



Volume 11, No. 1 Published by Assessment Resource Office, Eastern New Mexico University Date: 1-31-03



National Survey of Student Engagement

The College Student Report

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) surveys undergraduate students at four-year colleges and universities to determine the extent to which students engage in a variety of good educational practices. ENMU participated in NSSE 2001, the first year of NSSE following its pilot project years, and again in 2002. The 2002 sample used by NSSE comprised 206,844 first year and senior students randomly selected from data files provided by 366 participating schools. The sample size from each school was determined by the number its undergraduate students. The sample size was up from 2001 when NSSE had 177,103 students from 321 schools participating.

The 2002 NSSE survey was mailed to 450 ENMU students, and 141 students responded. 40% of the respondents were first year students, and 60% were seniors. The gender split was 68% female and 32% male. The race and ethnicity of ENMU respondents were 3% African American, 2% American Indian/Native American, 2% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 52% Caucasian/White, 38% Hispanic, and 1% International. 85% of the respondents were full-time students. 67% of the students lived off campus. Most of those distributions were very close to the total NSSE distribution. The notable differences were in Race/Ethnicity, where the ENMU sample contained almost three times as many Hispanic students as the NSSE sample, less than half the percentage of African American students, and about 27% fewer Caucasian/White students.

The NSSE survey is comprised of 11 different areas of data pertaining to the educational experiences of students. An example of the actual survey can be seen at <http://www.collegereport.org/NSSEDemo.htm>

The topics of the survey are:

- Academic, Intellectual, and Social Experiences
- Mental Activities
- Reading and Writing
- Challenge of Examinations
- Quality of Advising
- Enriching Educational Experiences
- Time Usage
- Institutional Emphases
- Quality of Relationships
- Satisfaction
- Educational and Personal Growth

ENMU faculty and staff may obtain copies of the full report by contacting the Assessment Resource Office. However, in this edition of the DATAWave, we will examine parts of only three topics covered by the survey: Mental Activities, Time Usage, and Reading and Writing. In all of the charts used to examine those three topics we compare ENMU mean scores with NSSE.

Mental Activities

We have included charts comparing reported mental activities ENMU students use in their coursework to those of NSSE as a whole because we believe it remains important to note that ENMU students continue to report more "memorizing facts" and fewer of the higher order cognitive activities than NSSE. While the differences aren't great, they are consistent with the 2001 ENMU comparison to NSSE.



The survey described the mental activities required in coursework as follows:

Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so that they can be repeated in pretty much the same order.

Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components.

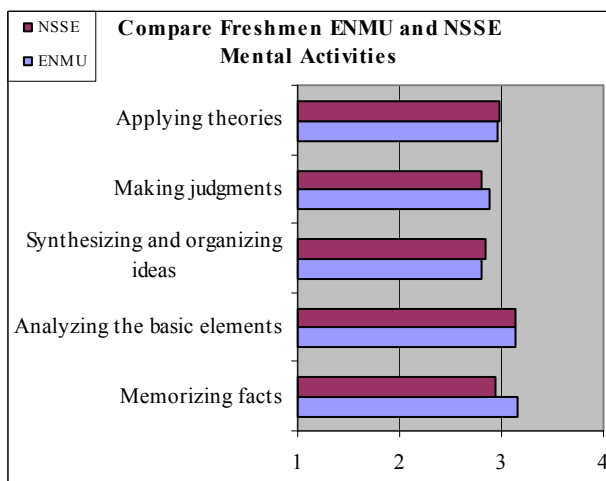
Synthesizing Ideas, and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.

Evaluating Information by making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions.

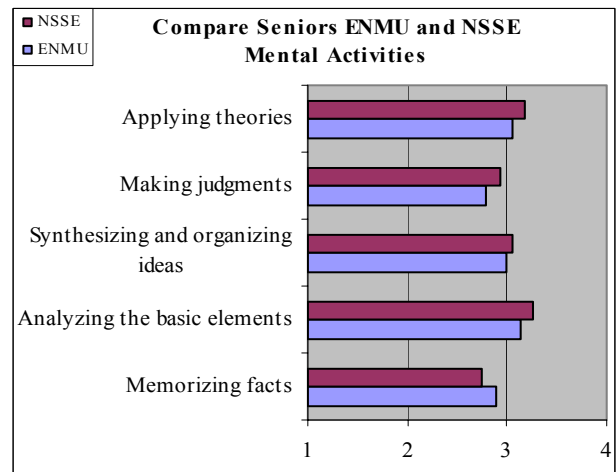
Applying Theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations.

This chart displays the results comparing ENMU Freshmen to NSSE Freshmen using score values of:

- 1= Very little
- 2= Some
- 3= Quite a bit
- 4= Very much



The next chart displays the results comparing ENMU Seniors to NSSE Seniors using the same values.



Reading and Writing

We include the Reading and Writing topic because it is pertinent to the general education part of our mission that is of concern to many people all across post-secondary education.

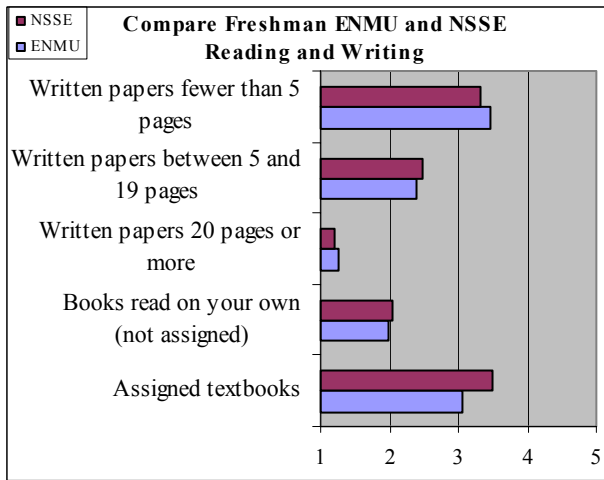
The descriptions of the variables used by the NSSE in Reading and Writing are:

- Number of written papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages.
- Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages.
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more.
- Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment.
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length packs of course readings.

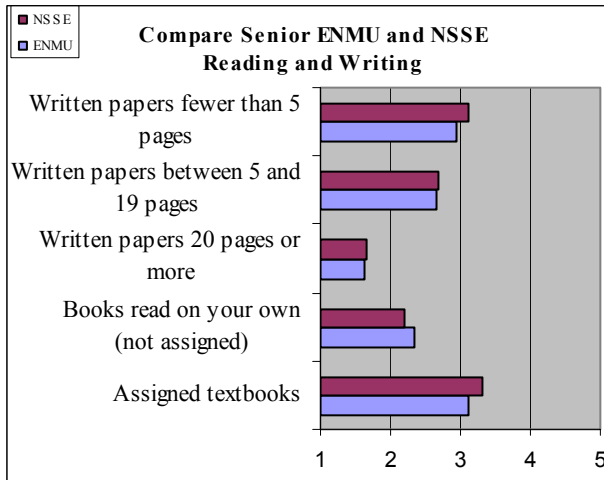
The responses for questions were scored:

- 1 = None
- 2 = Between 1 and 4
- 3 = Between 5 and 10
- 4 = Between 11 and 20
- 5 = More than 20

The first chart compares freshmen students of ENMU to their NSSE counterparts.



The next chart compares ENMU's seniors with their NSSE counterparts.



Reading and Writing compared extremely close to the NSSE average of the means in each category and grade level.

Time Usage

This topic attempts to show how students use their time during their college careers. The students were asked to respond to the following question:

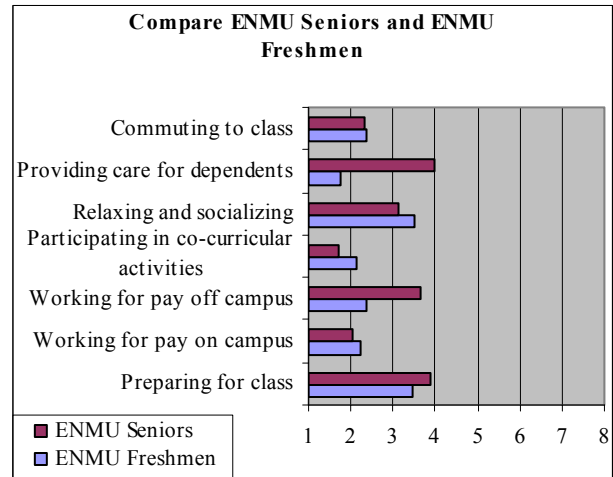
About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

- Providing care for dependents living with you
- Relaxing and socializing
- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Working for pay off campus
- Working for pay on campus

- Preparing for class
The responses were scored:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1= 0 hours | 5= 16 to 20 hours |
| 2= 1 to 5 hours | 6= 21 to 25 hours |
| 3= 6 to 10 hours | 7= 26 to 30 hours |
| 4= 11 to 15 hours | 8= 30 hours or more |

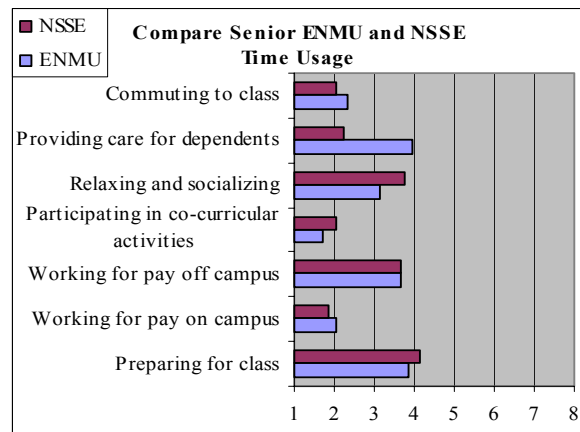
The first chart compares ENMU 1st year students and senior students in Time Usage.



The chart indicates that senior students devote more time to their studies and to working than do freshmen.

The large increase in Dependent Care is interesting and is very large when comparing ENMU's seniors to the NSSE means for seniors.

The second chart compares ENMU senior students to the NSSE means. ENMU senior students tend to spend more time than their NSSE counterparts working and providing dependent care and less time relaxing and involved in co-curricular activities.

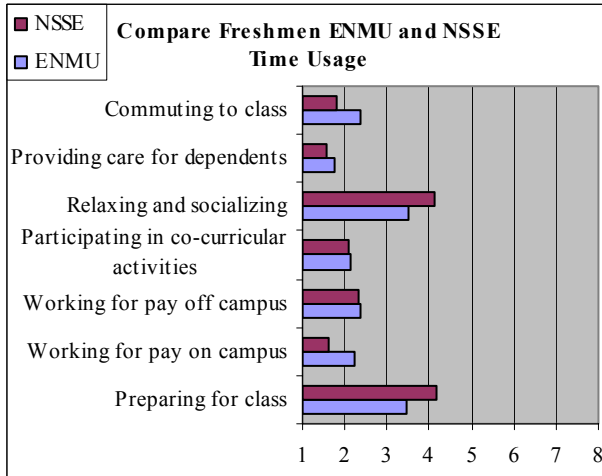


The next chart compares 1st year students to their NSSE counterparts. It indicates that ENMU students



tend to work more and spend less time preparing for class than NSSE counterparts.

time our seniors spend caring for dependants compared to the NSSE mean.



Thus, I repeat, it is hard to imagine that the "dependent care" data does not represent a situation that bears upon the success rate of our students; and, given the results of the second round of NSSE surveys, it seems clear that this is a matter that needs our attention here at ENMU.

Editorially Speaking: NSSE and Eastern
By Larry Smith

In the last issue of the DATAWave I indicated that "[g]iven the size of the sample of Eastern's respondents to the NSSE it might be premature to state that the huge increase from freshman to senior in time spent on care of dependents is of epidemic proportions at Eastern"; and I stated further that it was "a statistic to be watched carefully over time."

Well, time has passed, and the second NSSE survey again shows a rather startling disparity in the

The Assessment Resource Office, Station 9, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico 88130 publishes the DATAWave.
 Voice: 505-562-4313
 Fax: 505-562-4326
 Email: Larry.Smith@enmu.edu

Editor: Larry N Smith
 Assessment Coordinator

Contributions: Byron Mitchell
 Graduate Assistant

Production: Tammy Garcia
 Secretary



Printed on recycled paper



Eastern New Mexico University is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap in its programs, activities, or employment. Persons seeking additional information about the University's policy should contact the Director of Human Relations/Affirmative Action Office, ENMU Station #2, Portales, NM 88130.

**EASTERN
NEW MEXICO
UNIVERSITY**

Assessment Resource Office, Station #9
 Eastern New Mexico University
 Portales, NM 88130