

Summary of Key Evidence for UCORE: 2025 National Survey of Student Engagement UCORE Assessment | Washington State University

Introduction

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior student participation in activities and programs that promote their learning and personal development. More than 90% of participating institutions administer the survey on a periodic basis, generally every 2-3 years.

This document summarizes selected 2025 NSSE results in the context of the [UCORE curriculum](#), which is bookended by a required first-year course [ROOT] and a senior integrative capstone experience [CAPS], and complemented by foundational courses and inquiry-based learning in the disciplines. For UCORE Assessment, NSSE questions provide indirect evidence of student learning on the outcomes of the UCORE general education program at the first-year and senior levels.

Note: NSSE is an externally developed survey administered by the University of Indiana (Bloomington). As such, questions on the NSSE survey are not specifically tailored to WSU and/or UCORE. WSU's complete NSSE results (current and historic) are available on the [WSU Office of Institutional Research \(IR\) website](#).

Assessment

NSSE assesses the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. At WSU, NSSE is offered to all first-year and senior students on all WSU campuses every other spring. With the census administration, students receive a survey invitation and reminders by email. Coordinated by the Provost's Office, the Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness (ACE) contributes to WSU's planning and participation in NSSE and coordinates with the Office of Institutional Research (IR) to produce NSSE reports for UCORE.

Participating institutions may also append up to two Topical Modules – short question sets on designated topics that allow for deeper exploration. In 2025, questions on the NSSE survey provided indirect evidence of student learning on UCORE learning outcomes related to: Critical & Creative Thinking, Written Communication, Non-Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Diversity, and Integrative Learning.

Note: As with any voluntary survey, response rates and the presence of non-response bias should be considered when evaluating NSSE results. In other words, those who did not respond (non-respondents) may have different views than those who did respond and therefore the results may not be representative of all students.

2025 NSSE Results

Context: In 2025, 1,388 seniors and 1,331 first-year students responded to the survey at WSU. The WSU response rate was 28% for seniors and 33% for first-year students, compared to the average national response rate of 18% for participating institutions with undergraduate enrollments of 10,000 or more. Where survey results are displayed alongside a peer comparison, the comparison includes roughly 11,000 seniors and 13,000 first-year students from 13 land-grant institutions with high research activity that administered NSSE in 2024 or 2025.

In these results, percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for peer groups) and may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Note: NSSE results are not longitudinal, but represent a cross-section of students. As such, NSSE results are not intended to show growth between first-year and senior responses.

SENIORS

WSU SENIOR CONTEXT: During the senior year, it is expected that most students will complete the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS] requirement for UCORE, along with upper-division courses towards the major. Seniors may also complete coursework contributing to additional majors, minors, certificates, etc. It is also expected that most students will have completed the majority of their UCORE requirements prior to the senior year (especially the foundational and inquiry-based ways of knowing requirements).

Note: Senior eligibility for NSSE participation is primarily based on the number of credit hours completed (a minimum of 90 cumulative credit hours) as of the beginning of the prior fall term. As such, participating seniors may or may not complete NSSE in their final semester prior to graduation.

CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING

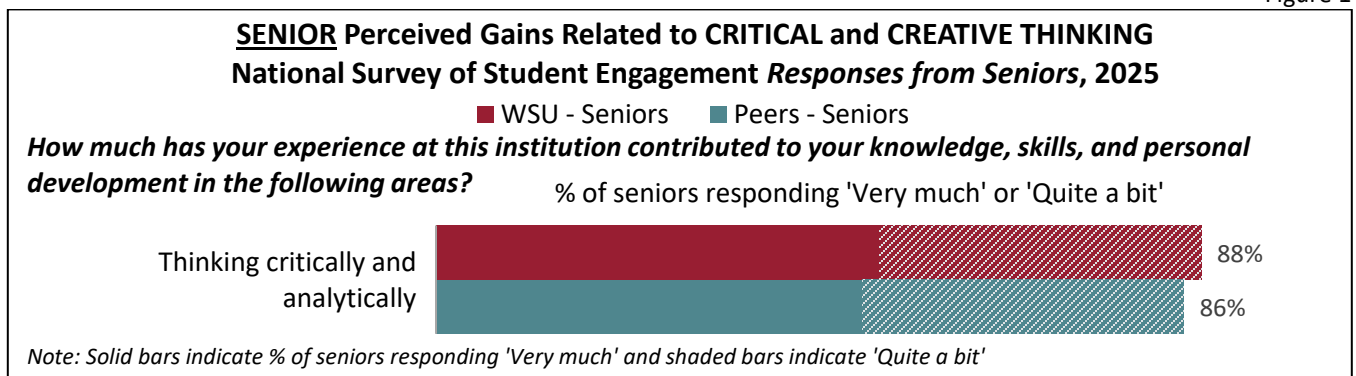
UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: All UCORE courses require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Critical & Creative Thinking Learning Goal, including the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS].

Specifically, the student experience with Critical & Creative Thinking includes a minimum of 34 credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Critical Thinking and a minimum of three credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Creative Thinking (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information).

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

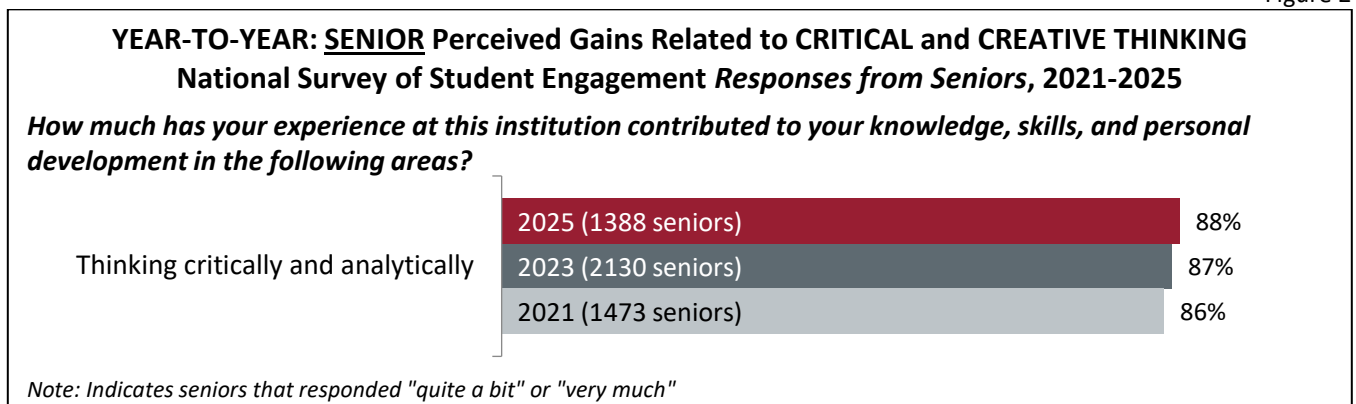
- **88%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **thinking critically and analytically** "very much" or "quite a bit" (Figures 1 and 2); additionally, 10% reported that WSU contributed "some," while 2% reported that WSU contributed "very little"

Figure 1



YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 2



WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

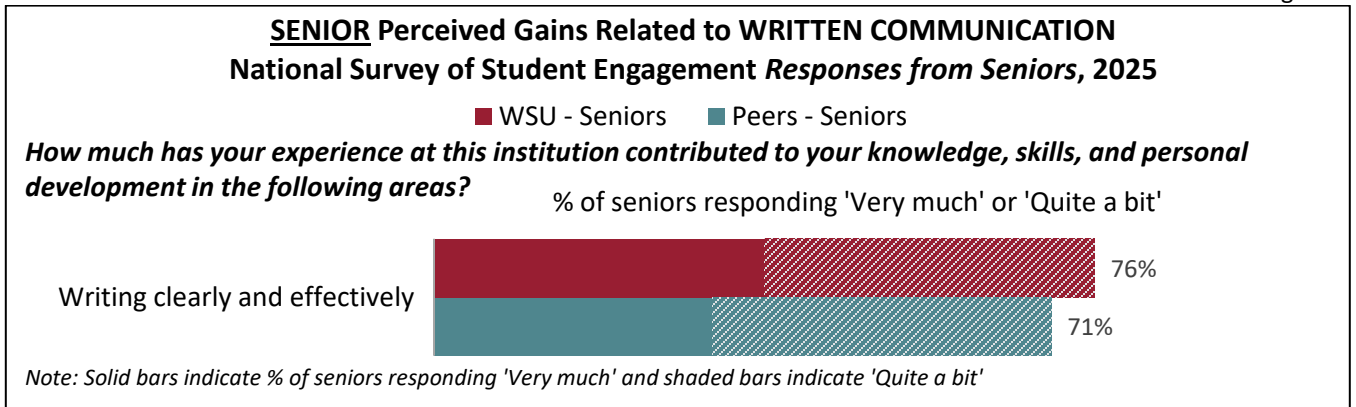
UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: All UCORE courses require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance Written Communication, a sub-goal of WSU's Communication Learning Goal, including the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS].

Thus, the student experience with Written Communication includes a minimum of 34 credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Written Communication (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information).

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

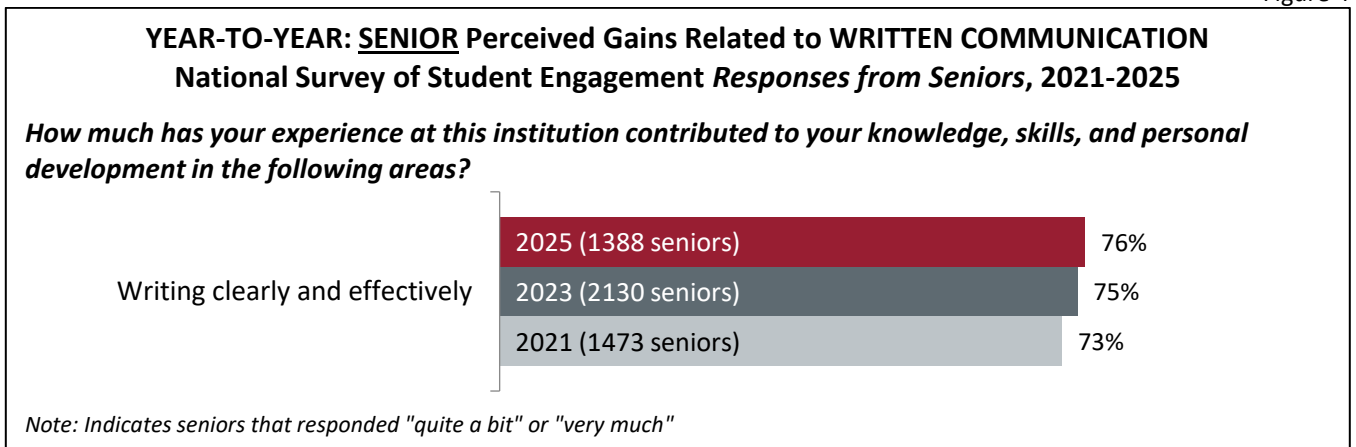
- **76%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **writing clearly and effectively** "very much" or "quite a bit" (Figures 3 and 4); additionally, 20% reported that WSU contributed "some," while 4% reported that WSU contributed "very little"

Figure 3



YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 4



NON-WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance Non-Written Communication, a sub-goal of WSU's Communication Learning Goal, as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). Briefly:

- Students may complete a foundational Communication course [COMM] that advances Non-Written Communication (*note: students can take a second [WRTG] course instead of a [COMM] course*)
- At the senior-level, Non-Written Communication may be required in the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS] as appropriate to the course and discipline

Thus, the student experience with Non-Written Communication in UCORE-designated courses varies.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

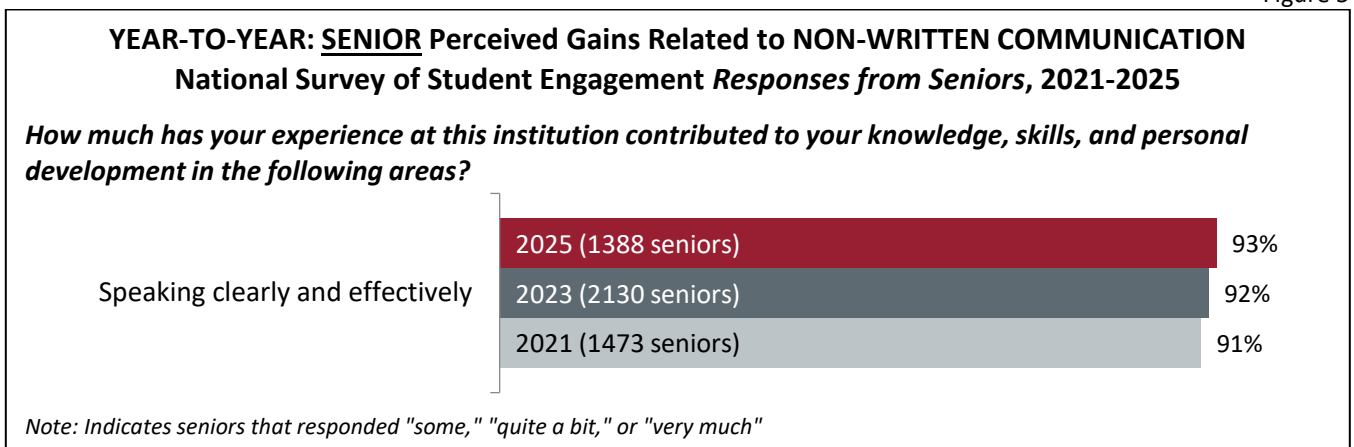
- **93%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **speaking clearly and effectively**, while 7% reported that WSU contributed "very little" (Table 1 and Figure 5)

Table 1

SENIOR Perceived Gains Related to NON-WRITTEN COMMUNICATION				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from Seniors, 2025				
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	% of seniors			
	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
Speaking clearly and effectively				
WSU - Seniors	33%	36%	24%	7%
Peers - Seniors	33%	37%	23%	7%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 5



QUANTITATIVE REASONING

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Quantitative Reasoning Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). Briefly:

- At the first-year level, the foundational Quantitative Reasoning course [QUAN] advances the Quantitative Reasoning Learning Goal
- Students also complete at least one Inquiry in the Biological Sciences course [BSCI] or Inquiry in the Physical Sciences course [PSCI], which advances Quantitative Reasoning, during the UCORE curriculum
- At the senior-level, Quantitative Reasoning may be required in the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS] as appropriate to the course and discipline

Thus, the student experience with Quantitative Reasoning includes a minimum of seven credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Quantitative Reasoning.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

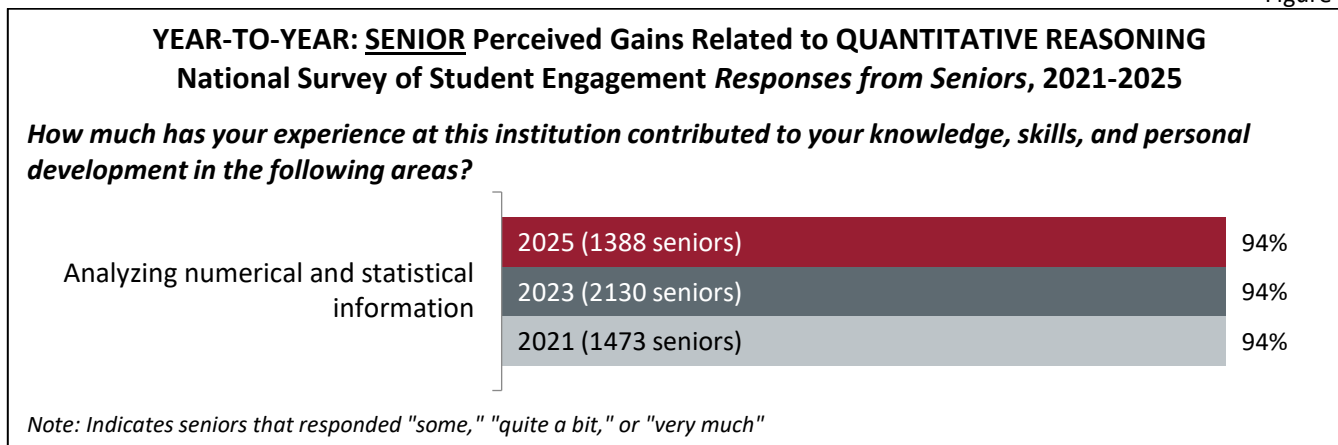
- **94%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in **analyzing numerical and statistical information**, while 6% reported that WSU contributed "very little" (Table 2 and Figure 6)

Table 2

SENIOR Perceived Gains Related to QUANTITATIVE REASONING National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from Seniors, 2025				
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	% of seniors			
	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
Analyzing numerical and statistical information				
WSU - Seniors	40%	34%	19%	6%
Peers - Seniors	38%	35%	21%	6%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 6



DIVERSITY

UCORE’S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU’s Diversity Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). Briefly:

- At the first-year level, the required first-year experience course [ROOT] advances the Diversity Learning Goal
- Students also complete at least one Inquiry into Global Cultural Diversity course [DIVR] or Inquiry into Equity and Justice course [EQJS], which advances Diversity, during the UCORE curriculum
- At the senior-level, Diversity may be required in the senior integrative capstone experience course [CAPS] as appropriate to the course and discipline

Thus, the student experience with Diversity includes a minimum of six credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Diversity.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

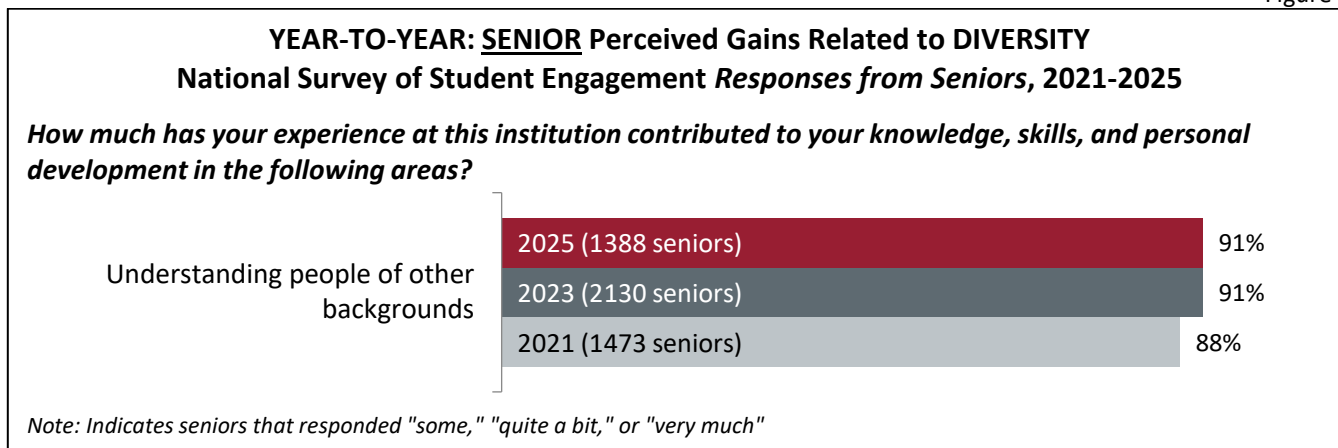
- **91%** of seniors reported that their experience at WSU contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in ***understanding people of other backgrounds***, while 9% reported that WSU contributed “very little” (Table 3 and Figure 7)

Table 3

SENIOR Perceived Gains Related to DIVERSITY				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from Seniors, 2025				
How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	% of seniors			
	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
Understanding people of other backgrounds				
WSU - Seniors	33%	35%	23%	9%
Peers - Seniors	30%	34%	26%	10%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 7



SENIORS, continued

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator. Briefly:

- At the first-year level, the required first-year experience course [ROOT] advances Integrative Learning
- At the senior-level, the senior integrative capstone course [CAPS] advances Integrative Learning
- Students also complete ways of knowing requirements, which advance Breadth of Learning, during the UCORE curriculum

Specifically, the student experience with Depth, Breath, and Integration of Learning includes a minimum of six credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Integrative Learning and a minimum of 19 credit hours in UCORE-designated courses that include instruction and/or engagement with Breadth of Learning (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information).

Note: NSSE does not ask seniors about their perceived gains related to Depth, Breadth, & Integration of Learning. However, NSSE does ask seniors about their completion of learning tasks related to Integrative Learning.

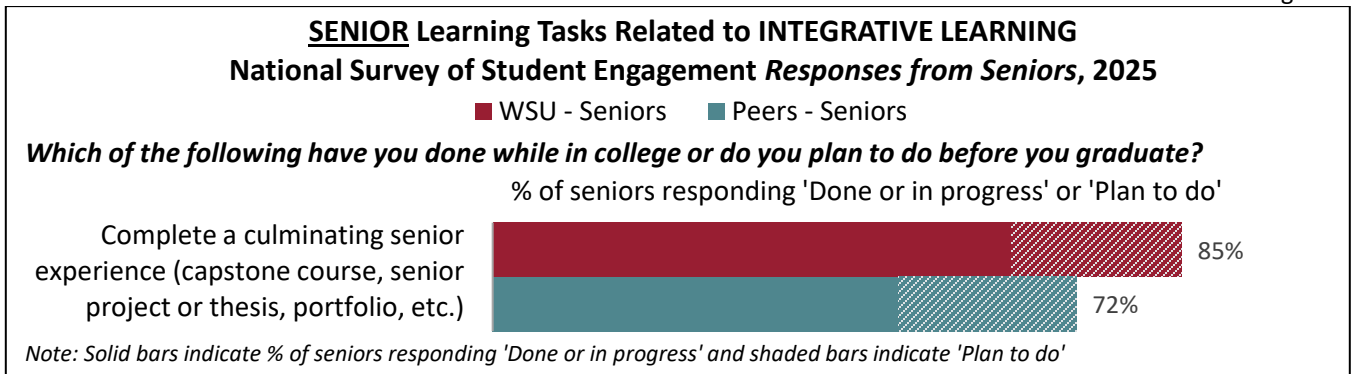
2025 NSSE RESULTS:

- **99%** of seniors reported **connecting ideas from their courses to prior experiences and knowledge** during the current year, while 1% reported that they “never” did this during the current year (Table 4 and Figure 9)
- **98%** of seniors reported **combining ideas from different courses when completing assignments** during the current year, while 2% reported that they “never” did this during the current year (Table 4 and Figure 9)
- **85%** of seniors reported completing or planning to complete a **culminating senior experience**, while 5% responded “have not decided” and 9% responded “do not plan to do” (Figures 8 and 10)

Table 4

SENIOR Learning Tasks Related to INTEGRATIVE LEARNING				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from Seniors, 2025				
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?	% of seniors			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge				
WSU - Seniors	43%	46%	10%	1%
Peers - Seniors	41%	45%	13%	1%
Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments				
WSU - Seniors	34%	45%	19%	1%
Peers - Seniors	34%	41%	23%	3%

Figure 8



YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 9

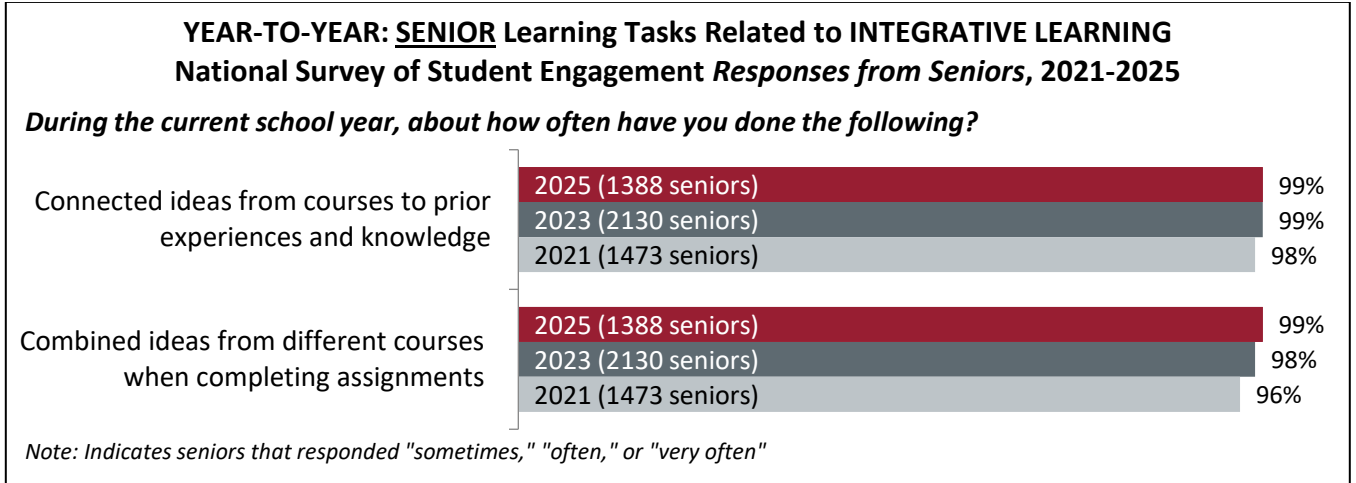
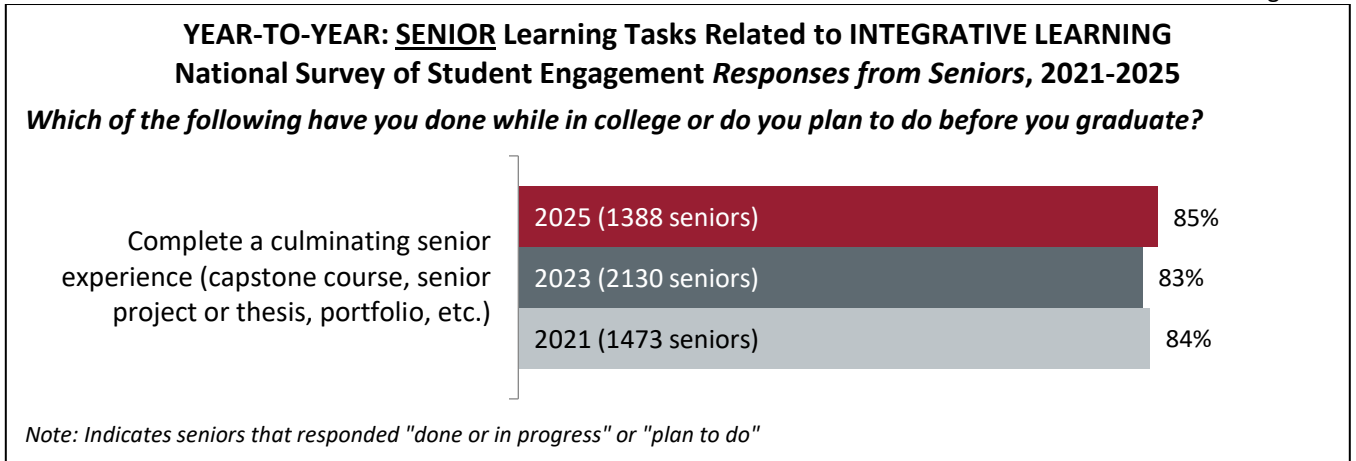


Figure 10



FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

WSU FIRST-YEAR STUDENT CONTEXT: During the first-year, it is expected that most students will complete the first-year experience course [ROOT] requirement for UCORE, along with other UCORE foundational requirements (i.e., Quantitative Reasoning [QUAN], Writing [WRTG], and Communication [COMM]¹). First-year students may also complete introductory courses towards the major and may make progress in completing UCORE's inquiry-based ways of knowing requirements.

¹Note: Students can take a second [WRTG] course instead of a [COMM] course.

Note: First-year student eligibility for NSSE participation is primarily based on admit type and the number of credit hours completed, and includes students admitted as first-time, first-year students in the prior year (spring, summer, and fall) regardless of how many total credits they have, as well as students that transferred to WSU in the prior year and had less than 30 total credits as of the beginning of the prior fall term. Additionally, NSSE 2025 opened to WSU students in early March. As such, first-year student responses are typically based on experiences in fall semester and a portion of spring semester.

CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: All UCORE courses require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Critical & Creative Thinking Learning Goal. At the first-year level, the required first-year experience course [ROOT] and other UCORE foundational requirements advance Critical Thinking (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information).

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

- **98%** of first-year students reported ***applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations*** during the current year, while 2% reported that they did this "very little" (Table 5 and Figure 11)
- **97%** of first-year students reported ***forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information*** during the current year, while 3% reported that they did this "very little" (Table 5 and Figure 11)
- **97%** of first-year students reported ***analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts*** during the current year, while 3% reported that they did this "very little" (Table 5 and Figure 11)
- **96%** of first-year students reported ***evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source*** during the current year, while 4% reported that they did this "very little" (Table 5 and Figure 11)

FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS, continued

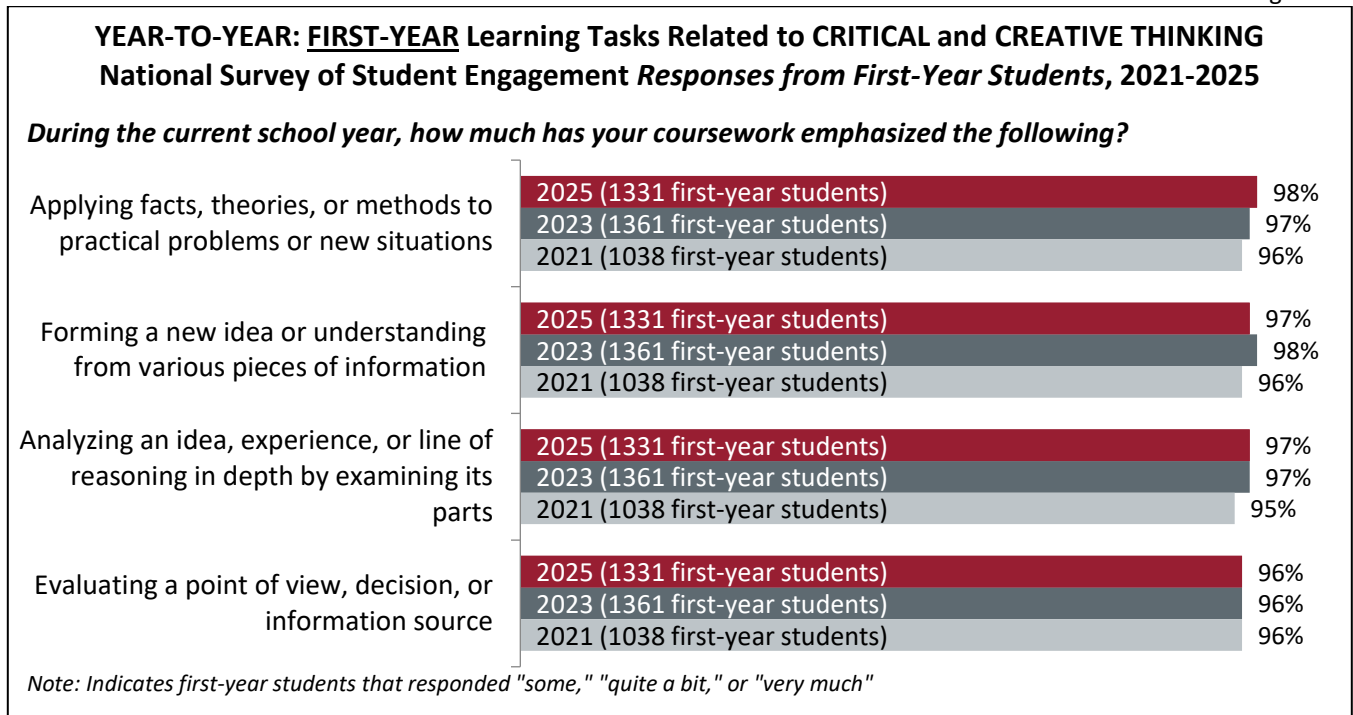
2025 NSSE RESULTS, continued:

Table 5

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to CRITICAL and CREATIVE THINKING				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2025				
During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?	% of first-year students			
	Very much	Quite a bit	Some	Very little
Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations				
WSU - First-year students	22%	53%	23%	2%
Peers - First-year students	30%	46%	22%	2%
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information				
WSU - First-year students	26%	48%	24%	3%
Peers - First-year students	26%	46%	25%	4%
Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts				
WSU - First-year students	27%	46%	25%	3%
Peers - First-year students	27%	45%	25%	3%
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source				
WSU - First-year students	24%	48%	24%	4%
Peers - First-year students	25%	44%	27%	4%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 11



WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: All UCORE courses require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance Written Communication, a sub-goal of WSU's Communication Learning Goal, including the required first-year experience course [ROOT] and other UCORE foundational requirements (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information).

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

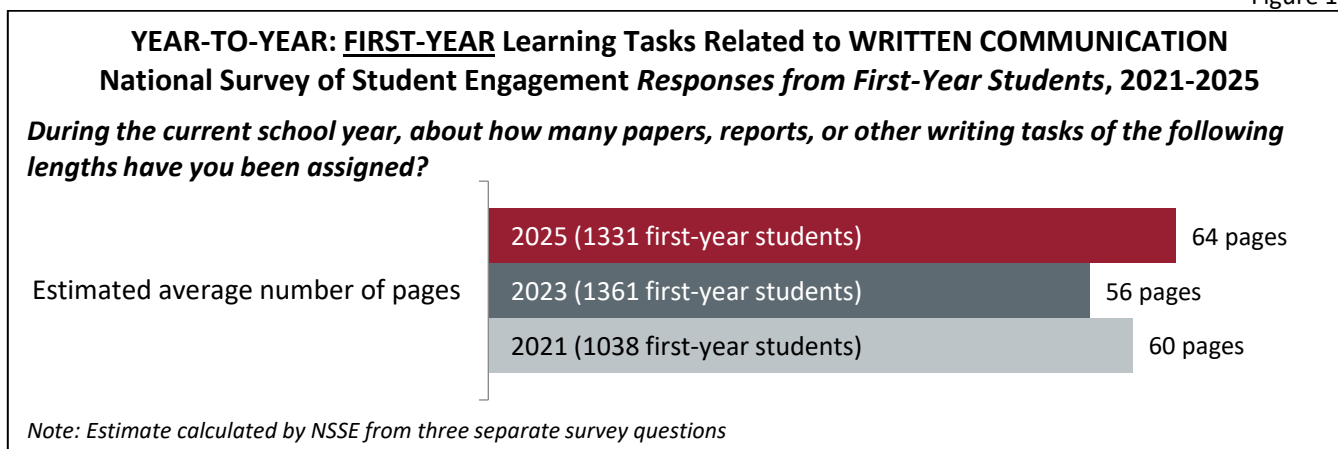
- On average, first-year students reported **being assigned an estimated 64 pages of writing** during the current year (Table 6 and Figure 12)

Table 6

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to WRITTEN COMMUNICATION National Survey of Student Engagement <i>Responses from First-Year Students, 2025</i>	
<i>During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following lengths have you been assigned?</i>	Estimated average number of pages
WSU - First-year students	64 pages
Peers - First-year students	55 pages

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 12



NON-WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance Non-Written Communication, a sub-goal of WSU's Communication Learning Goal, as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). At the first-year level, students may complete a foundational Communication course [COMM] that advances Non-Written Communication (*note: students can take a second [WRTG] course instead of a [COMM] course*).

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

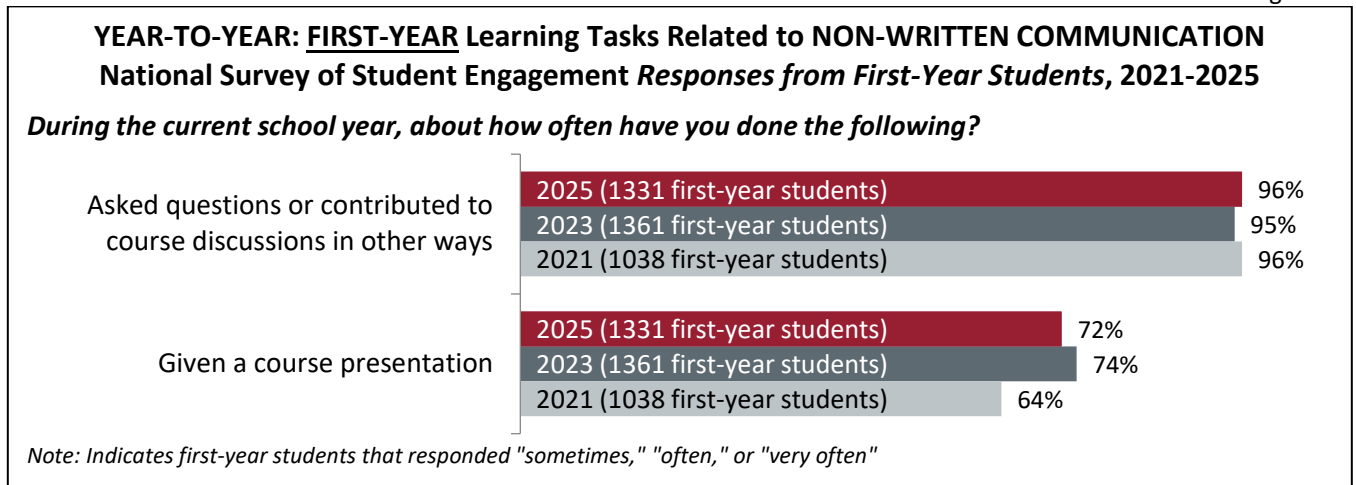
- **96%** of first-year students reported **contributing to course discussions** during the current year, while 4% reported that they "never" did this (Table 7 and Figure 13)
- **72%** of first-year students reported **giving a course presentation** during the current year, while 28% reported that they "never" did this (Table 7 and Figure 13)

Table 7

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to NON-WRITTEN COMMUNICATION				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2025				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways				
WSU - First-year students	19%	36%	41%	4%
Peers - First-year students	22%	36%	38%	4%
Given a course presentation				
WSU - First-year students	8%	19%	45%	28%
Peers - First-year students	10%	22%	46%	22%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 13



FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS, continued

QUANTITATIVE REASONING

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Quantitative Reasoning Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). At the first-year level, the foundational Quantitative Reasoning course [QUAN] advances the Quantitative Reasoning Learning Goal.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

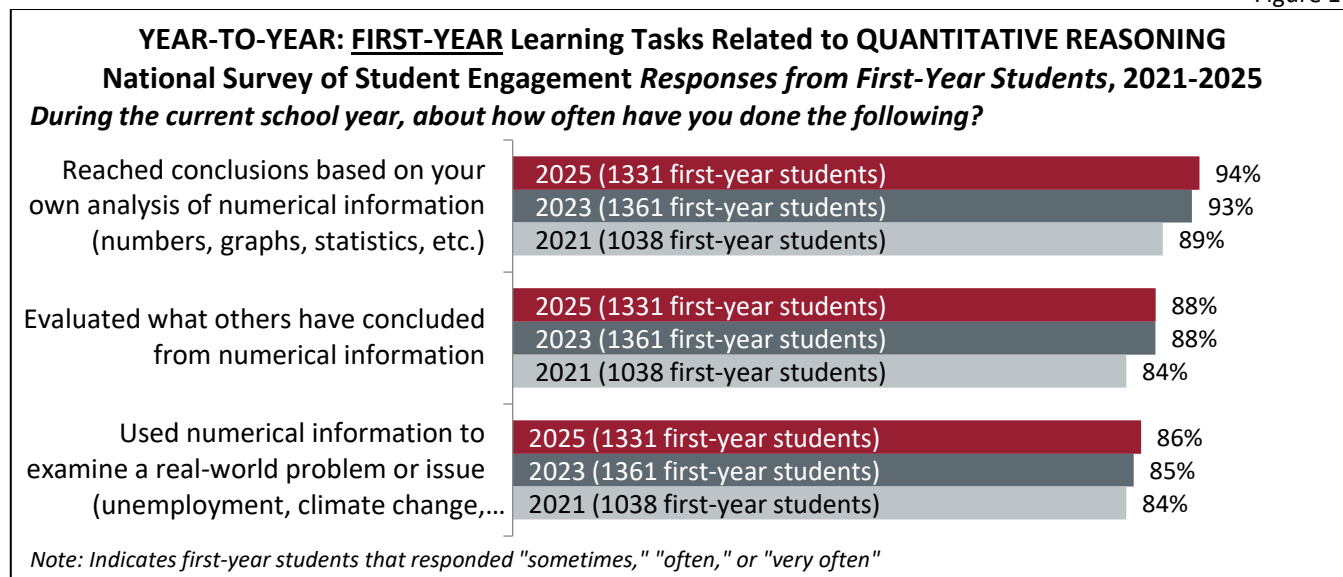
- **94%** of first-year students reported **reaching conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information** during the current year, while 6% reported that they "never" did this (Table 8 and Figure 14)
- **88%** of first-year students reported **evaluating what others have concluded from numerical information** during the current year, while 12% reported that they "never" did this (Table 8 and Figure 14)
- **86%** of first-year students reported **using numerical information to examine a real-world problem** during the current year, while 14% reported that they "never" did this (Table 8 and Figure 14)

Table 8

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to QUANTITATIVE REASONING				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2025				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information				
WSU - First-year students	19%	41%	34%	6%
Peers - First-year students	20%	40%	33%	7%
Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information				
WSU - First-year students	12%	35%	40%	12%
Peers - First-year students	14%	34%	40%	13%
Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue				
WSU - First-year students	12%	33%	41%	14%
Peers - First-year students	15%	32%	38%	15%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 14



FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS, continued

DIVERSITY

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Diversity Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). At the first-year level, the required first-year experience course [ROOT] advances the Diversity Learning Goal.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

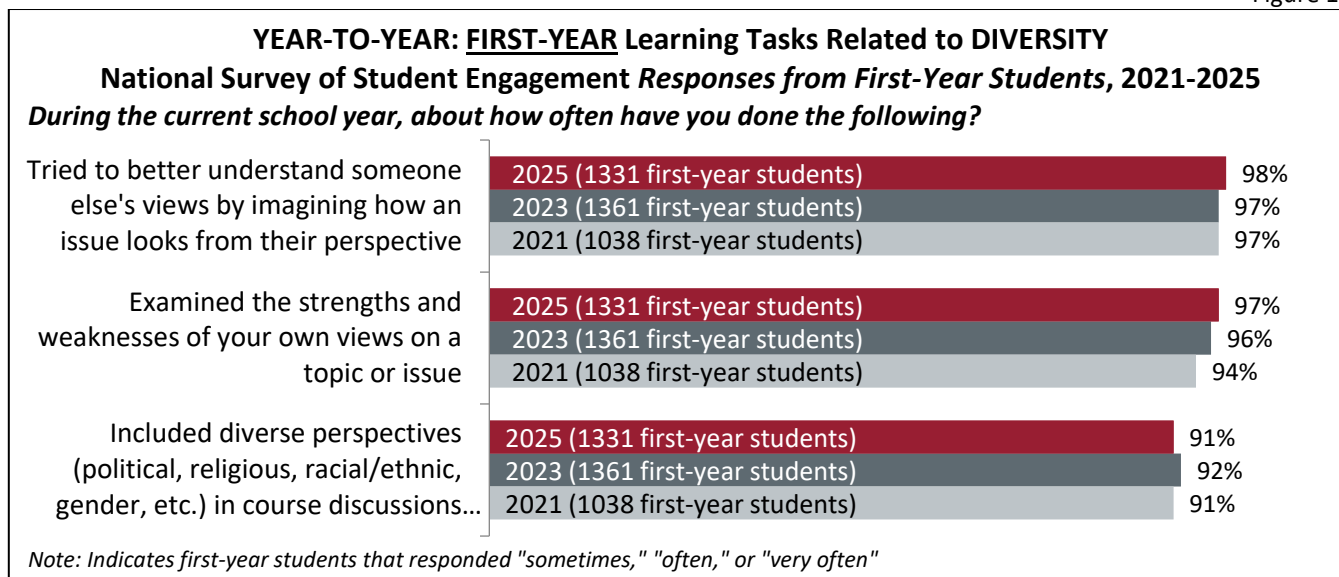
- **98%** of first-year students reported ***trying to better understand someone else's views*** during the current year, while 2% reported that they "never" did this (Table 9 and Figure 15)
- **97%** of first-year students reported ***examining the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic or issue*** during the current year, while 3% reported that they "never" did this (Table 9 and Figure 15)
- **91%** of first-year students reported ***including diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments*** during the current year, while 9% reported that they "never" did this (Table 9 and Figure 15)

Table 9

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to DIVERSITY				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2025				
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?</i>	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective				
WSU - First-year students	26%	48%	24%	2%
Peers - First-year students	24%	47%	26%	3%
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue				
WSU - First-year students	21%	49%	27%	3%
Peers - First-year students	20%	46%	30%	4%
Included diverse perspectives (political, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments				
WSU - First-year students	21%	38%	32%	9%
Peers - First-year students	17%	36%	38%	11%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 15



INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

UCORE'S CONTRIBUTION: UCORE courses only require students to demonstrate designator learning outcomes that advance WSU's Depth, Breadth, and Integration of Learning Goal as appropriate to the designator (see the [UCORE Curriculum Map](#) and [UCORE Curriculum webpages](#) for more information). At the first-year level, the required first-year experience course [ROOT] advances Integrative Learning.

2025 NSSE RESULTS:

- **98%** of first-year students reported **learning something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept** during the current year, while 2% reported that they "never" did this (Table 10 and Figure 16)
- **93%** of first-year students reported **connecting their learning to societal problems or issues** during the current year, while 7% reported that they "never" did this (Table 10 and Figure 16)

Table 10

FIRST-YEAR Learning Tasks Related to INTEGRATIVE LEARNING				
National Survey of Student Engagement Responses from First-Year Students, 2025				
During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?	% of first-year students			
	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept				
WSU - First-year students	24%	48%	26%	2%
Peers - First-year students	23%	47%	28%	2%
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues				
WSU - First-year students	17%	40%	36%	7%
Peers - First-year students	17%	36%	38%	10%

YEAR-TO-YEAR NSSE RESULTS:

Figure 16

