

# Research & Analysis

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## **DID I LEARN? - A STUDENT ASSESSMENT: RESULTS OF THE 2007 CCSSE ADMINISTRATION**

As its namesake suggests, the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)* seeks to measure student engagement. The survey is based on research demonstrating an association between educational engagement and learning outcomes. The survey does not measure learning outcomes per se.

However, unique to the instrument, survey question #12 asks respondents to rate the level of knowledge gained as a consequence of their engagement. Though this does not constitute direct evidence of learning outcomes, self-assessment does provide an important indirect measure; that is - do students think they learned.

### **Question #12, a Self-Assessment of Student Learning**

Question #12 asks “how much has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THIS COLLEGE contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?” The question is followed by 15 items which include several general education outcomes similar to those defined by HCC (2007-08 *College Catalog*, p. 95). The importance of attaining general education competencies is evident in Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1 of the SACS *Principles of Accreditation*.

*The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.*

The respondent is asked to rate each item using the following scale:

1 = very little, 2 = some, 3 = quite a bit, and 4 = very much.

This brief will examine the mean college response to each item within question #12. Comparisons will be made to the means of the 22 Achieving the Dream (AtD) colleges, the 28 Florida community colleges, the 46 “extra-large” community colleges, and the national cohort consisting of 525 institutions. Furthermore the results will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity for HCC students.

### **The Results**

The following table displays the 2007 mean results of all items for question #12, with the 2004 and 2006 results also shown for HCC.

**Table 1. Mean Ratings of 15 Items Addressing CCSSE Question #12, Comparisons of HCC to Achieving the Dream Colleges, Florida Community Colleges, Extra-Large Community Colleges, and the National Cohort, 2007**

Survey Item	HCC			AtD (22)	FL (28)	XL (46)	Nation (525)
	2004	2006	2007				
1. Acquiring a broad general education	2.87	2.93	2.87	2.97	2.98	2.93	2.93
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.18	2.26	2.31	2.57*	2.42	2.43	2.55*
3. Writing clearly and effectively	2.59	2.69	2.61	2.72	2.74	2.67	2.68
4. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.51	2.59	2.56	2.66	2.62	2.59	2.58
5. Thinking critically and analytically	2.78	2.76	2.75	2.90	2.86	2.83	2.85
6. Solving numerical problems	2.57	2.61	2.72	2.64	2.69	2.54	2.57
7. Using computing and information technology	2.59	2.60	2.60	2.77	2.72	2.63	2.69
8. Working effectively with others	2.50	2.56	2.54	2.77*	2.64	2.64	2.69
9. Learning effectively on your own	2.80	2.80	2.81	2.93	2.86	2.85	2.88
10. Understanding yourself	2.42	2.52	2.42	2.66*	2.54	2.56	2.56
11. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.26	2.41	2.24	2.44	2.35	2.39	2.34
12. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.16	2.26	2.24	2.42	2.31	2.31	2.32
13. Contributing to the welfare of your community	1.80	1.91	1.88	2.04	1.96	1.94	1.97
14. Developing clearer career goals	2.41	2.46	2.50	2.68	2.58	2.57	2.62
15. Gaining information about career opportunities	2.19	2.30	2.31	2.56*	2.46	2.47	2.51

\* Mean differences with HCC are significant at  $p < 0.001$  and an effect size equal to or greater than 0.2.

Ratings fluctuate between 2 “some” and 3 “quite a bit,” with the exception of item #13 “Contributing to the welfare of the community.” For the most part, HCC scores fall below the means of the comparison groups. For the HCC scores falling below the AtD means, four were statistically significant in their difference. These items mostly related to workforce preparation. They include:

1. Item #2 “Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills;”
2. Item #8 “Working effectively with others;”
3. Item #10 “Understanding yourself;” and
4. Item #15 “Gaining information about career opportunities.”

For HCC scores falling below the nation, item #2 “Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills” was statistically significant.

In only one instance did an HCC rating exceed the means of a comparison group - item #6, “Solving numerical problems.” In fact, the rating exceeds the means of all four groups. Note also the steady gain in the score across the three survey administrations.

Also notable, is the sharp rating decline of HCC respondents from 2006 to 2007 on item #11 “understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.” Factors contributing to this decrease may be better understood by referencing the table containing disaggregation by race/ethnicity in the following section.

### Disaggregation by Race/Ethnicity

*Trendline 2006*, the college Fact Book, reveals that 43% of the student body consists of minority racial/ethnic groups (p. III-5). Fifty-two percent (52%) of HCC respondents to the survey reflect a non-White group.

HCC's participation in the *Achieving the Dream* initiative has included the College in a national project focused on improving success rates for community college students—particularly low-income students and students of color, specifically of African-American and Hispanic backgrounds. The table below displays the mean scores of self-assessed learning attainment from students sampled at HCC by race/ethnicity.

**Table 2. Mean Ratings of 15 Items Addressing CCSSE Question #12, Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity Within Hillsborough Community College, 2007**

Survey Item	HCC (n=835)	Black (n=145)	Hispanic (n=188)	Asian (n=46)	White (n=397)	Other (n=59)
1. Acquiring a broad general education	2.95	3.06	2.93	3.04	2.90	3.08
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	2.41	2.64	2.44	2.57	2.28	2.45
3. Writing clearly and effectively	2.72	2.92	2.89	2.89	2.53	2.83
4. Speaking clearly and effectively	2.66	2.83	2.77	3.07	2.45	2.92
5. Thinking critically and analytically	2.86	3.01	2.94	2.93	2.74	3.03
6. Solving numerical problems	2.77	2.76	2.81	2.87	2.72	2.85
7. Using computing and information technology	2.70	2.72	2.89	2.87	2.58	2.68
8. Working effectively with others	2.63	2.78	2.76	2.59	2.52	2.67
9. Learning effectively on your own	2.88	2.99	2.92	3.16	2.78	3.00
10. Understanding yourself	2.52	2.77	2.63	2.93	2.30	2.70
11. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.34	2.57	2.55	2.59	2.12	2.39
12. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.32	2.51	2.47	2.41	2.13	2.53
13. Contributing to the welfare of your community	1.95	2.08	2.11	2.07	1.79	2.13
14. Developing clearer career goals	2.59	2.87	2.59	2.80	2.44	2.70
15. Gaining information about career opportunities	2.43	2.71	2.59	2.67	2.20	2.55

All racial/ethnic groups exceeded the College mean in at least 14 of the 15 items except for the White respondent group in which all 15 items were below the College mean. Given that White respondents represent 48% of the total sample, the College scores are lowered due to these ratings. If responses by White students are controlled for, HCC ratings would exceed all benchmark group ratings except for items 2 and 8.

The aforementioned decline in the rating for item #11 “Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds” is due to declining scores ascribed by Whites (2.31 in 2006 to 2.12 in 2007) and Hispanics (2.76 to 2.55). Together these groups represent 70% of all survey respondents.

In a similar vein, the rating gain for item 6 “Solving numerical programs” from 2.61 in 2006 to 2.77 in 2007, as shown in Table One, is attributable to higher ratings assigned by Whites (from

2.64 to 2.72) and Hispanics (increase from 2.76 to 2.81). The other racial groups also had higher ratings, but the increases were either too marginal or the number sampled too small to explain most of the gain for the College.

In contrast to previous survey administrations, the Asian respondent group, formerly assigning the lowest ratings, are now among the highest with 14 scores exceeding the college means. Their ratings of item 9 “Learning effectively on your own” and item 4 “Speaking clearly and effectively” were the highest in the entire survey. Overall, the Asian respondent group displayed sizable increases in all items for the 2007 CCSSE administration.

## **Conclusions**

Among the conclusions that can be drawn from an examination of CCSSE results for question #12 are:

1. In general, ratings from HCC students continue to fall below all benchmark groups.
2. Results disaggregated by race/ethnicity demonstrate that the low College ratings are attributable to Whites representing almost half of respondents. Ratings from Whites were below the mean for all 15 items. All other groups exceeded the mean on at least 14 of 15 items.
3. The ratings by Asian respondents increased markedly from prior survey administrations.
4. A comparison of College ratings to the AtD consortium finds that four items were found to be significantly below the mean, with three of those items pertaining to workforce preparation.
5. The largest rating decline from 2006 was in “Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.”
6. A notable exception to the general pattern is the high rating ascribed to “Solving numerical problems” in which HCC ratings have posted steady gains and exceed all benchmark groups.

The changes in these results between the 2004, 2006 and 2007 CCSSE administrations may assist in providing a more defined direction in evaluating the self-assessment of student learning.

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