

# Messina

## Messina Spring Semester Survey Findings

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## Overview

1018 students participating in Messina during the Spring 2017 semester were invited to participate in a web survey to assess their first-year experience. The survey was submitted for Institutional Review Board for approval (FWA00013527) before it was sent to students. Questions were designed to correspond primarily to Messina learning outcomes related to Critical Understanding with an additional question that led to student responses that related to three other outcome areas – Discernment, Community, and Integrated Learning (see Appendix A for complete list of Learning Outcomes and descriptions).

The survey was conducted from May 1, 2017 – May 30, 2017. At its completion, 431 students began the survey and 193 students fully completed the survey. Data represents the following themes and identities:

- 49 (25.39%) respondents represented Self and Other, 53 (27.46%) respondents represented Stories We Tell, 44 (22.80%) respondents represented The Visionary, and 47 (24.35%) respondents represented The Good Life. (*n*=193)
- 57 (29.53%) respondents identified as men, 136 (70.47%) respondents identified as women.

## Summary of Findings

Students were asked a variety of quantitative and qualitative questions related to their first-year experience. The first part of the survey involved students being provided with the two definitions of the Messina learning outcomes related to Critical Understanding. For each definition they were then asked to respond to the following three questions:

- *Question 1:* During your first year at Loyola, in what ways did you experience this learning outcome within and beyond the classroom? In your response, please give examples of specific course content, assignments, programs, activities, or other experiences.
- *Question 2:* What level of influence did your participation in Messina have in relation to this area? (select one) No Influence, Little Influence, Some Influence, Very Influential
- *Question 3:* Please comment on why you made the above selection in regard to Messina's level of influence.

### **Learning Outcome 1: Develop habits of reading, writing, and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.**

Responses to Question 1 highlighted the influence of a specific course(s) in fostering this learning outcome. Main topics mentioned by students centered on writing assignments, group discussions, and research and examination of texts. While responses to this question were not intended to be specific to the Messina course, students tended to provide examples from their Messina experience.<sup>1</sup> One observation of note are students, both formally through the course and on their own, having discussions about the connections between their fall and spring Messina course.

An element listed separately in responses centers on broader reflections by students about their first year experience, primarily in regard to opportunities students had to make connections between coursework and real-world applications. This occurred through class discussions, supplemental readings, and excursions that tied

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<sup>1</sup> This could be identified because students responded to the question with variations of "In my Messina..."

to course content. In some ways, these responses provide examples of a different Messina learning outcome, Integrated Learning.

When asked about the influence of Messina in contributing to how students experienced learning outcome 1, over half of respondents indicated that Messina had “some influence” or was “very influential.” 30 students indicated that Messina had “no influence” of this learning outcome, and reviews of responses to Question 3 unfortunately do not provide specific details as to what may have contributed to making that selection. 16 responses were empty- no information was provided. The feedback that was offered directly related to Question 3 centered around the type of courses offered in the pairing, specifically pairings that did not have reading or writing assignments and the point that subject areas of some pairings are not designed to foster conversation because they are based more on formulas and facts.

Feedback not directly related to the question but connected to elements of Messina centered on the following topics: disappointment in classes that did not do an outside trip/ excursion into Baltimore, disappointment that the Messina pairing did not connect to a student’s intended major, a sense that there could be fewer enrichment sessions, a desire for different professors, a lack of engagement in Messina by the working group which in turn fostered a lack of student participation/ engagement, and the timing of enrichment sessions conflicted with possible courses a student could take outside of Messina.

### **Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.**

Responses to Question 1 indicated student development in both knowledge and utilization of campus resources. Specific resources frequently mentioned were The Writing Center, The Study, The Library, and the Counseling Center. Students learned about these resources in Messina and non-Messina classes, from administrators, through upperclass students including Evergreens, RAs, and people they met in other clubs and activities. Messina program elements including attendance at theme-wide lectures fostered this outcome.

When asked about the influence of Messina in contributing to experiencing learning outcome 2, over half of respondents indicated that Messina had “some influence” or was “very influential.” 29 students indicated that Messina had “no influence” of this learning outcome, and similar to when this question was asked about the previous outcome, reviews of responses to Question 3 do not really provide specific details as to what may have contributed to the selected choice. 13 responses were either empty or stated variations of “no influence.” Feedback that was provided included feelings that campus resources were discussed but no specific connections were made between these and critical thinking, Messina not helping with a student’s major, and feeling that elements of the experience were useless, including seminars and enrichment sessions. There were also comments that although resources were presented, students did not feel as though they were personally beneficial and that there wasn’t a need to expose them to said resource.

Elements of Messina’s level of influence included times during the class and enrichment sessions when campus resources were introduced. In some instances, students utilized these resources following this introduction. Some students indicated not feeling the need for extra support in regard to campus resources, describing a feeling of already being aware of these prior to Messina involvement, or feelings that they did not need to personally utilize a resource.

The overwhelming majority of responses to this question provided feedback not related to Messina’s level of influence in relation to the learning outcome. This included appreciation for working group members, personal

growth through Messina participation, helpful Messina program elements including trips, enrichment sessions, and attendance at Messina events. Some critical responses related to enrichment sessions without specific details about how this could be improved or issues with their Messina professor.

## **Future Consideration/ Areas to Further Explore**

Information collected on the Critical Understanding learning outcomes shed some light about specific experiences that students had both in and out of the classroom related to these outcomes. However, a high number of students provided either incomplete details or helpful information about other aspects of Messina not connected to the two learning outcomes. This data, while unrelated, is still shared in the detailed findings because it does provide helpful information to consider. To address this in the future, it may be beneficial to collect data from Messina faculty about specific topics, assignments, or other experiences that are built into their Messina class that correspond to Critical Understanding learning outcomes. Samples of student work may also help contribute to a greater understanding of the level to which these learning outcomes are being fostered and experienced in the first year. A follow up to this would be conversations with faculty on how they see their students demonstrate, or not demonstrate, these outcomes. Conversely, it would be interesting to explore the idea of hosting smaller focus groups with students to talk about their specific course to compile responses that provide a greater depth of clarity in regard to their experience.

When reviewing responses related to Critical Understanding learning outcomes, it became evident that some students only view Messina as being the enrichment session, separate from the academic course they take as a part of Messina in both semesters. While this is not a perspective held by all respondents, it is something to potentially clarify in future surveys.

Some students commented on having intellectual conversations with peers beyond their courses in residence halls, on campus, and in other activities. This is an area that could be further examined, as a few responses provided by students in this survey suggest growth in another Messina learning outcome- Integrated Learning.

Additional feedback provided by students about their Messina experience covered similar themes mentioned in responses to question 3 for each of the learning outcome questions. Common topics were appreciation of Messina trips into Baltimore, relationships formed within Messina between peers and working group members, enrichment session feedback- both positive and constructive, and Messina courses. An area to further explore in future data collection would be conversations with students while they are experiencing Messina and in years two and three about the enrichment sessions that were most meaningful for them and practical ways they imagine may be helpful to continue to build upon this experience.

## Detailed Findings

### Critical Understanding

#### Overview

Students were provided the two definitions of the Messina Learning Outcomes related to Critical Understanding. For each definition they were then asked to respond to the following three questions:

*Question 1:* During your first year at Loyola, in what ways did you experience this learning outcome within and beyond the classroom? In your response, please give examples of specific course content, assignments, programs, activities, or other experiences.

*Question 2:* What level of influence did your participation in Messina have in relation to this area? (select one)  
No Influence, Little Influence, Some Influence, Very Influential

*Question 3:* Please comment on why you made the above selection in regard to Messina's level of influence.

### Learning Outcome 1 Findings

#### **Develop habits of reading, writing, and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement. (n=233)<sup>2</sup>**

Responses to Question 1 highlighted the influence of a specific course(s) in fostering this learning outcome. Main topics mentioned by students centered on writing assignments, group discussions, and research and examination of texts. While responses to this question were not intended to be specific to the Messina course, students tended to provide examples from their Messina experience. One observation of note are students, both formally through the course and on their own, having discussions about the connections between their fall and spring Messina course.

An element listed separately in the responses below centers on broader reflections by students about their first year experience, centered primarily on opportunities students had to make connections between coursework and real-world applications. This occurred through class discussions, supplemental readings, and excursions that tied to course content. In some ways, these responses provide examples of a different Messina learning outcome, Integrated Learning.

When asked about the influence of Messina in contributing to experiencing learning outcome 1, over half of respondents indicated that Messina had “some influence” or was “very influential.” 30 students indicated that Messina had “no influence” of this learning outcome, and reviews of responses to Question 3 unfortunately do not provide specific details as to what may have contributed to making that selection. 16 responses were empty- no information was provided. The feedback that was offered directly related to Question 3 centered around the type of courses offered in the pairing, specifically pairings that did not have reading or writing assignments and

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<sup>2</sup> The *n* is higher for this question because we had 37 students that did not respond to all three questions for this learning outcome, instead opting to only answer some of the questions. Given that the responses they did complete provided important context, a decision was made by the investigator to include the insights of all of the students that completed any of the three questions related to this learning outcome. Additionally, some responses connected to multiple themes.

the point that subject areas of some pairings are not designed to foster conversation because they are based more on formulas and facts.

Feedback not directly related to the question but connected to elements of Messina centered on the following topics: disappointment in classes that did not do an outside trip/ excursion into Baltimore, disappointment that the Messina pairing did not connect to a student's intended major, a sense that there should be fewer enrichment sessions, a desire for different professors, a lack of engagement in Messina by the working group which in turn fostered a lack of student participation/ engagement, and the timing of enrichment sessions conflicted with possible courses a student could take outside of Messina.

An observation in reading responses suggest that some only view Messina as being the enrichment session, and separate from the academic course. While this is not a perspective held by all respondents, it is something to potentially clarify in future surveys. Below is the breakdown of common themes from responses to Questions 1-3, including selected quotes highlighting student responses.

### ***Themes from Question 1***

- Class<sup>3</sup> related experiences, including enrichment session content (139)
  - Activities related to class; including field trips related to course content
  - Assignments and course structure; including research and examination of text, writing prompts, service learning experiences, and class discussions
    - Describing their experience in an English course *"...we used the reading assigned to have engaged in-class discussions about a wide range of topics in today's world and in history. We discussed how our experiences might change our points of view on a piece or a poem, and how we should learn from the writer and use their tactics that work well to improve our own writing skills."*
  - Developing personal management strategies; specifically time management, study skills, etc.
- Out of class connections (22)
  - Students described developing an appreciation of topics beyond class which was also connected to conversations with peers and professors outside of the classroom about class content
    - *"...The new thing I experienced outside of this was opportunities outside of the classroom for intellectual conversations with friends, family, professors, advisors and coaches at Loyola. For example, one afternoon right before midterms of the spring semester, my friend and I spent the whole afternoon pondering the "meaning of life" as it pertained to our respective religious backgrounds, personal ideologies, developing philosophical perspectives and hopes and doubts. It was truly an amazing experience and one I have never thought I would be able to have and share with someone who is one of my closest friends."*
  - Attending campus lectures
  - The formation of study groups with peers
- Broader reflections (20)
  - Making connections between coursework and real world applications

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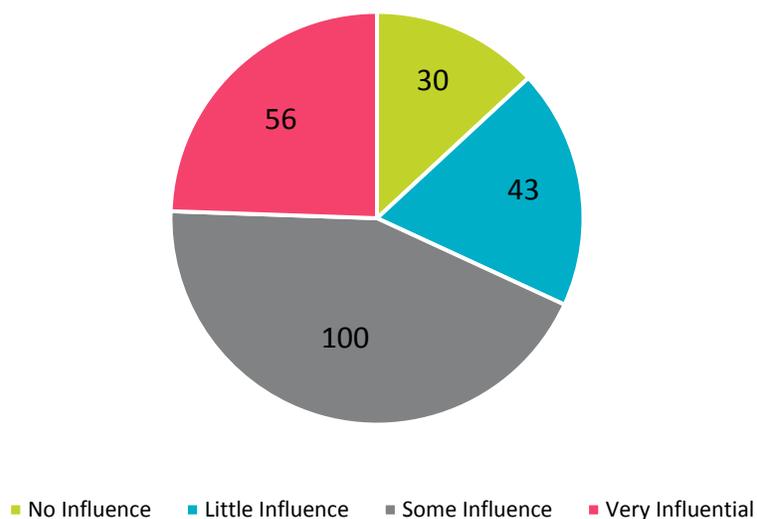
<sup>3</sup> Responses included Messina classes and non-Messina classes

- *"... We did a canoe and scoop which helped us apply what we learned in the classroom about pollution to the real world. We also went to a museum about climate change which also gave the class activities that applied what we learned in class."*
- Response not related to learning outcome (47)
  - These responses were varied. In some instances, students described an experience that was not tied to the learning outcome but connected to a different learning outcome- particularly responses that demonstrated the Messina learning outcomes described in Connections to Loyola Community.
    - *"I learned a lot about the city and how it works. It was good to go on field trips and see different parts of Baltimore, it was nice to learn more about the city we live in. It was also nice to have a core group of people throughout the whole year so you can become familiar with other people and it creates and easier opportunity for friends."*
  - Students also provided responses about being disappointed in their Messina experience, specifically being with a classes that did few or no excursions into Baltimore, feelings that Messina was not interesting, or negative interactions with their Messina professor.
- Did not experience (5)
  - Student responses were not specific- mentioning variations on "I didn't"

### ***Messina's Level of Influence***

Over half of respondents indicated that Messina had some influence or was very influential in contributing to their experiencing learning outcome 1.

Messina's Level of Influence (n=229)



### ***Messina's Level of Influence Explained***

- Class related experiences (83)
  - Assignments and course structure; including research and examination of text, writing prompts, service learning experiences, and class discussions

- *“In a lot of classes you can simply attend but in Messina it means something to participate. By participating, you have to challenge yourself and your other classmates and when you go off of one another you have the opportunity to see different angles you may never have thought of.”*
    - *“The professors in my Messina were more willing to stray from course materials in order for the students to think critically and have meaningful discussions.”*
  - Activities related to class, including trips connected to course content and service learning experiences
  - Topics that fostered development of personal management strategies
    - *“I now know how to extract information from texts, read through different lens, relate information to current events, outlining and highlighting has become a habit, I like going to the Writing Center, and I'm more confident to share my thoughts with others; all because of Messina.”*
- Personal growth as a result of Messina participation (8)
  - Growth of self-confidence as a student, including increased academic motivation, level of comfort in asking questions, and feeling more prepared in other courses
  - Making connections between coursework and real world issues
    - *“I wrote a lot and read a lot of things in Messina relating to coursework along with issues going on in the world today. I also was able to explore new issues happening with my Messina and events that we were able to go on over the year.”*
    - *“I have become much more environmentally aware and have now switched to more eco friendly means of life.”*
- Out of classroom experiences (6)
  - These included attending campus lectures, conversations with professors, courses that fostered out-of-class discussions, and the residence hall experience
- Did not experience (6)
- Lack of detail in response (14)
  - Responses were not specific- both positive (ex. *“because it was the key factor”*) and negative (ex. *“I learned some, but not a lot.”*)
- Response not related to learning outcome (63)
  - Similar to responses to Question 1, these responses were varied. Some common responses of constructive feedback from students were in regard to disappointment in classes that did little or no outside excursions into Baltimore, a desire for more balance in enrichment session content- i.e. more opportunities for topics not specifically connected to the course and more purposeful enrichment sessions, a desire for a reduction in the amount of enrichment sessions, changes to how Messina course pairings are assigned, and frustration with a member(s) of the Messina working group.
  - Positive feedback about aspects of Messina included the relationships with peers fostered through Messina participation, the role of the professor as a core advisor in helping with selection of major decisions, positive differences between fall and spring faculty, and conversations around the transition to college.

## Learning Outcome 2 Findings

### **Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking. (n=188)<sup>4</sup>**

Responses to Question 1 indicated student development in both knowledge and utilization of campus resources. Specific resources frequently mentioned were The Writing Center, The Study, The Library, and the Counseling Center. Students learned about these resources in Messina and non-Messina classes, from administrators, through upperclass students including Evergreens, RAs, and people they met in other clubs and activities. Messina program elements including attendance at theme-wide lectures fostered this outcome.

When asked about the influence of Messina in contributing to experiencing learning outcome 2, over half of respondents indicated that Messina had “some influence” or was “very influential.” 29 students indicated that Messina had “no influence” of this learning outcome, and similar to when this question was asked about the previous outcome, reviews of responses to Question 3 do not really provide specific details as to what may have contributed to the selected choice. 13 responses were either empty or stated variations of “no influence.” Feedback that was provided included feelings that campus resources were discussed but no specific connections were made between these and critical thinking, Messina not helping with a student’s major, and feeling that elements of the experience were useless, including enrichment sessions and seminars. There were also comments that although resources were presented, students did not feel as though they were personally beneficial and that there wasn’t a need to expose them to said resource.

Elements of Messina’s level of influence included times during the class and enrichment sessions when campus resources were introduced. In some instances, students utilized these resources following this introduction. Some students indicated not feeling the need for extra support in regard to campus resources, describing a feeling of already being aware of these prior to Messina involvement, or feelings that they did not need to personally utilize a resource.

The overwhelming majority of responses to this question provided feedback not related to Messina’s level of influence in relation to the learning outcome. Described in detail below, this included appreciation for working group members, personal growth through Messina participation, helpful Messina program elements including trips, enrichment sessions, and attendance at Messina events. Some critical responses related to enrichment sessions without specific details about how this could be improved or issues with their Messina professor.

Below is the breakdown of common themes from responses to questions 1-3, including selected quotes highlighting student responses.

### ***Themes from Question 1***

- Knowledge and utilization of campus resources (97)
  - 64 students described gaining a knowledge of campus resources, including the Writing Center, the Study, and the Library. Additionally, 33 students described specific ways in which they utilized a campus resource that aids critical thinking.
    - *“We had many enrichment hours that talked about getting ahead of the game here at Loyola. Some of the sessions included talking about studying abroad, participating in*

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<sup>4</sup> The *n* is lower for this question because we had 30 students that opted to not respond to all three questions for this learning outcome. A decision was made by the investigator to include the insights of all of the students that completed any of the three questions related to this learning outcome. It should be noted that some responses to this question connected to multiple themes.

*community service, getting to know Baltimore, and building a resume with the Career Center. All of these taught us a more about the opportunities and tools we have at Loyola to better ourselves.”*

- *“Some of the campus resources I used were Student-Athlete Support Services and the Study. While the first was a product of my involvement in athletics, it allowed me to meet with an advisor who suggested classes to take and helped find tutors that I wouldn't normally do. Also learning in my Messina classes about the writing center, the library, and the Study allowed me to find more resources that could help me in my classes.”*
- Messina program elements (41)
  - Students described a variety of components specific to Messina related to critical thinking, including enrichment session content, class attendance at Messina theme-wide events, and working group support. Responses described here often contained elements related to knowledge and utilization of campus resources.
    - *“Messina classes made going to campus events mandatory. I've attended at least 6 lectures and actually enjoyed it! I now go without anyone having to tell me to go. I use the writing center regularly. I've developed the habit of reading the Wall Street Journal and being more aware.”*
    - *“I always used to be nervous to ask questions in fear that it would make me appear unintelligent, so having professors encourage students to reach out for assistance of just to talk, it allowed me to branch out and develop relationships with my professors so I was comfortable using their open office hours to demonstrate interest in the material.”*
- Class<sup>5</sup> related experiences (16)
  - Assignments and course structure; including research and examination of text, writing prompts, service learning experiences, and class discussions
    - *“For my history class, we were required to go to the library to watch several different films about the events we were learning in class. In addition, we had to use the interlibrary loan system to use books for a research paper we wrote at the end of the semester.”*
- Out of class experiences (7)
  - A common response from students related to individual clubs or activities they were a part of during their first-year, such as participation in CCSJ and OAE. Another resource mentioned were upperclass students, including Resident Assistants.
- Feedback not related to learning outcome (14)
  - Varied responses, including negative feedback about a faculty member, issues related to the wording/understanding of the learning outcome, and observations about the first year experience not related to the learning outcome. Two responses also talked about the desire for more consistency across enrichment sessions related to what content is covered and the amount of activities each group is required to do in Baltimore.
  - Three students described self-care strategies developed in Messina and a knowledge of those resources available to them.

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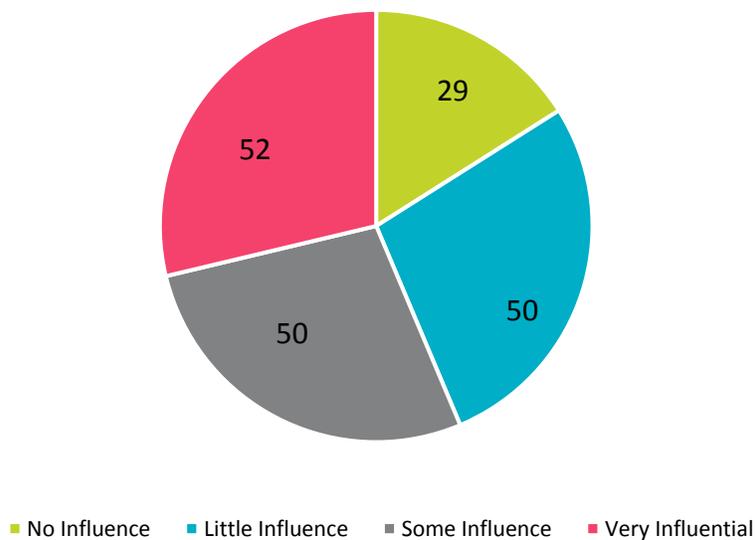
<sup>5</sup> Responses included Messina classes and non-Messina classes

- *“In my first class, we did a lot of exploring and learning about on-campus resources that made my first year more comfortable. My favorite was going to the counseling center and discussing ways to manage stress.”*
- Did not experience (8)
  - Student responses were not specific- mentioning variations on *“I didn’t”* or *“Not at all”*
- Not enough information provided (5)

### ***Messina’s Level of Influence***

Over half of respondents indicated that Messina had some influence or was very influential in contributing to their experiencing learning outcome 2.

Messina's Level of Influence (n=181)



### ***Messina’s Level of Influence Explained***

- Knowledge and utilization of campus resources (53)
  - Students described both class and enrichment sessions as providing information about campus resources which were then utilized by students at different points in the first year.
    - *“I think the application of campus resources could have been extrapolated, but the instructors were very good at directing us to resources as we needed them. We were also encouraged and incentivized to go to campus lectures and programs.”*
    - *“I definitely used more on campus resources or felt more comfortable using them after my first semester. I wish after Christmas break we had some type of refresher or list of what we did previously to keep an idea of what is still available to us.”*
- Did not experience (15)
  - Responses included the feeling that participation and campus resources are separate elements, that Messina did not cover elements that aid critical thinking, and seeking out resources on their own without Messina influence.

- Did not need extra support (5)
  - Three students described feeling that they were exposed to campus resources during orientation or through other programs. Two students indicated not needing to utilize any resources that aid critical thinking in their first year.
- Feedback not related to question (63)
  - Personal growth from participation, including increased feelings of self-confidence, how the experience fostered looking at things from different perspectives, a curiosity about the world, and becoming a better student.
  - Appreciation for working group members- specifically the helpfulness of Evergreens, the passion of professors about their content areas, and general advice provided by these individuals.
  - A dissatisfaction with the enrichment sessions without providing detailed examples (ex. referring to it as a “waste” or “not helpful”).
  - Messina program elements, including an appreciation of the off-campus events to get acclimated to Baltimore, attendance at campus events followed by written reflection assignments, and helpful and informative enrichment sessions.
  - Support from other campus individuals, including Resident Assistants and administrators.
- Not enough information (18)
  - Responses were not specific- some described one semester being more beneficial than the other but not specifically what about that experience was better. These responses were mixed and seemed to be class specific- i.e. not skewed toward the first semester being more beneficial. Other responses were unclear as to what the student was describing “ex. we did then as a class” or “Some influence in critical thinking.”

## **Student Experience (Reflection Question)**

*Question: As you wrap up your first year, how would you currently describe yourself as a student compared to when you first entered Loyola? (n=166<sup>6</sup>)*

Responses for this question were analyzed and common themes were pulled from responses. On the next page is a listing of common themes and the amount of times these themes were mentioned in student responses to this question. There were 166 total responses to this question but many responses incorporated multiple themes. In some, but not all instances, responses to this question provided connections to Messina Learning Outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> Common themes were coded and responses sometimes covered multiple themes, hence a total of 303 times a theme was mentioned. Not every student that completed the survey opted to respond to this question.

					Relation of Theme to Learning Outcomes for Spring 2017 Responses			
Theme	Context of Response	Spring 2017 Frequency of Mention	Spring 2016 Frequency of Mention	Spring 2015 Frequency of Mention	Jesuit Mission & Values	Critical Understanding	Connections to Loyola Community	Integrated Learning
Confident	Positive	33	36	52				
Actively engaged	Positive	28	26	22	X	X	X	
Self-aware	Positive	26	35	44	X	X	X	
Active learner	Positive	20	0	13	X	X		
Good relationships	Positive	16	17	23			X	
Knows expectations	Positive	16	17	11		X		
Same	N/A	16	6	0				
Well-rounded	Positive	15	10	10	X	X	X	
Independent	Positive	14	9	17	X	X		
Motivated	Positive	13	4	17	X	X		
Comfortable	Positive	12	13	17	X	X	X	
Broader perspectives	Positive	10	24	29	X			X
Knowledgeable (campus resources)	Positive	10	14	17		X	X	
Mature	Positive	10	12	17	X			
Not enough information	N/A	8	11	4				
More educated	Positive	7	1	0		X		
Focused	Positive	7	6	11	X			
Acclimated	Positive	7	16	16	X		X	
Changed positively	Positive	7	13	11	X	X		
Resiliency	Positive	4	11	24	X		X	
Openness	Positive	4	8	24	X	X	X	
Worse	Negative	4	1	0				
Stressed	Negative	3	1	0				
Bad class experience	Negative	3	1	0				
Organized	Positive	3	4	5				
Curious	Positive	3	4	15				
Self-aware	Negative	1	1	1				
Tired	Negative	1	0	1				
Responsible	Positive	1	1	5				
Empty	Negative	0	1	0				
Not engaged	Negative	0	1	0				
Depressed	Negative	0	1	0				
Excited	Positive	0	6	4				
Time management	Negative	0	0	1				

## **Observations about data**

Over the course of collecting student responses to this question during the past three years, the top five themes have stayed relatively consistent. The past two years Messina has used information collected from this question to promote the idea that the transition to college takes a full year and that along the way there are resources available to students when they find themselves struggling with academics or their personal well-being.

One limitation to student responses to this question is the depth of response provided. In some cases a one word answer was provided, so it is difficult to gauge the context of the student's experience that led to a response. A future consideration for assessment is exploring other existing means or developing new strategies for collecting more detailed information about their development, positive or negative, as a first year student. This could be exploring this in focus groups, existing reflection activities, or a reflection on this topic at a later time in their academic experience.

## **Below is a sample of responses that relate to the top five themes:**

### ***Confident***

- "I feel more confident as a student in general. In high school, I did not always speak up in class and when I did, I usually doubted myself. However, as the year progressed, I found myself participating more and making my stance clear."
- "When I first entered Loyola, I was not as confident in my abilities to succeed in college as I am now. I am a student that believes in my abilities and does not compare herself to other students. I learned quickly that if you ask people how they are doing in your shared class, it might bring you down when really, you want to be encouraging yourself to be the best that you can be, not the best that your classmate might be. Also, I am better able to manage my time."

### ***Actively Engaged***

- "I think my ambition to be involved has become more focused, and I have learned to manage workload a lot easier. I have felt more like an adult as my year progressed."
- "When I first entered Loyola, I was scared about making new friends and adapting to a new educational environment. As a finish my first year, I feel that I am a better student and know how to adapt to the college environment. Making friends was a lot easier than I had initially thought it would be and I am more comfortable participating in clubs and activities on campus."
- "I would say that after the first year of college I am more willing to participate in class along with reach out and communicate with my teachers then I was before."

### ***Self-Aware***

- "I think about different topics completely differently, and I was finding that classes in completely different disciplines were connecting in unexpected ways. I have had a more well-rounded education than in high school, and with my mentors helping me and encouraging me to work on myself I feel I've heard lots of opinions and I'm armed to help in the world."
- "I am much more outgoing and more willing to be involved and participate in class. I am more accepting of who I am and not who the people around want me to be. I made a lot of friends through messina that I hope I will keep forever, one of which I am living with next year. My evergreen was also so great in helping me become more comfortable here at Loyola and become the person I am today. Couldn't done it without her."

- “More independent, stressed, sleep deprived. But, overall I have learned that its important to stay on top of your work and get the help you need.”

### ***Active Learner***

- “I am a lot more studious actually; in high school, everything came easy to me and I never had to sit down and study or I never thought like I should really take the time to go over something. Now, I want to be proud of all of my work, and I will focus on making all my work, in particular essays, something I can be proud of. Also, I thought I was really interested in learning new things, but now I gravitate towards things I don't know how to do and I am so eager to try and try again.”
- “I am more outgoing and positive. I have developed different ways of thinking critically, and consider more perspectives almost automatically instead of falling towards he[sp] initial reaction I may have.”
- “I am a much stronger student. I can interpret different ways of analyzing the same piece of work and know how to read in an analytical way.”

### ***Good Relationships***

- “I came into college very confident in my time management skills having never faced a task I couldn't complete. My first year advisors helped a lot of kids with these two things. Although I didn't benefit much from the time management sessions, I was able to rely on the community to pick me up after a bad day and reassure me that I don't need to be able to do everything.”
- “When I first entered Loyola, I was a nervous wreck who was homesick and didn't see myself making any friends as an introvert. Now, I'm excited to be part of the Loyola community and I love the friends that I have made through my Messina class.”
- “I would describe myself as a well-rounded student more so now than I was at the beginning of the year. I would say this about myself because I was able to learn more about social problems going on in our world because of Messina and make more friends that swayed me in my decision to stay at the university.”

## **Additional Feedback on Messina Experience**

*Question: If interested, please use this space to add any other positive or constructive feedback about your Messina experience this semester. (n=89)*

The following are some noted observations from the comments, included a few selected quotes:

### ***Trips***

- There was an appreciation of excursions into Baltimore. However, in classes when this didn't occur students spoke about wanting these opportunities.

### ***Enrichment Sessions***

- Enrichment was helpful in exposing students to campus resources and becoming closer to peers. There was a feeling that the amount of enrichment sessions could be reduced in the spring, still covering topics of Housing selection and Study Abroad. Some students indicated a feeling that there could be a better balance of enrichment sessions covering conversations around course continuation and outside topics. (i.e. all enrichment sessions should not just be course continuation or all enrichment sessions should not just be about non-course related things, instead, a mix of both) Comments suggested a general feeling

that enrichment sessions should have a purpose, and that the amount of enrichments could be re-evaluated during weeks in which there is minimal information to cover.

- *“I would try to encourage more Messina trips and work that encourage learning outside of the classroom. The Messina experience was important to me to have a consistent group of people that I could turn to, but I think that more learning outside of the classroom, like using the facilities available on campus, like the library or even trips off campus to learn about the community, would be beneficial.”*

### **Working Group Members**

- Students expressed appreciation for their Evergreens, Professors, and Mentors.
  - *“I transferred Messinas [sp] and my second half was absolutely wonderful. The people I worked with cared so much about making a difference and helping us grow. Some people don't appreciate what Messina can do for you, and they don't take advantage of it. I feel so much better knowing that I got to know so many wonderful people and developed skills and knowledge about Loyola and the outside community that otherwise, I wouldn't have access too.”*

### **Peer Connections**

- Overall, there was a strong appreciation of the relationships formed within Messina with peers. However, this was not the case for all students- some had a feeling that relationships were forced.
  - *“Absolutely adored my group. Putting a more difficult course in the beginning with a good amount of work helped a lot of us to structure our time during our first semester and also created a sense of community so that we were pushed to ask one another to study outside of class.”*

### **Messina Courses**

- Several students commented on feeling that their courses were interesting. A different aspect mentioned about courses were some of the differences between fall and spring semester experiences, both positive and negative. This was in relation to the perceived level of difficulty of course content. Another reason provided by students were differences between professors both in approaches to course content and differing personalities.

### **Personal Growth**

- Students reflected on the positive changes they made as a student and an individual from their Messina participation.
  - *“Messina has allowed me to meet my best friends. It has also helped me grow as a speaker and participant in class discussions. This is one of the best aspects of Messina and it should stay this way.”*

## Respondent Demographics

### Residential Status

*(Embedded Data from student roster)*

Answer	Response (n=193)
Commuter	3
On-Campus Resident	190

### Gender

*(Embedded Data from student roster)*

Answer	Response (n=193)
Female	136
Male	57

### Race

*(Embedded Data from student roster)*

Answer	Response (n=193)
African American/Black	5
Asian	7
White	173
American/Alaska Native	1
Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian	1
Not Given	7

### Ethnicity

*(Embedded Data from student roster)*

Answer	Response (n=193)
Non Hispanic/ Latino	170
Hispanic/ Latino	23

## **Appendix A: Messina Learning Outcomes**

As a result of the *Messina*, first-year students will....

### Jesuit Mission and Values

- Develop habits of discernment and reflection in the Ignatian tradition.
- Explore and articulate the values and principles involved in their personal decision-making.

### Critical Understanding

- Develop habits of reading, writing and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.
- Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.

### Connections to Loyola Community

- Establish healthy, mutually beneficial and respectful relationships with others including faculty, administrators, staff and peers.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging to the community at Loyola University both in and out of the classroom.

### Integrated Learning

- Integrate multiple sources of knowledge gained through various disciplinary lenses, texts, instruction, out of class experiences and personal reflection to offer a perspective on the interdisciplinary theme of the community.

# Appendix B: Copy of the Survey Instrument: 2017 Spring Messina Student Survey

## Section 1: Spring 2017 Messina End of Year Student Survey Consent

### Q1.1 Participant Consent Form

I agree to participate in a study of all first-year students in Messina at Loyola that is being conducted by Mary Ellen Wade of Loyola University Maryland. This survey will be used to assess the overall experience of Messina students in the context of our Messina learning outcomes. This survey is designed to collect information that will enable us to develop Messina so that it will better serve future first-year students. There are no direct benefits to participating in this survey.

I understand that by participating in this survey I will be expected to participate in a number of tasks relating to my knowledge, attitudes, satisfaction, and experience as a first-year student. This instrument includes multiple choice and open-ended questions. I understand that none of the questions require a response, at any point if I prefer not to answer a question I am able to skip to the next question.

I have been informed that any information obtained in this study will be recorded with a code number and that my responses will not be linked to me as an individual. Additionally, all data collected in this study will be kept in a password protected file only accessible by the researchers. At the conclusion of this study the separate key that relates my demographical information with my assigned code number will be destroyed. Under this condition, I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for publication or education, provided that I am in no way personally identified.

There are no risks associated involved with this study, but I understand I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time. A decision to withdraw from the study will not affect the services available to me from Loyola or my participation in Messina. To withdraw from this survey at any time please close the internet browser.

If I have any questions or problems that arise in connection with my participation in this study, I should contact Mary Ellen Wade, the project director at (410) 617-2225 (work) or at mewade@loyola.edu THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD- (Approval FWA00013527) PHONE: 410-617-2004.

Please select one of the following two options below. Clicking on the "**AGREE**" button indicates that:

- You have read and understand the above information
  - You voluntarily agree to participate
  - You are 18 years of age or older
- 
- I have read the information above and I **AGREE** to participate in this survey.

- I am **DECLINING** to participate in this survey.\*<sup>7</sup>

Q1.2 (statement visible to those that agree to participate)

Thank you for participating in the Spring 2017 Mid-Year Student Survey administered by Messina. This survey is an opportunity to offer feedback and input on your first year experience. The survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete. Please be honest with your responses.

## **Section 2: Critical Understanding Learning Outcome 1 Questions**

Q2.1 (introductory statement)

The next three questions relate to one of two learning outcomes related to Critical Understanding. Please read the statement and respond to the corresponding questions.

*Critical Understanding Learning Outcome 1:*

Develop habits of reading, writing, and intellectual conversation that support academic excellence and engagement.

Q2.2 During your first year at Loyola, in what ways did you experience this learning outcome within and beyond the classroom? In your response, please give examples of specific course content, assignments, programs, activities, or other experiences.

Q2.3 What level of influence did your participation in Messina have in relation to this area?

- No Influence
- Little Influence
- Some Influence
- Very Influential

Q2.4 Please comment on why you made the above selection in regard to Messina's level of influence.

## **Section 3: Critical Understanding Learning Outcome 2 Questions**

Q3.1 (introductory statement)

The next three questions relate to one of two learning outcomes related to Critical Understanding. Please read the statement and respond to the corresponding questions.

*Critical Understanding Learning Outcome 2:*

Demonstrate increased knowledge and use of campus resources that aid critical thinking.

Q3.2 During your first year at Loyola, in what ways did you experience this learning outcome within and beyond the classroom? In your response, please give examples of specific course content, assignments, programs, activities, or other experiences.

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<sup>7</sup> If this option is selected, the survey is complete for the individual. They are automatically taken to the end of the survey.

Q3.3 What level of influence did your participation in Messina have in relation to this area?

- No Influence
- Little Influence
- Some Influence
- Very Influential

Q3.4 Please comment on why you made the above selection in regard to Messina's level of influence.

#### **Section 4: General First Year Experience Questions**

Q4.1 As you wrap up your first year, how would you currently describe yourself as a student compared to when you first entered Loyola?

Q4.2 If interested, please use this space to add any other positive or constructive feedback about your Messina experience this semester.

#### **Section 5: Gift Card Survey Info**

Q6.1 Thanks for answering our survey questions. This last part of this survey is to find out if you are a winner of one of the \$10 Starbucks gift card prizes- there is a 1 in 20 chance you have won a prize which you will find out in the next screen. Do you want to be entered in the drawing for a gift card? If you select "yes" you will be redirected to another survey and a question will appear for you to provide your name/email/mailstop if you win a prize. If you select "no" you will be taken to the end of the survey and not be entered in the prize giveaway.

- No
- Yes

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#### **The Prize Survey (referred to in Q6.2)**

Q1.1 Please fill out the information below so if you are a winner we can contact you about the prize you have won.

- First Name
- Last Name
- Loyola Email Address

Q1.2 (statement)

Click "Next" to see if you won a \$10 gift card!

**Section 2: Prize Generator \*\*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\*\* There is a randomization to the questions in this section. For every 20 people who take this survey, one will receive message Q2.1 and 20 will receive messages Q2.2-Q2.20.**

Q2.1

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE WON A \$10 STARBUCKS GIFT CARD!

**Click "Next Page" to claim your prize!** Once you "Click Next Page" an email will be sent to you and the survey administrator letting them know that you have won. Your gift card will be available for pickup at Maryland Hall 145 anytime Monday-Friday between 8:30am-5pm. If it is not claimed within a week or you receive this over after you have already left for summer break, it will automatically be sent to your home address. Thanks again for participating!

Q2.2-Q2.20

Sorry! You did not win this semester but thank you for participating in our survey. Your responses will help us improve the Messina student experience.