Professional Development Portfolios (PDP):
Impact on reframing and articulating student employment as a learning experience

Jen Bird, Dean of Students Office

The purpose of this study was to determine if the use of a carefully designed PDP as an integrative learning tool would effectively guide students to reframe and articulate their understanding of their job as a learning experience.

Overview/Context

Participants:

- Division of Student Affairs Level 3 and 4 student employees (managers, supervisors, lead students, etc.)

Interventions:

Per their position, all participants were required to:

- Attend one professional development workshop
- Create resume and cover letter (or personal statement) based on a position announcement in their field – each was to be critiqued by two professionals.
- Design a personalized website demonstrating mastery of identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) through their position within Student Affairs

PDP Tasks Assessed:

- NACA NEXT pre/post self-evaluative survey on their mastery of skills employers seek (per NACE, the National Association for Colleges and Employers)
- Pre/post critical reflections

Limitations

- IRB process updated after start of fall semester which delayed start of study; possibly impacted participant numbers and data from pre-survey and pre-critical reflection
- All data (surveys and reflections) was self reported
- With only 10 students completing the pre/post surveys, and only 7 of the 10 completed both pre/post reflections, outcomes cannot be generalized
- Consistency in messaging difficult due to multiple supervisors
- Supervisory staff transitions during study led to miscommunication with participants
- Students completed personalized websites but did not include artifacts demonstrating how they met SLOs for their position; therefore, data from this strategy unable to be utilized in final analysis
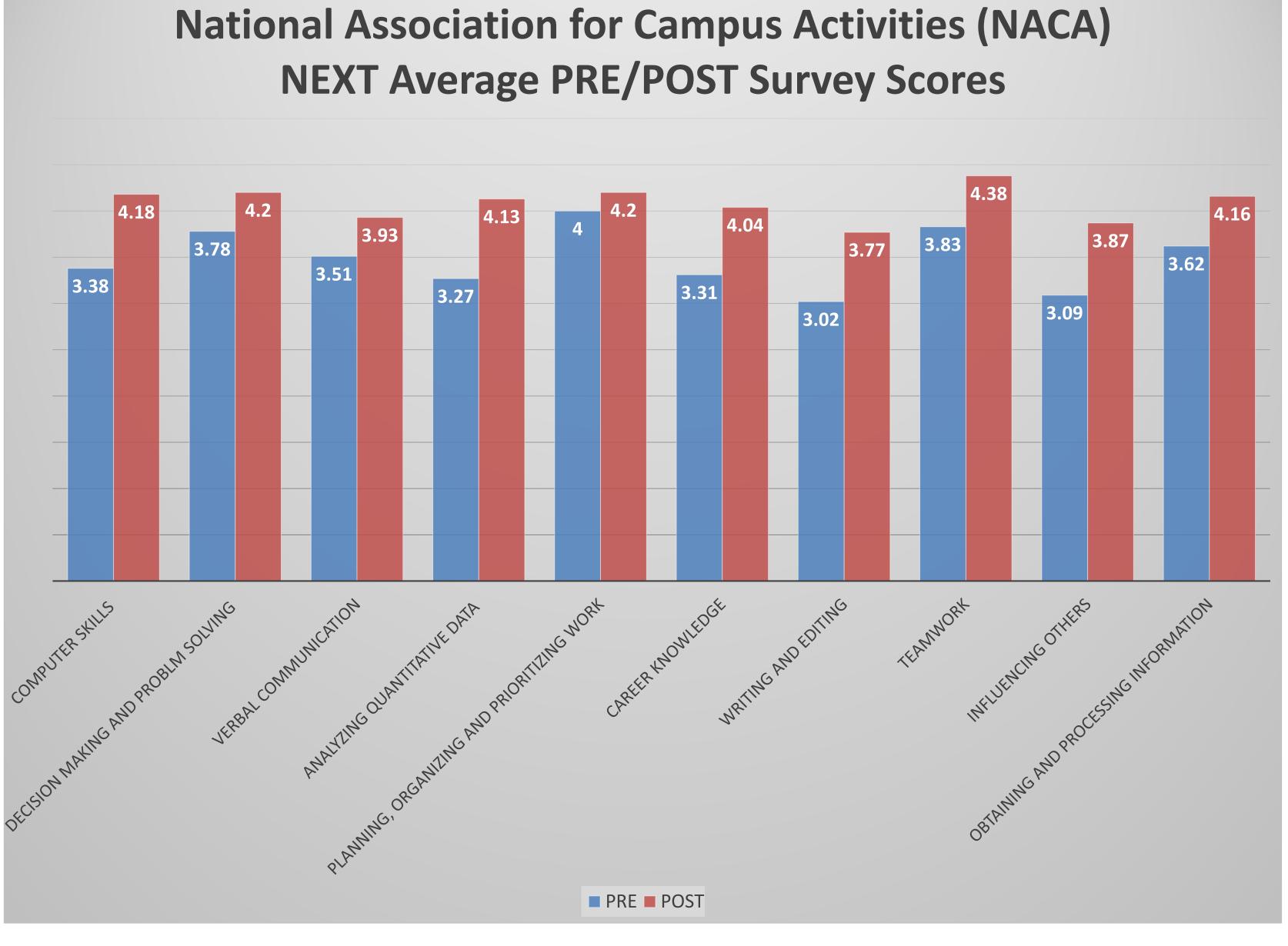
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Methods

Quantitative	Qualitative
• Pre and post self-evaluative surveys	• Pre/post critical reflections

"Completing the PDP has helped me to reflect on what I have learned and experienced as part of Student Affairs. Having worked with the division for three years sometimes I forget how much of an impact this experience has had in my life, so it is nice to have the opportunity to reflect and recognize how much I have learned and grown."

"I did learn a bit about my position within Student Affairs as a learning experience as a result of the PDP. It helped me analyze my role and how I can improve myself in different areas related to my position within Student Affairs."

"I learned how to manipulate the skills I learned in my job to help me search for the proper graduate school. As a (omitted) major, I had not considered computer skills as a necessity for success, but with the help of the PDP I have used my e-profile to market myself more prominently."

National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) NEXT Average PRE/POST Survey Scores

PRE | POST

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Results Highlights

Decision Making/Problem Solving		
t-test (2-tail)	.005671	*P-value*
t-test (1-tail)	.002835	*P-value*
Verbal Communication		
t-test (2-tail)	.016242	*P-value*
t-test (1-tail)	.008121	*P-value*
Planning/Organizing/Prioritizing		
t-test (2-tail)	.0118396	*P-value*
t-test (1-tail)	.059198	*P-value*
Career Knowledge		
t-test (2-tail)	.010006	*P-value*
t-test (1-tail)	.005003	*P-value*
Teamwork		
t-test (2-tail)	.008319	*P-value*
t-test (1-tail)	.004159	*P-value*

Qualitative data:

- Post-survey scores increased significantly in 9 out of 10 skill areas from pre-survey
- While t-test showed significant change from pre- to post-survey scores, results cannot be generalized due to small sample size

Quantitative data:

- Review of post-critical reflections showed participants felt the PDP guided them to reflect on how their position has helped them grow and develop
- Participants were able to articulate skills learned while in their position and how skills connect with their future career path

References

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