

## Transference of Learning in and out of the Classroom

In the spring of 2006, over 1200 Texas A&M undergraduate students participated in the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), sponsored by the University of Maryland, College Park. Their theoretical framework was based on the Social Change Model of Leadership, and 54 institutions participated. Institutions could submit additional local questions in addition to the 37 questions in the standard survey. Texas A&M asked two qualitative questions: “Please describe your best example of how you applied your classroom learning to your out-of-class experiences” (819 responses with 1,003 independent thoughts) and “Please describe your best example of how you applied out-of-classroom learning experiences to your classroom experiences” (714 responses with 920 independent thoughts). Students responded with general statements about learning, what they learned in terms of specific skills or knowledge, and where they applied learning. Staff in the Division of Student Affairs conducted a formal qualitative sort to put the responses into themes. The table below illustrates the 20 most common response categories in descending frequency order; color/number coding shows direct matches between questions. Each set of responses were categorized into 36 different themes.

Applying Class to Out-of-Class Experiences	Applying Out-of-Class to Class Experiences
(1) Work—Job (general)	(2) Working in Groups
(2) Working in Groups	(7) Time Management
(3) Class/Major (including student teaching)	(1) Work (Including Internships and Military)
(4) World View	(3) Classroom Experience (General Application)
(1) Work—Internship	Direct Link
(5) Understanding People/Individuals	Leadership
(6) Personal Development/Characteristics	Organize/Prioritize
Interaction—Daily Life	(5) Understanding Others’ Values and Perspectives
(7) Time Management	(9) Communication
Interaction—Discussion/Conversation	Study Skills
(8) Critical Thinking/Decision Making	Meeting People/Social Confidence/Networking
(9) Communication	(6) Personal Development/Characteristics
Relationships	(8) Critical Thinking
Volunteering	(10) Real World Experiences
Financial Management	Listening
Family	(4) Diversity
(10) Real World Experiences	Hard Work/Work Ethic
Interaction—Debate	Assertiveness/Speaking Up
Interaction—Teaching Others	Motivation/Dedication
(1) Work—On Campus	Respect

Clearly, students see the connection between their classroom experiences and their work life. In addition, there is a class/out of class connection in terms of skills students have developed for personal improvement, used in student organizations and other groups, and applied in “real world” experiences. These skills support the Texas A&M Undergraduate Outcomes of (1) Mastering a depth of knowledge required of a discipline, (2) Demonstrating critical analytical skills, (3) Communicating effectively in writing and speaking, and (4) Providing ethical leadership in a global and diverse society.

For more information about the MSL, see <http://www.leadershipstudy.net/>. For information specific to Texas A&M students, see <http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/leadandserve/msl> or contact Krista Bailey at (979) 845-1133 or [kbailey@stuact.tamu.edu](mailto:kbailey@stuact.tamu.edu).

