

*American Undergraduate  
General Education: Why It  
Matters, What It Means at  
Clemson, & All About  
Crossings*

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## Game: Poll

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What is the top reason students attend college?

# Overview of our session on *Undergraduate General Education*

I.) Why it matters  
– talking to new  
students and  
parents

II.) What it means  
at Clemson

III.) All about  
Crossings

# What IS General Education?

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- aka – “liberal education” for *liberating the mind* (not a political word!)
- adjective, not noun
  - General Education *Program*
  - General Education *Curriculum*
- knowledge, skills, and intellectual attributes for *all students, regardless of major*
  - NOT simple foundational skills that then enable students to do the “real work” in the major
  - NOT an inoculation of the basics so that students no longer have to cover them in the major
- more than a list of courses

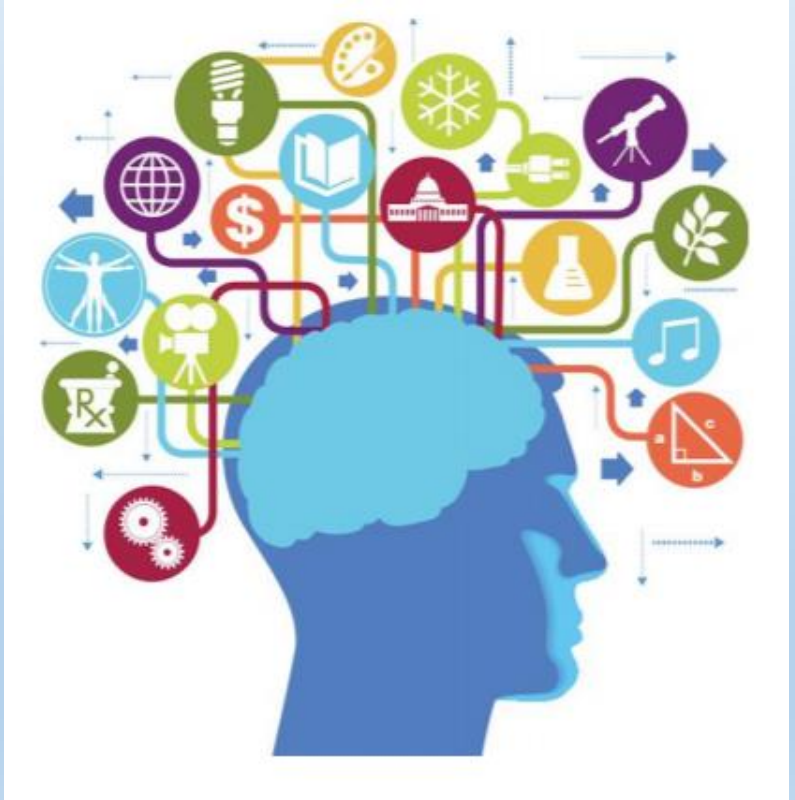
# The Baccalaureate Degree

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## European model



## American model



# Recent Global Shifts toward American Model

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- Singapore
- Hong Kong
- India

## National Education Policy 2020

Reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to be more interdisciplinary and multi-lingual

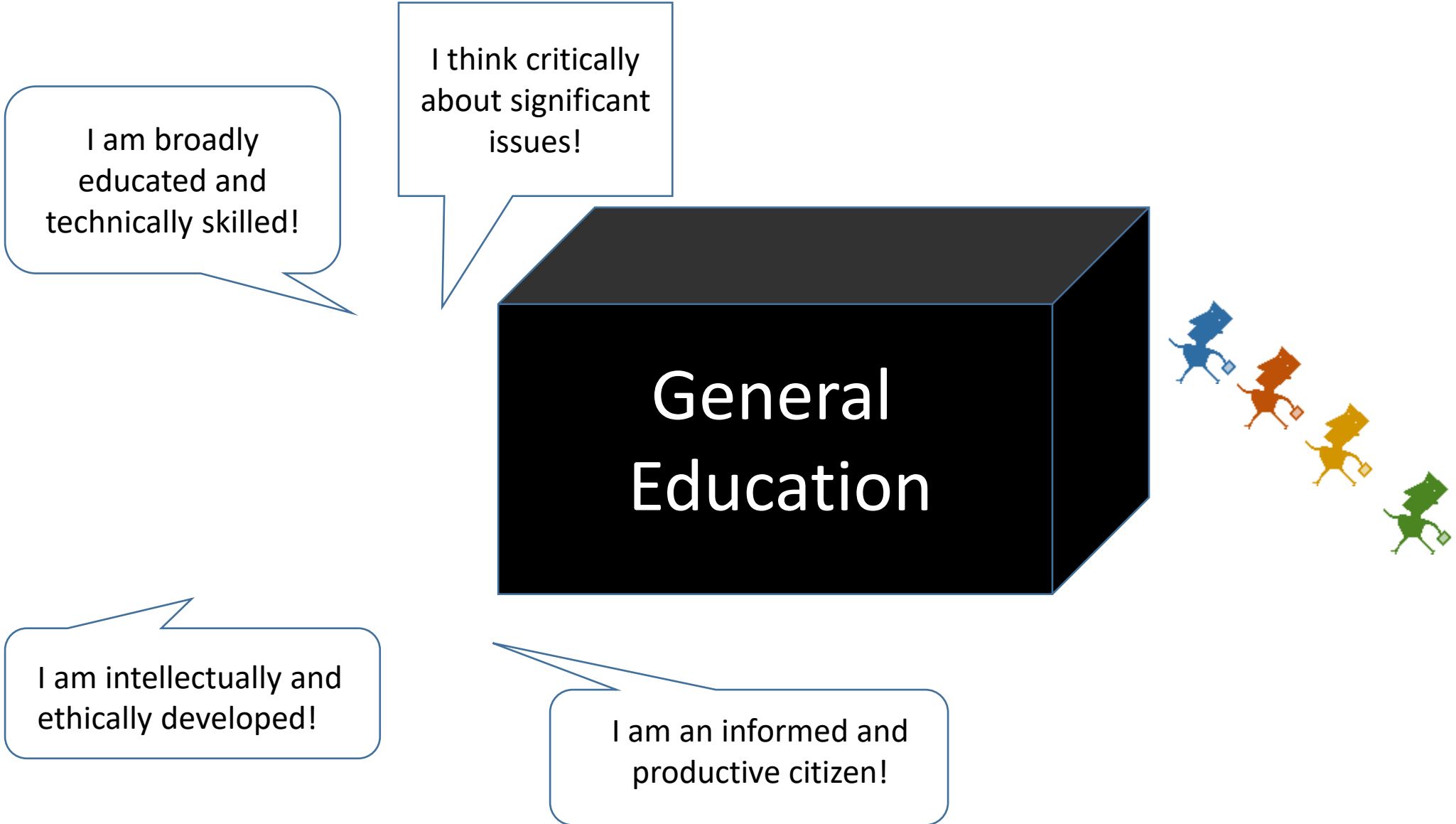
“If a student wants to pursue fashion studies with physics, or if one wants to learn bakery with chemistry, they'll be allowed to do so”.

Changes to grade reports to be more holistic, info about skills not just test scores

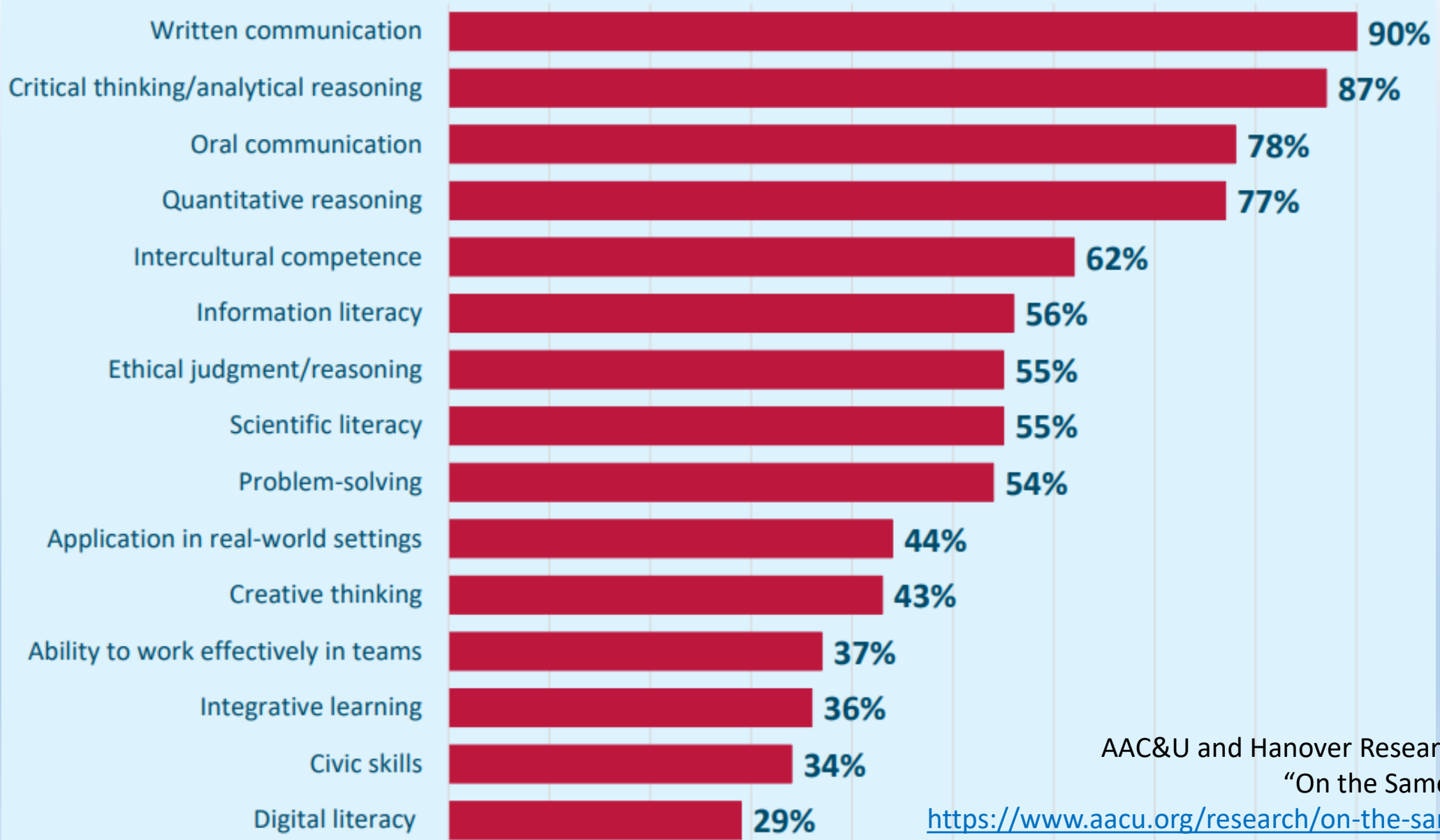




# What colleges want from our students:



## Most Frequently Identified Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Learning



AAC&U and Hanover Research. 2022  
“On the Same Page?”

<https://www.aacu.org/research/on-the-same-page>



# What do we want our students to know and do regardless of major? – from Clemson faculty & staff

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- Develop *critical thinking, ethical decision-making*, and draw on *multiple perspectives*
- *Integrate learning* across disciplines to form *global citizens*
- *Apply intercultural competency* and *global awareness*
- *Connect disciplines*
- Honor the land grant mission and *prepare citizens* for a democratic society
- Engage in *evidence-based civil discourse*



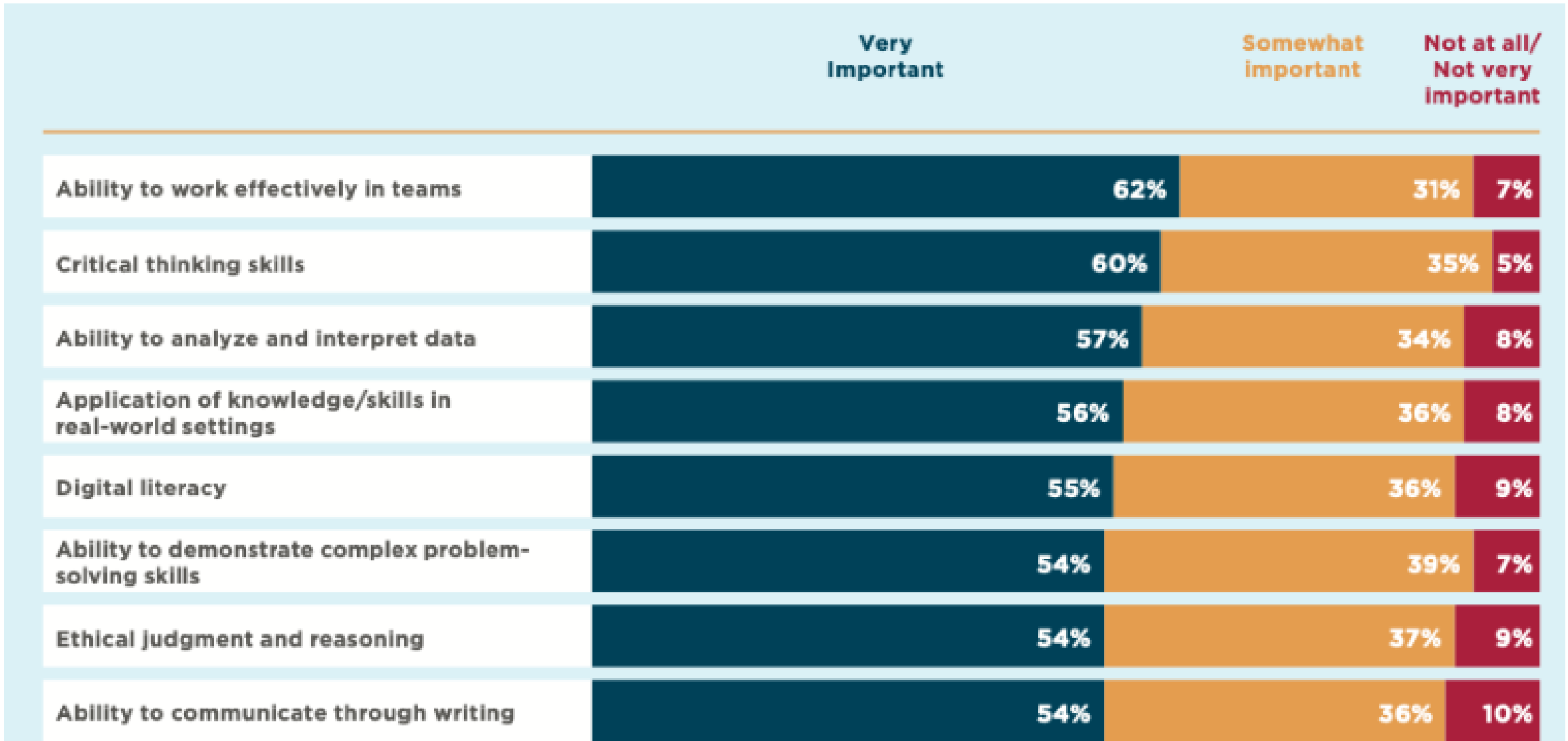
# What types of academic experiences are most beneficial to you? – from Clemson students

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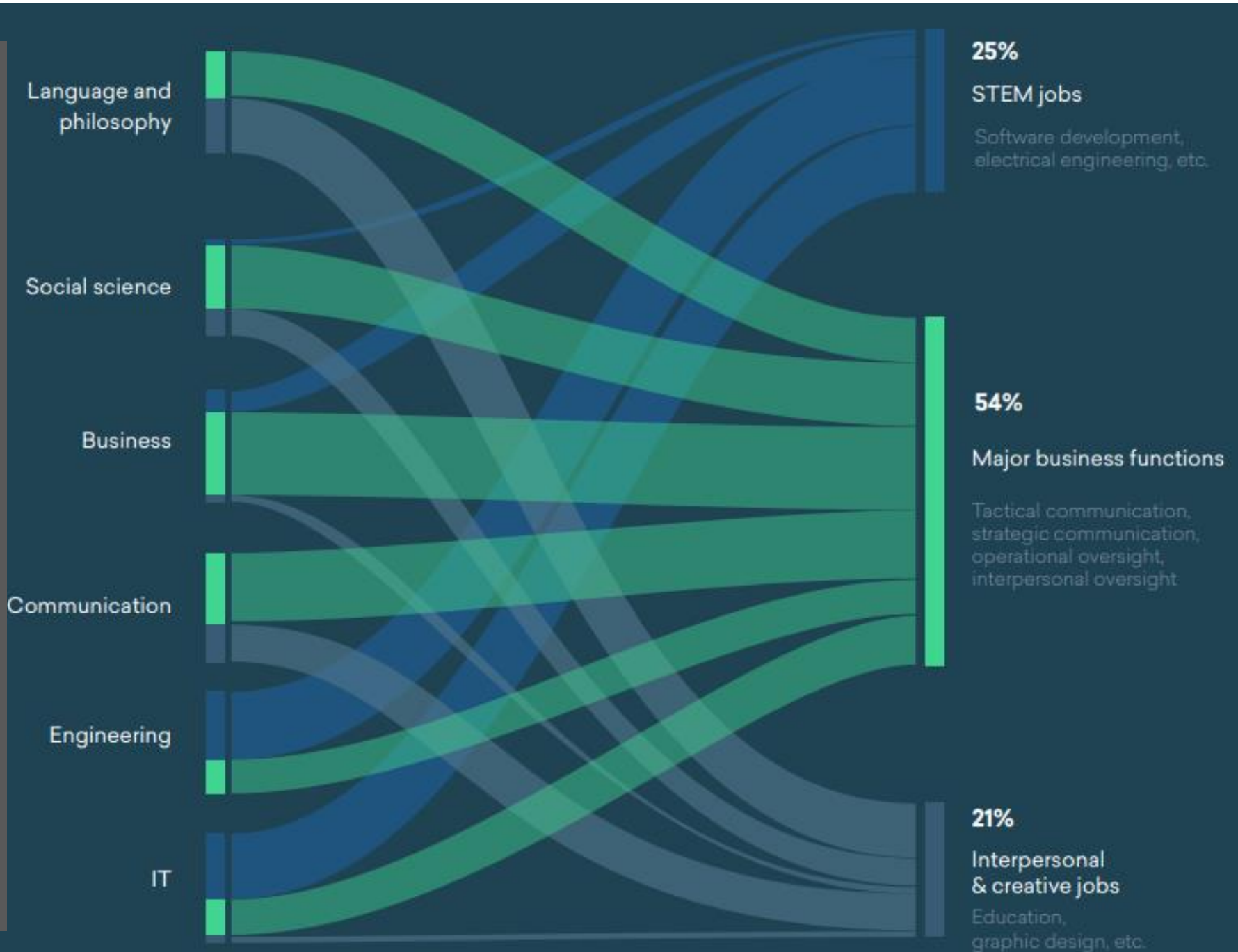
- Coursework that is *contemporary and applicable*
- When it helps me find my *passions*
- Those that have *real-world connections*
- When I'm challenged in my views to *analyze broad viewpoints* that are not just the professors' viewpoints
- Moving *beyond theory to application*
- *Opportunities* like Creative Inquiry, CEDC, service-learning, the Global Health Certificate, and being part of teams with students outside my major



# What do employers want?



“How College Contributes to Workforce Success” 2021,  
<https://www.aacu.org/research/how-college-contributes-to-workforce-success>



# Why so much emphasis on the major?

Diverse educational paths often collapse into a few career functions.

Emsi. 2019. "Degrees at Work."  
<https://www.economicmodeling.com/2019/07/30/degrees-at-work/>

# What are the impacts of a General Education Curriculum?

	Values				
	Continued learning	Life-long fulfilment	Leadership	Short-term success	Financial earnings
<b>Intellectual Skill Development</b>					
Professors encouraging the examination of strengths and weaknesses of one's own views.**	☑	☑			
Discussions of questions to which there is not necessarily a right answer.**	☑	☑	☑		
<b>Larger perspectives and experiences</b>					
Conversations with others who have very different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.**	☑		☑	☑	
Discussing issues such as peace, justice, human rights, equality, and race relations.	☑		☑	☑	☑
<b>Span of learning</b>					
Number of courses completed unrelated to one's major or similar fields.**	☑	☑			☑
Discussion of philosophical, ethical, and literary perspectives on the human condition in most classes	☑	☑			

\*\*=2-3x greater impacts for students with low socioeconomic resources

Detweiler, Richard. (2021). *The Evidence Liberal Arts Needs: Lives of Consequence, Inquiry, and Accomplishment*. MIT Press.

# Communicating ‘Core Competencies’ To Students

- NOT soft skills – empowerment skills!
- Need intentionality, reflection

## Engagement

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Leadership

## Innovation

- Adaptability
- Analytical Skills
- Technology

## Professionalism

- Self-Awareness
- Integrity & Ethics
- Brand



# ***II.) General Education: What It Means at Clemson***

# General Education Models & Design

## Foundation

4 <sup>th</sup> year	Major
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	
1 <sup>st</sup> year	General education

## Gradually specialize

4 <sup>th</sup> year	Major
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	General education
1 <sup>st</sup> year	

## Reinforce, extend, integrate, make meaning

4 <sup>th</sup> year	General education	Major
3 <sup>rd</sup> year		
2 <sup>nd</sup> year		
1 <sup>st</sup> year		

Virginia Tech:

<https://www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/minors/showcase.html>

Boston University:

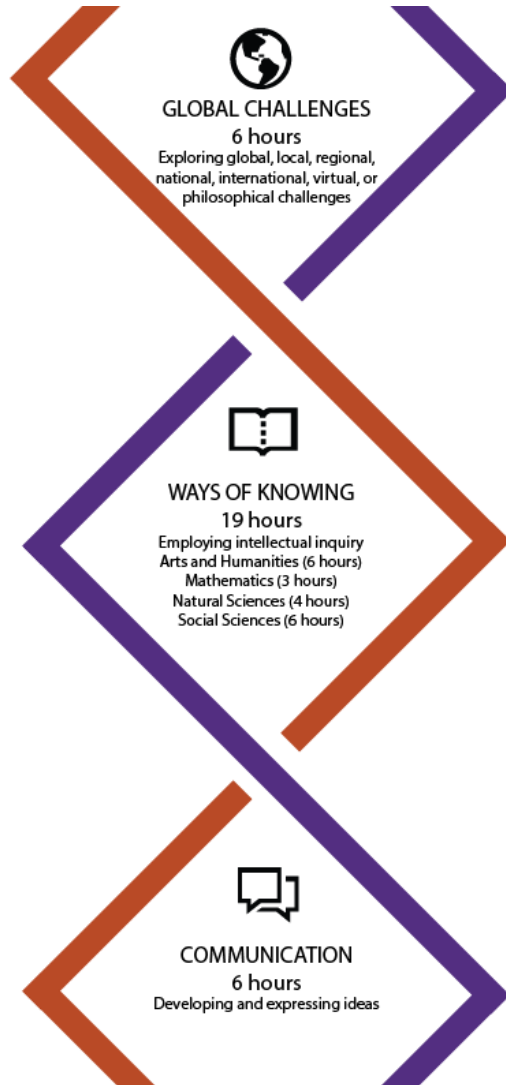
<https://www.bu.edu/hub/>

See also *General Education Essentials*. Paul Hanstedt. 2012.

# Integration: General Education Curriculum at Clemson

## CROSSINGS

THE CLEMSON® UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM



### Why 'Crossings'?

- skills, knowledge, and intellectual development acquired in the general education curriculum crosses with those in the major course of study
- theoretical knowledge crosses into engaged learning and practical applications
- students cross from novice to professional

[Clemson.edu/Crossings](https://Clemson.edu/Crossings)

# National Trend: High-impact practices (HIPs)

- ❖ First-year seminars
- ❖ Learning community
- ❖ Student-faculty research
- ❖ Study abroad
- ❖ Service-learning
- ❖ Internships
- ❖ Senior experience/capstone



Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Washington, DC: AAC&U.  
Kuh, G. D., & O'Donnell, K. (2013). Ensuring quality & taking high-impact practices to scale. Washington, DC: AAC&U.

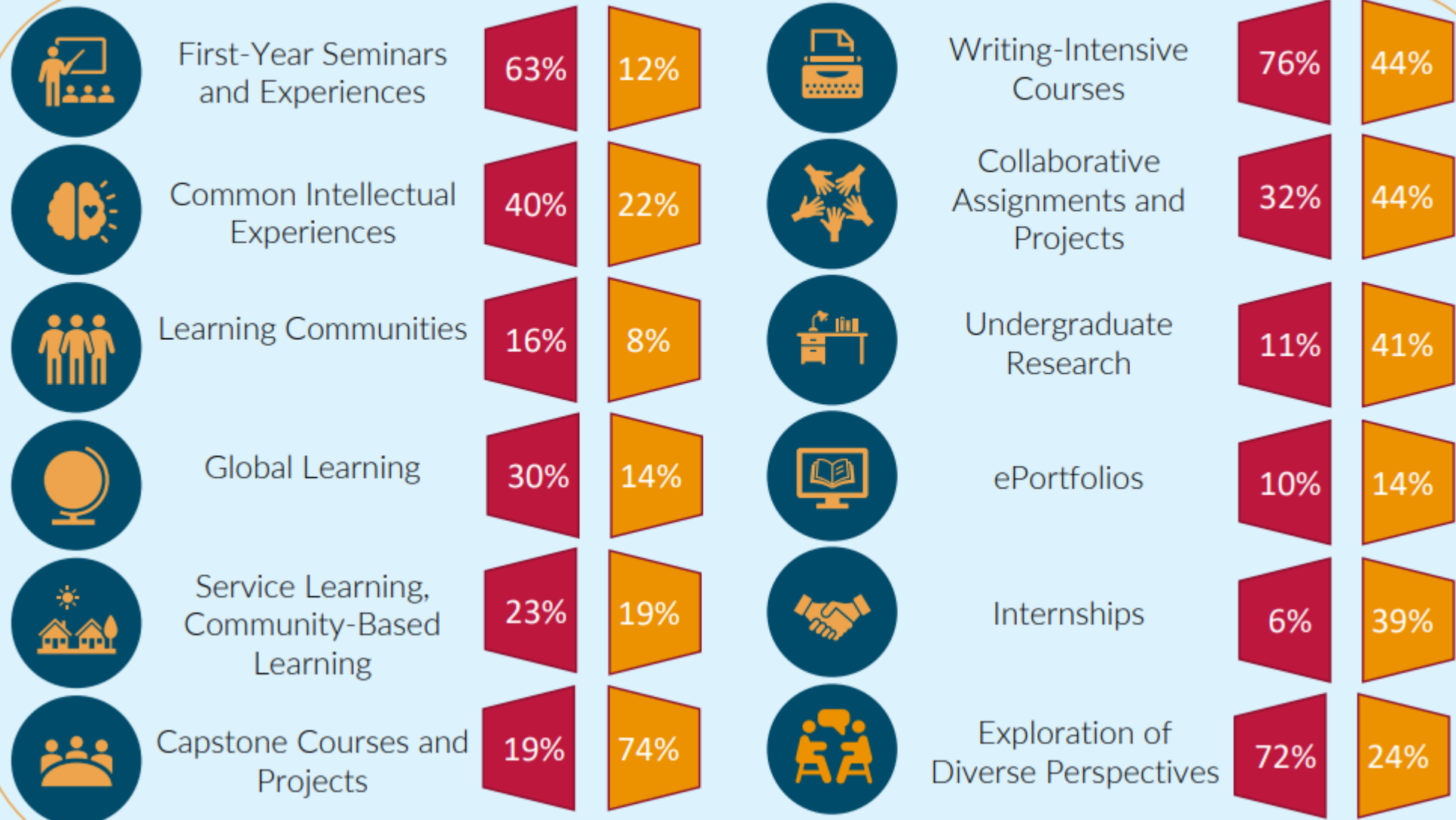
# Required High-Impact Educational Practices



Required in General Education



Required in Majors



What it means at Clemson

“On the Same Page?”

<https://www.aacu.org/research/on-the-same-page>



# UN Sustainable Development Goals – Infuse HIPs and Curricula





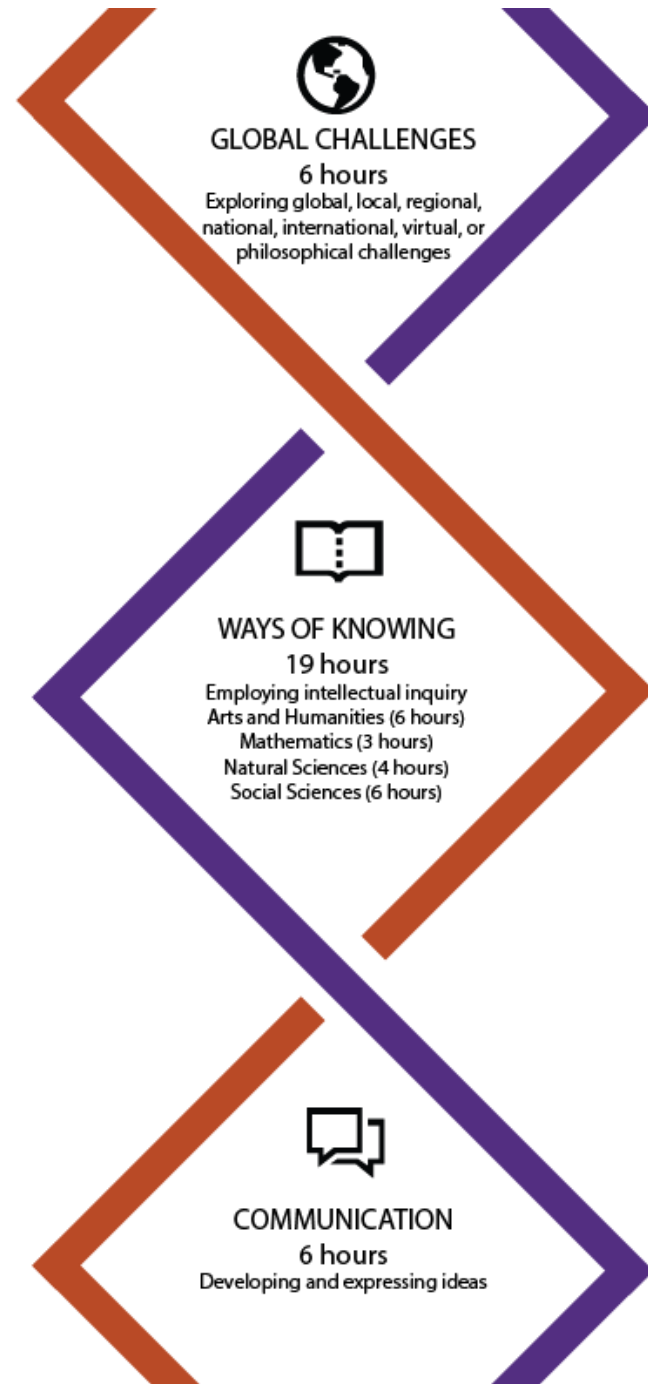
# III.) General Education: All About Crossings

## A.) Your Tools

- [Clemson.edu/Crossings](https://Clemson.edu/Crossings)
- [Catalog.Clemson.edu](https://Catalog.Clemson.edu)
- Advising manual

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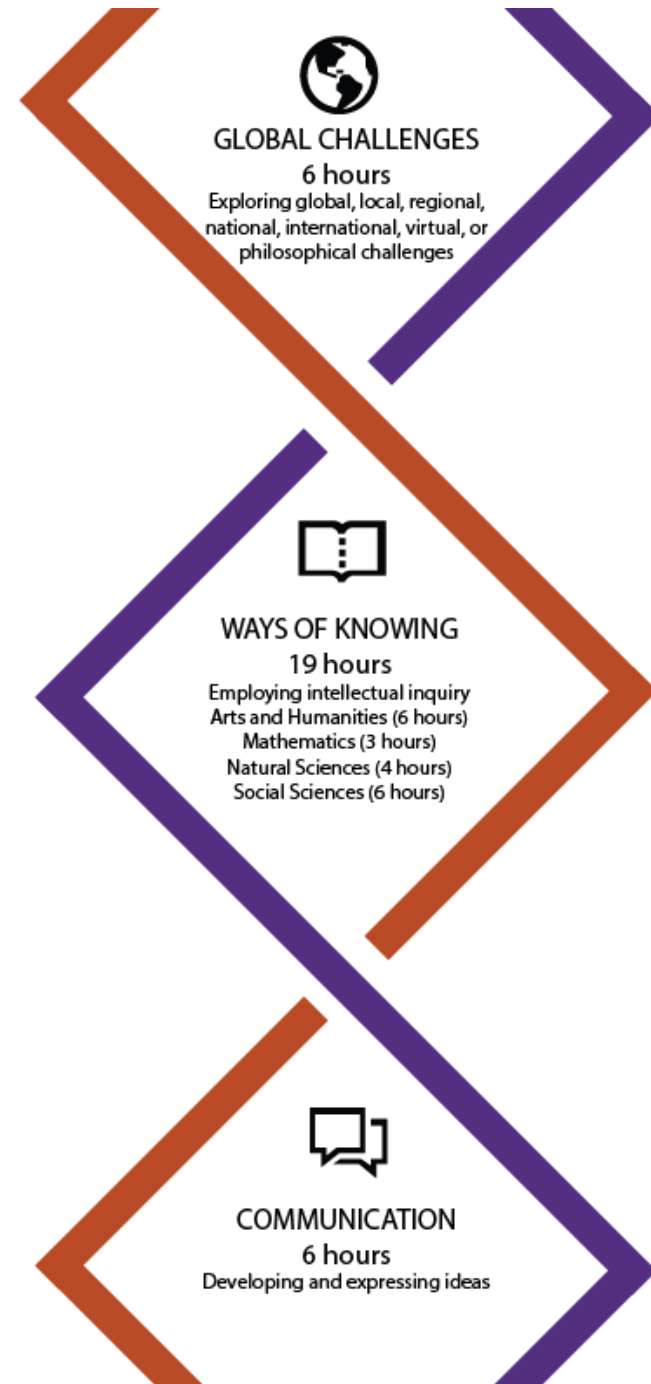
# III.) General Education: All About Crossings

## B.) Course substitutions

- Communication & Ways of Knowing - transfer courses
- Banner attribute v. catalog year

# CROSSINGS

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## III.) General Education: All About Crossings

### C.) Courses to fulfill Global Challenges

- 6 hours  $\neq$  2 3-hour courses
- Don't always try to find a course in 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Use degree map

# CROSSINGS

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