

Assessing the New State Core at Stephen F. Austin

Presented by
Dr. Rachel Jumper
Dr. Larry J. King
Mrs. Jennifer Stringfield



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY

NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

The Texas Core Curriculum

- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is charged by the Texas Legislature with developing a common core curriculum for all Texas public colleges and universities.
 - The Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC) is charged by the coordinating board with the development of recommendations for the core.
 - In April 2011, the UEAC presented a new proposed core to the coordinating board.
 - After public comment and revision the new core was approved by the coordinating board in October 2011 with full statewide implementation scheduled for Fall 2014.

Purpose of the New Core

- Through the core curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world; and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.

Core Objectives

- **Critical thinking skills** – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
- **Communication skills** – to include effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Empirical and Quantitative skills** – to include scientific and quantitative literacy and applications of scientific and mathematical concepts.
- **Teamwork** – to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- **Social Responsibility** – to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- **Personal Responsibility** – to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Foundational Component Areas

- **Communication**
- **Mathematics**
- **Life and Physical Sciences**
- **Language, Philosophy, and Culture**
- **Creative Arts**
- **American History**
- **Government/Political Science**
- **Social/ Behavioral Science**

Core Objectives Mapped to Foundational Component Areas

Component Area	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	X	X	Optional	X	Optional	X
Mathematics	X	X	X	Optional	Optional	Optional
Life and Physical Sciences	X	X	X	X	Optional	Optional
Language, Philosophy, and Culture	X	X	Optional	Optional	X	X
Creative Arts	X	X	Optional	X	X	Optional
American History	X	X	Optional	Optional	X	X
Government/ Political Science	X	X	Optional	Optional	X	X
Social/ Behavioral Science	X	X	X	Optional	X	Optional
Component Area Option	X	X	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent	Dependent



Background on Process

- Two university committees:
 - The Core Advisory Committee.
 - Charged with reviewing applications for course inclusion in the core and recommending the courses to be included in the core.
 - This was a new faculty committee.
 - The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee.
 - Charged with developing and overseeing the core curriculum assessment process.
 - This committee has functioned for 9 years.
 - Find the assessment plan at:
http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/images/Core_Curriculum_Assessment_Guidelines_April_2013.pdf



Guiding Values

- Everyone in the core will contribute equally to the assessment of the core.
- All courses will assess all required objectives.
- The core curriculum should be viewed not as the responsibility of individual departments, courses, or faculty, but as the province of the university.
- The core objectives, as identified by the THECB, should not be considered adequately developed through a small number of courses early in a student's academic career.

- The assessment must focus, in part, on student performance at the upper-level.
- The use of multiple measures will allow for a fuller picture of students' achievement of the core objectives.
- Faculty involvement is essential at all stages of the core assessment process.
- Academic freedom and assessment should be viewed as compatible, not antithetical.

Outline of the Core Curriculum Assessment Plan

Core Objectives	Assessment	Type
Critical Thinking To include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using a critical thinking rubric	Direct
	ETS Proficiency Profile	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Communication To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using a communication rubric	Direct
	ETS Proficiency Profile	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Empirical and Quantitative Skills To include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using an empirical and quantitative skills rubric	Direct
	ETS Proficiency Profile	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Teamwork To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using a teamwork rubric	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Personal Responsibility To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using a personal responsibility rubric	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect
Social Responsibility To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.	Assessment of samples of student work from across the university using a social responsibility rubric	Direct
	Senior Exit Survey	Indirect
	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect



Schedule for Assessment of Core Assignments

Schedule for Assessment of Student Work from Core Courses Fall 2014 – Forward

	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017
Student Work Collected	Communication (Written, Written and Visual)	Critical Thinking Social Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication (Written, Written and Visual, Oral, Oral and Visual) Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication (Written, Written and Visual, Oral, Oral and Visual) Social Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every odd-calendar year.)
Student Work Assessed		Communication (Written, Written and Visual)	Critical Thinking Social Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication (Written, Written and Visual, Oral, Oral and Visual) Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication (Written, Written and Visual, Oral, Oral and Visual) Social Responsibility (Repeated each semester following assessment of the objectives.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated each semester following assessment of the objectives.)



Assessment of Student Work

- Core rubric development phase by faculty committees.
 - The final rubrics can be found at <http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/114.asp>.
- Core course assignment development phase.
 - Development and/or identification of student work in core courses to be used for assessment.
 - Review and approval by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee of core course assignments to be used for assessment.

- Upper-level course assignment development phase.
 - Development and/or identification of student work in upper-level courses to be used for assessment.
 - Review and approval by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee of upper-level course assignments to be used for assessment.

- Implementation of core assessment in upper-level courses.
 - Student work will be collected beginning in Spring 2018 using LiveText as a repository of student work.
 - Students will upload their work to LiveText through Desire2Learn.
 - Assessment of the work will be conducted by groups of faculty the semester follow the collection of the student work.
 - A random sample of 100 individual students assignments for each core objective will be assessed.



Schedule for Assessment of Upper-Level Courses

	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019
Student Work Collected	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every even numbered year.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated fall and spring of every odd-numbered year.)
Student Work Assessed		Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility	Critical Thinking Communication Social Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)	Empirical and Quantitative Skills Teamwork Personal Responsibility (Repeated following assessment of the objectives.)

Selecting a Technology Platform

- A faculty committee appointed by the Provost to provide a recommendation on which platform would be best for SFA to adopt.
 - The committee was charged with determining which platform would be the most effective for collecting student work for core assessment and for use in the development of ePortfolios for academic program assessment.
- The committee focused on:
 - Integration with the learning management system.
 - Deep linking.
 - Ease of use for faculty and students.
 - Support from the company.
 - Functionality for different purposes.
 - Cost.
 - Features.



Use of Assessment Results?

- The Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment staff will compile the results generated by the assessment teams and annually report the results to the Provost, deans, Core Curriculum Advisory Committee, Core Curriculum Assessment Committee, and all departments and faculty involved in teaching core curriculum courses.
 - Results will be disaggregated to show the results for transfer and native students.

- The Core Curriculum Advisory Committee will meet to consider the results.
 - Facilitate meetings of faculty relevant to specific core objectives and/or component areas to consider action plans based on the assessment results.
 - Develop institutional action plans for improvement in the core based on the assessment results.
 - Communicate these actions to the faculty, deans, and Provost.
 - Monitor implementation and effectiveness of improvements.

- The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee will meet to consider the results.
 - Facilitate meetings of faculty relevant to specific core objectives or component areas to consider action plans related to assessment plans based on results.
 - Develop institutional action plans for improvement in assessment methods and plans.
 - Communicate these actions to the faculty, chairs, deans, Provost.
 - Monitor implementation and effectiveness of improvements in assessment of the core.



Guiding Principles

- The most effective way to approach assessment of the core is from a programmatic perspective.
- The assessment plan is based on the idea that the best way to assess expansive core objectives, like those required by the THECB, is through the evaluation of student work samples drawn from course assignments that are intended to demonstrate students' attainment of the core objectives.

- The faculty of any department may, based on assessment results, recommend action plans for improvement in the core to the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee or action plans for improvement in assessment of the core to the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee.
 - Such recommendations from departmental faculty will be given due consideration by the appropriate committee, and the committee will provide a response to the departmental faculty.
- All assessment plans, results, and actions will be tracked in the assessment management system by the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment.

Fall 2014 Implementation

- Implementation of assessment in core courses for Fall 2014.
 - Core assignments and rubrics were added in LiveText for each core course.
 - Student work collected in Fall 2014 using LiveText as a repository of student work.
 - 11,115 students were enrolled in courses assessed in the fall.
 - 8374 or 75% students uploaded their work to LiveText through Desire2Learn.
 - Assessment of the work conducted by groups of faculty the semester following the collection of the student work.
 - A random sample of 100 individual student assignments for each core objective will be assessed.
 - For Communication Written Communication and Written and Visual Communication will be treated as different objectives.
 - The sample will be randomly selected by the sampling function in LiveText.



Issues Encountered

- The usual claims that we were infringing on academic freedom.
 - This was resolved by referring to the AAUP statements on assessment.
- Embedding LiveText into D2L.
 - This was resolved with an upgrade of D2L.
- Not everyone wanted to assess all modes of communication.
 - The Provost identified who would assess which modes of communication.

Distribution of Communication Objective Elements Across Component Areas

Courses included in the new core will be required to assess at least two elements (written, oral, or visual) of the Communication Objective. Specific requirements for the two objectives are listed in the table below.

Component Area	Communication Objective Elements Required to be Assessed
Communication	
ENG 131 or 133H, 132	Written and Oral Communication
COM 111, 170, 215	Oral and Visual Communication
BCM 247; ENG 273; FRE 131, 132; GER 131,132; POR 131, 132; SPA 131, 132; SPH 172, 272	Written and Oral Communication
Mathematics	
MTH 110, 127, 138, 143, 220, 233	Oral and Written or Visual Communication
Life and Physical Science	
AST 105; BIO 121, 123, 125, 131, 133, 225, 238; CHE 101, 111, 133, 134; ENV 110; GOL 101, 131, 132; PHY 100, 101, 102, 110, 131, 132, 241, 242	Oral and Written or Visual Communication
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	
ENG 200, 209, 211, 212, 221, 222, 229, 230, 233H; HIS 151, 152; PHI 153, 223	Written and Visual Communication
Creative Arts	
ART 280, 281, 282; DAN 140; MHL 245; MUS 140; THR 161, 163	Oral and Written or Visual Communication
American History	
HIS 133, 134	Written and Visual Communication
Government/Political Science	
PSC 141, 142	Written and Visual Communication
Social and Behavioral Science	
ANT 231; ECO 231, 232; GEO 131; PSY 133; SOC 137	Written and Visual Communication

- During the review process, some assignments did not seem well aligned with the objectives or the approved university rubrics.
 - This was generally resolved by providing specific examples of how assignments can be revised to include the elements of the university rubrics.
- Revision to the assessment schedule to focus on only one objective.
- Students registering LiveText accounts.
 - Faculty encouragement is key.
- Students submitting work.
 - Faculty encouragement is key.



Sample Assignments

- Some assignments were designed to assess a single objective.
- Other assignments were designed to assess multiple or all objectives.



Tuning Sessions

- Six member scoring teams were drawn from departments teaching core courses for each objective (written and written & visual).
- Tuning sessions
 - Rubrics discussed & scoring “rules” were developed by each team.
 - Practice papers were scored and followed by discussion where further rules were developed & clarification of previous rules was discussed.
 - A document containing the rules from the sessions was sent to members of both scoring teams for reference.



Scoring & Results

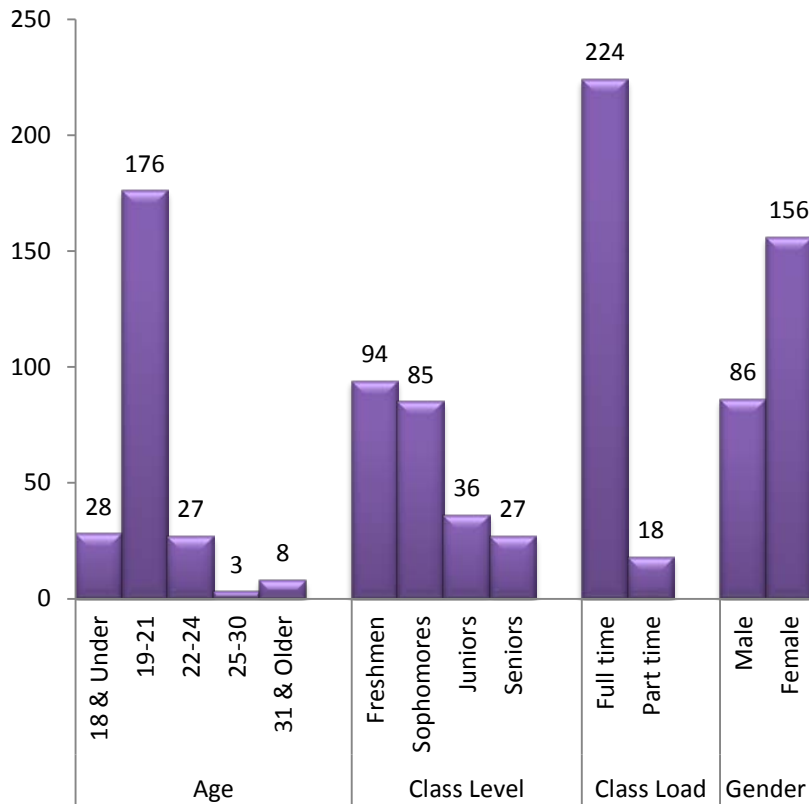
- LiveText sampling tool pulled a random sample for each objective & sent the artifacts to members of the scoring team to score.
- Faculty scored the assignments online using the rubric in LiveText.
- SFA had sent our “rules of agreement” to LiveText to be programmed so that the rubric would automatically go to two scorers and possibly a third.

Scoring

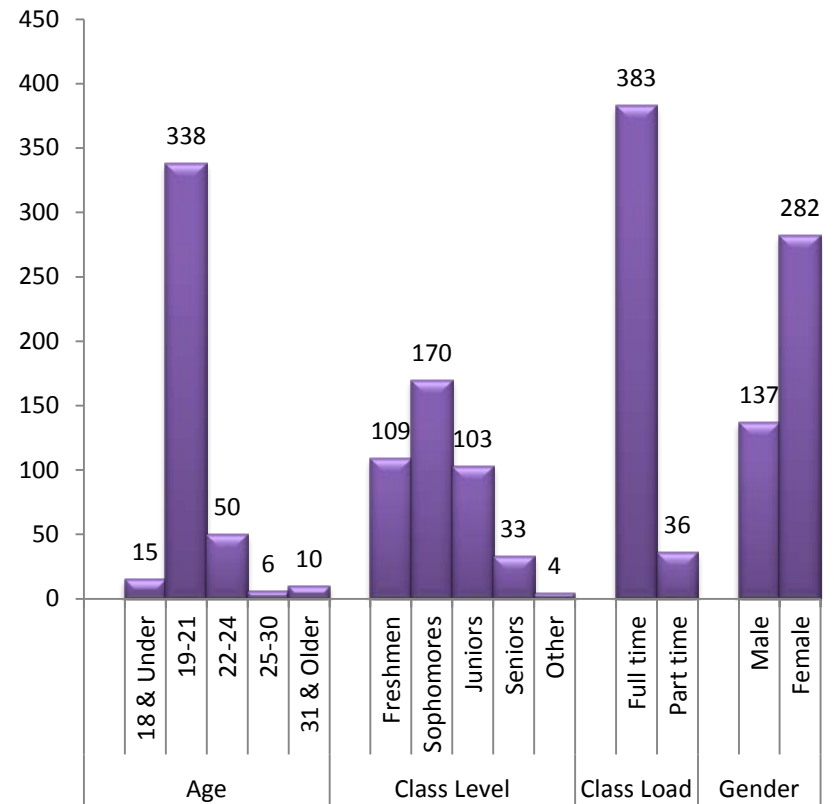
- Faculty were given approximately three weeks to complete their scoring.
- Faculty had very positive reactions to:
 - The tuning process
 - Using LiveText
 - The rubric
- All participants indicated that they would encourage fellow faculty to participate!

Results: Sample Demographics

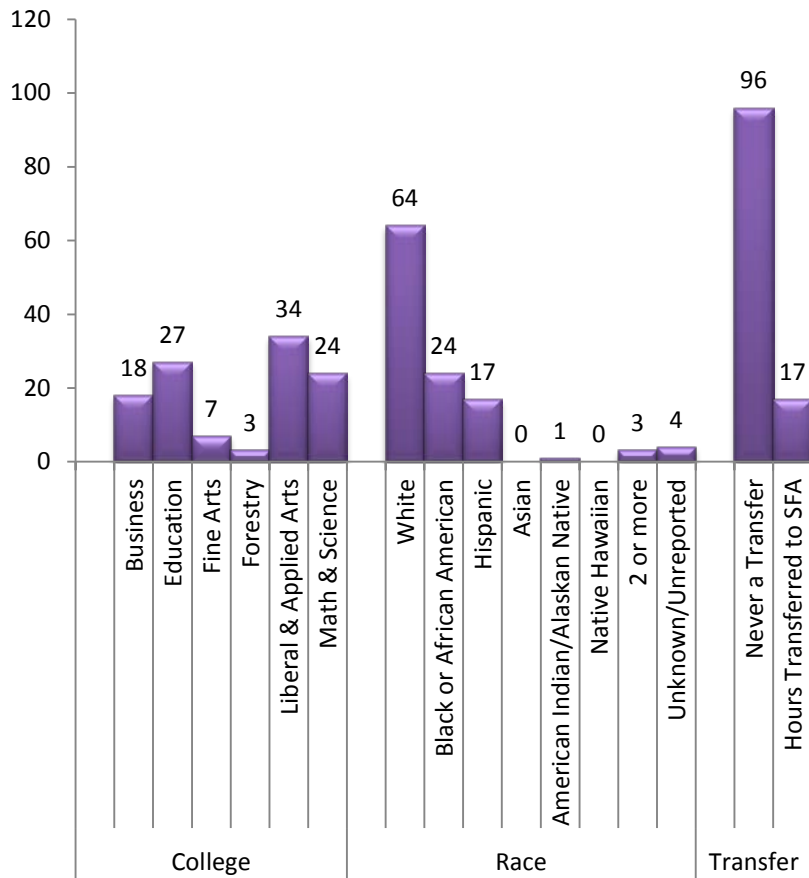
Written & Written & Visual Communication (n=242)



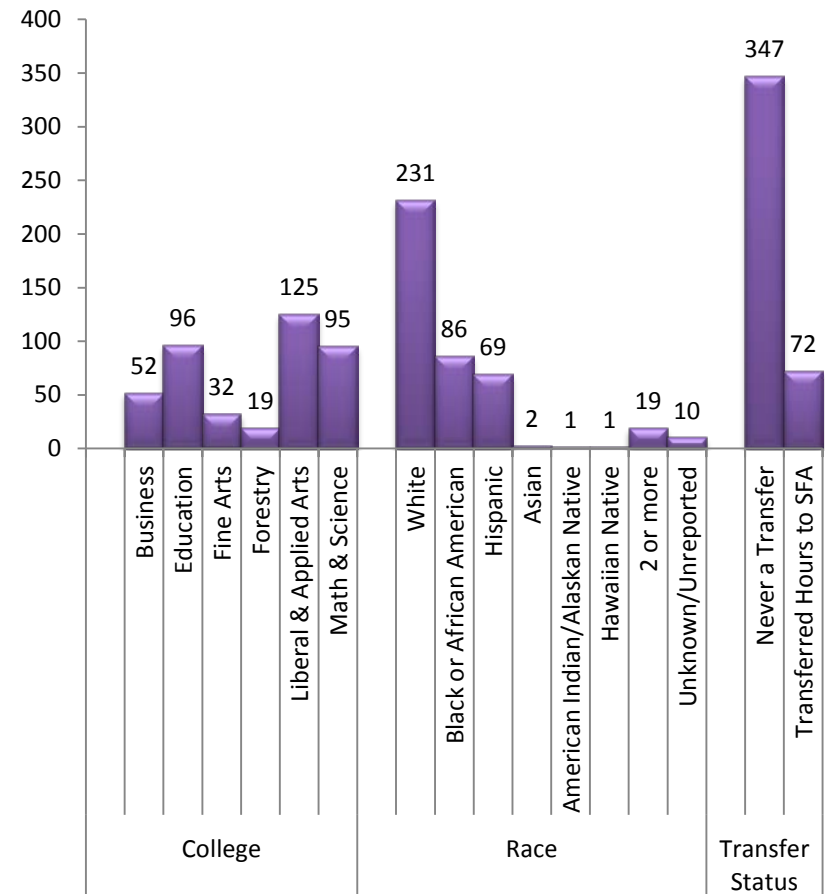
Critical Thinking & Social Responsibility (n=419)



Written & Written & Visual Communication (n=242)



Critical Thinking & Social Responsibility (n=419)



Results: Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICC)

	Written Communication (n=113)	Written & Visual Communication (n=132)	All Written Elements (n=135)
Overall ICC: All Criteria	0.69	0.86	0.82
Audience, Context, & Purpose	0.67	0.84	0.78
Content Development	0.68	0.84	0.78
Sources & Evidence	0.75	0.91	0.87
Organization & Presentation	0.56	0.84	0.75
Control of Syntax	0.6	0.72	0.71
Visual Aids	--	0.91	--

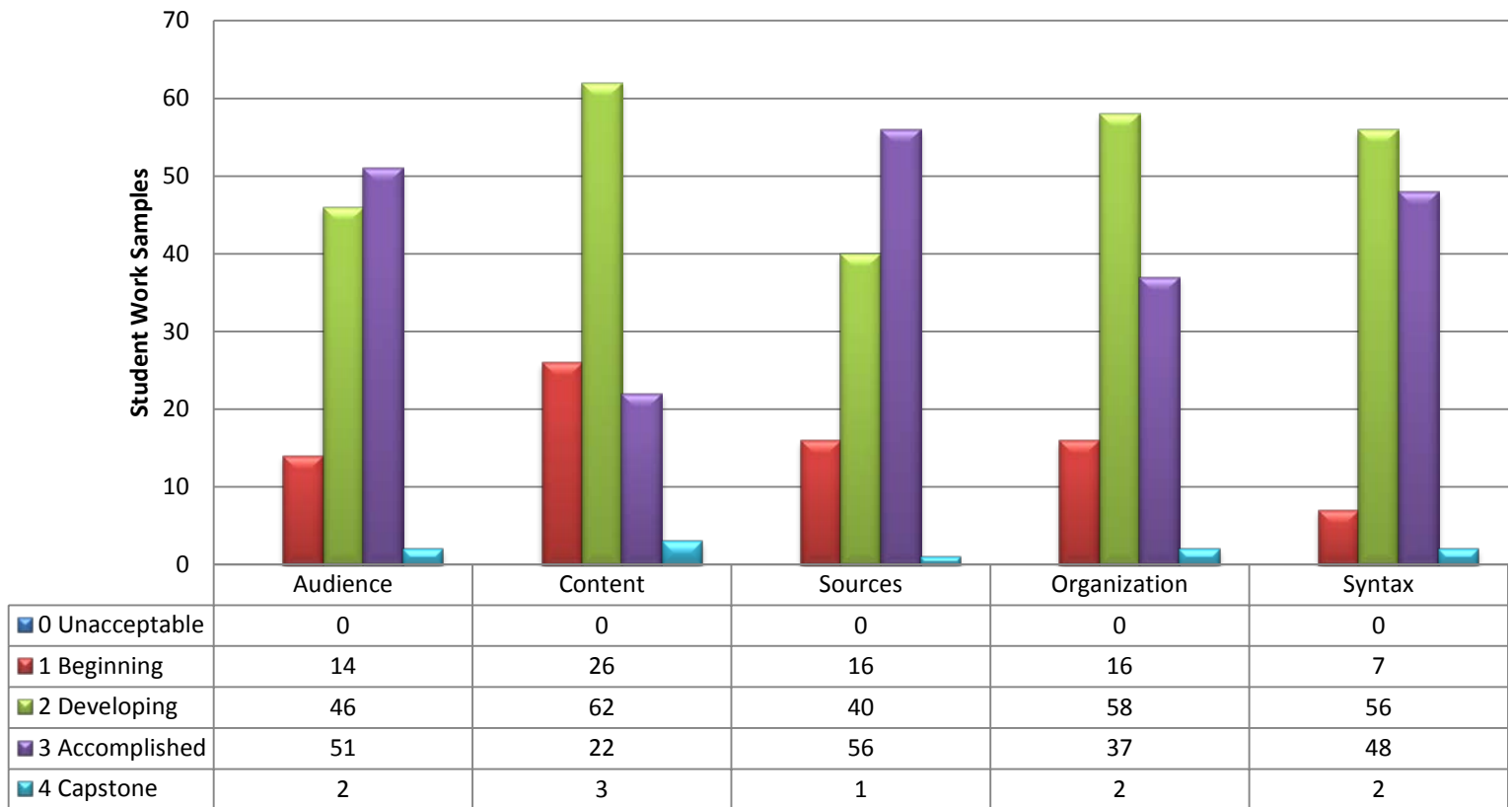
	Critical Thinking (n =224)	Social Responsibility (n=211)
Overall ICC: All Criteria	0.82	Overall ICC: All Criteria 0.77
Identification & explanation of issues	0.84	Cultural Self-Awareness 0.78
Collection of Information	0.80	Cultural Worldview Frameworks 0.78
Recognition of context & assumptions	0.75	Civic Responsibility 0.76
Evaluation & synthesis of information	0.80	Understanding One's Role 0.75
Conclusions & related outcomes	0.82	

Results: Average Scores

	Written Communication (n=113)		Written & Visual Communication (n=132)		All Written Elements (n=245)			Critical Thinking (n=224)			Social Responsibility (n=211)	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode		Mean	Mode		Mean	Mode
Overall ICC: All Criteria	2.27	2	2.04	2	2.18	2	Overall ICC: All Criteria	1.84	2	Overall ICC: All Criteria	1.66	2
Audience, Context, & Purpose	2.36	3	2.27	2	2.31	2	Identification & explanation of issues	1.77	2	Cultural Self-Awareness	1.77	2
Content Development	2.02	2	2.02	2	2.02	2	Collection of information	2.24	3	Cultural Worldview Frameworks	1.51	2
Sources & Evidence	2.37	3	1.81	2	2.18	2	Recognition of context & assumptions	1.54	1	Civic Responsibility	1.79	2
Organization & Presentation	2.22	2	2.05	2	2.13	2	Evaluation & synthesis of information	1.96	2	Understanding One's Role	1.59	2
Control of Syntax	2.4	2	2.31	2	2.35	2	Conclusions & related outcomes	1.68	2			
Visual Aids			1.76	3								

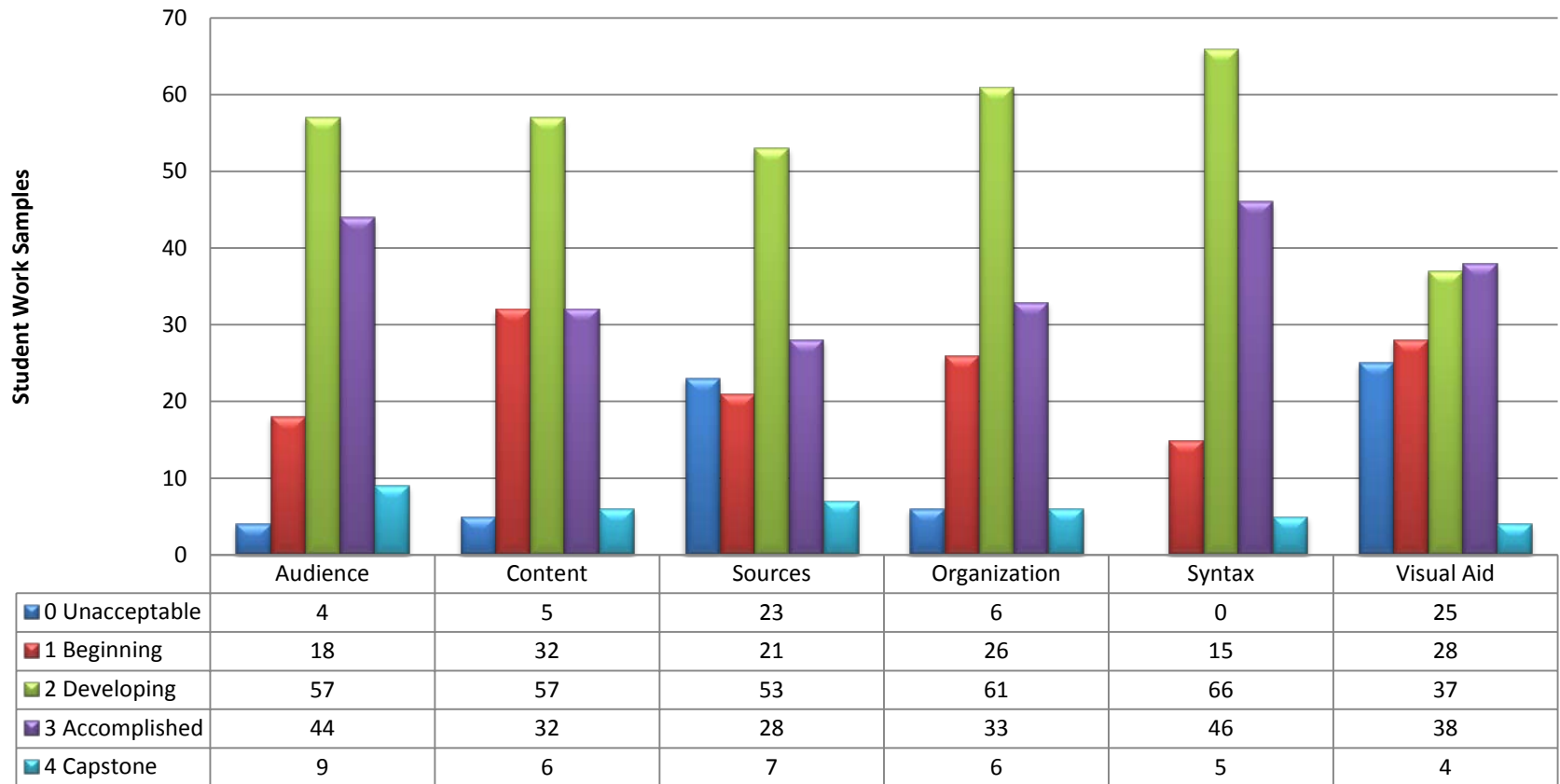
Results: Frequencies by Element

Written Communication Sample Scores by Element



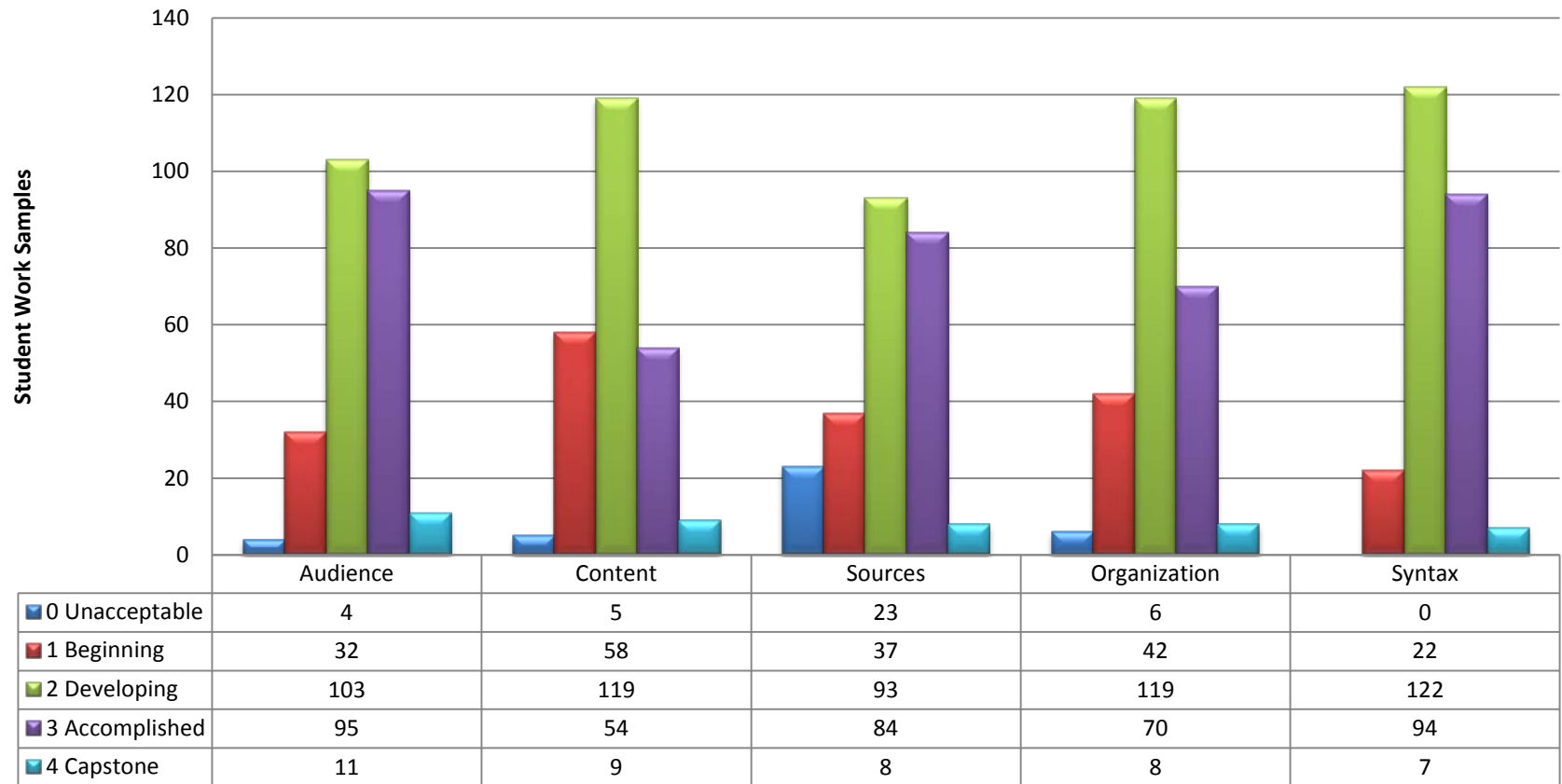
Results: Frequencies by Element

Written & Visual Communication Work Sample Scores by Element



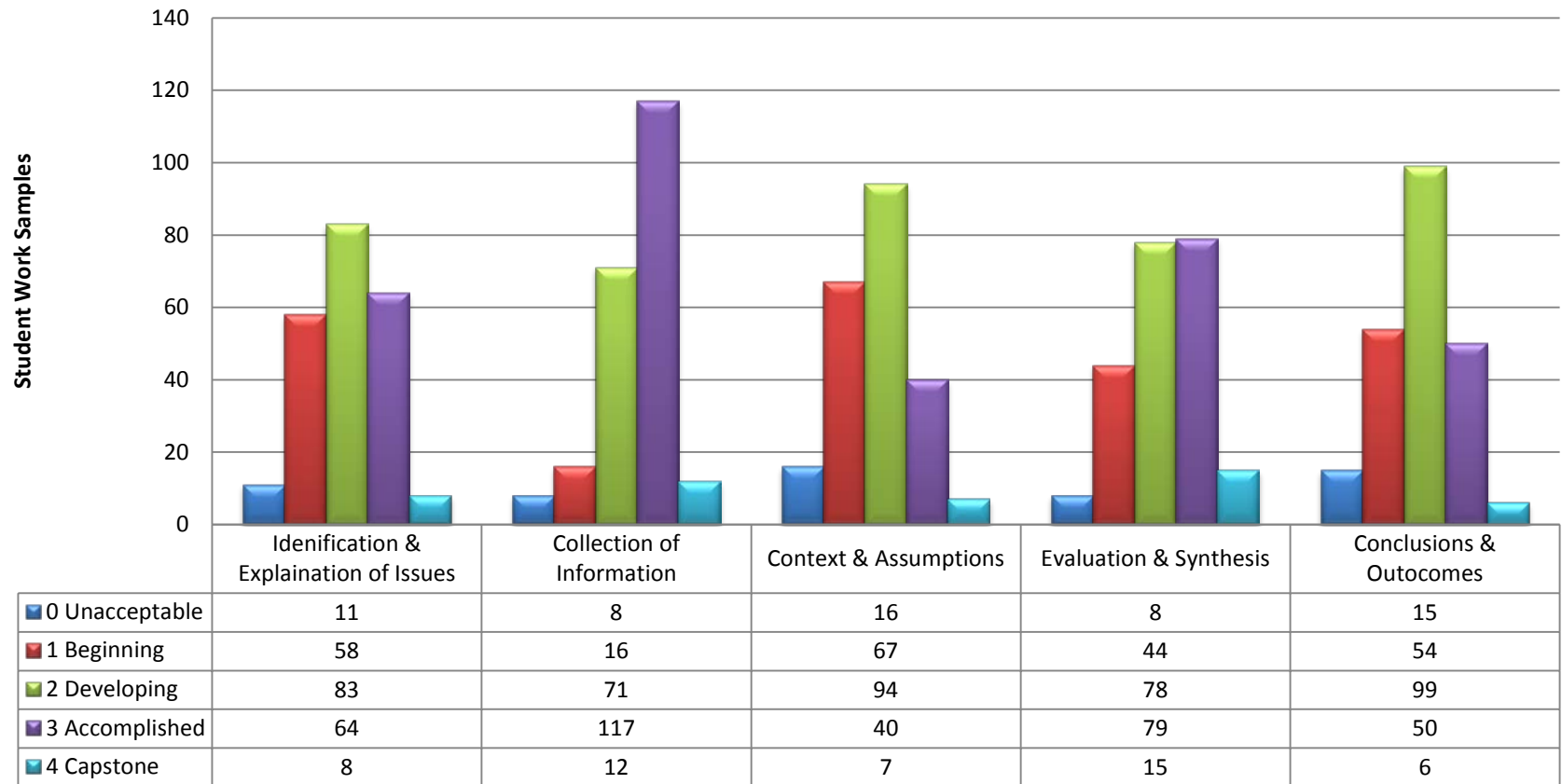
Results: Frequencies by Element

All Written Work by Element



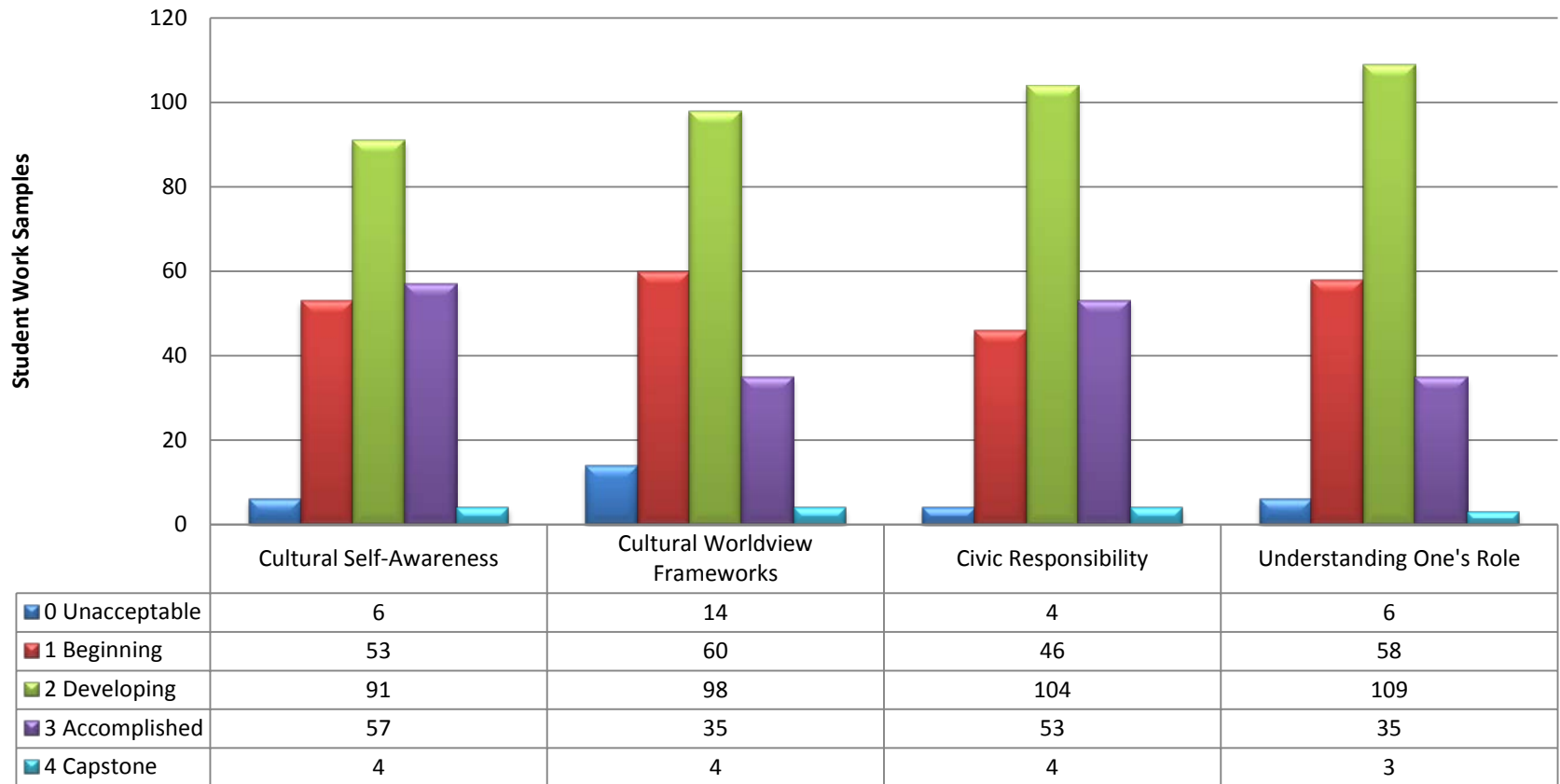
Results: Frequencies by Element

Critical Thinking Work Sample Scores by Element



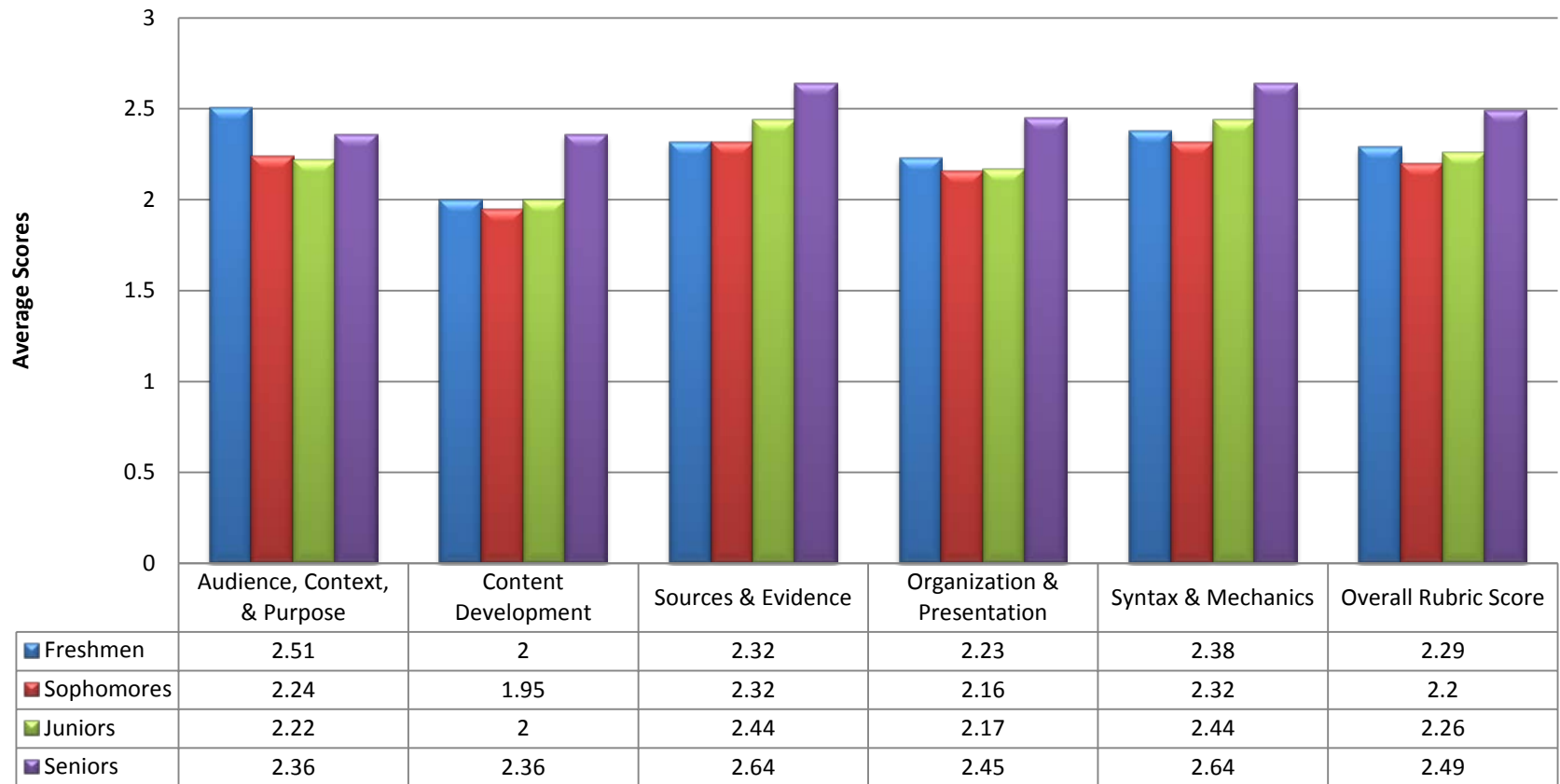
Results: Frequencies by Element

Social Responsibility Work Sample Scores by Element



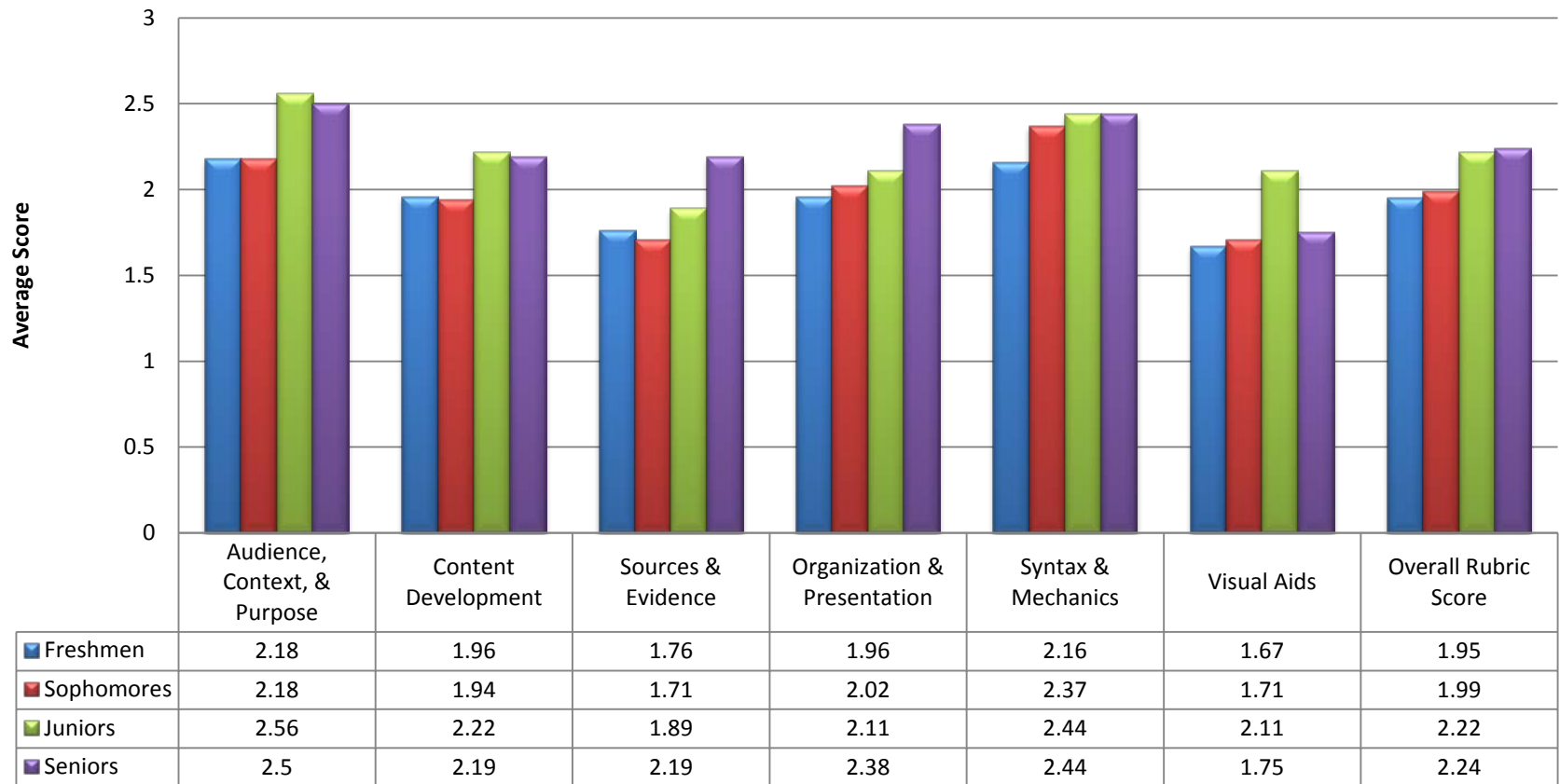
Results: Scores by Classification

Written Communication Average Scores by Classification



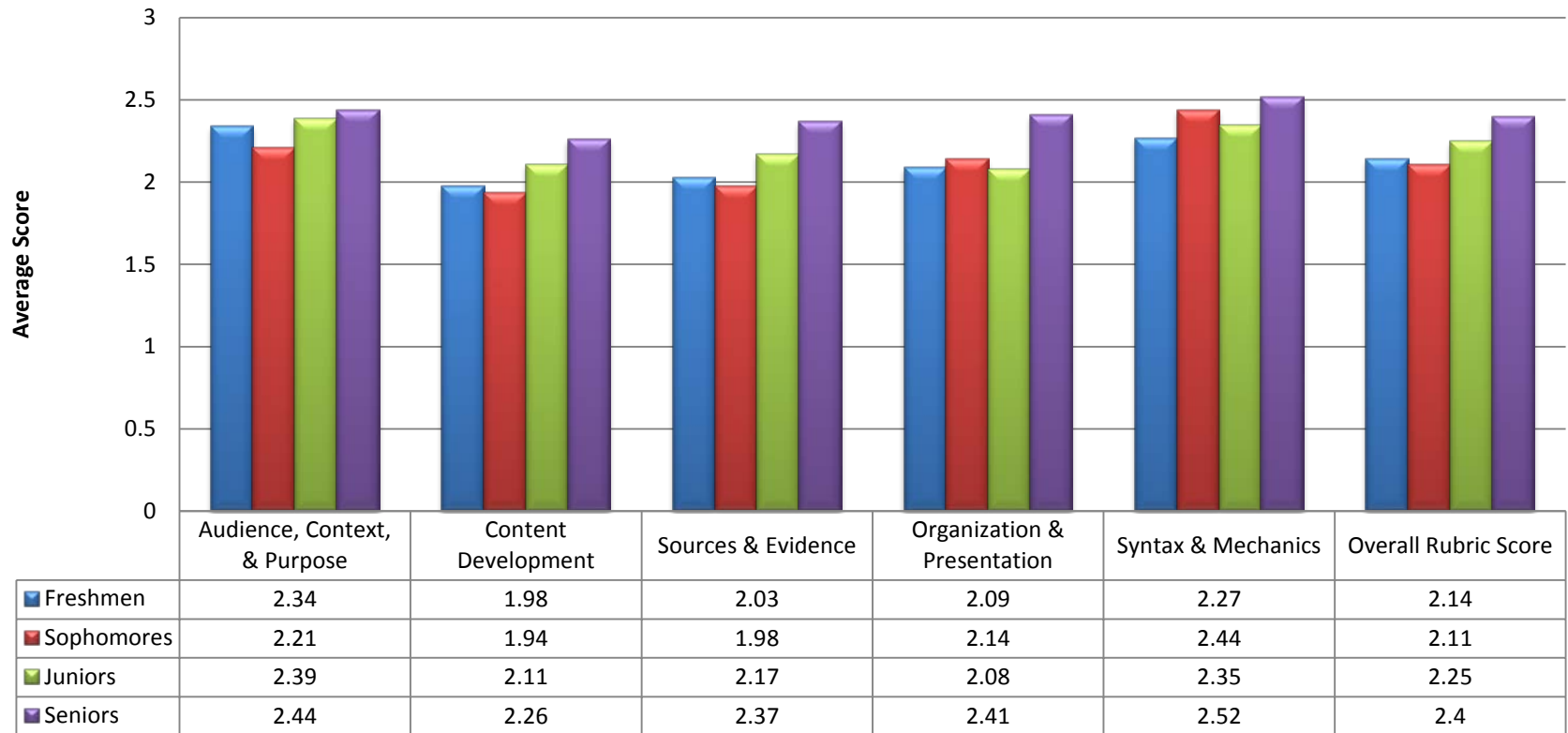
Results: Scores by Classification

Written and Visual Average Scores by Classification



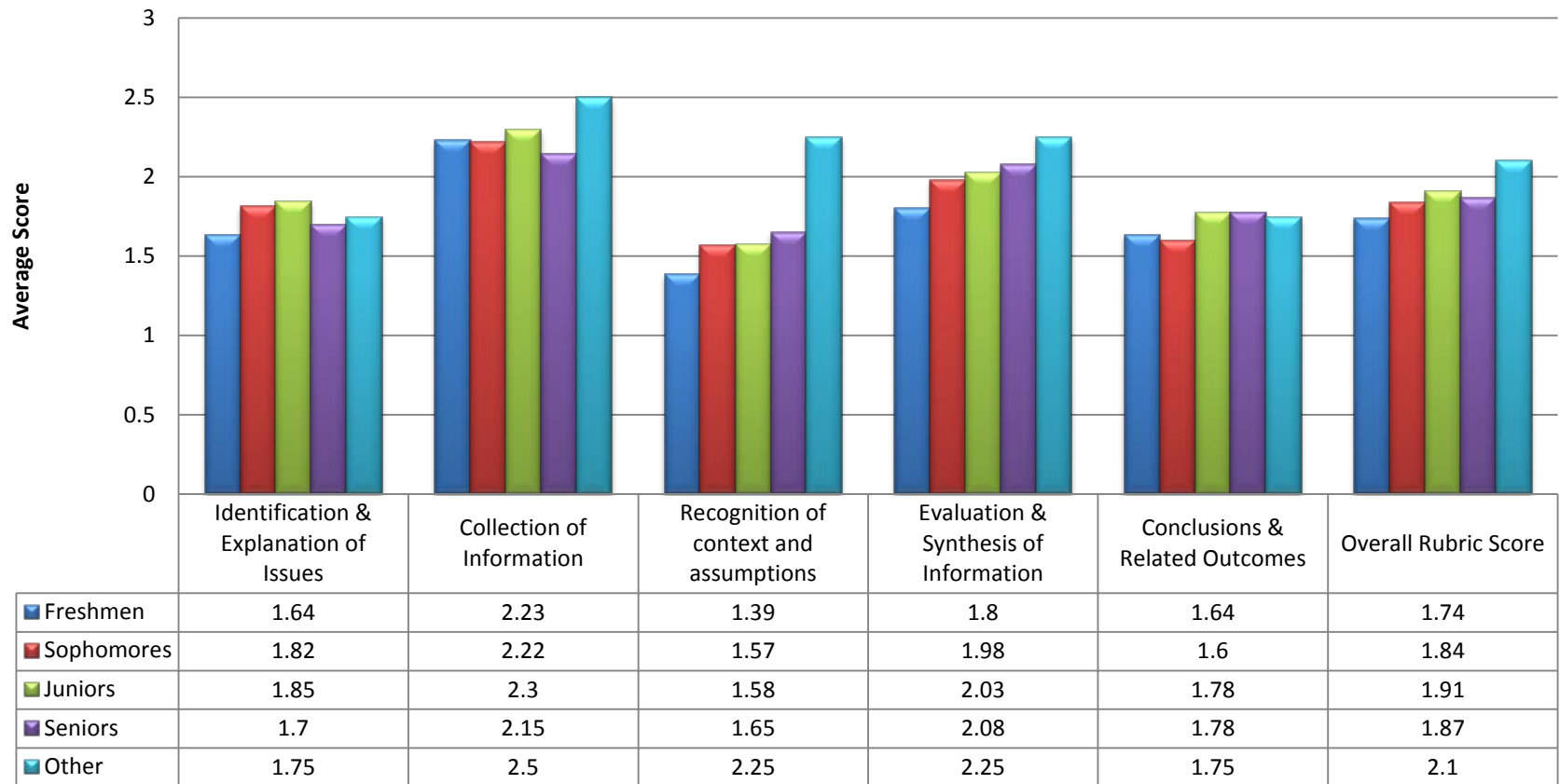
Results: Scores by Classification

Written Elements from Both Samples Average Scores by Classification



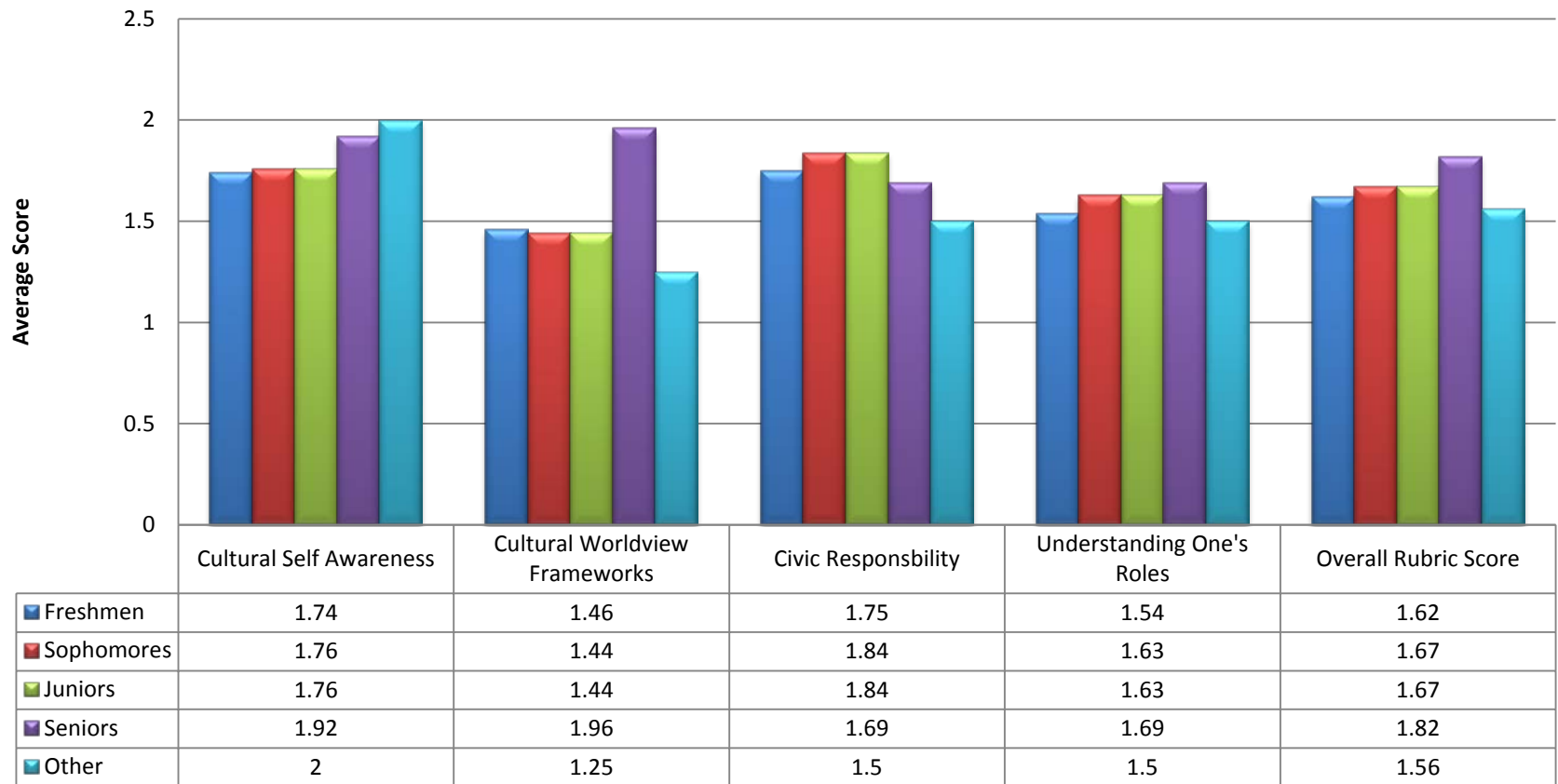
Results: Scores by Classification

Critical Thinking Average Scores by Classification



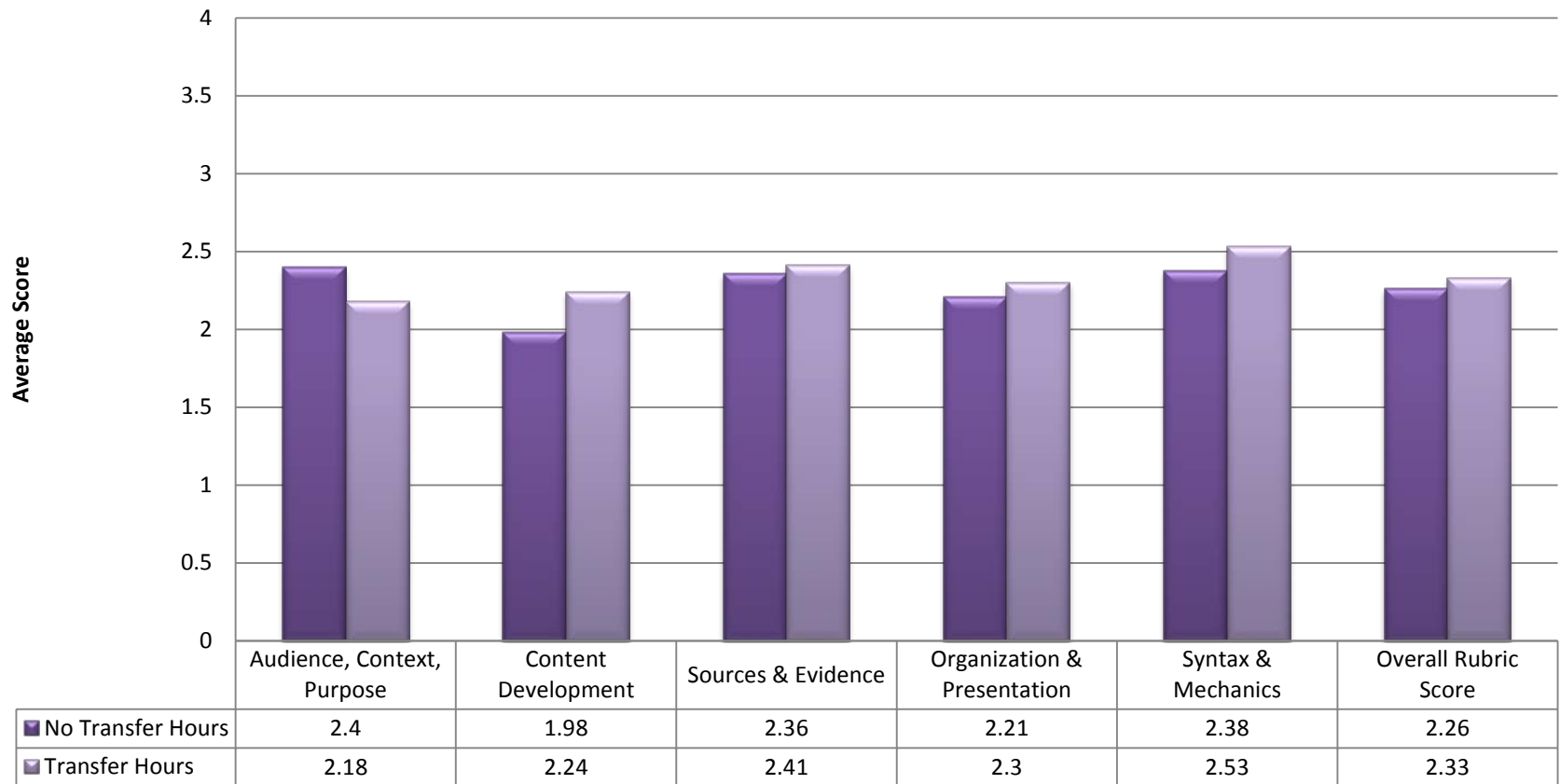
Results: Scores by Classification

Social Responsibility Scores by Classification



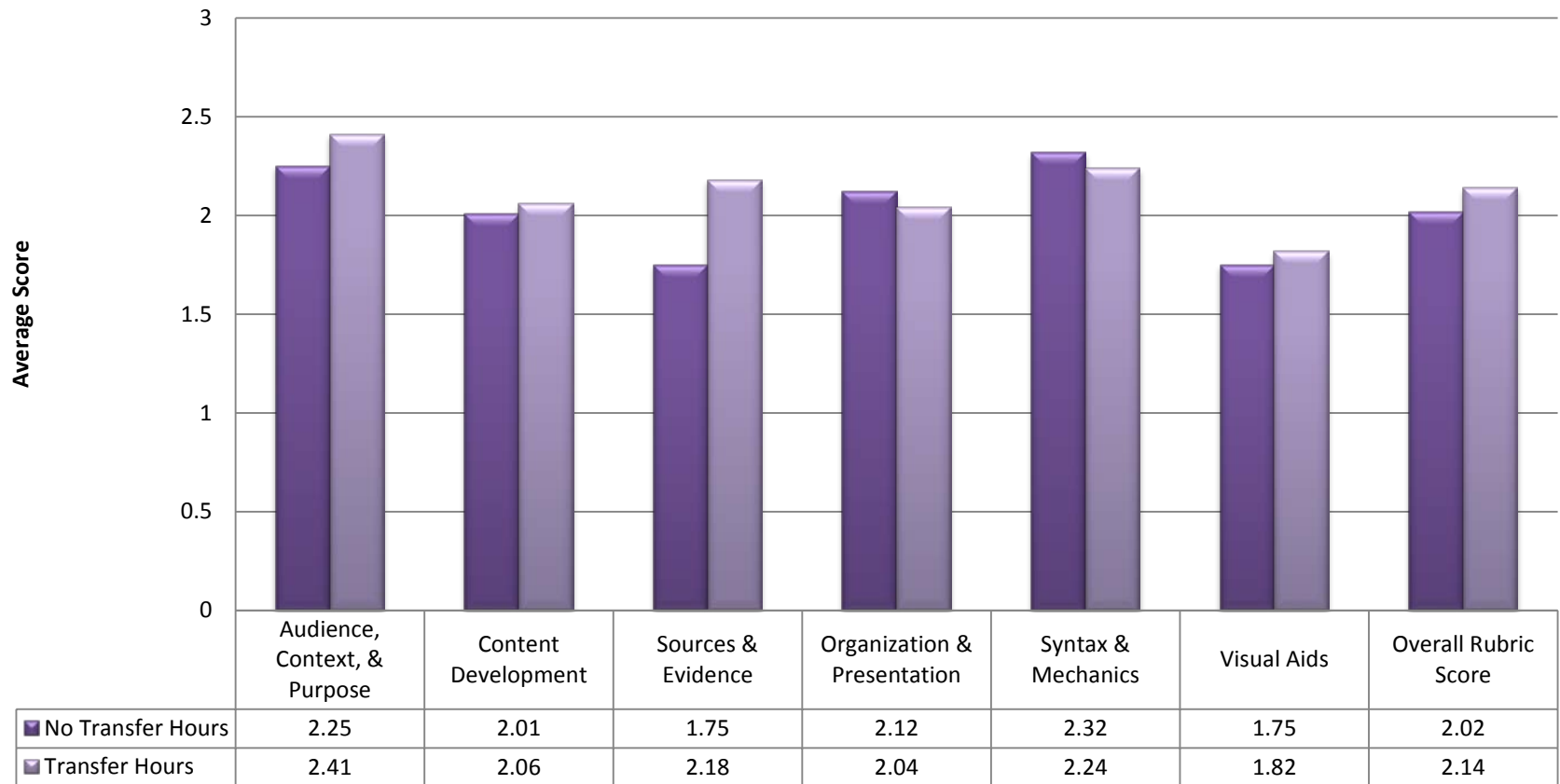
Results: Scores by Transfer Status

Average Scores on Written Sample by Transfer Status



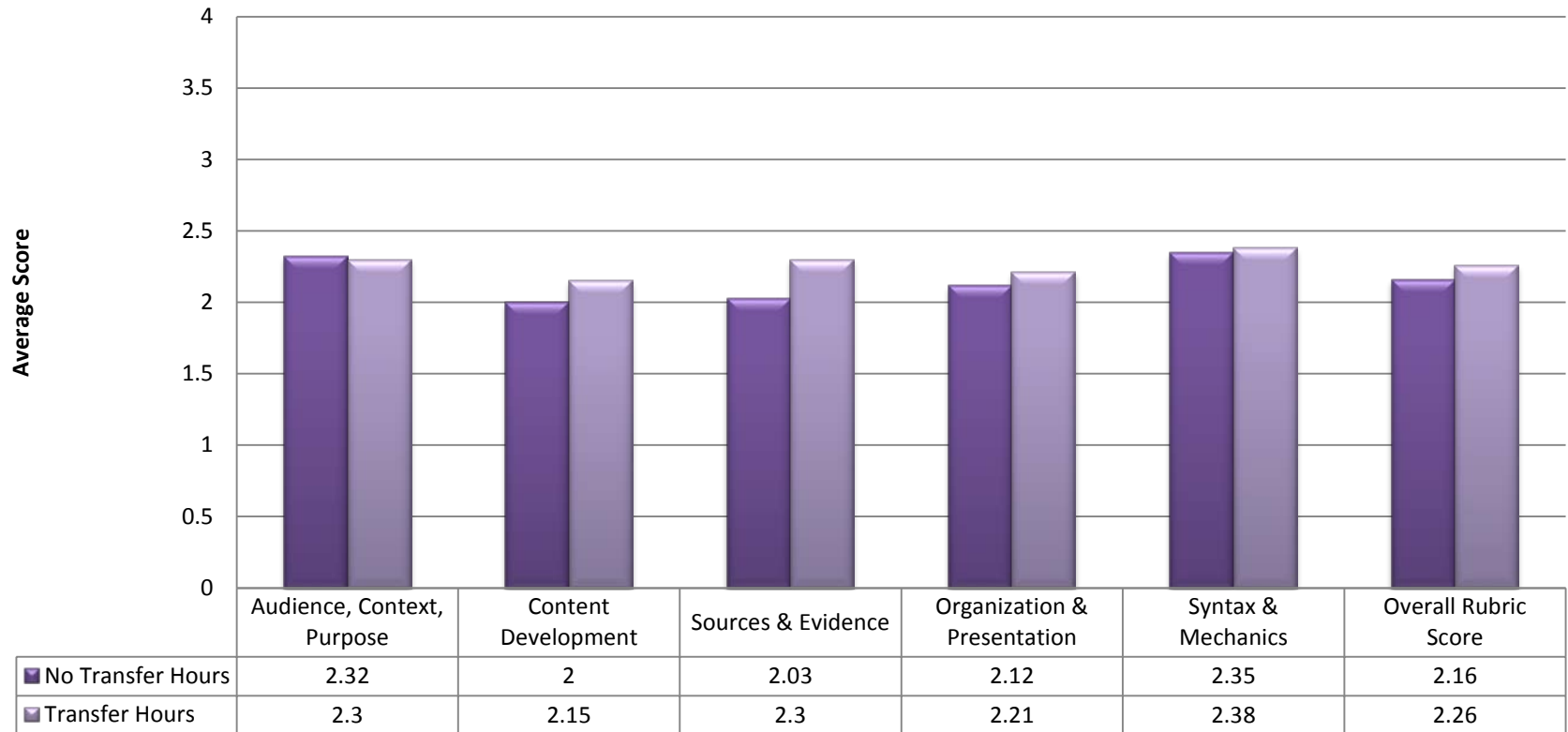
Results: Scores by Transfer Status

Average Scores on Written & Visual Sample by Transfer Status



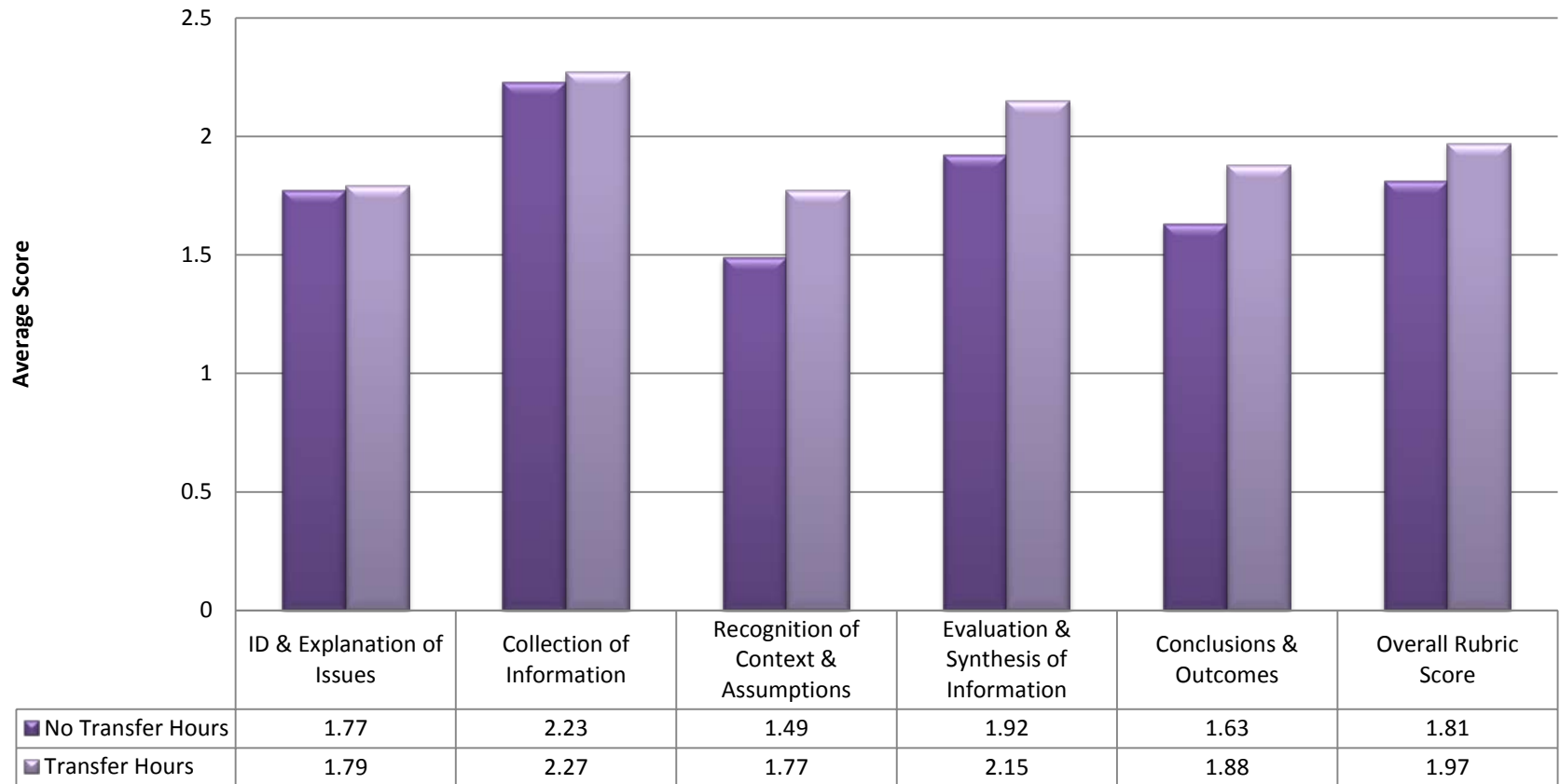
Results: Scores by Transfer Status

Average Scores on Written Elements from Both Samples by Transfer Status



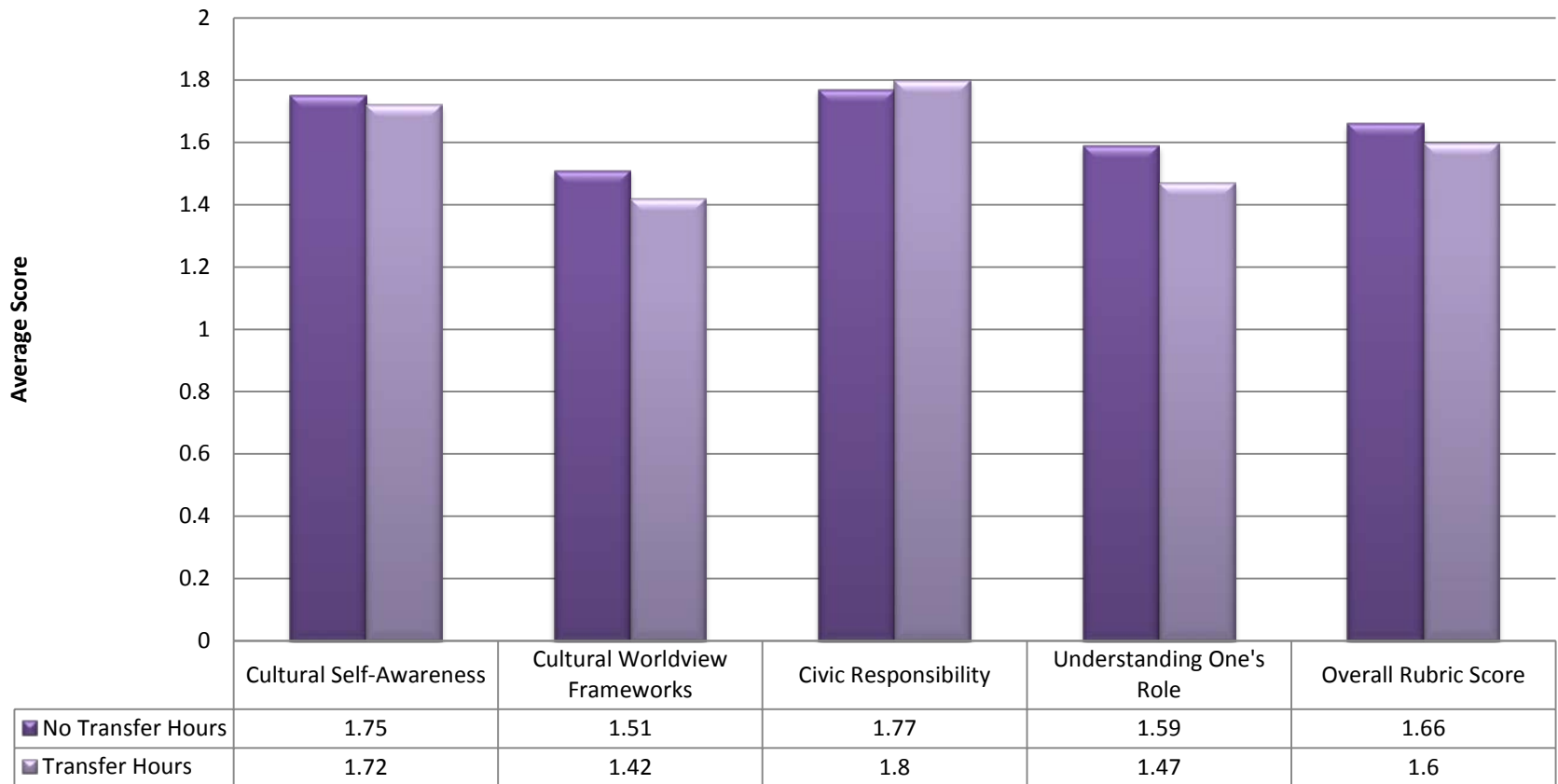
Results: Scores by Transfer Status

Average Scores on Critical Thinking Sample by Transfer Status

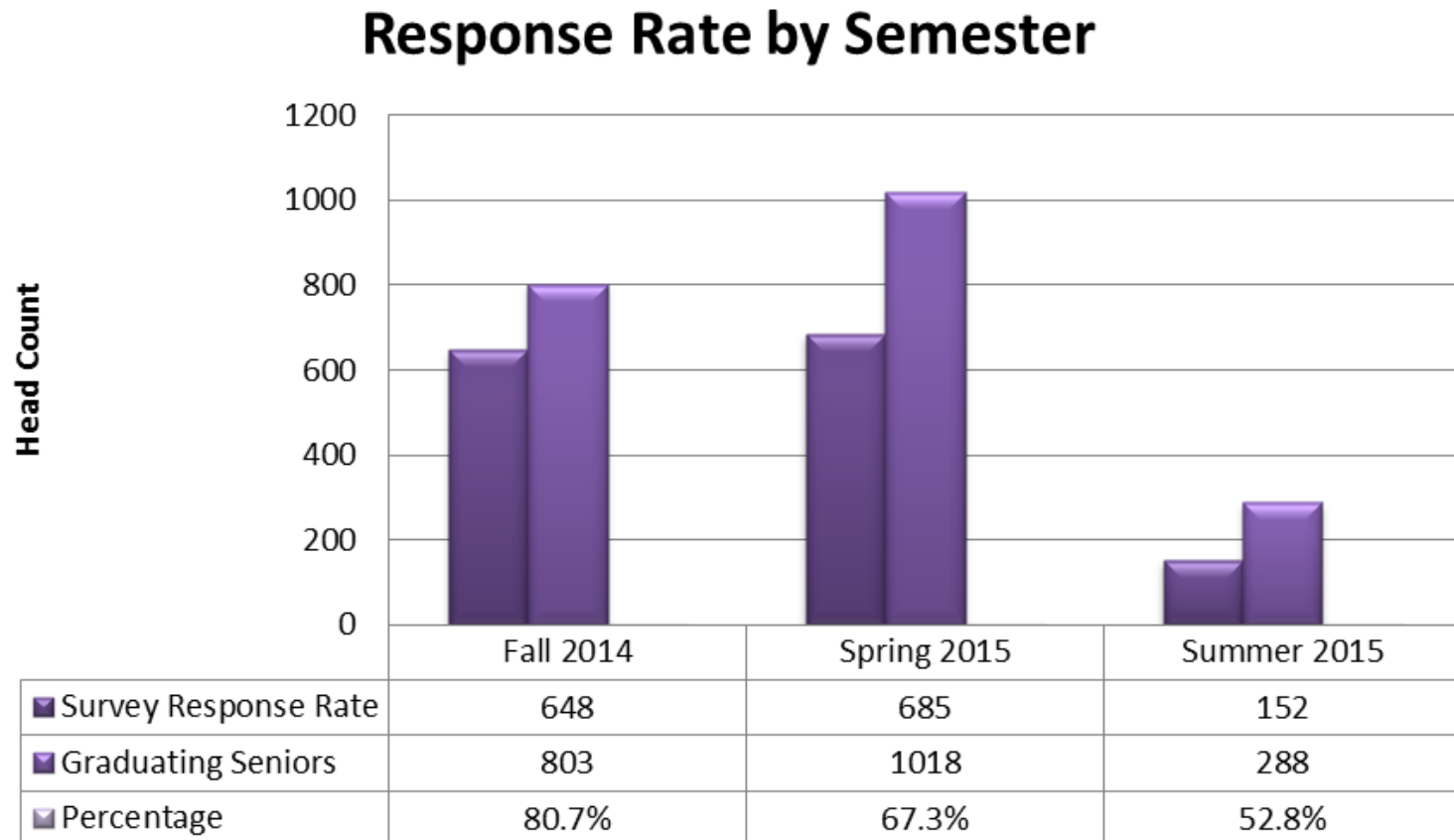


Results: Scores by Transfer Status

Average Scores on Social Responsibility Sample by Transfer Status



Results: Senior Exit Survey



Results: Senior Exit Survey

Core Objective	Response Rate	# Students indicating Very Good or Excellent	Percentage
Critical Thinking	1414	1133	80.13%
Communication	1414	1153	81.54%
Empirical & Quantitative Skills	1414	998	70.58%
Teamwork	1414	1121	79.28%
Personal Responsibility	1414	1192	84.30%
Social Responsibility	1414	1135	80.27%



Larry J. King, Ph. D.
Director of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment &
Professor of Communication
Stephen F. Austin State University
Box 6172, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
lking@sfasu.edu
(936) 468-1260



Jennifer Stringfield
Assessment Specialist—LiveText Coordinator
Stephen F. Austin State University
Box 6172, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
jstringfield@sfasu.edu
(936) 468-1267



Rachel Jumper, Ph. D.
Assistant Director of Student Learning & Institutional Assessment
Stephen F. Austin State University
Box 6172, SFA Station
Nacogdoches, TX 75962
jumperr@sfasu.edu
(936) 468-1130