



BELLEVUE
COLLEGE

Navigating the Diversity of General Education Outcomes

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Objectives

- To provide a detailed overview of the general education outcomes as defined by community and technical colleges across Washington State.
- To highlight the similarities and differences in terminologies and definitions used by different colleges in their general education outcomes.
- Comparative analysis of the definitions of general education outcomes across 34 community colleges in Washington State.

Methodology

Data Collection

- Gather general education outcome statements from each college's official website.
- Review accreditation documents for additional insights.
- Compile data into a centralized file for analysis.

Textual Analysis

- Employ the AAC&U VALUE rubric for coding definitions.
- Four researchers independently code the outcomes.
- Cross-verification to ensure consistency and reliability of the coding process.

AAC&U VALUE Rubrics



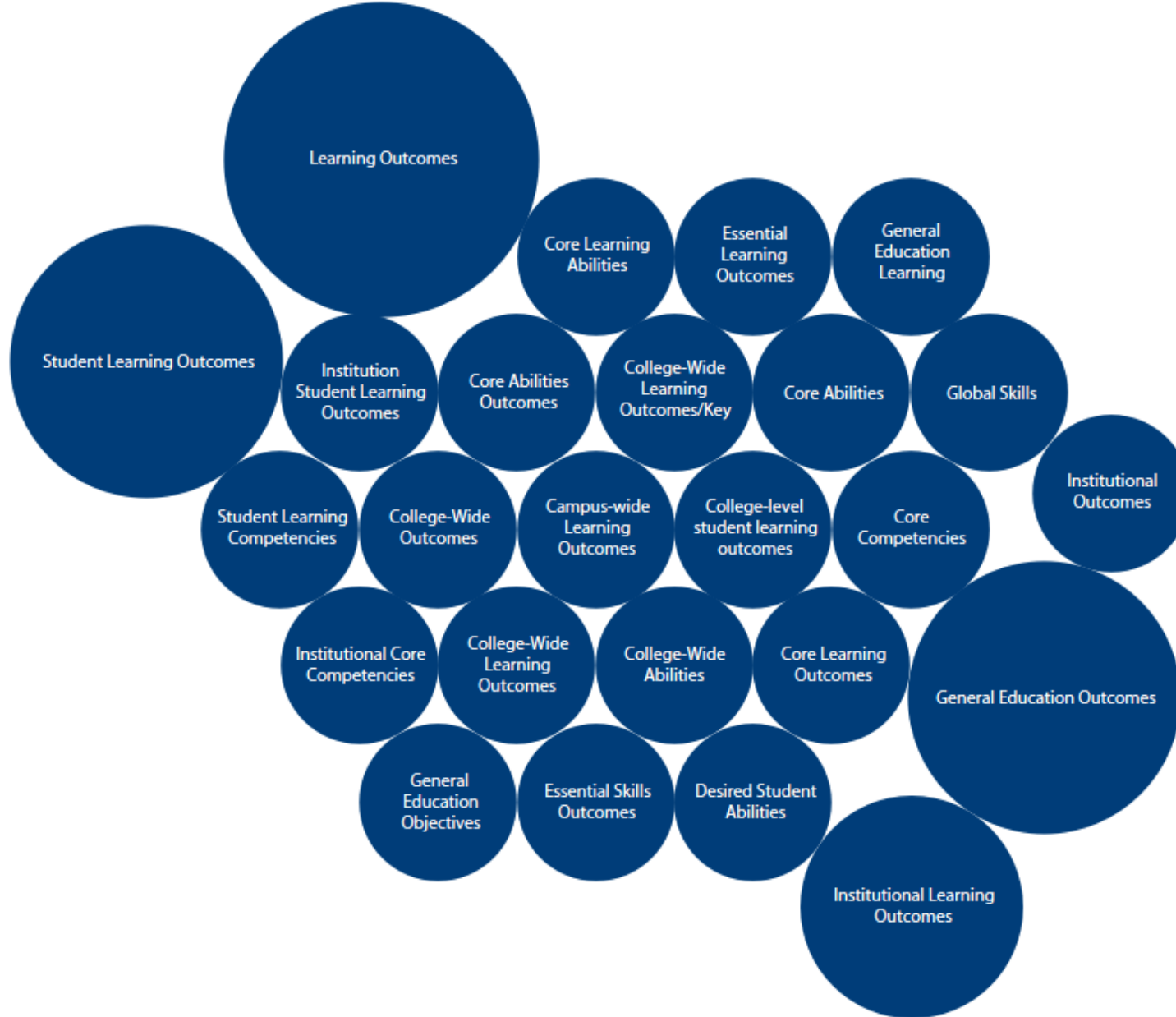
- The AAC&U VALUE Rubrics stand for the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education rubrics.
- They are a set of assessment tools designed to measure essential learning outcomes for undergraduate students.

16 Value Rubric Outcomes

Civic Engagement - Local and Global
Creative Thinking
Critical Thinking
Ethical Reasoning
Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning
Global Learning
Information Literacy
Inquiry and Analysis

Integrative Learning
Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
Oral Communication
Problem Solving
Quantitative Literacy
Reading
Teamwork
Written Communication

Terminology for Learning Outcomes



NWCCU Standard 1.C.6

Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Number of Outcomes
by College

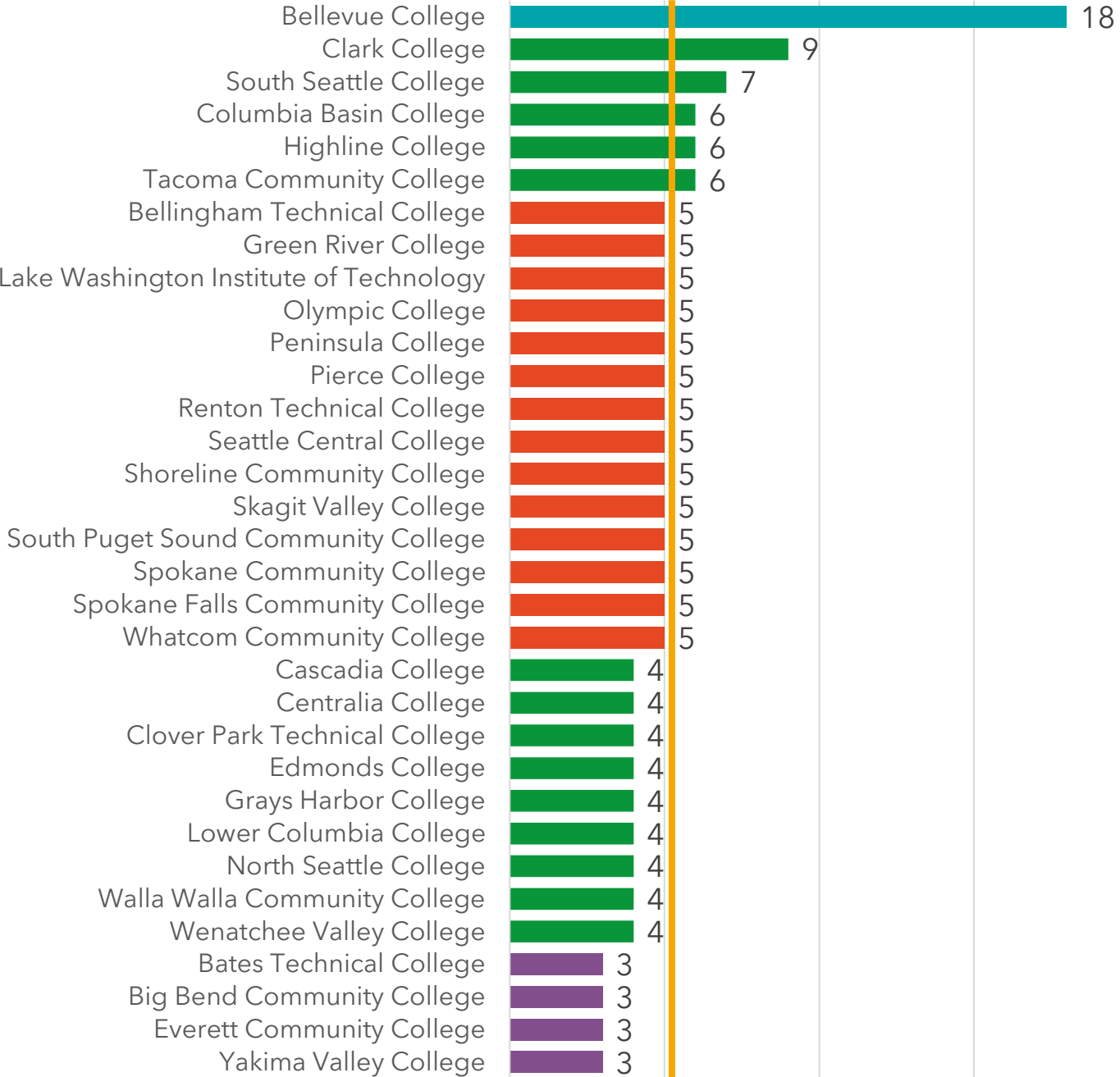
5.15
Average

5
Median

18*
Maximum

3
Minimum

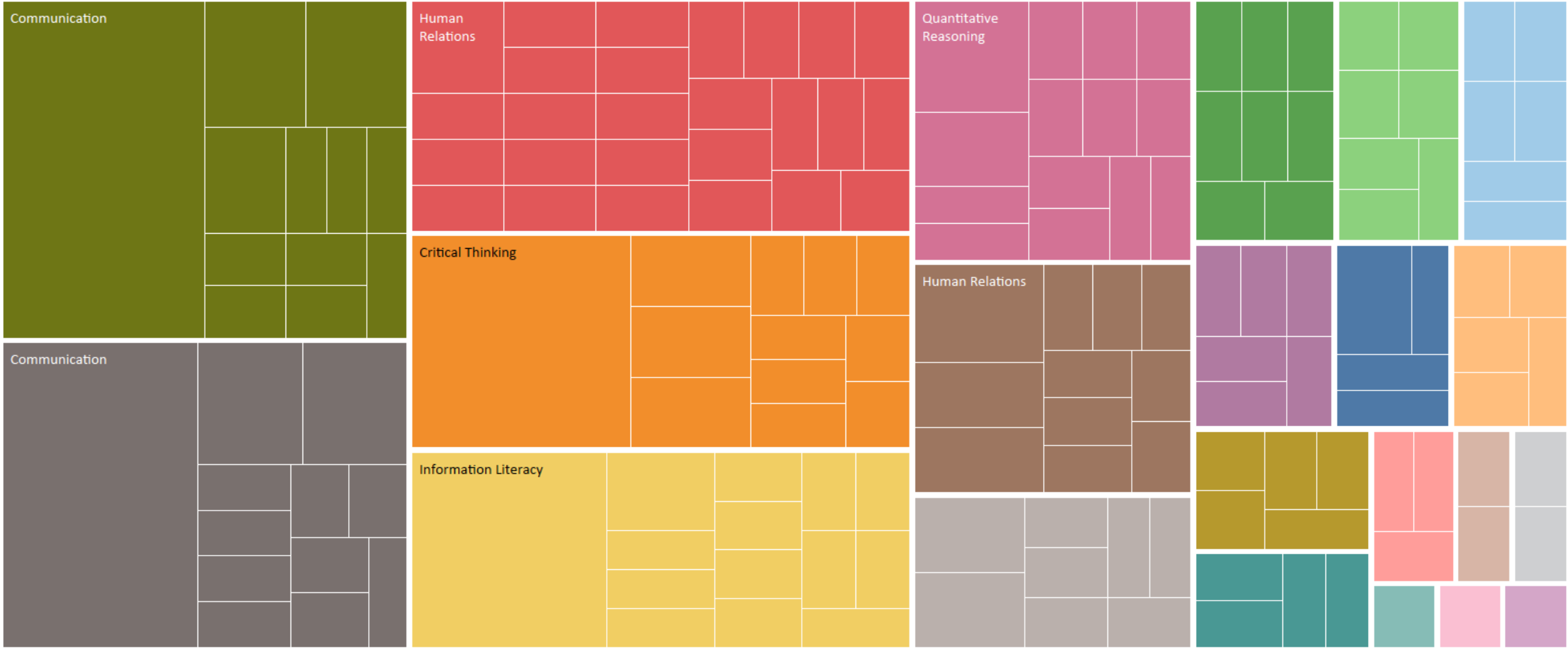
**Bellevue College has 18 general education outcomes organized under the three categories of Creative & Critical Thinking, Communication, and Connections.*



Mapping of 170 Outcomes

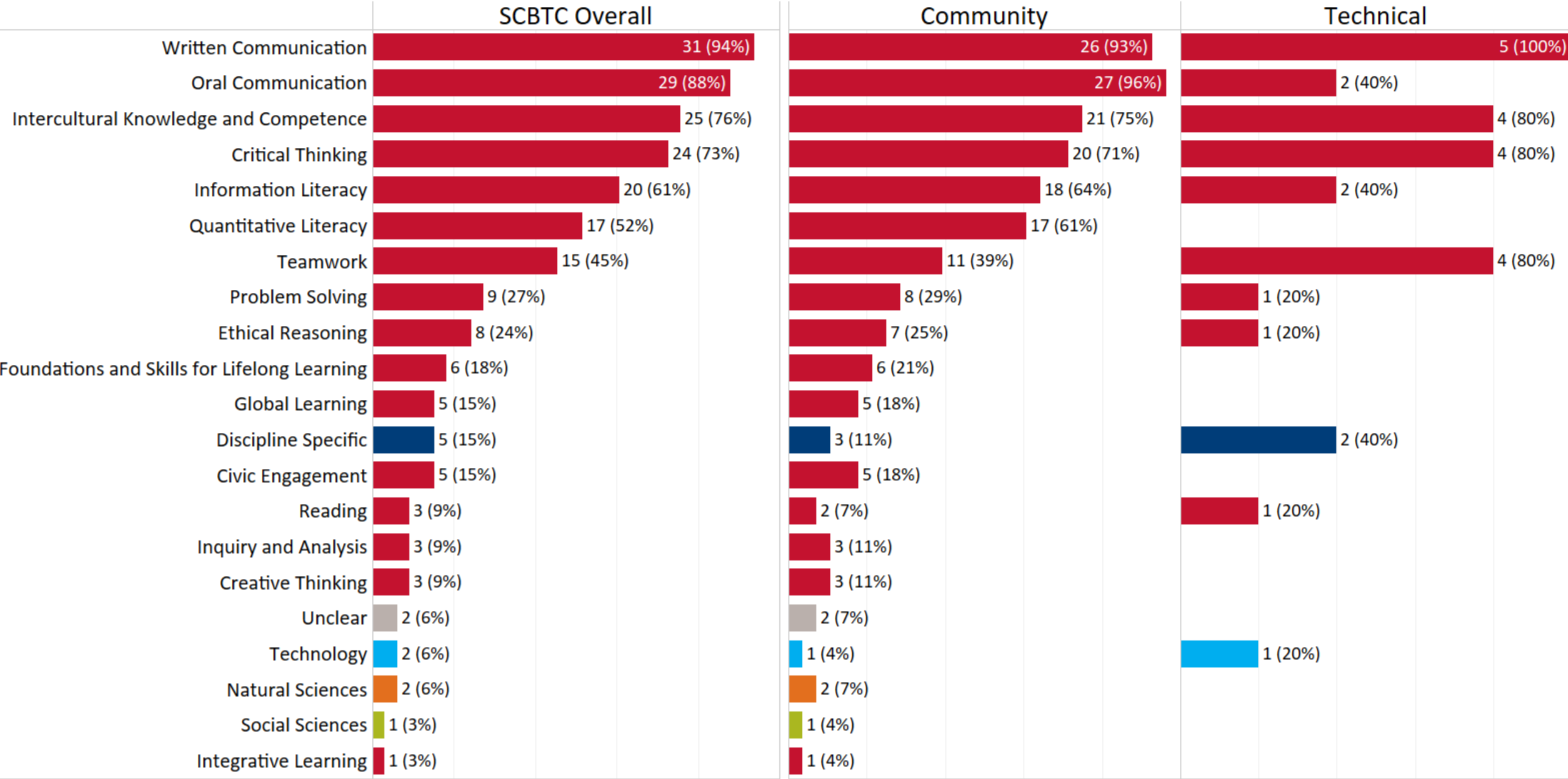
Outcomes could be mapped to up to 2 different categories

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Intercultural Knowledg..
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Quantitative Literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Ethical Reasoning
- Foundations and Skills f..
- Creative Thinking
- Reading
- Civic Engagement
- Discipline Specific
- Global Learning
- Inquiry and Analysis
- Natural Sciences
- Technology
- Unclear
- Integrative Learning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Social Sciences



Presence of Categories

Bars in red indicate AA&CU Value Rubric matches. All other colors represent separate codes.



Communication

Communication - Similarities

1. **Multimodal Communication:** The ability to communicate through various modes—oral, written, visual, and technological—is a common theme across many colleges.
2. **Clarity and Effectiveness:** There is a consistent emphasis on clear and effective communication, which is tailored to suit different audiences and purposes.
3. **Critical Engagement:** The capacity to engage critically with content, such as the ability to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create, is often highlighted as a part of effective communication.
4. **Ethical Communication:** Several colleges note the importance of ethical considerations when communicating, reflecting a concern for integrity in the communication process.
5. **Adaptability:** The ability to adapt communication styles to various audiences and contexts is recognized as an important skill.



Communication – Differences

- 1. Focus on Specific Skills:** While some colleges focus on specific aspects such as written communication, listening, and speaking, others adopt a more comprehensive view that includes non-verbal cues and sign language.
- 2. Technological Emphasis:** Some colleges place a particular emphasis on using modern technology effectively as part of communication skills.
- 3. Cultural and Interpersonal Dynamics:** The extent to which colleges focus on the impact of ethnicity, age, culture, gender, and other social factors on communication varies, with some giving it considerable attention.
- 4. Feedback and Collaboration:** Definitions differ in how they incorporate the importance of giving and receiving feedback and engaging in collaborative communication.

Communication

- There is agreement among the different colleges about the fundamental components of good communication skills. These include the ability to express oneself clearly and effectively, as well as to understand others, in a variety of ways (like speaking, writing, visual communication) and across different situations or for different purposes.
- However, the actual methods used to teach communication (the pedagogical approaches) and what each college aims to achieve with their communication courses (the educational objectives) varies from one institution to another. Each college places different emphasis on certain aspects of communication, such as digital media skills, creative expression, teamwork, or cultural sensitivity.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural Diversity - Similarities

1. **Recognition of Differences and Commonalities:** Most colleges acknowledge the importance of recognizing, understanding, and responding to the diversity of human experiences
2. **Cultural Competence:** There is a shared focus on developing cultural awareness and competence, which often includes appreciating multiple perspectives, engaging with various communities and cultures, and understanding the value of diversity.
3. **Inclusivity and Equity:** Many definitions emphasize the need to function inclusively within diverse societies and to advance equity, suggesting an educational goal that extends beyond awareness to active participation in inclusive practices.
4. **Social Responsibility:** There is an understanding that diversity includes a social and personal responsibility to address issues related to power, privilege, and inequity.



Cultural Diversity - Differences

- 1. Scope of Diversity:** The scope of diversity addressed varies; some colleges focus on multicultural understanding within a global context, while others emphasize local or national social justice issues.
- 2. Application of Diversity Understanding:** Colleges differ in how they expect students to apply their understanding of diversity, with some focusing on intercultural engagement and others on solving contemporary social problems.
- 3. Institutional Context:** Some definitions specifically address the role of institutional structures and their impact on diversity, indicating a critical approach to understanding systemic factors.
- 4. Approach to Intercultural Literacy:** Definitions vary in their approach to intercultural literacy, with some emphasizing the intersectional understanding of social identities and others focusing on collaboration within diverse populations.

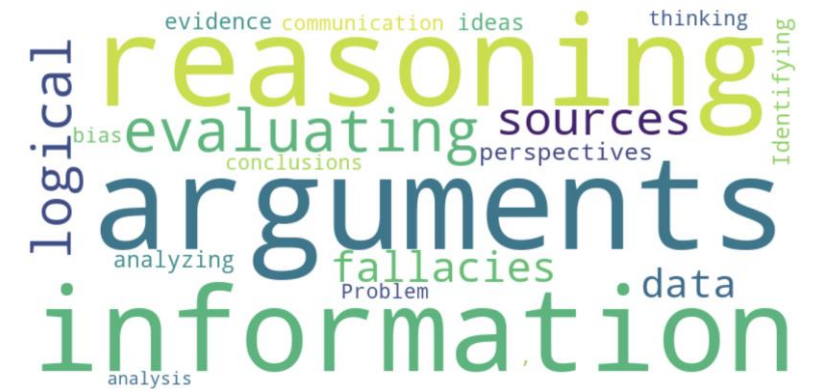
Cultural Diversity

- While all colleges value diversity as a key component of education, their approaches range from fostering personal growth and understanding to advocating for systemic change.
- These varied approaches indicate that each college tailors its educational outcomes to fit its mission, student body, and the broader community it serves.

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking – Similarities

1. **Evidence-Based Reasoning:** Many colleges define critical thinking as a process that includes evaluating information based on evidence. This emphasizes an empirical approach to reasoning.
2. **Analytical Skills:** The ability to analyze and synthesize information is a common element, reflecting the understanding that critical thinking involves breaking down complex information and integrating it to form a comprehensive view.
3. **Problem-Solving:** A focus on solving problems is central to most definitions, indicating that critical thinking is not just theoretical but also practical and aimed at finding solutions.
4. **Open-Mindedness:** Several definitions include open-mindedness as a critical aspect, suggesting that being receptive to various perspectives is a crucial part of critical thinking.
5. **Decision-Making:** The ability to make decisions based on critical analysis is another shared characteristic, highlighting the importance of critical thinking in guiding actions.



Critical Thinking – Differences

- 1. Creativity and Innovation:** While some colleges incorporate creativity and innovation into their definitions, suggesting a more expansive view, others focus more strictly on analytical aspects.
- 2. Emotional Intelligence:** A few definitions consider the role of emotions in thinking processes, suggesting a more holistic understanding of critical thinking that includes emotional as well as rational factors.
- 3. Disciplinary Focus:** Some colleges specify that critical thinking should be applied within specific disciplines using methods proven in those fields, while others promote a more general application.
- 4. Ethical and Cultural Considerations:** A few definitions explicitly mention ethical judgment, which implies considering ethical or cultural considerations as part of the critical thinking process.
- 5. Reflective Thinking:** Some institutions highlight reflection on personal values and attitudes as part of critical thinking, indicating a more introspective approach.

Critical Thinking

- While there is a common understanding that critical thinking involves analytical and evaluative skills grounded in evidence and reason, the extent to which creativity, personal introspection, ethical consideration, emotional awareness, and disciplinary-specific inquiry are incorporated varies among the different colleges.



Summary

- This analysis provides a descriptive snapshot of how colleges currently define and implement general education outcomes.
- Offers a foundation for potential reform in assessing and enhancing general education frameworks.

Information Literacy

Information Literacy - Similarities

1. **Research Skills:** Many colleges emphasize the importance of employing contemporary research strategies and evaluating the reliability and validity of sources.
2. **Ethical Use of Information:** A common thread across definitions is the ethical engagement with information, which includes ethical creation of content and adherence to legal guidelines.
3. **Critical Evaluation:** There's a focus on the ability to critically evaluate information, assessing its accuracy, relevance, bias, and authority.
4. **Technological Proficiency:** Definitions often mention the use of modern technology and digital tools as integral to the process of information literacy.



Information Literacy - Differences

- 1.Application of Information:** While some definitions simply mention locating and using information, others emphasize applying this information ethically in one's field or discipline, reflecting the practical application of knowledge.
- 2.Integration of Inquiry Tools:** Definitions vary in terms of incorporating various inquiry tools and the extent to which they stress different media formats, indicating diverse approaches to handling information.
- 3.Disciplinary Focus:** Some colleges specify that information literacy skills should be appropriate to the student's field or discipline, while others present a more general approach.
- 4.Power and Privilege:** A few definitions incorporate a critical understanding of how information is influenced by power structures and privilege, indicating a broader socio-political context.
- 5.Visual and Digital Literacy:** Some colleges specifically address visual and digital literacy, suggesting a wider scope of literacy that goes beyond traditional text-based information.

Information Literacy

- Information literacy is broadly defined as the skilled and ethical finding, evaluating, and using of information, often supported by modern technology.
- However, the specifics of how information literacy is contextualized and what skills are emphasized can vary greatly depending on the college's educational goals and the needs of its student body.

Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative Reasoning- Similarities

- 1. Use of Quantitative Information:** Almost all definitions involve the use of numerical and symbolic data. Terms like "manipulate," "analyze," and "interpret" are commonly used, emphasizing the processing and application of quantitative information.
- 2. Problem Solving:** There is a clear emphasis on problem-solving skills, where quantitative reasoning is often linked with the ability to solve practical and theoretical problems.
- 3. Communication:** Many colleges stress the importance of being able to communicate quantitative arguments effectively, often requiring the translation between mathematical symbols and words.
- 4. Application Across Disciplines:** Several descriptions mention the application of quantitative reasoning to various disciplines, not just math, suggesting a broad utility for these skills.



A word cloud of terms related to quantitative reasoning. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'quantitative' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'mathematical', 'symbolic', 'information', 'conclusions', 'problems', 'solve', 'algebraic', 'Apply', 'analyze', 'numerical', 'reason', 'modes', 'data', 'Reasoning', 'interpret', 'techniques', and 'MATH&'. The words are in various shades of blue, green, and purple.

solve algebraic Apply analyze
symbolic information
conclusions numerical
problems mathematical
techniques reason modes
quantitative
MATH& data Reasoning interpret

Quantitative Reasoning- Differences

- 1. Depth and Scope:** Some colleges, like Shoreline College, provide detailed examples of how quantitative and symbolic reasoning is applied in specific courses, while others give a more general description.
- 2. Terminology:** The terms used to describe quantitative skills vary. "Quantitative/Symbolic Reasoning" "Quantitative Literacy."
- 3. Specific Techniques:** Some institutions, emphasize specific mathematical skills such as algebra, whereas others take a more holistic approach, including logic and creativity.
- 4. Course Relevance:** Certain colleges explicitly link their quantitative reasoning skills to relevant courses, giving concrete examples of how these skills are applied in various academic contexts.
- 5. Emphasis on Critical and Creative Thinking:** Some colleges list critical and creative thinking alongside quantitative reasoning, suggesting a more integrated approach to problem-solving that values diverse cognitive skills.

Quantitative Reasoning

- While the essence of quantitative reasoning is maintained across institutions—focusing on the application of mathematical and logical skills to solve problems and communicate effectively—each college tailors the definition to fit its curriculum and educational goals, resulting in a range of specific expectations and applications.