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The power of syllabi: Faculty roles in ePortfolio

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Undergraduate Views of the Structure and Value of the Clemson General

Education ePortfolio

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Summary Statement

The goal of the current study was to gather objective information about the content of the Clemson general education ePortfolio as well as students' views of the ePortfolios' educational, professional, and assessment values.

Background and Introduction

The Clemson general education ePortfolio is a collection of a student's work throughout their undergraduate career. The ePortfolio is intended to enhance learning and aid in career development by requiring students to upload artifacts with a rationale statements for each competency.

Clemson's ePortfolio aims to help students learn about themselves as learners,

help the university learn more about the core effectiveness of general education, and encourage students to engage in critical self-reflection.

Award winning portfolios contain general education portfolios that are not elaborate, so they may not be valuable to students. There is some suggestion that the ePortfolios are not elaborate, and so may not be valuable to students. We surveyed students who had already completed their ePortfolio in order to explore this hypothesis.

"Award-winning" vs "typical" ePortfolio



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	General Education Competencies	
	List of Gen Ed Competencies	
	Arts and Humanities	
	AH1: Demonstrate an understanding of the arts and humanities in historical and cultural contexts.	
	Nudity in Art	
	This artifact is a paper I wrote for English 103 my freshman year. It is a research paper studying the impact and prejudices towards mudity in public art. The paper explores how mudity has many different cultural biases depending upon the location of the artwork and the extent of the mudity. It explores comparisons between European and American cultural ideals and how the chosen public art acts as a representative for each respective culture.	
	• Fate's Chisel	
	This artifact is a paper I wrote for English 103 my freshman year. It is a paper that analyses art in the current cultural context of a world where photography of art is a prevalent as art itself. The paper looks at a piece of sculpture and a photo of said piece and discusses the cultural ramifications of duplication of historical art with modern techniques. The paper looks specifically at modern culture and the widespread use of the camera flooding the waters of the art culture.	
	Critical Thinking	
	CT1: Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze the quality and utility of knowledge gained throughout the undergraduate experience and apply this knowledge to a wide range of problems.	
	thebottoms project This project represents the summation of three years worth of creative inquiry collaboration between the Student Organic Farm and the	
	School of Architecture at Clemson. It is a condensed report of the work done for the farm through architectural research on the impact of solid, low-cost design. The design, and analysis of impact led to further collaboration and the expansion of the farm and their research program. This project was done with many different students and my involvement as team leader has been detailed in the document. This project used by full knowledge gained from my architectural studies as well as other elective and general education classes including horticulture and agriculture and society.	
	Cross-Cultural Awareness	
	CC1: Demonstrate the ability to critically compare and contrast world cultures in historical and/or contemporary contexts.	
	• Park Guell	
	This research paper was authored in collaboration with Alex Mostov while we were studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain. The paper looks at the ethical ramifications as well as the outward success of planed communities versus naturally developing communities. The area discussed is Park Guell, a large park in the rear of the city, which was originally a planned community by the architect Gaudi. The modern park is split into to zones (the front and the rear) which feature contrasting social and physical development. The paper looks at how the front of the park,	
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Method

Participants

ePortfolio (n=51)

Materials & Procedure

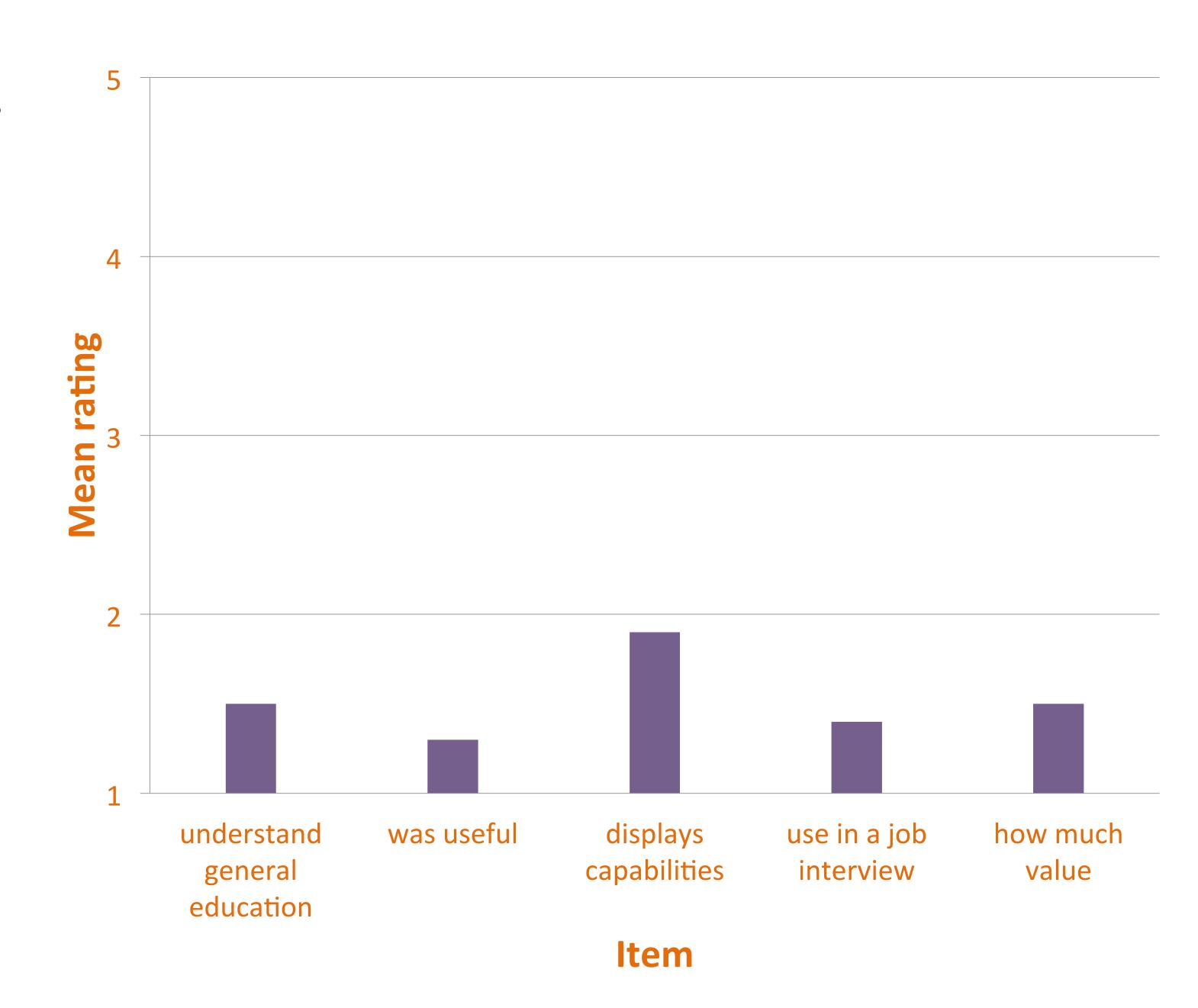
One on one interview consisting of 8-9 questions depending on the depth of the ePortfolio

Participants provided estimates of the objective measures of their ePortfolio.

Participants also rated the usefulness of the ePortfolio along five dimensions on a scale from 1-5 (1=not at all and 5=very much):

- 1. "understand general education"
- 2. "was useful"
- 3. "accurately displays capabilities"
- 4. "use in a job interview"
- 5. "how much value"

Figure 3



Results

Most students' ePortfolios featured the minimum number of Clemson University Undergraduate Students who had completed their artifacts and rationale statements for the eight competencies: 11 artifacts and 9.3 rationale statements on average.

> Figure 3 represents the mean rating of values of the ePortfolios: the means were all low (between 1 and 2). There was a significantly higher rating for item 3 ("accurately displays capabilities") compared to the other four items. Participants with a major program ePortfolio rated the five questions regarding the values of the ePortfolio significantly higher (x=2.2) than the participants without (x=1.3) (p=.003).

Discussion

Results indicate that undergraduate students feel that the ePortfolio is not elaborate and not useful.

Students were somewhat more likely to agree that the ePortfolio accurately displayed their capabilities. Perhaps students feel that they put a lot of effort into their work, so putting major documents into one portfolio helps them display all that they have accomplished in their undergraduate career.

We are currently assessing underclassmen views to see if the senior results generalize to other students. Preliminary data suggests that freshman and sophomore students are more positive in their views than seniors.

It is important to note that students who had completed an ePortfolio for their major indicated that the undergraduate ePortfolio was more beneficial than those that did not. This finding suggests that ePortfolios can be effective.

References

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