



NSSE 2017 Topical Module Report

First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

Washington State University

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About This Topical Module

This module includes a set of items only for first-year students and a set only for seniors, with questions adapted from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, respectively. The first-year items focus on academic perseverance, help-seeking behaviors, and institutional commitment, while the senior items explore post-graduation plans, links between the academic major and future plans, and confidence with skills developed during college.

Comparison Group

This section summarizes how this module's comparison group was identified, including selection criteria and whether the default option was taken. This is followed by the resulting list of institutions represented in the 'First Year Exper' column of this report.

Group label	First Year Exper
Date submitted	5/19/17
How was this comparison group constructed?	Your institution customized this comparison group by selecting institutions from all module participants.
Group description	No description provided

First Year Exper (N=6)

Kansas State University (Manhattan, KS)*

Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)*

University of Alabama at Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)*

University of Delaware (Newark, DE)

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, The (Knoxville, TN)*

University of Texas at Arlington, The (Arlington, TX)

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?										
a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do	FYSfy01a	1	Never	25	3	74	3	2.8	2.9	-.06
		2	Sometimes	323	34	874	34			
		3	Often	410	42	984	36			
		4	Very often	205	21	700	27			
		Total		963	100	2,632	100			
b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn't understand the material	FYSfy01b	1	Never	22	2	54	2	2.9	2.9	-.05
		2	Sometimes	262	28	728	28			
		3	Often	483	50	1,243	48			
		4	Very often	191	20	590	23			
		Total		958	100	2,615	100			
c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn't feel like it	FYSfy01c	1	Never	78	8	199	8	2.5	2.5	-.02
		2	Sometimes	439	46	1,156	45			
		3	Often	318	33	890	32			
		4	Very often	127	13	377	14			
		Total		962	100	2,622	100			
d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments	FYSfy01d	1	Never	98	10	296	12	2.4	2.4	.04
		2	Sometimes	455	47	1,198	47			
		3	Often	298	31	802	29			
		4	Very often	111	11	317	12			
		Total		962	100	2,613	100			
e. Finished something you have started when you encountered challenges	FYSfy01e	1	Never	4	0	17	1	3.1	3.1	.00
		2	Sometimes	177	19	485	20			
		3	Often	489	51	1,268	49			
		4	Very often	293	30	840	31			
		Total		963	100	2,610	100			
f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment	FYSfy01f	1	Never	29	3	103	4	2.9	2.8 *	.09
		2	Sometimes	288	29	828	31			
		3	Often	421	44	1,122	43			
		4	Very often	225	24	561	22			
		Total		963	100	2,614	100			
2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?										
a. Learning course material	FYSfy02a	1	Not at all difficult	30	3	97	4	3.5	3.6 *	-.08
		2	2	130	14	376	14			
		3	3	311	32	744	28			
		4	4	354	37	943	36			
		5	5	115	12	351	14			
		6	Very difficult	23	2	110	4			
		Total		963	100	2,621	100			
b. Managing your time	FYSfy02b	1	Not at all difficult	42	4	103	4	3.7	3.9 **	-.10
		2	2	138	14	327	12			
		3	3	228	24	593	22			
		4	4	271	28	747	28			
		5	5	191	20	523	20			
		6	Very difficult	92	10	325	13			
		Total		962	100	2,618	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
c. Getting help with school work	FYSfy02c	1	Not at all difficult	123	13	326	12	3.0	3.0	.00
		2	2	229	24	663	25			
		3	3	277	29	751	29			
		4	4	212	22	549	22			
		5	5	88	9	232	9			
		6	Very difficult	33	4	96	4			
		Total		962	100	2,617	100			
d. Interacting with faculty	FYSfy02d	1	Not at all difficult	156	17	358	13	2.9	3.0 **	-.10
		2	2	255	27	669	25			
		3	3	243	26	713	28			
		4	4	181	19	501	19			
		5	5	98	10	268	10			
		6	Very difficult	27	3	110	4			
		Total		960	100	2,619	100			
3. During the current school year, about how often have you sought help with coursework from the following sources?										
a. Faculty members	FYSfy03a_16	1	Never	160	16	463	19	2.1	2.1	.00
		2	Sometimes	559	58	1,420	55			
		3	Often	197	21	570	21			
		4	Very often	46	4	165	6			
			Total	962	100	2,618	100			
b. Academic advisors	FYSfy03b_16	1	Never	389	41	1,204	49	1.8	1.7 ***	.16
		2	Sometimes	397	41	1,002	37			
		3	Often	141	14	326	11			
		4	Very often	34	3	81	3			
			Total	961	100	2,613	100			
c. Learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success coaching, etc.)	FYSfy03c_16	1	Never	344	36	979	40	1.9	1.9	-.02
		2	Sometimes	403	42	931	36			
		3	Often	162	17	451	16			
		4	Very often	51	5	244	9			
			Total	960	100	2,605	100			
d. Friends or other students	FYSfy03d_16	1	Never	42	5	89	4	2.9	3.0 **	-.11
		2	Sometimes	243	26	589	23			
		3	Often	405	42	1,083	42			
		4	Very often	271	28	855	32			
			Total	961	100	2,616	100			
e. Family members	FYSfy03e_16	1	Never	410	44	1,140	46	1.9	1.8	.05
		2	Sometimes	317	33	840	32			
		3	Often	167	17	438	16			
		4	Very often	68	7	194	6			
			Total	962	100	2,612	100			
f. Other persons or offices	FYSfy03f_16	1	Never	547	56	1,678	65	1.6	1.5 ***	.16
		2	Sometimes	302	31	662	26			
		3	Often	88	10	199	7			
		4	Very often	23	2	61	2			
			Total	960	100	2,600	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
4a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?^j										
	FYSfy04a	No		654	69	1,967	75	31%	25% ***	.14 △
		Yes		309	31	650	25			
		Total		963	100	2,617	100			
4b. [If answered "yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)										
	FYSfy04b_1_16	—	Academics are too difficult	55	17	120	20			
	FYSfy04b_2_16	—	Academics are too easy	18	6	28	4			
		—	Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)	35	12	82	13			
	FYSfy04b_3_16	—								
	FYSfy04b_4_16	—	Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)	135	43	294	44			
		—	To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)	51	17	99	16			
	FYSfy04b_5_16	—								
	FYSfy04b_6_16	—	Difficulty managing demands of school and work	47	15	91	16			
	FYSfy04b_7_16	—	Too much emphasis on partying	41	13	57	9			
	FYSfy04b_8_16	—	Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun	44	13	84	15			
	FYSfy04b_9_16	—	Relations with faculty and staff	23	7	45	7			
	FYSfy04b_10_16	—	Relations with other students	64	19	147	22			
	FYSfy04b_11_16	—	Campus climate, location, or culture	133	42	167	27			
	FYSfy04b_12_16	—	Unsafe or hostile environment	9	3	28	5			
		—	Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)	158	49	287	42			
	FYSfy04b_13_16	—								
	FYSfy04b_14_16	—	A reason not listed above, please specify:	50	17	77	12			
5. How important is it to you that you graduate from <i>this institution</i>?										
	FYSfy05	1	Not important	50	5	55	3	5.0	5.3 ***	-.19 ▽
		2		38	4	58	3			
		3		51	5	122	5			
		4		113	11	215	9			
		5		137	14	377	15			
		6	Very important	573	59	1,784	66			
		Total		962	100	2,611	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		WSU	First Year Exper	WSU	First Year Exper	WSU	First Year Exper			
FYSfy01a	959	2.81	2.86	.03	.01	0.79	0.85	1,608	.074	-.06
FYSfy01b	955	2.87	2.91	.02	.01	0.74	0.76	4,479	.201	-.05
FYSfy01c	958	2.51	2.52	.03	.01	0.82	0.84	4,489	.621	-.02
FYSfy01d	959	2.44	2.41	.03	.01	0.82	0.85	4,481	.330	.04
FYSfy01e	960	3.10	3.10	.02	.01	0.70	0.72	4,480	.924	.00
FYSfy01f	959	2.89	2.82	.03	.01	0.79	0.82	1,557	.013	.09
FYSfy02a	960	3.47	3.56	.03	.02	1.04	1.13	1,636	.029	-.08
FYSfy02b	958	3.75	3.88	.04	.02	1.31	1.33	4,487	.005	-.10
FYSfy02c	959	3.00	3.01	.04	.02	1.28	1.27	4,490	.918	.00
FYSfy02d	957	2.87	3.01	.04	.02	1.32	1.33	4,491	.006	-.10
FYSfy03a_16	958	2.14	2.14	.02	.01	0.73	0.78	1,607	.993	.00
FYSfy03b_16	957	1.81	1.68	.03	.01	0.81	0.78	4,482	.000	.16
FYSfy03b_16	956	1.91	1.93	.03	.02	0.85	0.94	1,647	.548	-.02
FYSfy03b_16	957	2.92	3.01	.03	.01	0.85	0.84	4,479	.003	-.11
FYSfy03e_16	958	1.87	1.82	.03	.02	0.93	0.91	4,483	.179	.05
FYSfy03f_16	956	1.58	1.46	.02	.01	0.77	0.72	1,455	.000	.16
FYSfy04a ^k	960	.314	.250	.0150	.0073	--	--	--	.000	.14
FYSfy05	959	5.04	5.28	.05	.02	1.46	1.25	1,361	.000	-.19

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
1. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?										
	FYSsr01_16	No		349	35	1,121	32			
		Yes		694	65	2,439	68			
		Total		1,043	100	3,560	100			
1a. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?										
	FYSsr01a	—	Full-time employment	407	59	1,373	56			
		—	Part-time employment	21	3	87	3			
		—	Graduate or professional school	133	19	595	24			
		—	Military service	7	1	17	1			
		—	Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.)	7	1	31	1			
		—	Internship (paid or unpaid)	55	7	136	6			
		—	Travel or gap year	27	4	96	4			
		—	No plans at this time	18	2	62	3			
		—	Other, please specify:	26	4	53	2			
		Total		701	100	2,450	100			
1b. [If immediate plans included full- or part-time employment] Do you already have a job for after graduation?^j										
	FYSsr01b	No		239	56	757	50	44%	50% *	-.12 ▽
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	Yes, I will start a new job		106	25	379	26			
		Yes, I will continue in my current job		82	19	318	24			
		Total		427	100	1,454	100			
2. [Excludes those who answered "No," not expecting spring/summer graduation] To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?										
	FYSsr02	1	Very little	42	6	118	6	3.0	3.0	.00
		2	Some	143	20	549	23			
		3	Quite a bit	284	41	948	38			
		4	Very much	228	32	831	34			
		Total		697	100	2,446	100			
3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?^j										
	FYSsr03	Yes		920	87	3,069	86	87%	86%	.05
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		45	4	152	5			
		Unsure		85	8	328	10			
		Total		1,050	100	3,549	100			
4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?^j										
	FYSsr04	Yes		208	21	645	19	21%	19%	.04
	(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No		579	53	1,907	52			
		Unsure		261	26	1,008	29			
		Total		1,048	100	3,560	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b			
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper		
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d	
5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?^j											
	FYSsr05		Yes	225	22	758	22	22%	22%	.01	
		(Means indicate the percentage who responded "Yes.")	No	539	50	1,697	46				
			Unsure	284	28	1,106	32				
			Total	1,048	100	3,561	100				
6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?											
a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information	FYSsr06a		1	Very little	4	0	12	0	3.4	3.5 *	-0.08 ▽
			2	Some	83	8	244	6			
			3	Quite a bit	413	38	1,342	36			
			4	Very much	548	53	1,958	57			
				Total	1,048	100	3,556	100			
b. Creative thinking and problem solving	FYSsr06b		1	Very little	8	1	14	0	3.4	3.5 **	-0.11 ▽
			2	Some	72	7	230	6			
			3	Quite a bit	421	39	1,284	36			
			4	Very much	545	53	2,028	58			
				Total	1,046	100	3,556	100			
c. Research skills	FYSsr06c		1	Very little	18	2	88	2	3.2	3.2	.04
			2	Some	175	17	641	18			
			3	Quite a bit	431	41	1,444	40			
			4	Very much	422	41	1,385	40			
				Total	1,046	100	3,558	100			
d. Clear writing	FYSsr06d		1	Very little	16	2	40	1	3.2	3.3 *	-0.09 ▽
			2	Some	142	14	477	14			
			3	Quite a bit	459	44	1,409	39			
			4	Very much	431	40	1,629	46			
				Total	1,048	100	3,555	100			
e. Persuasive speaking	FYSsr06e		1	Very little	45	4	156	4	2.9	3.0 ***	-0.13 ▽
			2	Some	306	29	855	24			
			3	Quite a bit	418	40	1,386	39			
			4	Very much	279	27	1,161	33			
				Total	1,048	100	3,558	100			
f. Technological skills	FYSsr06f		1	Very little	33	3	101	3	3.0	3.1 *	-0.08 ▽
			2	Some	281	25	785	21			
			3	Quite a bit	408	38	1,452	40			
			4	Very much	325	34	1,219	36			
				Total	1,047	100	3,557	100			
g. Financial and business management skills	FYSsr06g		1	Very little	182	17	522	14	2.4	2.6 **	-0.11 ▽
			2	Some	412	39	1,264	35			
			3	Quite a bit	277	27	1,079	31			
			4	Very much	176	17	691	20			
				Total	1,047	100	3,556	100			

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				WSU		First Year Exper		WSU	First Year Exper	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
h. Entrepreneurial skills	FYSSr06h	1	Very little	281	26	801	22	2.2	2.3 ***	-0.13
		2	Some	415	40	1,366	38			
		3	Quite a bit	242	23	887	25			
		4	Very much	108	11	494	15			
		Total		1,046	100	3,548	100			
i. Leadership skills	FYSSr06i	1	Very little	34	3	88	3	3.1	3.2 **	-0.11
		2	Some	200	19	566	16			
		3	Quite a bit	387	37	1,284	36			
		4	Very much	426	40	1,622	45			
		Total		1,047	100	3,560	100			
j. Networking and relationship building	FYSSr06j	1	Very little	64	6	173	5	2.9	3.0 ***	-0.14
		2	Some	282	28	773	22			
		3	Quite a bit	371	35	1,296	36			
		4	Very much	327	31	1,305	36			
		Total		1,044	100	3,547	100			
7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?										
a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming	FYSSr07a	1	Very little	36	4	136	5	3.0	3.1	-0.05
		2	Some	229	22	751	21			
		3	Quite a bit	444	42	1,376	38			
		4	Very much	335	32	1,291	36			
		Total		1,044	100	3,554	100			
b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty	FYSSr07b	1	Very little	255	25	936	27	2.3	2.3	-0.01
		2	Some	344	33	1,063	29			
		3	Quite a bit	272	25	906	25			
		4	Very much	172	17	640	18			
		Total		1,043	100	3,545	100			
c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem	FYSSr07c	1	Very little	55	5	175	6	2.9	3.0	-0.06
		2	Some	258	25	785	22			
		3	Quite a bit	409	39	1,374	39			
		4	Very much	319	31	1,202	34			
		Total		1,041	100	3,536	100			
d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions	FYSSr07d	1	Very little	146	14	469	14	2.6	2.6	-0.05
		2	Some	340	33	1,128	31			
		3	Quite a bit	335	32	1,097	31			
		4	Very much	214	21	828	24			
		Total		1,035	100	3,522	100			

8. Is there anything your institution could have done better to prepare you for your career or further education? Please describe.

This final question asked students to respond in an open text box. Comments were recorded for 404 seniors. Responses are provided in your "NSSE17 Topical Module - Senior Transitions Student Comments" report and in a separate SPSS data file.

These open-ended responses appear exactly as respondents entered them and may not be suitable for distribution without prior review.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error ^f		Standard deviation ^g		DF ^h	Sig. ⁱ	Effect size ^d
		WSU	First Year Exper	WSU	First Year Exper	WSU	First Year Exper			
	Comparisons with:									
FYSsr01b ^k	425	.436	.495	.0241	.0125	--	--	--	.030	-.12
FYSsr02	685	3.00	3.00	.03	.02	0.88	0.89	3,384	.981	.00
FYSsr03 ^k	1050	.874	.856	.0102	.0056	--	--	--	.126	.05
FYSsr04 ^k	1048	.209	.193	.0126	.0063	--	--	--	.230	.04
FYSsr05 ^k	1048	.224	.221	.0129	.0066	--	--	--	.827	.01
FYSsr06a	1,048	3.44	3.50	.02	.01	0.66	0.63	1,604	.024	-.08
FYSsr06b	1,046	3.44	3.51	.02	.01	0.66	0.63	1,590	.003	-.11
FYSsr06c	1,046	3.21	3.17	.02	.01	0.77	0.80	4,980	.225	.04
FYSsr06d	1,048	3.24	3.30	.02	.01	0.74	0.74	4,977	.014	-.09
FYSsr06e	1,048	2.89	3.00	.03	.01	0.85	0.86	4,980	.000	-.13
FYSsr06f	1,047	3.02	3.09	.03	.01	0.84	0.82	4,979	.017	-.08
FYSsr06g	1,047	2.45	2.56	.03	.02	0.96	0.96	4,978	.001	-.11
FYSsr06h	1,047	2.19	2.32	.03	.02	0.94	0.98	1,693	.000	-.13
FYSsr06i	1,047	3.15	3.24	.03	.01	0.84	0.82	4,980	.002	-.11
FYSsr06j	1,044	2.91	3.03	.03	.01	0.91	0.90	4,966	.000	-.14
FYSsr07a	1,044	3.02	3.06	.03	.01	0.83	0.87	1,694	.168	-.05
FYSsr07b	1,043	2.34	2.35	.03	.02	1.03	1.06	1,681	.843	-.01
FYSsr07c	1,042	2.95	3.00	.03	.01	0.88	0.89	4,951	.087	-.06
FYSsr07d	1,035	2.59	2.64	.03	.02	0.97	1.00	4,926	.180	-.05

Endnotes

- a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts.
- b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.
- c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.
- d. Effect size for independent t -tests uses Cohen's d ; z -tests use Cohen's h .
- e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.
- f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.
- g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.
- h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the t -tests. Values differ from N s due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.
- i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t -tests or z -tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.
- j. Statistical comparison uses z -test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.
- k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

- ▲ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.
- △ **Your students' average** was significantly higher ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▽ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.
- ▼ **Your students' average** was significantly lower ($p < .05$) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context.