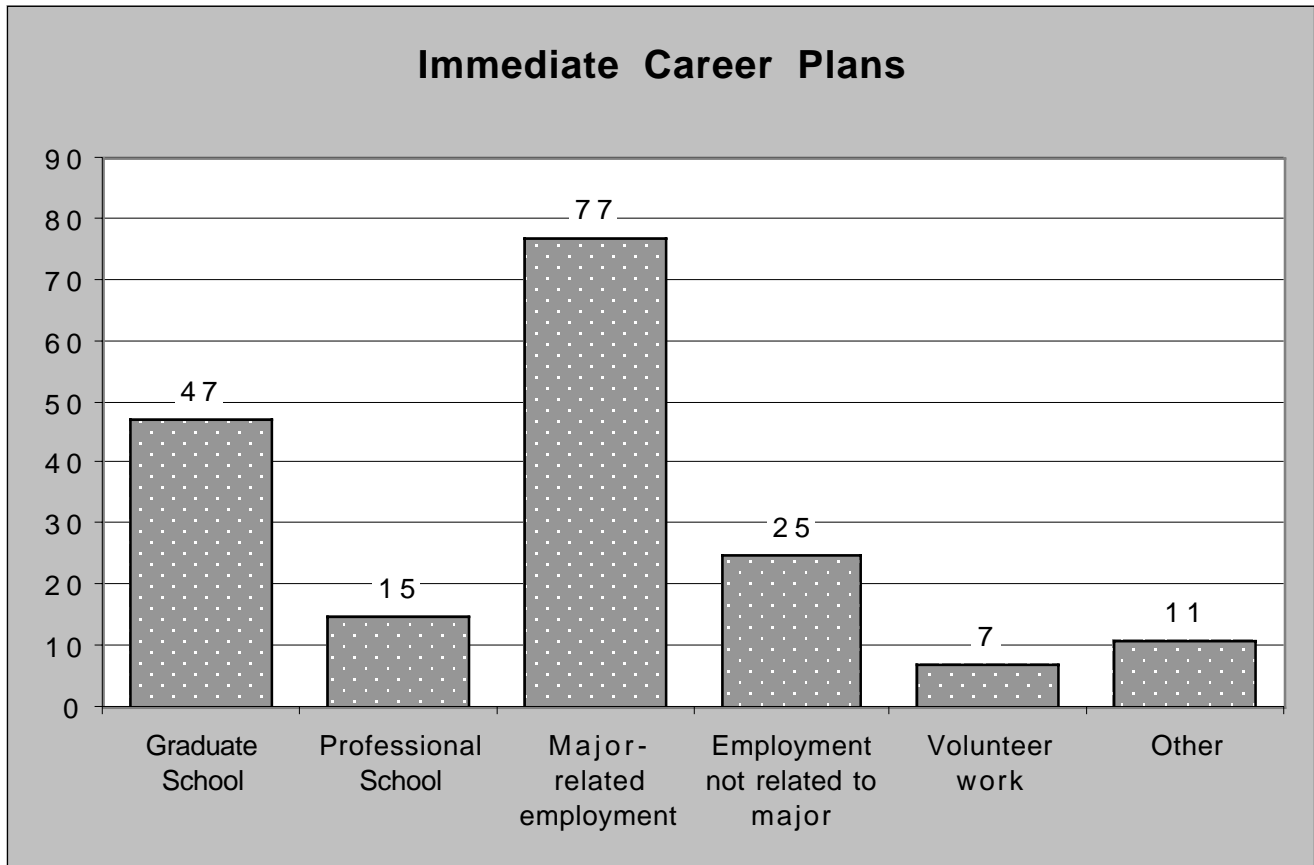
<i>Type of Major</i>	<i>Intended Majors</i>		<i>Current Majors</i>	
Education	23	12%	13	7%
Humanities	41	21%	39	21%
Science & Math	70	35%	55	29%
Social Sciences	46	23%	75	40%
Interdisciplinary	2	1%	7	4%
Undecided	18	9%	0	0%
	200	100%	189	100%

Twenty-nine percent intended to double major and 8% to triple major. Actual double majors were 24% of respondents and triple majors were 5%. Changed majors resulted in a decrease in majors in the Division of Education, Division of Science and Mathematics, and undecideds. The percentage of majors in the Division of the Humanities stayed the same. Majors in the Division of Social Sciences and Education increased after the changes.

No of Yrs at UMM	# Students	%-age
1-2	4	2.9%
3-4	103	74.6%
5-6	27	19.6%
7-8	0	0%
9	1	1%
10 or more	1	1%
	136	100.0%

Of 136 student respondents, 87 (63%) attended UMM for 4 years, 16 (12%) were at UMM for 3 years, 4 (3%) were at UMM for 2 years, and 29 (21%) were at UMM for more than 4 years. The average number of years at UMM was 4.12, the median was 4.00 years, and the standard deviation was .96.

Immediate Career Plans



The majority of UMM graduates (56%) planned to go directly into major-related employment; 34% to graduate school, 11% to professional school, 18% to employment not related to the major, 5% to volunteer work, and 8% had other plans not mentioned.

General Education Categories

Students were asked four questions about each category of the General Education Requirements (GER). The questions were as follows:

1. To what extent have you achieved the learning objective specified?
2. How important was this objective to your education?
3. What activities enabled you to achieve this requirement?
4. What were the important things did you gain while meeting this objective?

In addition, two categories included one additional question designed to provide direct evidence of learning. The two categories chosen and the questions used are given below:

- A. Historical Perspectives: With what historical era or eras, other than the present, do you feel you are familiar?
- B. Human Diversity: What culture or cultures did gain knowledge about during your time at UMM with which you were not familiar when you entered?

Scores for questions 1-2 were ranked on a scale from one to five. The higher the score the student gave, the better they felt about the requirement. Questions 3-4 and A-C were multiple choice with text boxes for additional open-ended answers. To see the students' actual responses to the open ended questions, please see the appendix.

The first section dealt with the **Skills for the Liberal Arts**, including Artistic Performance, College Writing, Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning, and Foreign Language.

Summary of Scores for Achievement of General Education Objectives					
(Ranked by Mean Score)					
General Education Requirement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	% Scores "Moderate" or above	% Scores Below "Moderate"
Human Behavior, Social Proc/Inst	3.76	.99	3.83	88%	12%
College Writing	3.59	1.08	3.75	82%	18%
Global: Human Diversity	3.53	1.05	3.58	81%	19%
Artistic Performance	3.44	1.09	3.49	78%	22%
Communication, Language,Lit,Phil	3.33	1.04	3.31	75%	25%
Fine Arts	3.31	1.18	3.33	72%	28%
Global: International Perspective	3.26	1.10	3.29	73%	27%
Global:Ethic/Civic Responsibility	3.25	1.01	3.30	74%	26%
Physical & Biological Sciences	3.25	1.16	3.19	72%	28%
Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning	3.25	1.27	3.16	67%	33%
Historical Perspectives	3.25	1.07	3.15	70%	30%
Global:People & Environment	3.16	1.10	3.13	71%	29%
Foreign Language	3.01	1.23	2.96	63%	37%

All of the GER categories had mean scores of 3 (moderately) or above for Question #1, “To what extent have you achieved the learning objective specified?” Human Behavior, Social Proc/Inst was the objective that received the highest mean score of 3.76 and also had nearly 90% of its scores in the “moderate” or above range. It is worth noting that two categories—Foreign Language and Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning—had over 30% of the scores in the below “moderate” range.

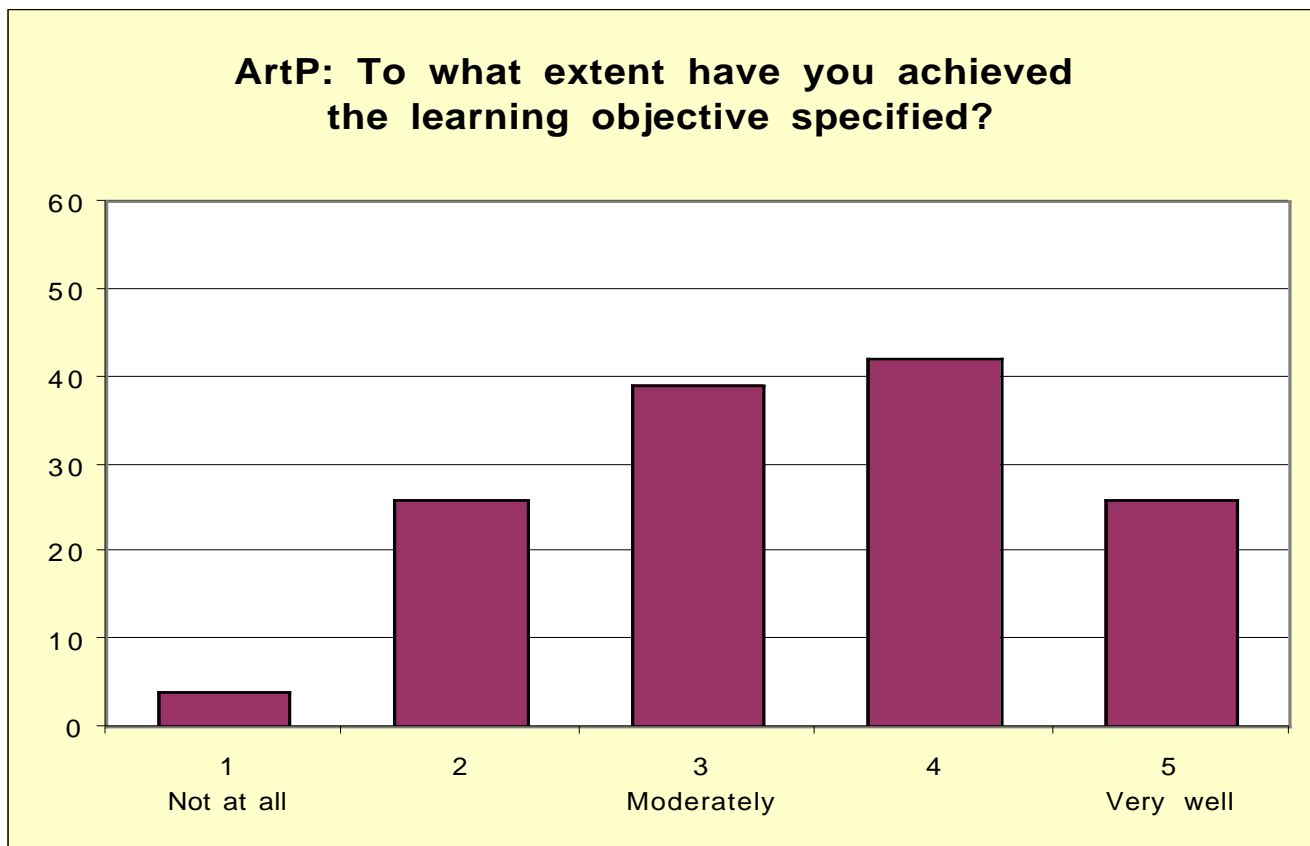
Summary of Scores for Importance of General Education Objectives					
(Ranked by Mean Score)					
General Education Requirement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	% Scores "Moderate" or above	% Scores Below "Moderate"
College Writing	3.57	1.11	3.67	82%	18%
Human Behavior, Social Proc/Inst	3.39	1.19	3.34	72%	28%
Global: Human Diversity	3.22	1.18	3.14	68%	32%
Global:Ethic/Civic Responsibility	3.15	1.11	3.09	67%	33%
Communication, Language,Lit,Phil	3.04	1.08	2.95	64%	36%
Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning	3.00	1.39	2.89	58%	42%
Global:People & Environment	2.93	1.08	2.93	68%	32%
Physical & Biological Sciences	2.91	1.33	2.79	57%	43%
Global: International Perspective	2.89	1.12	2.79	58%	42%
Historical Perspectives	2.78	1.12	2.63	54%	46%
Fine Arts	2.62	1.27	2.41	47%	53%
Artistic Performance	2.61	1.27	2.42	47%	53%
Foreign Language	2.43	1.26	2.17	38%	62%

The mean scores for Question #2, “How important was this objective to your education?” were significantly lower than for Question #1. College Writing was the objective that received the highest mean score (3.57).

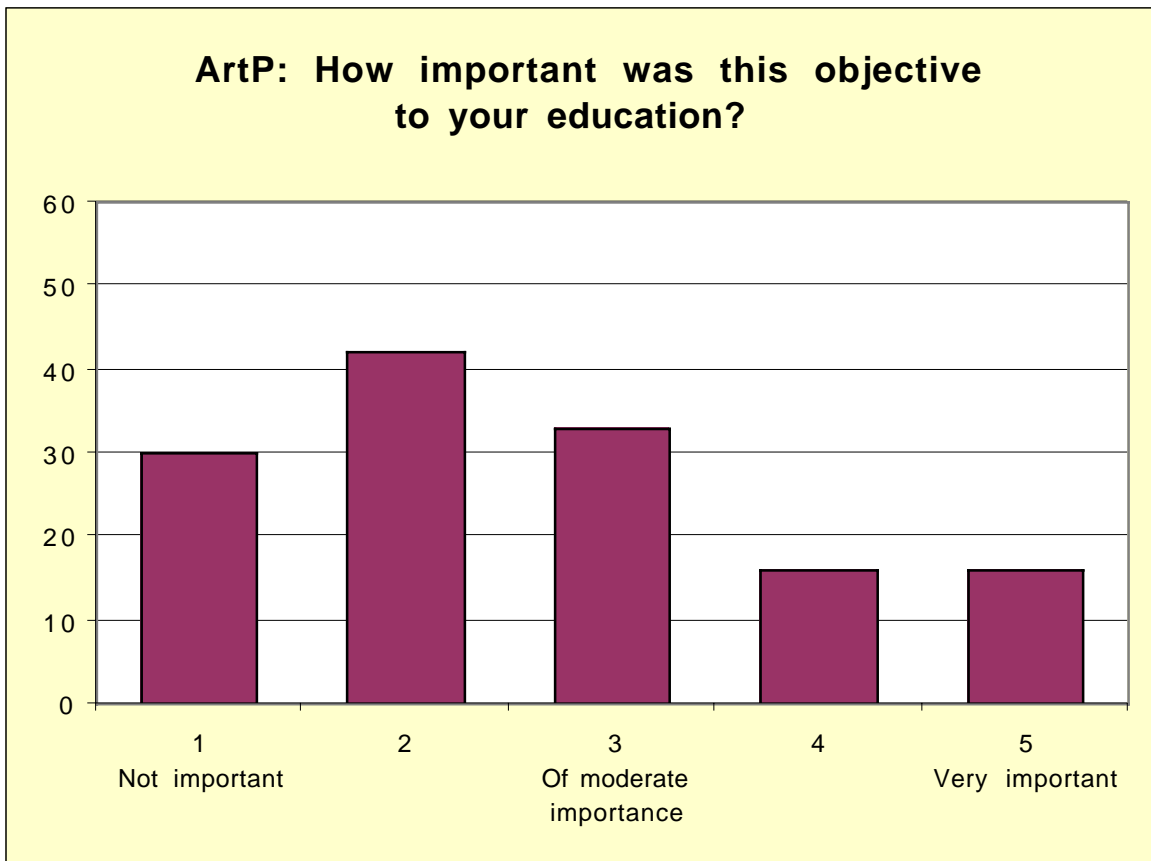
College Writing also had 82% of its scores in the “moderate” or above range. Three categories—Foreign Language, Artistic Performance, and Fine Arts—had over 50% of the scores in the below “moderate” range.

Skills for the Liberal Arts

Artistic Performance (ArtP)



Scores for the achievement of the artistic performance objective were mostly positive. Seventy-eight percent of the scores were 3 or above. The mean score was 3.01; standard deviation was 1.23, and median was 2.96.



The students surveyed did not feel that the artistic performance requirement was important to their education to the same degree that they had achieved the objective. Fifty-three percent of the scores were below 3. They gave the importance of ArtP a mean score of 2.61, median of 2.42, and standard deviation of 1.27.

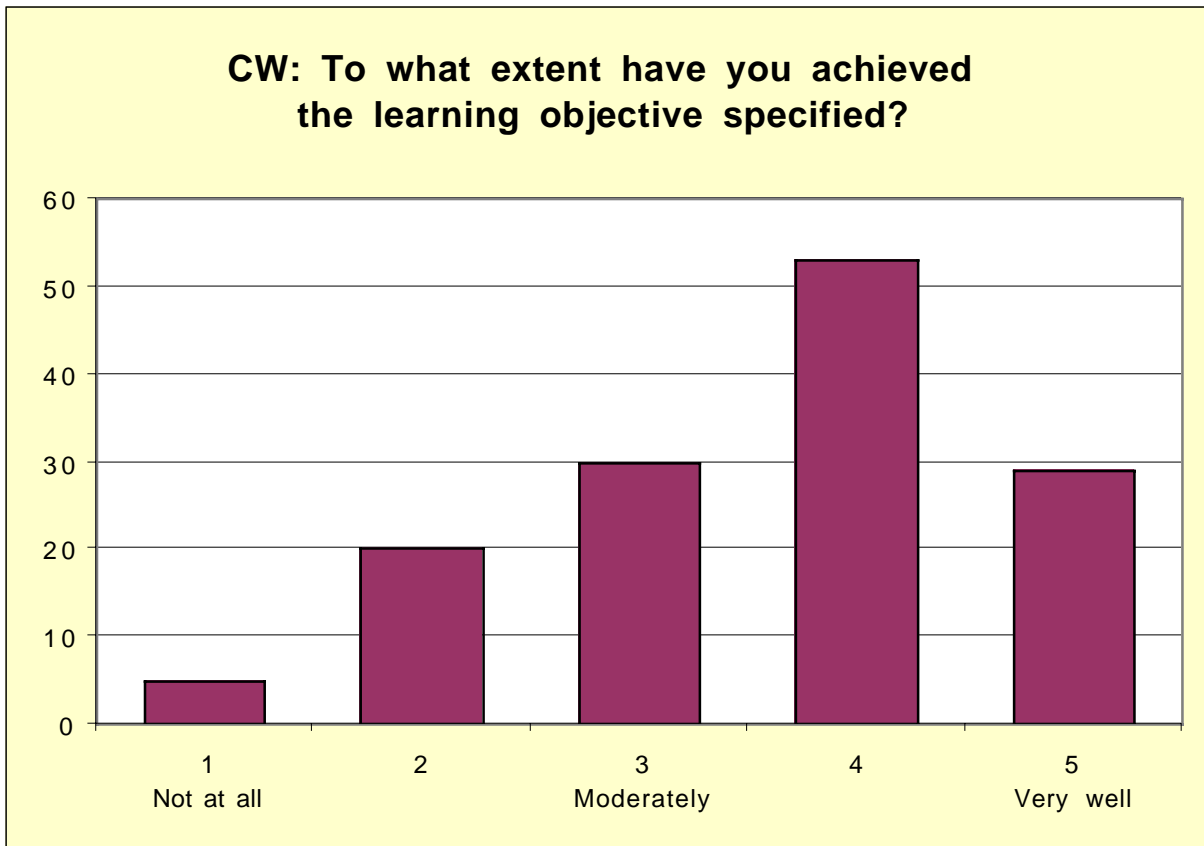
Activities that Met Artistic Performance Requirement		
Music class or music performance group	68	51%
Art class	45	34%
Theatre class or performance group	24	18%
Dance class or performance group	19	14%
Writing, foreign language, speech, sign lang. or other ArtP class	69	51%
Extra-curricular activities/class activities outside of ArtP class	40	30%
Attending UMM outside speakers/art groups	57	43%
Other	5	4%
This requirement was waived for me.	1	1%
Tested out/not sure.	1	1%
	134	

This table shows what activities students used to achieve the artistic performance objective. The two most frequent answers were music class (51%) and Writing, foreign language, speech, sign lang., or other ArtP class (51%). Note: throughout the report, students were allowed to choose more than one category.

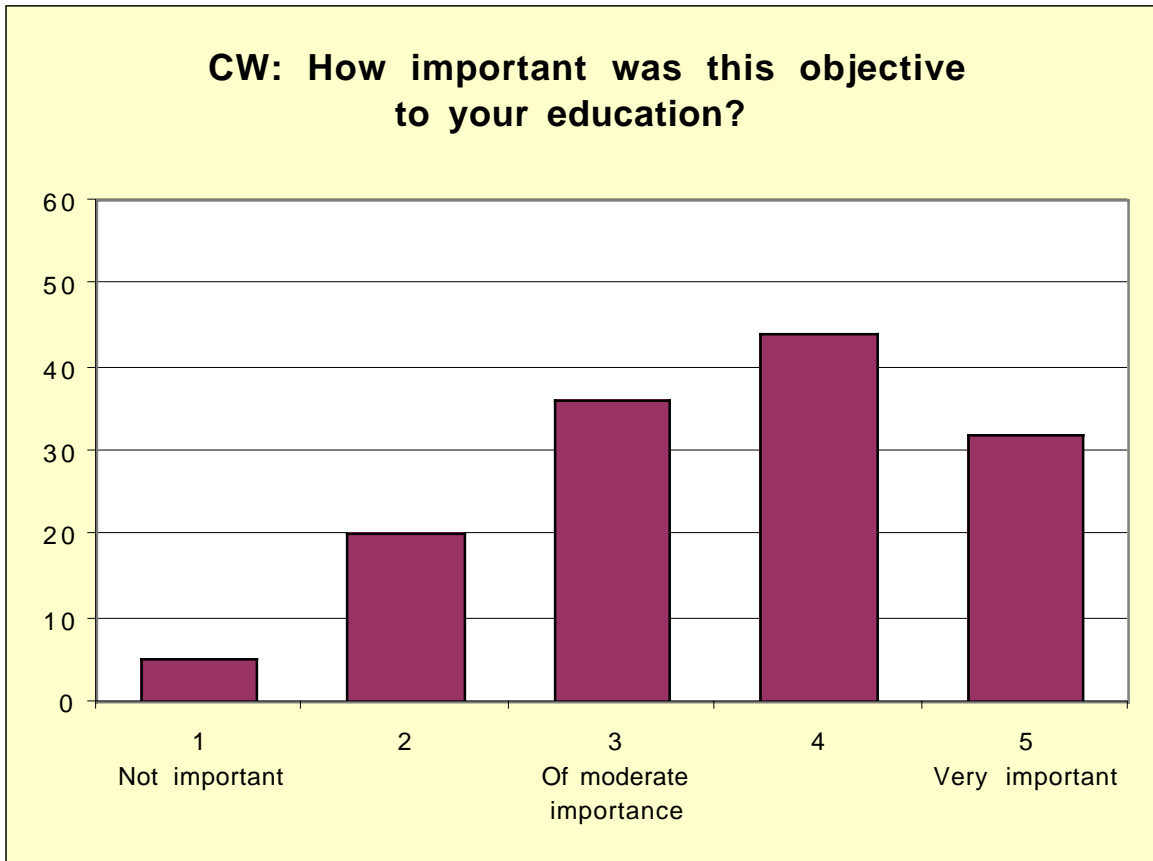
<i>ArtP: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective</i>		
Increased artistic ability in general or a specific skill	73	54%
Enjoyment/relaxation	96	71%
Increased appreciation of art/music, its difficulty, or its importance	91	67%
Increased confidence in area	64	47%
How to work with others	37	27%
Other	0	0%
Nothing/not sure	12	9%
	136	

Seventy-one percent of respondents gained enjoyment/relaxation through this requirement. Another 67% gained appreciation of the skills of this area and 54% believe their artistic abilities were increased.

College Writing (CW)



Only five students felt that they had not achieved the Writing objective. Eighty-two percent of the scores were 3 or above. The median score for this objective was 3.75. The mean was 3.59 and standard deviation was 1.08.



As in the previous question, students felt quite highly about the importance of writing to their education. They gave this question the highest mean (3.57) for Question #2. The standard deviation was 1.11 and the median was 3.67. Eighty-two percent of the scores were 3 or above.

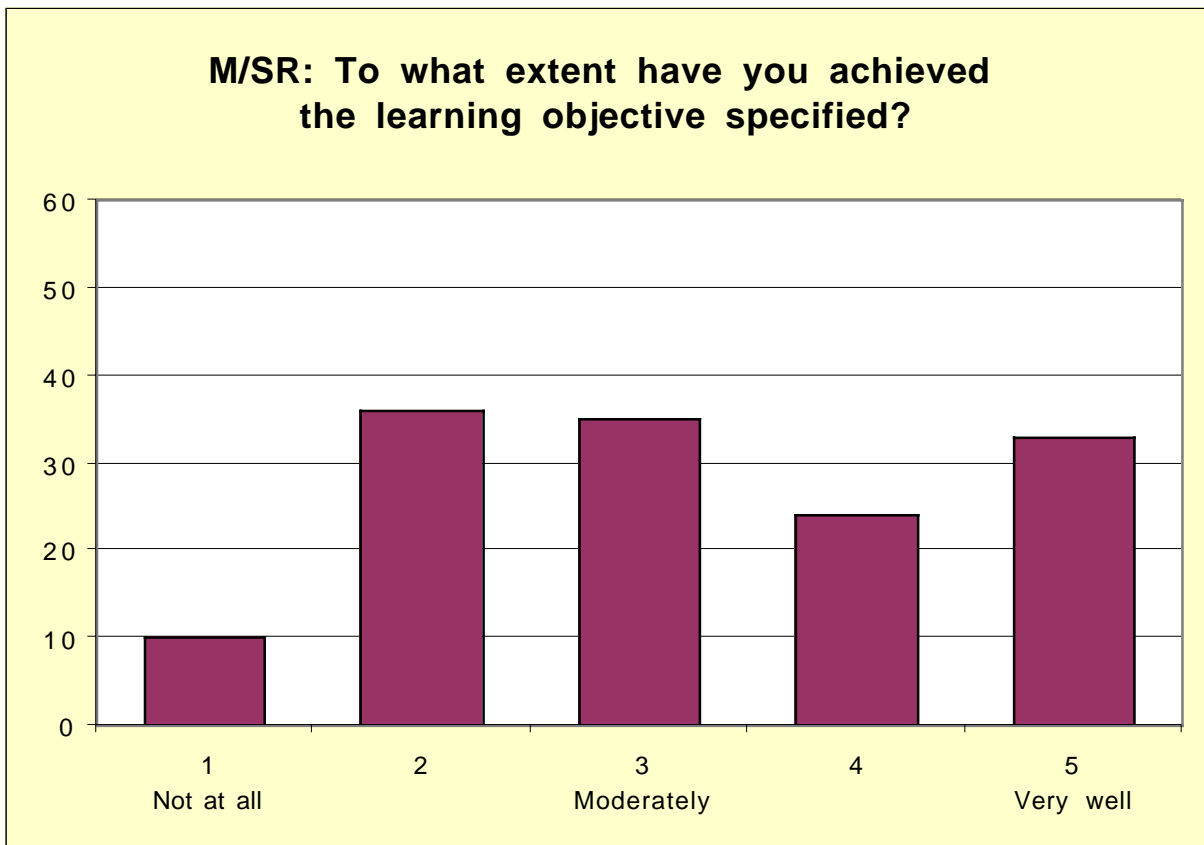
Activities that Met College Writing Requirement		
Writing papers in classes in general	106	77%
College Writing class	66	48%
Other specific classes	33	24%
Other	6	4%
This requirement was waived for me.	20	15%
Tested out/not sure	<u>17</u>	12%
	137	

Writing papers in classes in general (77%) and College Writing classes (48%) were the two answers that received the most responses to this question. Only 31% of students did not met the requirement through a class.

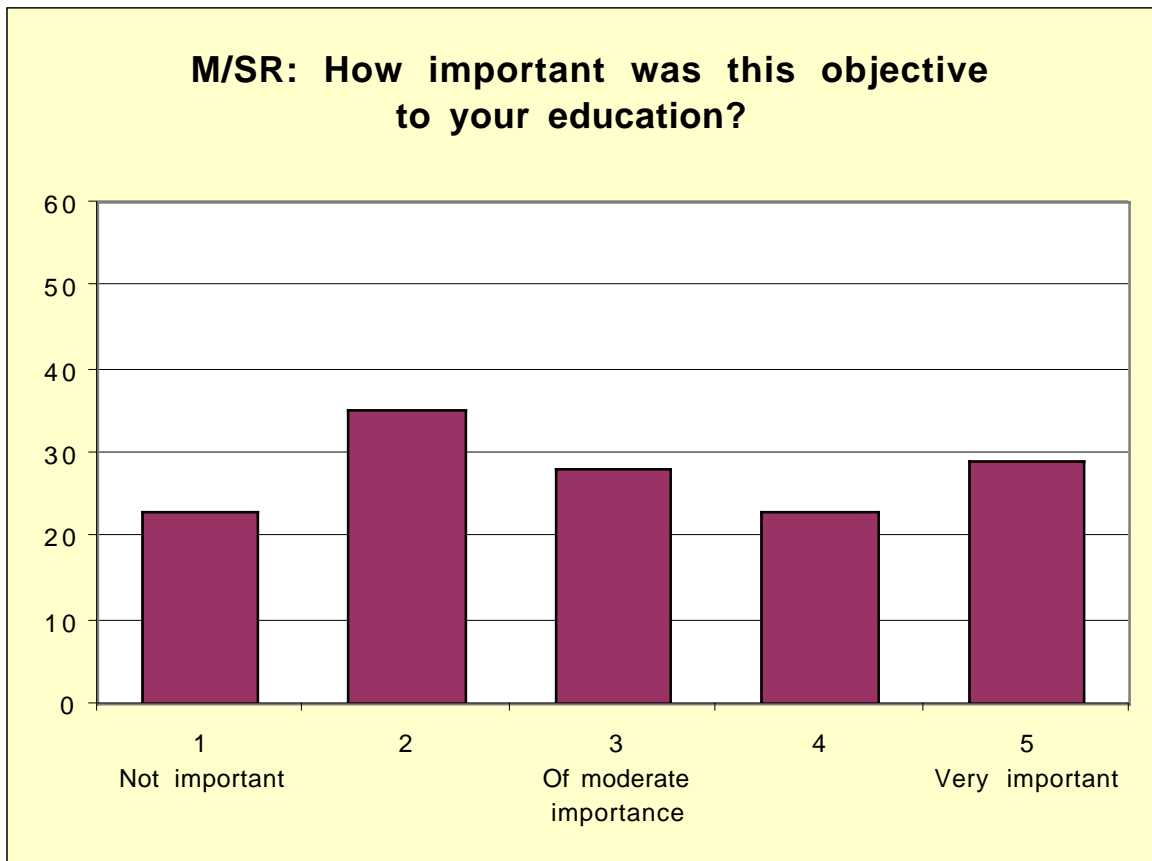
CW: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
How to write	73	53%
A particular skill helpful to writing	71	52%
Better work habits	44	32%
Increased confidence in area	67	49%
Other	7	5%
Nothing/not sure	17	12%
	137	

The top two answers to what students learned through the Writing requirement were “How to write” (53%) and “A particular skill helpful to writing” (52%). This table also shows that the Writing objective helped students achieve better work habits and increased their confidence in writing.

Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning (M/SR)



Sixty-seven percent of the students felt that they achieved the learning objective of Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning moderately to very well. The mean score for this objective was 3.25 with a standard deviation of 1.27. It had a median of 3.16.



Fifty-eight percent of the students felt the Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning requirement was moderately to very important. The mean score for this objective was 3.00 with a standard deviation of 1.39. It had a median of 2.89.

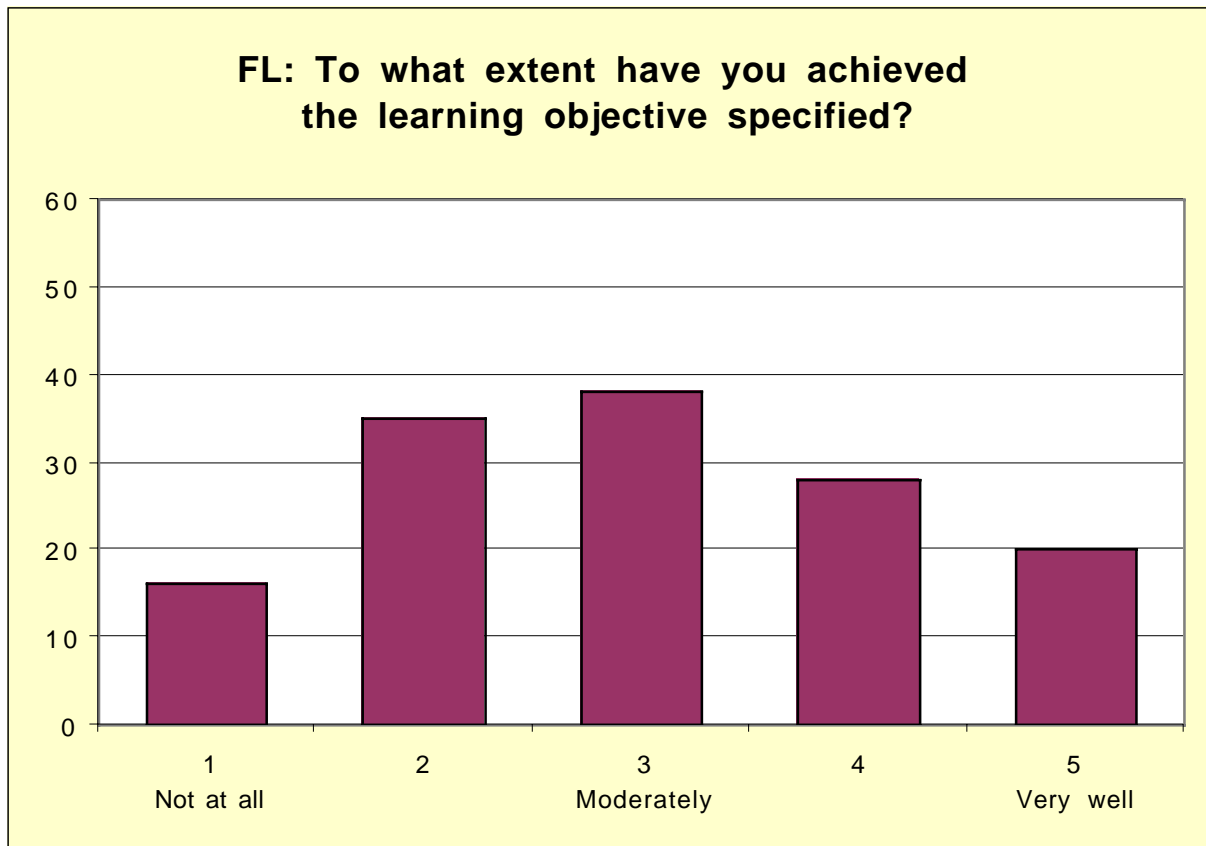
Activities that Met Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning Requirement		
Class	122	90%
Other	10	7%
Tested out/not sure	13	10%
	136	

Ninety percent of the respondents met this requirement with a class. Ten percent tested out or were not sure how they met the requirement.

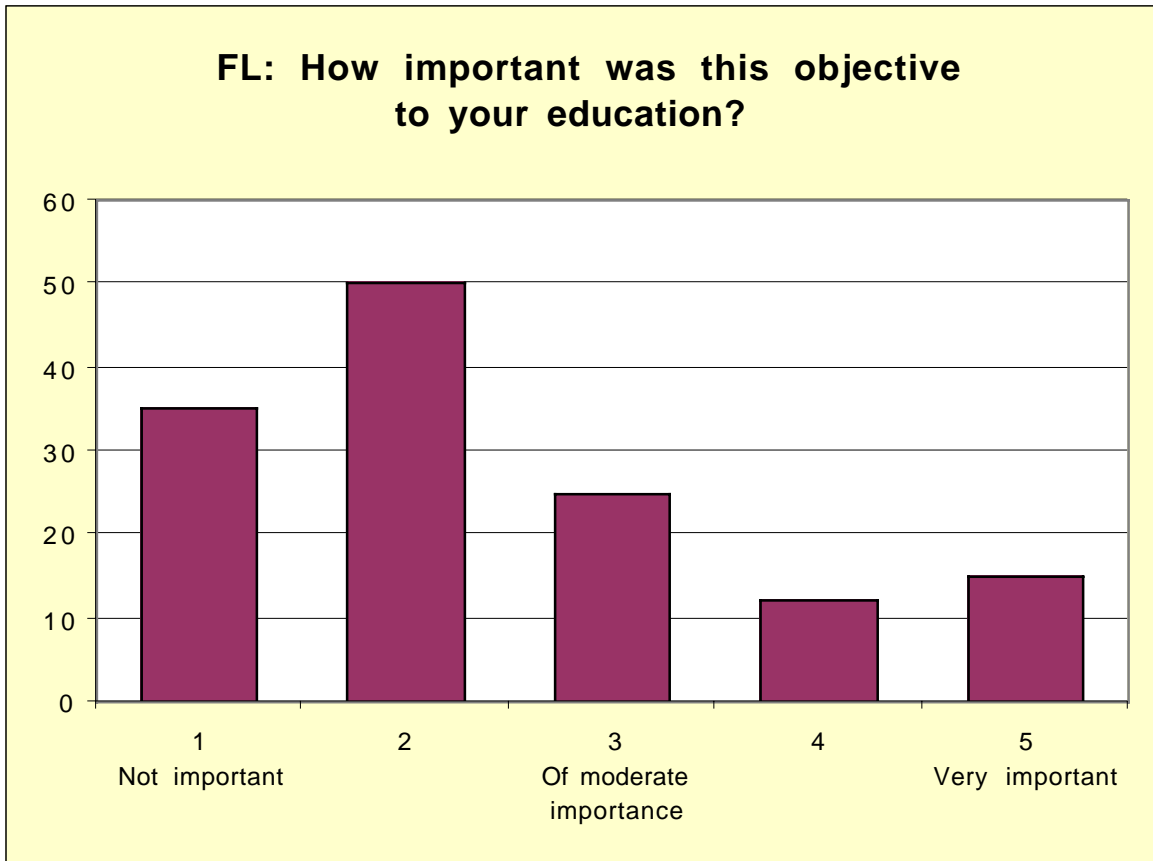
M/SR: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased mathematical ability in general or a specific skill	88	64%
Increased ability to think logically	83	60%
Other	3	2%
Nothing/not sure	30	22%
	138	

The top two answers to what students learned through the Mathematical/Symbolic Reasoning requirement were “Increased mathematical ability” (64%) and increased ability to think logically (60%).

Foreign Language (FL)



Students did not feel quite as positively about the Foreign Language objective as they did the previous objectives. They gave this question a mean score of 3.01, median of 2.96, and standard deviation of 1.23. This question resulted in the lowest mean answers given within the Skills for the Liberal Arts section of the General Education Requirements. Thirty-seven percent of the responses were below 3.



The responses to the question about the importance of the Foreign Language requirement resulted in the lowest ratings of all questions. The mean was 2.43, standard deviation 1.26, and median was 2.17. Sixty-two percent of responses were below 3.

Activities that Met Foreign Language Requirement		
College class	91	66%
High school language class	88	64%
Study abroad/ELTAP	25	18%
Other	10	7%
Tested out/not sure	34	25%
	138	

Nearly two-thirds of the students surveyed said that they achieved the Foreign Language objective through some type of college language class. The other most frequent answer was a high school language class (64%). Twenty-five percent of the students did not have to take a foreign language class because they tested out or met the requirement in high school.

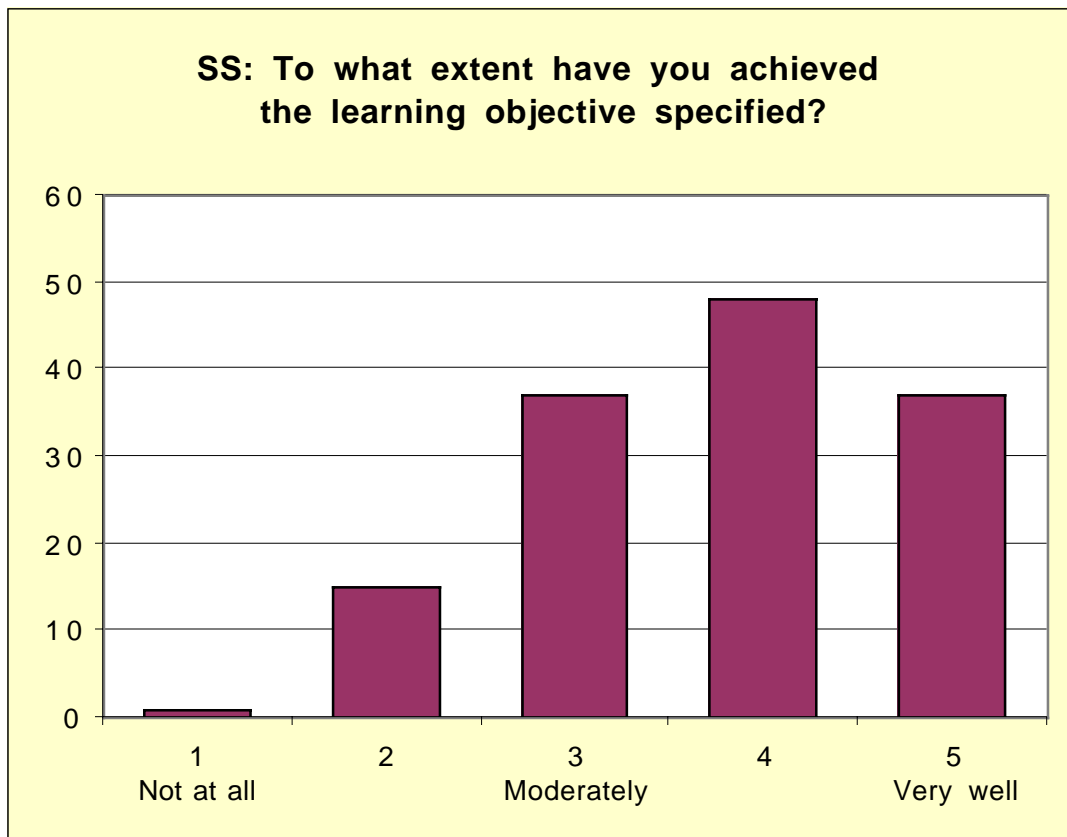
FL: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased ability in a foreign language	94	68%
Appreciation and/or knowledge of foreign cultures	80	58%
Appreciation of importance of knowing a foreign language	69	50%
Increased confidence in a foreign language	57	41%
Other	4	3%
Nothing/not sure	25	18%
	138	

Sixty-eight percent of respondents said they had an increased ability in foreign language and 58% had an increased knowledge of foreign cultures. The number who were not sure was 18%.

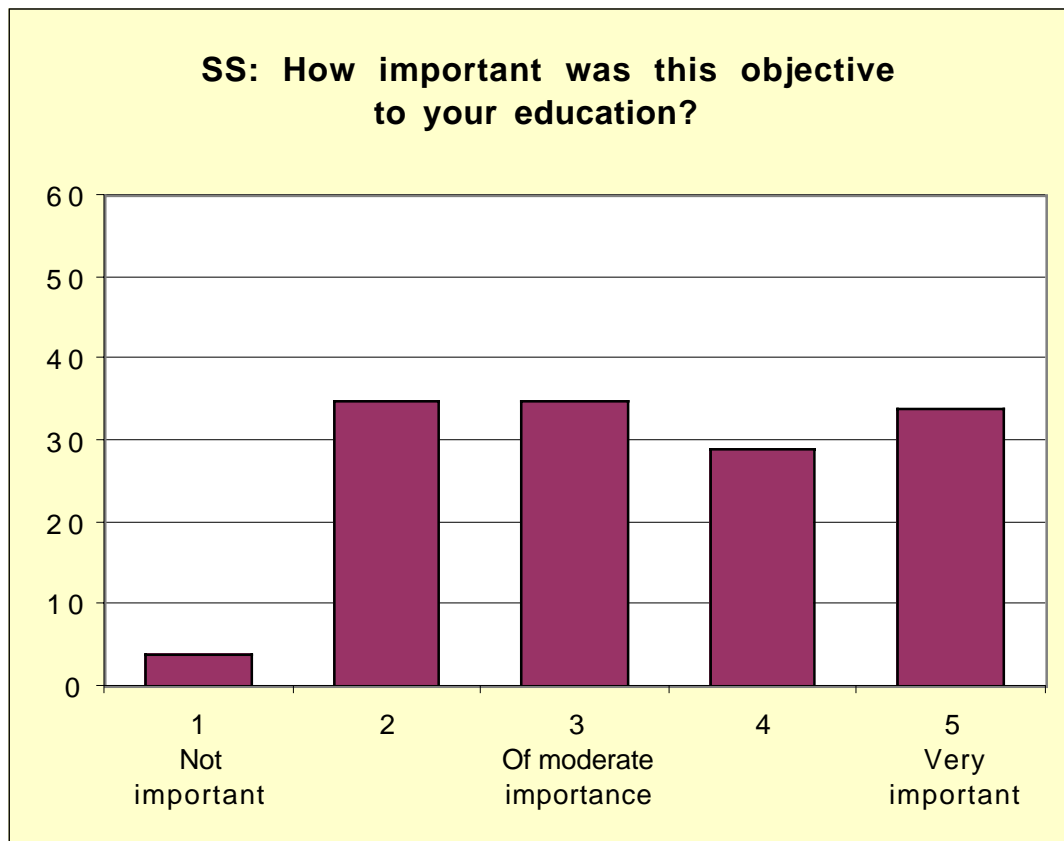
Expanding Perspectives

The second section of General Education questions deals with the Expanding Perspectives requirements, including Historical Perspectives; Human Behavior, Social Processes and Institutions; Communication, Language, Literature, and Philosophy; Fine Arts; Physical and Biological Sciences; Human Diversity; People and the Environment; International Perspective; and Ethical and Civic Responsibility.

Human Behavior, Social Processes and Institutions (SS)



The responses for the SS achievement were the highest for all questions. The mean was 3.76, standard deviation .99, and median was 3.83. Eighty-eight percent of respondents gave scores of 3 or above.



The mean rating for the importance of the SS requirement was 3.39. The standard deviation was 1.19, and the median was 3.34. Seventy-two percent of respondents gave a score of 3 or above.

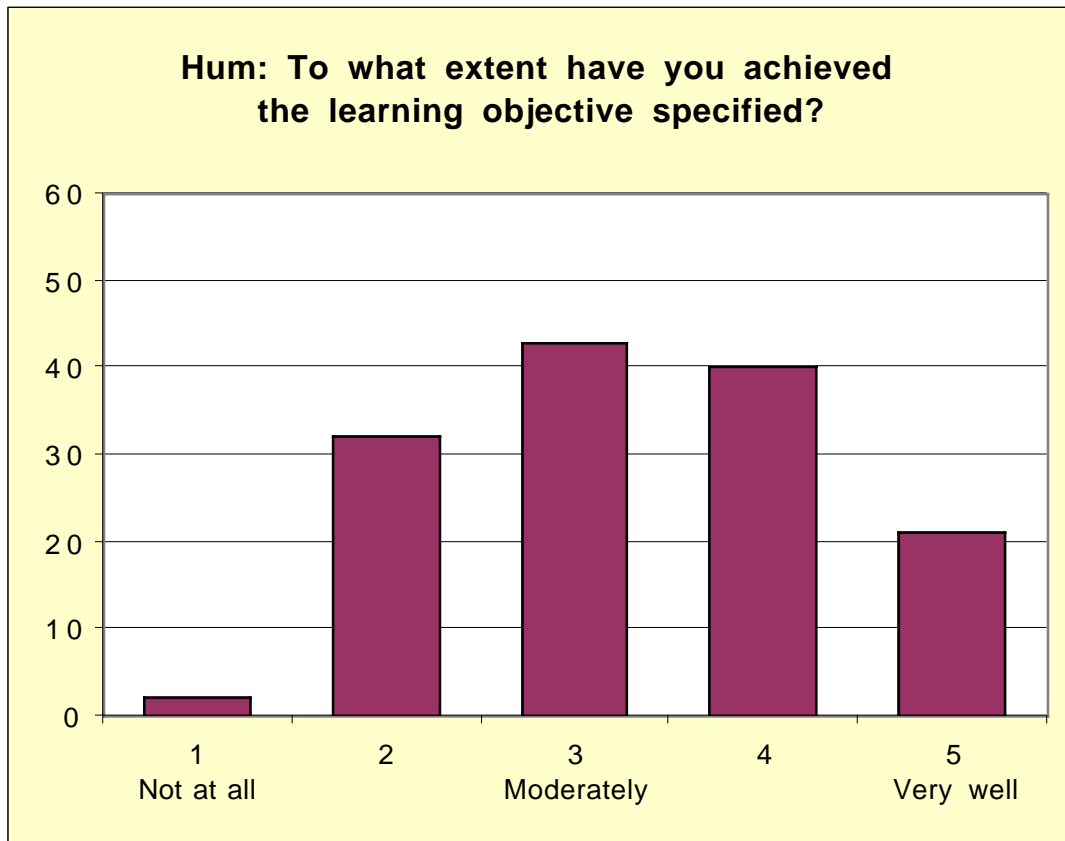
Activities that Met "SS" Requirement		
Class	120	87%
UMM experience as a whole	111	80%
Other	8	6%
Tested out, not sure	<u>0</u>	0%
	138	

Eighty-seven percent of the surveyed students felt that they had achieved the “SS” objective through classes. Another 80% felt that they accomplished it through their UMM experience as a whole.

SS: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased ability to understand social sciences	97	70%
Increased appreciation of importance of diversity	109	79%
Increased confidence in area	70	51%
Other	3	2%
Nothing/not sure	<u>6</u>	4%
	138	

The most frequent response to what important things students learned while achieving the “SS” objective was understanding (70%) and appreciation for human behavior, social processes and institutions (79%). Another 51% of the students gained confidence in the area.

Communication, Language, Literature, and Philosophy (Hum)



The mean score for achievement of the Humanities requirement was 3.33 with a standard deviation of 1.04. The median was 3.31. Seventy-five percent of responses were scores of 3 or above.



The mean score for the importance of the Humanities requirement was 3.04 with a standard deviation of 1.08. The median was 2.95. Sixty-four percent of responses were scores of 3 or above.

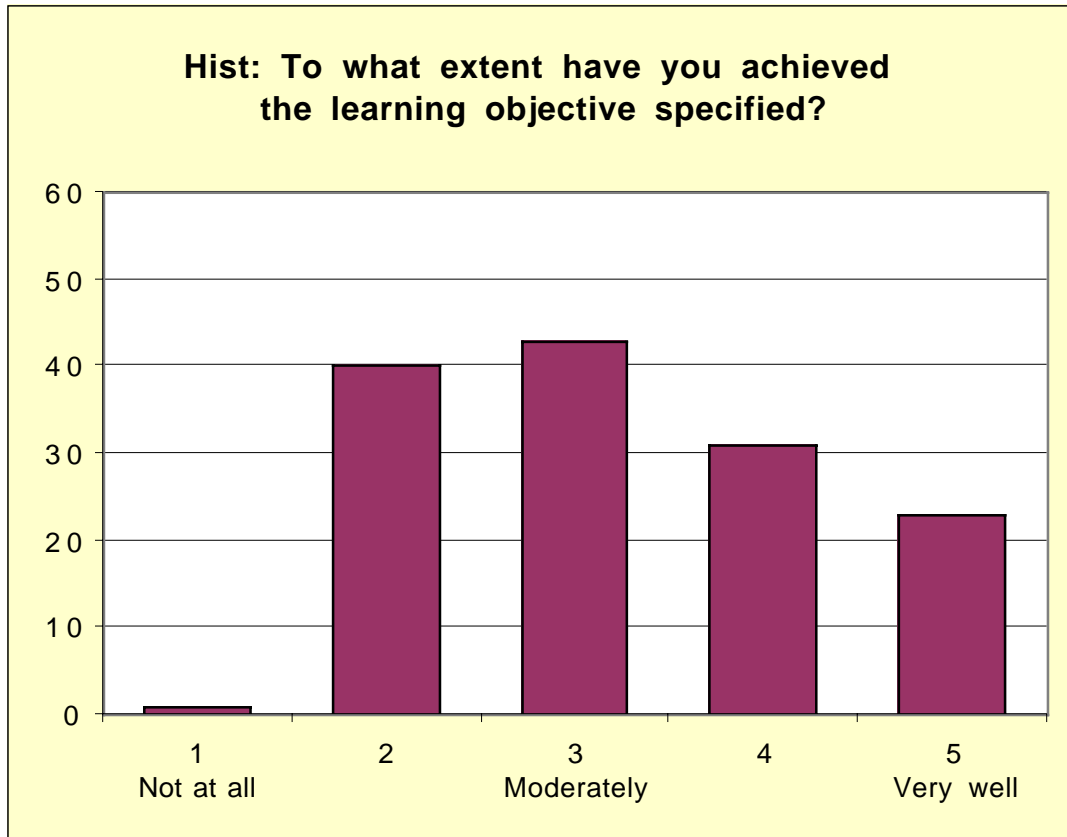
Activities that Met "Hum" Requirement		
Class	129	93%
UMM experience as a whole	87	63%
Other	1	1%
Tested out, not sure	<u>3</u>	2%
	138	

Ninety-three percent of the surveyed students felt that they had achieved the “Hum” objective through a class. Another 63% felt that they accomplished it through their UMM experience as a whole.

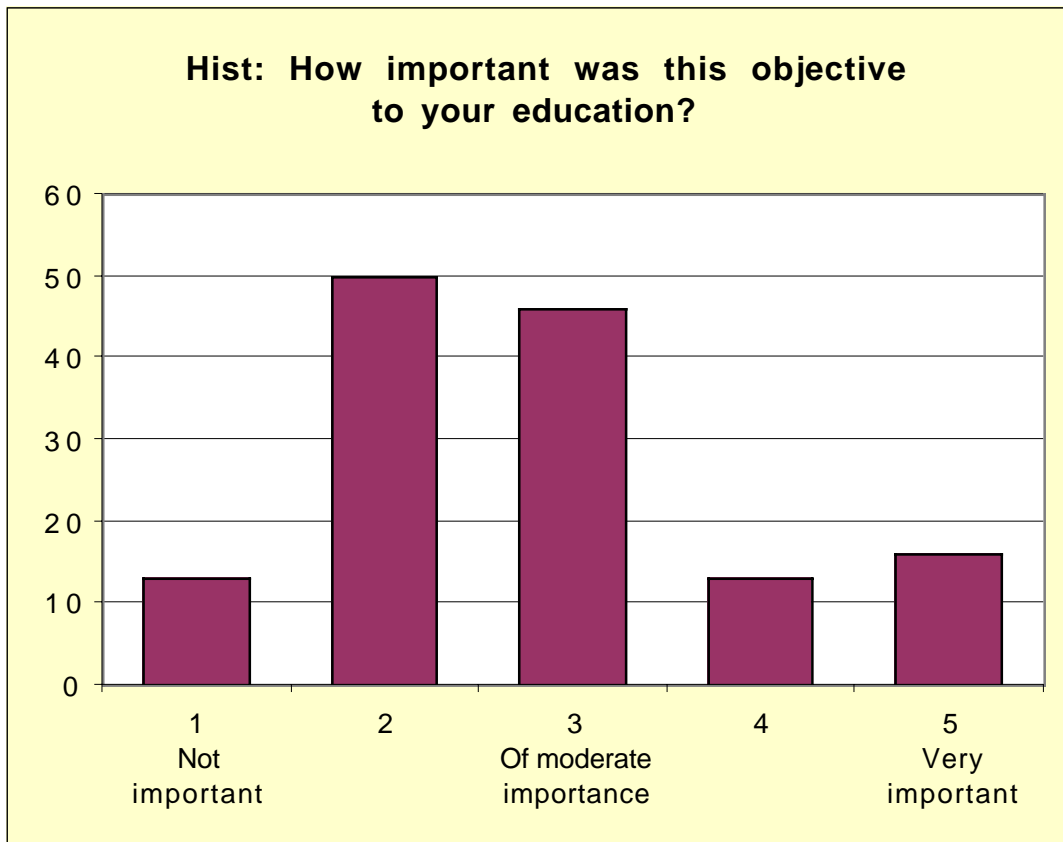
Hum: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased ability to understand humanities	94	69%
Increased appreciation of importance of diversity	96	70%
Increased confidence in area	54	39%
Other	1	1%
Nothing/not sure	<u>14</u>	10%
	137	

The most frequent response to what important things students learned while achieving the “Hum” objective was appreciation for humanities (70%). Another 69% of the students gained understanding in the area.

Historical Perspectives (Hist)



The mean score for this question was 3.25 with a standard deviation of 1.07. The median was 3.15. Seventy percent of responses were 3 or above.



The mean score for the importance of the Historical Perspectives requirement was 2.78 with a standard deviation of 1.12. The median was 2.63. Fifty-four percent of responses were scores of 3 or above.

Activities that Met "Hist" Requirement		
Class	123	89%
Other	8	6%
Tested out/not sure	<u>14</u>	10%
	138	

Almost 90% of the students replied that they achieved the Historical Perspectives objective through some type of class.

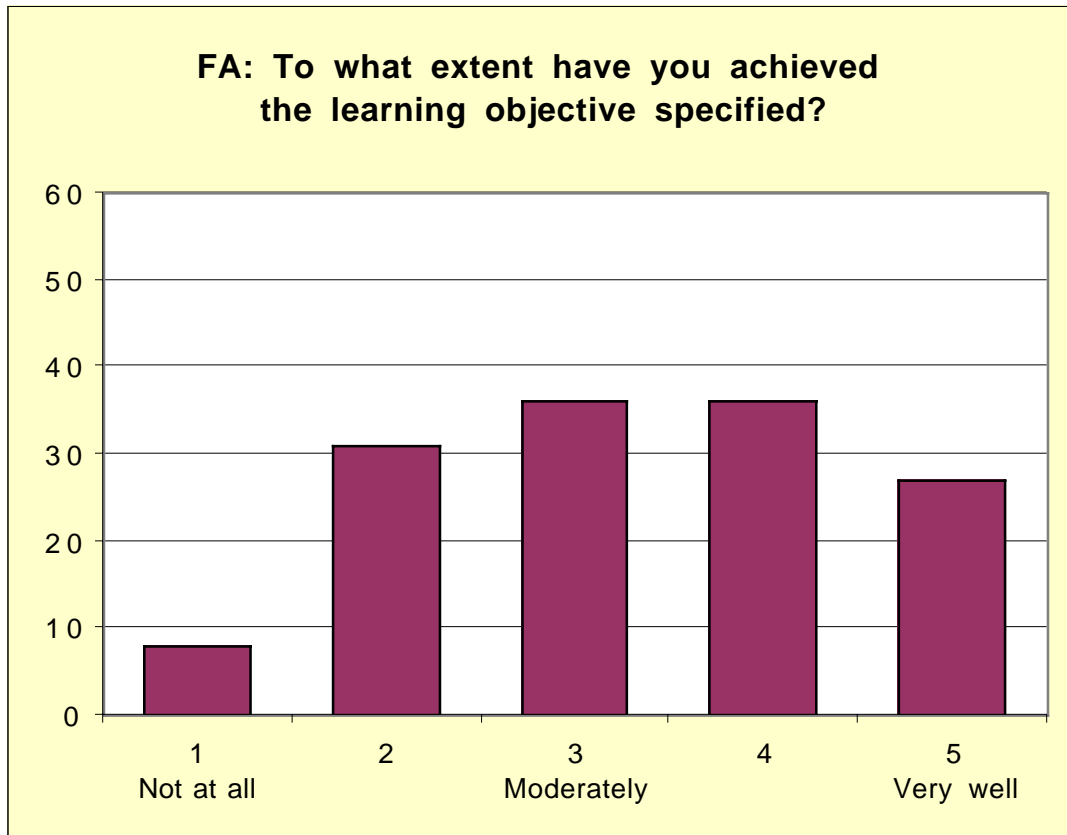
Hist: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased knowledge of history	102	74%
More aware of possible bias in the presentation of "facts" of history	87	64%
Attitudinal: e.g., "I'm more open-minded."	73	53%
Other	1	1%
Nothing/not sure	<u>11</u>	8%
	137	

Increased knowledge of history was the most frequent answer to this question (74%). Sixty-four percent said they were more aware of bias in history "facts."

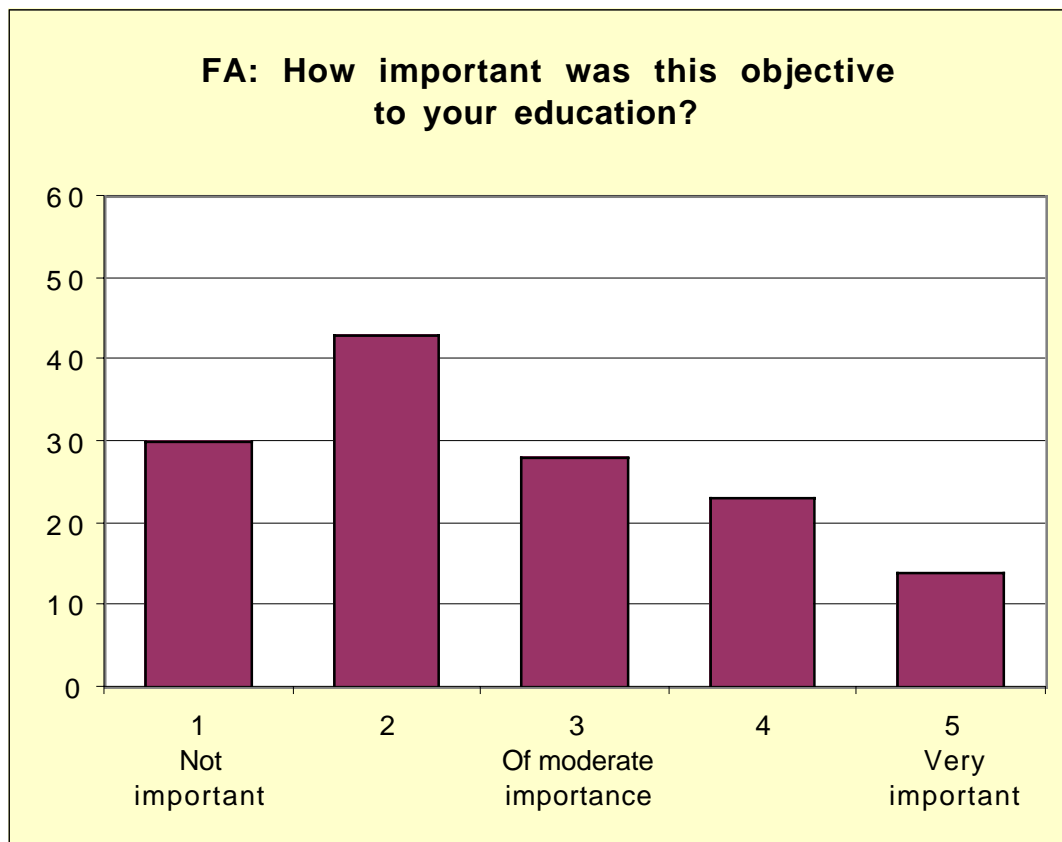
With what historical era or eras, other than the present, do you feel you are familiar?

Named one or more era	77	59%
None	54	41%
	131	

Nearly 60% of the students named an era with which they were familiar. Over 40% were not familiar with an era.

Fine Arts (FA)

Seventy-two percent of the responses for this question were at 3 or above. The mean for this question was 3.31 and the median was 3.33. The standard deviation was 1.18.



The responses related to the importance of the Fine Arts requirement were as numerous at the low end of the scale as they were at the high end. Fifty-three percent of scores were below 3. The mean for this question was 2.62 and the median was 2.41. The standard deviation was 1.27.

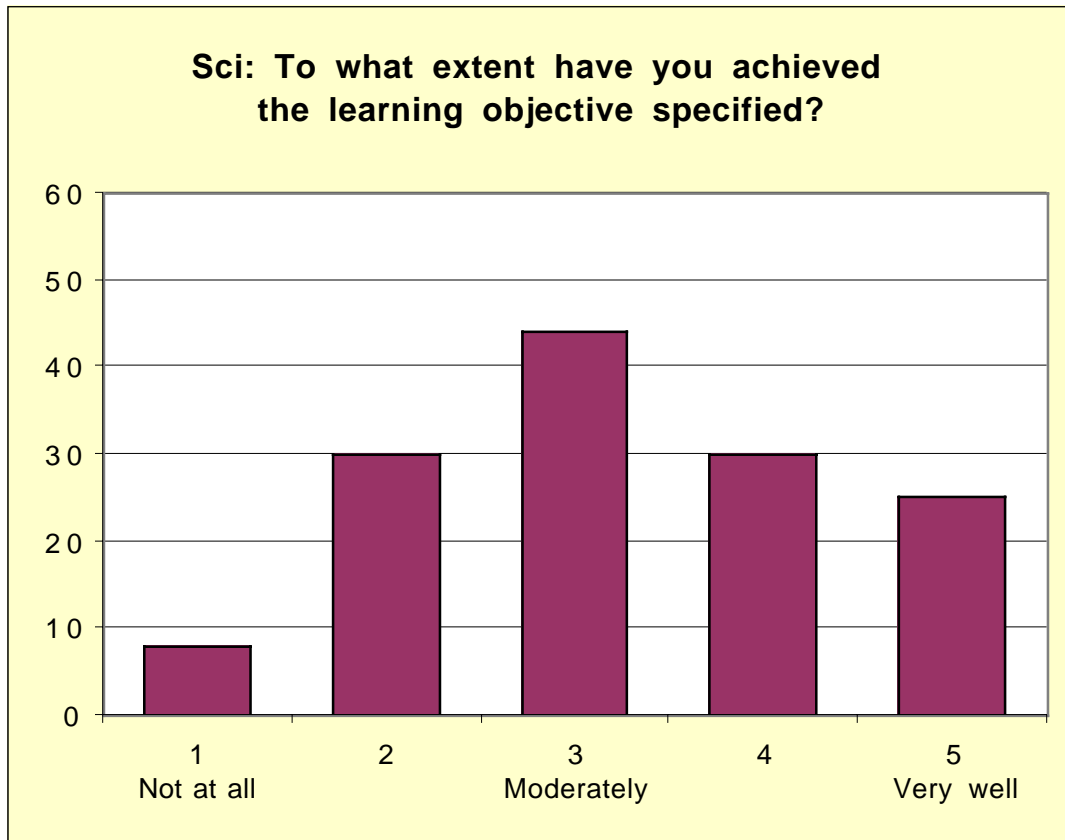
Activities that Met "FA" Requirement		
Class	113	82%
Attending performances, seeing art shows, etc.	108	78%
Other	7	5%
Tested out/not sure	5	4%
	138	

The two most frequent answers to how students achieved the Fine Arts objective were classes (82%) and attending performances, seeing art shows, etc. (78%).

FA: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Appreciation of music/art	106	79%
Increased knowledge of art/music	100	75%
Enjoyment/relaxation	95	71%
Attitudinal: e.g., "flexibility."	47	35%
Other	3	2%
Nothing/not sure	7	5%
	134	

Seventy-nine percent of respondents felt they had increased their appreciation of art and/or music and 75% increased their knowledge of art and/or music. In addition, 71% of the students gained enjoyment or relaxation while meeting this requirement.

Physical and Biological Sciences



The achievement of the Physical and Biological Sciences objective scored quite high. Only 8 students said they had not met the objective at all. Seventy-two percent of scores were 3 or above. This question had a mean of 3.25, standard deviation of 1.16, and median of 3.19.



The Physical and Biological Sciences objective was not as important to students compared to how well they achieved it. Forty-three percent of scores were below 3. The importance mean score was 2.91, standard deviation of 1.33, and median of 2.79.

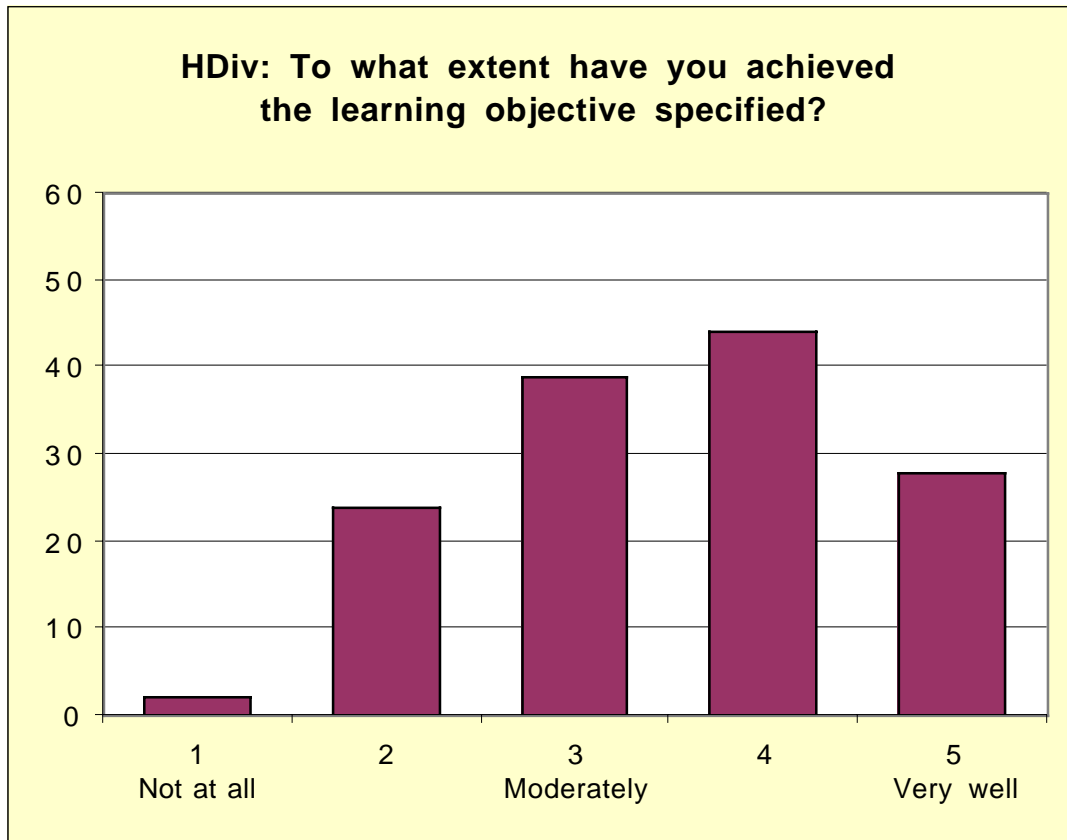
Activities that Met "Sci" Requirement		
Class	127	93%
Other	22	16%
Tested out/not sure	<u>10</u>	7%
	137	

Ninety-three percent of respondents took a class to fulfill the science requirement.

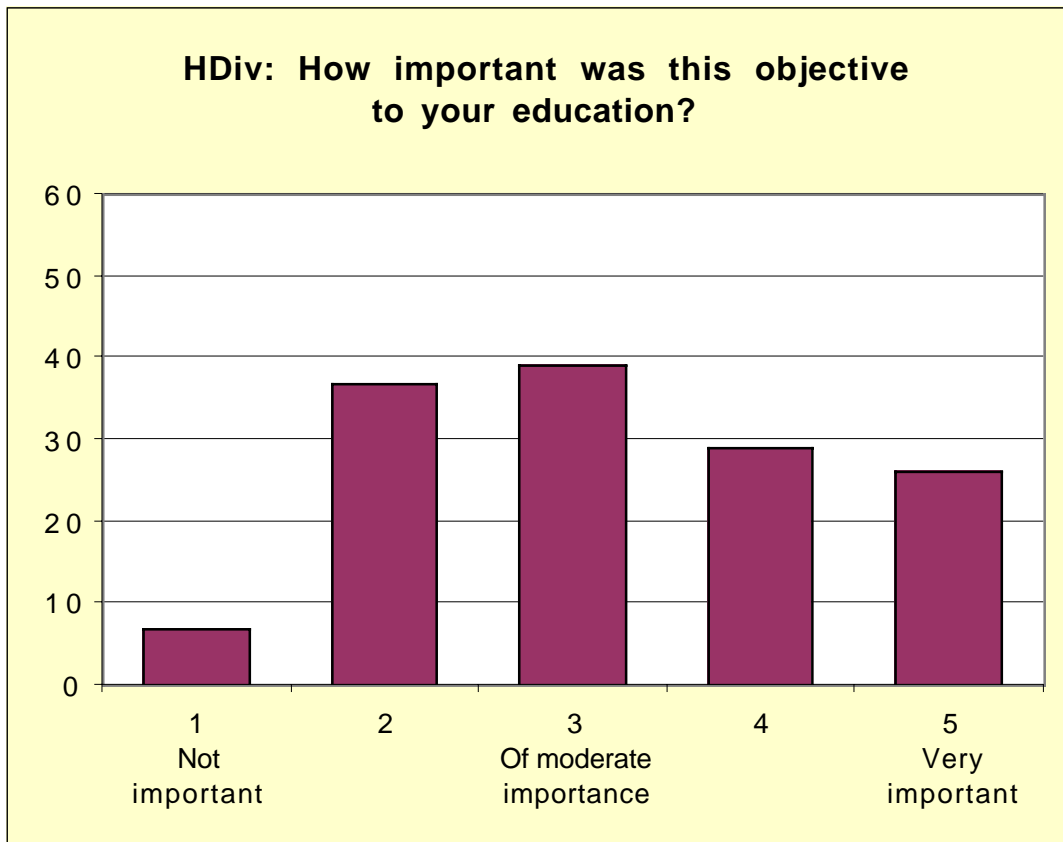
Sci: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased general or particular knowledge of science	112	82%
Attitudinal: e.g., "heightened environmental awareness"	70	51%
Other	5	4%
Nothing/not sure	<u>13</u>	9%
	137	

Over 80% of respondents felt they had increased their knowledge from the science requirement. Nine percent learned nothing or were not sure what they learned.

Global Village: Human Diversity (HDiv)



For the Human Diversity requirement, over 80% of scores were 3 or above. The mean score for the Achievement of the Human Diversity objective was 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.05. The median was 3.58.



The mean score for the importance of the Human Diversity objective was 3.22 with a standard deviation of 1.18. The median was 3.14. Sixty-eight percent of scores were 3 or above.

Activities that Met "HDiv" Requirement		
Class	112	81%
Extra-curricular activities, speakers, shows	99	72%
Interaction with other students/being at UMM in general	100	72%
ELTAP/study abroad	33	24%
Other	9	7%
Tested out/not sure	<u>2</u>	1%
	138	

Over 80% of respondents said they met the Human Diversity objective through a class at UMM. Seventy-two percent met HDiv through extracurricular activities, interaction with students, or being at UMM in general. Twenty-four percent met it through study abroad.

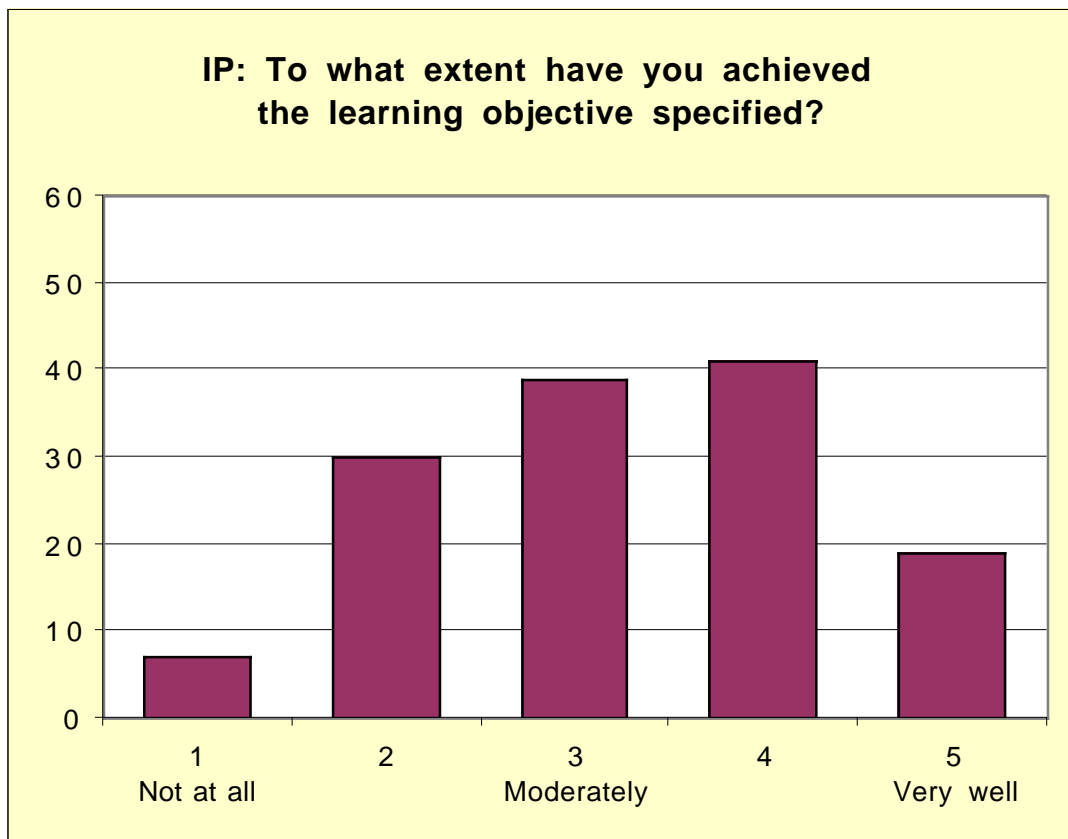
HDiv: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Greater understanding of other cultures	116	85%
That racism/oppression is still around today	94	69%
Attitudinal: e.g., "I respect diversity."	91	66%
Other	6	4%
Nothing/not sure	<u>5</u>	4%
	137	

Eighty-five percent of respondents believed they gained a greater understanding of other cultures through the Human Diversity requirement. Over 60% believe racism/oppression part of society and that their attitudes changed due to this requirement.

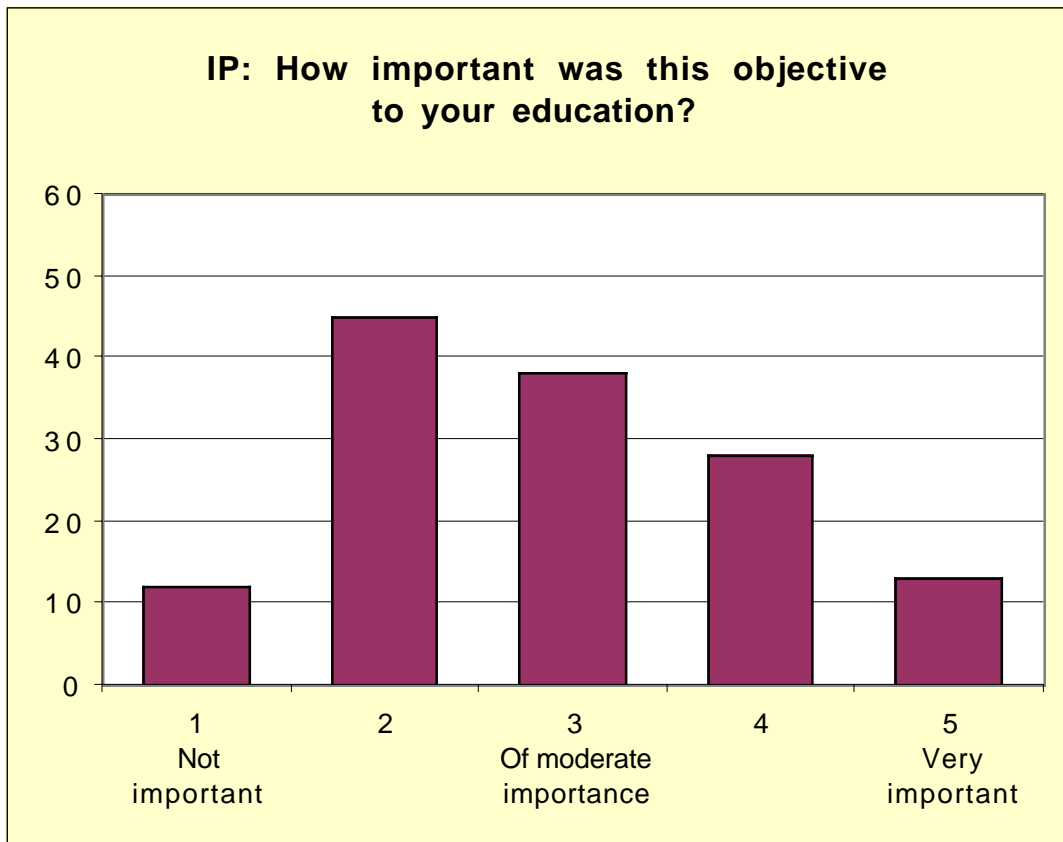
What culture or cultures did you learn about during your time at UMM with which you were not familiar when you entered?		
Named a particular culture: African American	87	65%
Named a particular culture: Native American	82	61%
Named a particular culture: Latin American/Hispanic	61	46%
Named a particular culture: Asian	42	31%
Named a particular culture: African	16	12%
Other culture	19	14%
None	<u>10</u>	7%
	134	

Sixty-five percent of respondents named African American as a culture with which they had become familiar while at UMM. Only 7% said they had learned about no cultures at UMM.

Global Village: International Perspective (IP)



The achievement of the International Perspective objective question had a mean of 3.26, standard deviation of 1.10, and median of 3.29. Seventy-three percent of scores were 3 or above.



The importance of the International Perspective objective question had a mean of 2.89, standard deviation of 1.12, and median of 2.79. Fifty-eight percent of scores were 3 or above.

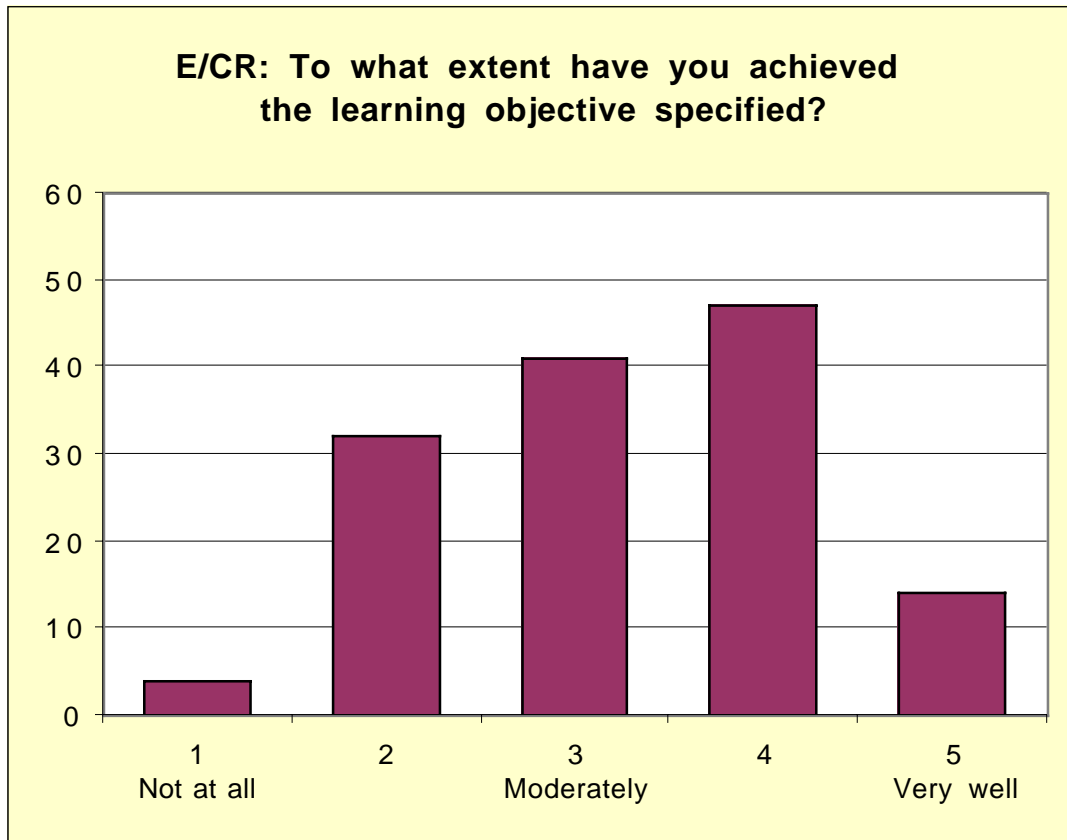
Activities that Met "IP" Requirement		
Class	111	81%
Extra-curricular activities, speakers, shows	79	58%
Interaction with other students/being at UMM in general	77	56%
ELTAP/study abroad	32	23%
Other	4	3%
Tested out/not sure	7	5%
	137	

The most frequent answer to how students achieved the International Perspective objective were classes (81%).

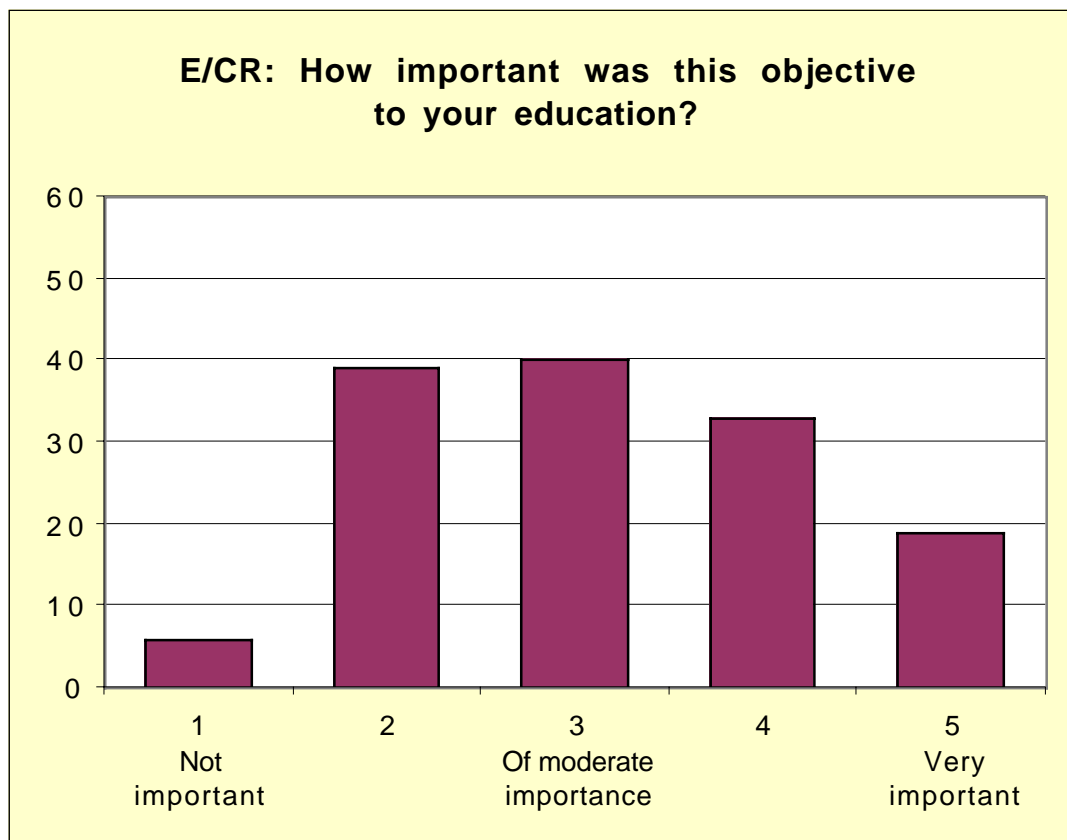
IP: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Greater understanding/appreciation of other cultures	113	84%
Attitudinal: e.g., "appreciation of differences."	94	70%
Other	3	2%
Nothing/not sure	<u>10</u>	7%
	135	

Eighty-four percent of respondents felt they had gained a greater understanding or appreciation of other cultures because of the International Perspective requirement. In addition, 70% had a change of attitude.

Global Village: Ethical and Civic Responsibility (E/CR)



Most students were in the middle of the road on this question. Seventy-four percent of scores were 3 or above. This question had a mean of 3.25, standard deviation of 1.01, and median of 3.30.



The importance of the Ethical and Civic Responsibility requirement had a mean of 3.15, standard deviation of 1.11, and median of 3.09. Sixty-seven percent of scores were 3 or above.

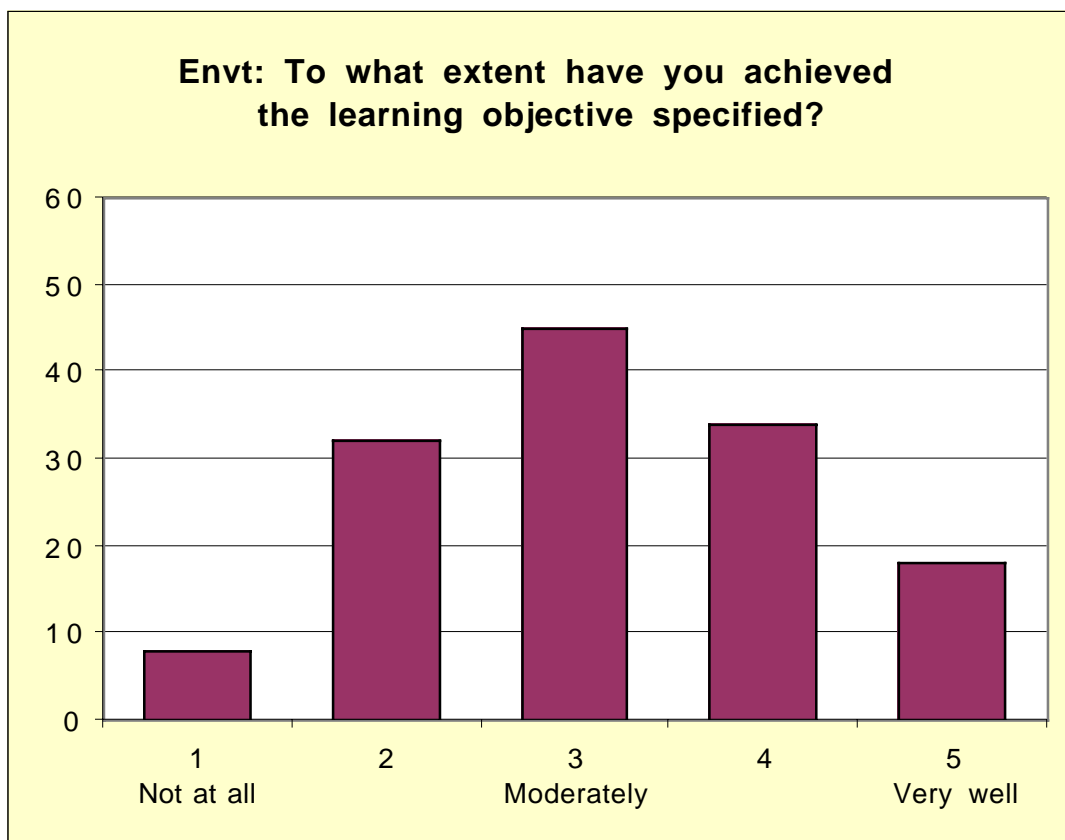
Activities that Met "E/CR" Requirement		
Class	117	85%
Extra-curricular activities, speakers, shows on campus	80	58%
Interaction with other students/being at UMM in general	91	66%
Other	3	2%
Tested out/not sure	5	4%
	137	

Eighty-five percent of respondents met this requirement through a class.

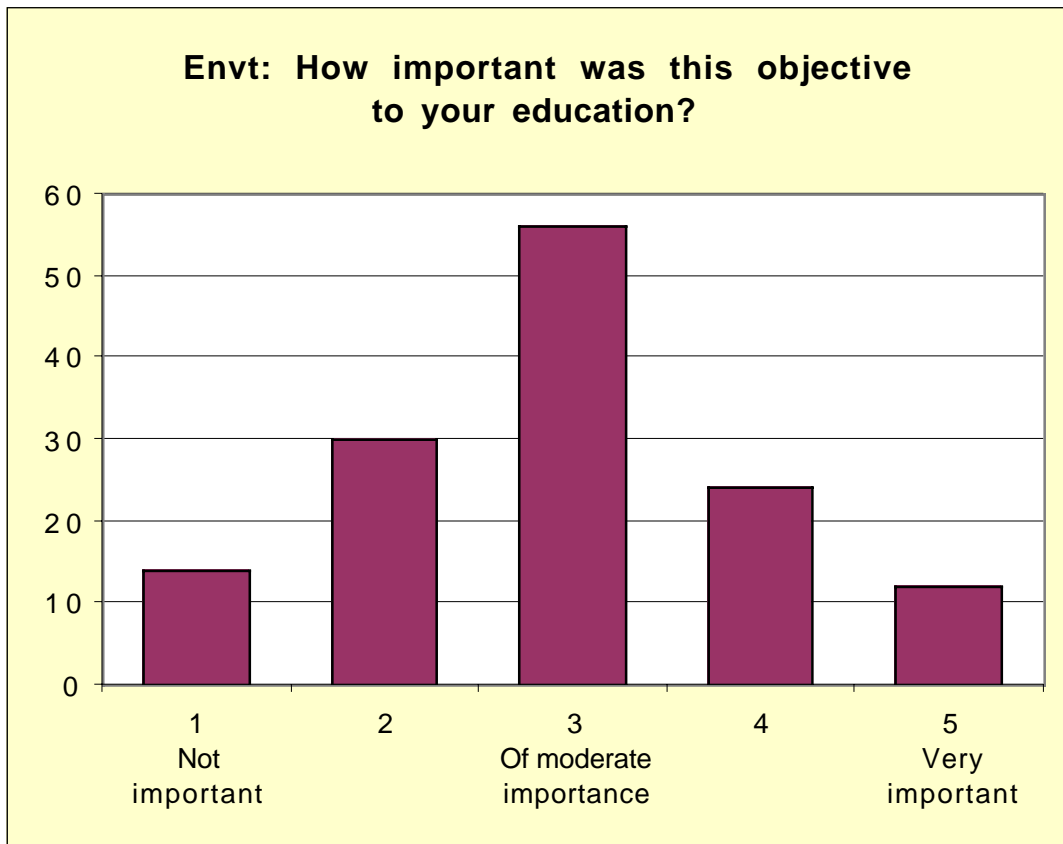
E/CR: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Increased critical thinking skills	115	84%
Attitudinal: e.g., "don't accept things at face value."	94	69%
Other	1	1%
Nothing/not sure	10	7%
	137	

Eighty-four percent of respondents felt their critical thinking skills had increased because of this requirement. Another 69% felt their attitudes had changed.

Global Village: People and the Environment (Envt)



The majority of students felt that they had achieved the People and the Environment objective. Seventy-one percent of scores were 3 or above. The median score for this objective was 3.13 and it had a mean of 3.16 with a standard deviation of 1.10.



The scores on the importance of the environment requirement resulted in a mean of 2.93, a standard deviation of 1.08, and a median of 2.93. Sixty-eight percent of scores were 3 or above.

Activities that Met "Envt" Requirement		
Class	107	79%
Interaction with other students/being at UMM in general	80	59%
Other	4	3%
Tested out/not sure	<u>12</u>	9%
	136	

Seventy-nine percent of respondents said they met the People and the Environment requirement with a class.

Envt: Important Things Learned in Meeting This Objective		
Attitudinal	102	77%
Other	3	2%
Nothing/not sure	<u>32</u>	24%
	133	

For this question, 77% of students believed the important result of this requirement was a change in attitude (77%).