



## Generation Z Perceptions of Learning in a University Student-Run Agency

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### Abstract

Student-run agencies are used in undergraduate mass communication programs to build real-world experience into the curriculum. This study reports on an exit survey in which Generation Z agency graduates identified 42 skills/skill sets presented in an agency. Specific, measurable hard skill tasks such as meeting a client and building a copy deck were more readily recognized than soft skills highly regarded by employers, such as critical thinking and stress management. Soft skill deficiencies were widely unrecognized as graduates expressed desire for more workplace explanation and structure. This research offers valuable help in understanding Gen Z, the largest cohort group in higher education today. Instructors can use the knowledge presented here to help guide Gen Z students to a more robust balance of hard- and soft-skill learning and career readiness.

Undergraduate students in advertising, public relations, and related mass communication fields can gain important knowledge and hands-on skills in a student-run agency. Student agencies have been in existence for more than forty years; their number is increasing as educators augment curriculum with hands-on learning opportunities that prepare students for the realities they will face as entry-level professionals.

The student agency learning experience is intentionally ambiguous. It is designed to push students to develop distinctive responses to real-world client opportunities and challenges.

As student agencies grow in number and size, concern is warranted about their application of intentionally ambiguous career preparation. Most of today's university students fall into Generation Z. This

population group has a unique perspective on the meaning of work, and a different sense of the value and reward of work than that of earlier generations (Iorgulescu, 2016; Tulgan, 2015).

The current study offers a summation of five years of exit questionnaire responses from Gen Z students as they ended a student agency experience. These agency graduates often did not recognize the intentionality and the ambiguity, particularly in regard to soft skills gained and those still needing attention. When asked what they'd seek in a 'do over,' agency graduates often asked for different team members, different clients, and more explanation and structure. This is in many ways contrary to what a student agency is intended to foster (Swanson, 2017).

Recently published studies have affirmed a student agency has the potential to allow students an

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easier transition to the workplace (Bush, Haygood, & Vincent, 2017; Maben & Whitson, 2014). The current study builds on these and other earlier works by looking specifically at what skills and skill areas Gen Z graduates perceived to have acquired, what skills and skill areas graduates wished they had learned, and what they would have done differently if they could repeat the experience.

Although exit questionnaire results were obtained from one student agency, the findings have implications for many hands-on learning experiences within undergraduate curriculum. It is valuable to know what kinds of skills Gen Z students perceive to have learned or missed. It is also valuable to know that students in large numbers can complete an otherwise rigorous experience involving both hard and soft skill learning and still perceive skill deficiencies.

Instructors may use the findings presented here to identify organizational and interpersonal challenges to student learning. The findings can guide future communication between instructors and all undergraduates about the importance of balancing both hard and soft skill learning to obtain ideal preparation for entry to the communication workplace.

### Literature Review

**Agency organization:** Today there are at least 158 student agencies, and the number is increasing (Swanson, 2017). Although every student-run agency exists to offer students real-world concepts and skills, each agency is structured differently. An agency may focus on work that falls within a particular communications discipline. An agency may be established within the curriculum as a required, elective, or capstone course (Deemer, 2012). It may be set up outside the curriculum as a volunteer-based entity or as community outreach of a student organization such as an American Advertising Federation or Public Relations Society of America student chapter (Swanson, 2017). An agency may operate year-round or only during certain academic terms. It may require students to apply for acceptance, or it may have open admissions.

An agency may avoid competing with local marketplace firms. It may choose to collaborate with area professionals on joint projects, or it may compete head-to-head for client work in the community (Struthers, 2016; Maben 2010). An agency may be set up so the instructor will recruit clients for student campaigns, or it may require students to find their own clients. An agency may charge for client ser-

vice, or it may perform all work pro bono. All of this depends on agency policy and/or university requirements (Bush, 2015; Bush, 2009).

Instructor oversight also differs. The agency may employ full-time instructors, adjuncts, or some combination of both. Some are hands-on at every level of a campaign or project; others stand back and let students take charge. At least one on-campus entity promoted as a student-run agency is directed by full-time executive staff with students in subordinate roles (Coffee, 2015).

**Student learning within the agency:** Within the confines of its unique structure and service emphasis, every student agency has the potential for “undergraduate transformations” as recognized by Maben and Whitson (2014). Transformation of student knowledge and skill comes when the agency replicates as much as possible the rigorous professional and creative environment that students will find in the post-commencement workplace.

A typical agency campaign or project will immerse students in client consultation, research, development of strategies and tactics, creation and dissemination of supportive communication materials, measurement of success, and reporting to the client of future recommendations. All these are key professional skills in advertising, public relations and related fields (Kim, 2015).

The individual and collective work is consistent with what has been termed project-based learning (Marcketti & Karpova, 2014), problem-based learning (Dolmans, Loyens, Marcq & Gijbels, 2016), service learning (Jacoby, 1999), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and high-impact practice (Kuh, 2008). Though these concepts are differentiated by past studies, all describe a learning environment that is intentional, pragmatic, collaborative, and occasionally ambiguous.

Undergraduates working in an agency think deeply, apply rigorous, professionally relevant standards of practice, and then reflect on their experiences. Accountability is assured through meaningful learning assessment linked to professional realities (Zilvinskis, 2015).

In 2006, the Commission on Public Relations Education, a group of educators and practitioners from a dozen different professional societies, recommended that undergraduates pursuing a PR education be exposed to seven curriculum areas. One of

these categories was “supervised work experience in public relations” as one would find in a student-run agency (The Professional Bond, 2006, p.7).

The CPRE’s newest report again noted the value of the student agency: “Extra-curricular and co-curricular involvement, whether PRSSA, student agencies or volunteer work using public relations skills, should be seen as an integral component for student development, with a particular focus on leadership skills” (Fast Forward: Foundations + Future State. Educators + Practitioners, 2017, p. 20).

Similar career preparation recommendations have been made by the American Advertising Federation. The AAF supports more than 200 local chapters, a national student advertising competition, advertising awards, a career conference and an honors society (Education services, 2018).

**Employer expectations of hard and soft skill learning:** Over the years, surveys of employers identified the most relevant entry level skills. Employers say hard skills are important in the increasingly technical social media-driven communication workplace. Soft skills are also needed. Soft skills are the interpersonally-based habits that establish a basis of trust between people (Duncan, 2018). Soft skills allow professionals to collaborate, deal with dissent, and manage projects for multiple constituencies (Brunner, Zarkin, & Yates, 2018; Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007).

A survey of 200 employers by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found the five most sought-after skills were leadership, teamwork, written communication, problem-solving, and verbal communication (Job Outlook 2016..., 2016). In 2012, a survey showed “integrity and communication” were the entry-level skills deemed most important by business executives who had recently interviewed undergraduate students (Robles, 2012, p. 455). A recent LinkedIn survey of 2,000 businesspeople showed 57% of respondents believed soft skills are more important than hard skills (Soft skills in demand, 2018).

Researchers Brunner, Zarkin and Yates recently conducted an analysis of 199 entry-level help wanted ads posted in the PRSA Job Center. Soft skills such as “collaborative... personable... team player” were listed in 67% of the ads (Brunner, Zarkin & Yates, 2018, p. 37).

Employers expect soft skills training to be prominent in university curriculum. In 2007, the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & Amer-

ica’s Promise identified “four essential learning outcomes” for all university undergraduates. Outcomes included knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, personal and social responsibility, intellectual and practical skills, and information literacy (College learning for the new global. . . , 2007, p. 12). In 2006, researchers working under the supervision of the American Association of Colleges & Universities interviewed more than 800 small business leaders and CEOs. There was strong agreement that “real world application of knowledge” must be included in curriculum (How should colleges prepare, 2006, p. 2). Only 22% of the business leaders supported a primary focus on knowledge and skill in a specific field, and none of the “most important skills” were hard skill technical competencies (2006, p. 5).

In 2013, Grasser reported that 88% of incoming university freshmen hoped a degree would allow them “to get a better job” (2013, p. 28). However, the reality today is that a university degree offers no guarantee that the degree earner can perform entry-level work and get that better job (Hazelwood, 2014).

Stewart, Wall, and Marciniac’s survey of juniors and seniors preparing to enter the workplace found “the soft skills in which college graduates feel competent are the same that employers feel the graduates fall short of possessing” (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniac, 2016, p. 280). Some students “have overstated their level of competency,” (p. 281) and the researchers predicted those students would struggle to find employment (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniac, 2016).

Perhaps in response to college graduates’ lack of work preparation, dozens of postgraduate “boot camps” and “bridge programs” have sprung up. These programs allow graduates to learn the skills they did not master in the university (Selingo, 2016).

**Pressures within academe:** Higher education programs have been accused of failure to proactively prepare graduates with critical workplace skills (Moody & Bates, 2013; Todd, 2009). A recent survey of chamber of commerce members found most respondents “grossly dissatisfied with college graduates’ level of preparation and delivery” of the skills employers were most interested in (Baird & Parayitam, 2017, p. 165). At least one survey suggested university graduates lack even the basic skills to succeed in life (Gamire & Pearson, 2013).

The most recent Commission on Public Relations Education report claims, “There are gaps, often

significant, between what employers want, what they think new hires have – and educators often tend to rate students higher than do practitioners” (Fast Forward: Foundations + Future State. Educators + Practitioners, 2017, p. 15).

While acknowledging gaps in student preparation, educators also claim too much work to do and not enough support for doing it (Malesic, 2016; Benderly, 2014; Gose, 2010; Wilson, 2010). The university can be a workplace where many people suffer personal stress and depression (Reevy & Deason, 2014) and where educators lack time to build relationships with employers (Toth & Aldoory, 2010). In 2006, almost half of all communication instructors responding to a national survey reported too many students and not enough time (Swanson, 2006).

**Generation Z and the student agency:** Gen Z brings yet another challenge to educators, to the agency and, ultimately, to the workplace. The 60 million members of this generational group were born between mid-1990s and early 2000s. These young adults have no memory of a time without social media. They are tech savvy multi-taskers on a variety of platforms and more at home with a cell phone or tablet than with a desktop computer (Tulgan, 2015).

They are always online on any technical device virtually, with no stop. It can be seen through their actions as well which are in connection with their technical environment and which can appear as a tool or as a milieu in their life (Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós & Juhász, 2016, p. 93).

Multicultural but not especially entrepreneurial, Gen Z adults have optimism for the future but are challenged by “poor communication skills, lack of accountability, and less-than-stellar organizational skills, productivity, follow-through, and timeliness” (Castellano, 2016, p. 18). Gen Z students are expected to succeed in the agency but may not even share the same language with instructors or business clients (How to speak Gen Z... 2012).

Existing student agency literature does not take into account the perceptions of learning among members of this unique cultural and demographic group. Previous studies addressed agency structure and characteristics (Bush & Miller, 2011), clients and funding sources (Maben, 2010), tools and strategies for assessing client satisfaction (Deemer, 2012), pedagogical benefits of the agency (Bush, 2009), curriculum development and community service (Kim, 2015;

Struthers, 2016), and experiences and perceptions of advisors (Maben & Whitson, 2014). A simple Google search can result in numerous news article and profile stories about student agencies, but little documentation of student learning.

In 2017, researchers Bush, Haygood, and Vincent study broke new ground to affirm a “tangible link between pedagogy/best practices and demonstrable postgraduate success” (2017, p. 421). The study used data collected in telephone interviews with 14 graduates of student agencies. The graduates, all of whom had been in the workplace between three months and eight years, spoke of the major learning outcomes of their student agency experience.

Bush, Haygood, and Vincent identified seven benefits of working in a student agency. The researchers presented three outcomes noted by graduates: skills application, business processes and protocols, and professional skills. All of this information greatly advanced what is known about student agency outcomes. At the same time, the study involved a small sampling of graduates. It categorized student comments into a small list of identified outcomes. The study did not address perceptions of hard and soft skills and did not recognize students as members of any unique cultural and demographic group.

The current study increases our knowledge of student agency outcomes by focusing on how Gen Z students perceive the learning of specific skills and skill areas from the agency experience, as well as how these students perceive to have fallen short in their agency work. This knowledge will allow the student agency (or any similar hands-on learning experience) to better educate undergraduates for career readiness.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions guided this study:

RQ 1: What reasons did Generation Z students give for joining the student-run agency, and what career plans did they express upon completion of their agency experience?

RQ 2: What professional skills/skill areas did Generation Z students perceive to have acquired through their agency experience?

RQ 3: What professional skills/skill area weaknesses did Generation Z students perceive upon completion of their agency experience?

RQ 4: What would Generation Z students do differently if they could repeat the agency experience?

**Methodology**

Undergraduates ending a student agency experience housed within a mass communication program in a large U.S. public university were asked to complete an online exit questionnaire to identify and describe learning experiences. This particular agency is a capstone course option for undergraduate majors in three subject concentrations including advertising and public relations.

The nine-item questionnaire combined multiple-choice questions with open-ended answer opportunities. Identical questions were presented to agency students within the last two weeks of each academic term, from fall 2013 through summer 2018. No course credit was given to students for completing the instrument, although questionnaire completion was a course requirement.

In total, 452 students were enrolled in the agency during this time period. Of those enrolled, 345 (76%) responded to the exit questionnaire. The survey was anonymous; all but a handful of agency students during this time period would have been members of Gen Z.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive data were downloaded and analyzed by the researcher, working independently using the constant comparative method. Qualitative responses were first coded into themes and then categorized, allowing for conclusions about the commonality of respondent experiences consistent with Strauss and Corbin (1990). Questionnaire responses that were similar in content but varied in wording were grouped together to allow identification of patterns of responses. In

this method, “the main focus is not on quantification of facts, but rather on identifying the meanings and values attributed by individuals in real-life situations, with idiosyncratic and personal views forming an important part of the overall picture” (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001, pp. 41-42).

**Results**

**RQ 1:** What reasons did Generation Z students give for joining the student-run agency, and what career plans did they express upon completion of their agency experience?

The exit questionnaire first asked respondents to indicate their top three reasons for enrolling in the agency course, and then to indicate their future plans. Answers to these questions helped establish context for subsequent responses.

Of 345 respondents, 229 (34.3%) indicated they had made an intentional decision to enroll in the agency course rather than any other capstone option. Other responses included “the course was the best option for my schedule,” (114, or 17%), “I wanted to take a course from this instructor,” (109, or 16.3%), and “I wanted to take the course at (this campus)” (106, or 15.8%). Forty-five responses (6.7%) indicated that the agency had been recommended by a friend. When asked to give one response indicating their post-commencement plans, a majority of respondents indicated they intended to work in public relations (140, or 40.5%) or advertising (75, or 21.7%). Figure 1 displays summarized responses to this question.

**RQ 2:** What professional skills/skill areas did Generation Z students perceive to have acquired through their agency experience?

Respondents were presented with an open-ended question asking for identification of “two relevant professional hands-on skills acquired” in the student-run agency. There was no prompting of skill examples, and no limitation on the length of response. A total of 339 respondents submitted 598 offers of professional skills/skill areas acquired, or an average of 1.76 offers per respondent. All comments were downloaded, coded, and subsequently categorized into a list. Comments that did not address the stated question were disregarded. Figure 2 displays the resulting list of 42 skills/skill areas common to the student-run agency.

The most commonly identified important skill/skill area students perceived they had acquired was “client communication/presentation/proposal/ser-

**Figure 1**

**Agency graduates’ reported post-graduation plans**

n = 345

<b>What are your plans after graduation?</b>		
I plan to work in advertising	75	21.7%
I plan to work in public relations	140	40.5%
... work in another communications field	48	13.9%
I plan to work in another profession	44	12.7%
... to go to graduate school or law school	17	4.9%
Other responses, including:	21	6%
Start/continue my own business		
Military service		
Post-graduate internship		
Travel		
Full-time parenting/caregiver		

vice” (103 responses, or 17.2% of the total). This item received more than three times as many offers as any of the others. Figure 3 displays the ten most commonly identified skills and response rates.

RQ 3: What professional skills/skill area weaknesses did Generation Z students perceive upon completion of their agency experience?

Respondents were presented with an open-ended question. There was no prompting of skill examples, and no limitation on the length of response. A total of 334 respondents submitted 336 offers, or an average of .89 offers per respondent. All comments were downloaded, coded, and subsequently categorized using the list of 42 skills common to the communication professions already developed from the responses to the previous question. Comments that did not address the stated question were disregarded.

The most commonly identified skills/skill areas students perceived to still need work was “writing and editing concepts and practice, including grammar,

punctuation and word use” (50 responses, or 14.8% of the total). Figure 4 displays the identified skills and response rates.

RQ 4: What would Generation Z students do differently if they could repeat the agency experience?

Respondents were presented with an open-ended question. There was no prompting of examples, and no limitation on the length of response. A total of 340 respondents submitted 269 offers, or an average of 1.26 offers per respondent. All comments were downloaded, coded, and categorized as either relating to academic responsibilities, agency responsibilities, client responsibilities, or team responsibilities. Comments that did not address the stated question were disregarded.

The most commonly identified action students would take if able to take an agency do-over was, “work with a different client, team, or team member” (74 responses, or 21.7% of the total). This potential do-over received almost twice as many mentions as

**Figure 2**  
**Student-run agency skills/skill areas as identified through student comments (42 in total)**

Agency structure/business operations	Media lists/management
Assertiveness/self-confidence	Message creation/framing
Associated Press Style	Networking
Audio/video production	News releases
Brand awareness	Organizational skills
Campaign book/plans book/copy deck	Pitching to client/presentation or public speaking skills
Campaign structure/management/budgeting	Procrastination/punctuality
Cision media management software	Research strategies/applications/citation format
Client communication/presentation/proposalservice	Resume/cover letter
Creative brief	Social media/management
Creativity/design skills	Strategic planning
Crisis planning/management	Stress management/emotional response
Critical thinking/decision-making/ethics	SWOT analysis
Delegation	Team-based communication & collaboration
Dispute resolution	Theories of communication
Event planning	Time Fox program/billable v. non-billable hours
Focus group development	Time management/timelines
Interpersonal communication/listening skills	Vendor relations/communication
Job interview skills including ‘dress to impress’	Web design skills
Leadership	Workplace expectations
Measurement of outcomes	Writing and editing concepts and practice, including grammar, punctuation and word use.

the next most popular response, “be more assertive/take more initiative” (39 responses, or 11.4% of the total). Figure 5 displays the categorized offers and response rates.

**Discussion**

The agency’s exit questionnaire data from hundreds of Gen Z students over a period of five years offers a wealth of data in regard to skills/skill areas perceived relevant by this new generation of undergraduates. Although the study was focused on perceptions of learning in a student-run agency, what was learned from Gen Z respondents may have applicability in other areas of the curriculum focusing on career readiness.

The questionnaire did not limit the number of skills/skill areas respondents could offer or the amount of text they could type into the online form. The questionnaire was open for responses during the final two weeks of each academic term, when respondents were wrapping up their agency work. In many cases, respondents may have received final client or instructor feedback immediately before survey completion. Thus, respondents would have immediate appreciation of personal strengths and weaknesses and would be less likely to remember the experience differently than had they been surveyed or interviewed after commencement.

Key conclusions from this study are shown in bold below:

**More often than not, when asked to identify the skills/skill areas acquired, agency graduates identified hard skills** – specific measurable tasks essential for agency completion. Most of the ten skills/skill areas shown in Figure 3 are hard skills.

**Agency graduates were much less likely to identify soft skills as acquired skills**, even though soft skills were a big part of their agency experience and are ultimately critical in all professional work. For example, out of 598 offers of professional skills/skill areas acquired, there were only 6 mentions of critical thinking/decision-making/ethics, 2 mentions of dispute resolution, 2 mentions of organizational skills, and 1 mention of vendor relations/communication.

**Agency graduates made many more offers of skills/skill areas ac-**

**quired than they did skills/skill areas needing further work.** Agency graduates made 598 offers of skills/skill areas acquired and 336 offers of skills/skill areas needing work. The most frequently offered skill needing work was: writing and editing concepts and practice, including grammar, punctuation and word use (see Figure 4). This is not surprising given the findings of many studies showing increasing weakness in writing skills among mass communication students.

**Many important soft skills/skill areas were not widely recognized by graduates either as acquired or needing improvement.** Sixteen of the skills/skill areas on the “acquired” list were offered by 5 or fewer respondents. Some of these items and number of offers included: crisis planning/management (2), focus group development (2), organizational skills (2), stress management (1), and vendor relations/communication (1). Twenty-four of the skills/skill areas on the “need to work on” list were offered by 5 or fewer respondents. Some of these items and number of offers included: critical thinking/decision-making/ethics (2), workplace expectations (1), brand awareness (1), dispute resolution (1), theories of communication (1) and vendor relations/communication (1).

**In a do-over situation, agency graduates would want more structure, more explanation, different clients and different team members.** When asked what they would change if they could repeat the agency experience, more than 21% of respondents expressed the wish for a different client, different team, or different team member(s). Beyond that, agency graduates’ responses suggest wishes for more struc-

**Figure 3**

**Ten most commonly identified important skills/skill areas**

n = 339 respondents; 598 skills/skill areas offered

**Identify two relevant professional ‘hands-on’ skills you acquired in (the agency)**

Client communication/presentation/proposal/service	103, or 17.2% of total
Social media/management	43, or 7.1% of total
Campaign book/plans book/copy deck	38, or 6.3% of total
Team-based communication and collaboration	37, or 6.1% of total
Time management/timelines	31, or 5.1% of total
Time Fox program/billable v. non-billable hours	30, or 5% of total
Research strategies/applications/citation format	26, or 4.3% of total
Creativity/design skills	26, or 4.3% of total
Pitching to client/presentation or public speaking skills	25, or 4.1% of total
Writing and editing concepts and practice, including grammar, punctuation and word use	22, or 3.6% of total

ture, more communication, and more responsibility (see Figure 5). This is generally consistent with Gen Z in that, “They expect authority figures to be always in their corner, to set them up for success, and to be of service” (Tulgan, 2015, September, para. 10). As a side note, this student agency’s instructors have a well-documented and established procedure for assisting students in dealing with ‘problem team members.’ The procedure requires initiation by students. In seven years of agency operation, fewer than half a dozen students have initiated the procedure, although student end-of-term complaints of ‘problem team members’ are commonplace.

### Conclusion

This research adds to the student agency literature in important ways. It documents that Generation Z students recognize the value of an agency experience and will select it over other career preparation options within a curriculum. More than two-thirds of graduates indicated they were planning an advertising or public relations career.

At the same time, the findings of this study offer cause for concern. Graduates acknowledged their agency’s offering of hard- and soft-skill learning. But the greater recognition of hard skills over essential soft skills suggests a focus on more structured aspects of the professional workplace – tasks that follow a ‘to do list,’ template, or pre-established format. Admittedly, hard skill mastery is probably easy to recall because it is quantifiable (Balcar, 2016). But undergraduates must blend hard and soft skills as they prepare for a career (Rao, 2013).

Agency graduates responding to the exit survey offered far less recognition of the soft skills seen by employers as of equal or greater long-term value. Results showed fewer acknowledgements of soft skills such as critical thinking, ethical understanding, and dispute resolution. These and other soft skills that were emphasized in this agency were not perceived as either mastered or needing improvement by the majority of exit survey respondents.

A student agency is designed to be a challenging learning environment that models professional realities. In any agency, students must resolve client issues and team-based interpersonal challenges that have no obvious answer. Exit survey respondents’ do-over requests for different clients, different team members, more structure and explanation suggest Gen Z students were uncomfortable with intentional ambiguity of the student agency. One wonders if this generation’s exposure to “helicopter parenting” and its many forms of protection, explanation, and support could be at least partially responsible (Schiffrin, Liss, Miles-McLean, Geary, Erchull, & Tashner, 2013).

It is important to remember that this research focused on indirect measures, or agency graduate *perceptions of learning*. The literature on student-run agencies is lacking in regard to identifying direct evidence of student learning either from the agency or through a comparison between the agency and traditional classroom instruction. Future research is warranted in this area. Future research could also be undertaken to examine course content and instructional methods across a variety of student agencies, to identify different ways of presenting and reinforcing hard- and soft-skills.

In her 2009 study of student agencies, Lee Bush identified “lack of student participation” as the biggest contributor to the risk that a student agency will fail (p. 33). For agencies to succeed and grow, and for agency students to be prepared for fulfilling careers, instructors must acknowledge and adapt to the values and perspectives of Gen Z students. Unless students can demonstrate hard and soft skill learning – in the agency and across our other curriculum offerings – students will be unprepared for the realities of work in the communication professions.

**Figure 4**  
**Ten most commonly identified important skills/  
 skill areas still needing work**

n = 334 respondents; 336 skills/skill areas offered

<b>What skills do you still need to work on?</b>	
Writing and editing concepts and practice, including grammar, punctuation and word use	50, or 14.8% of total
Time management/timelines	44, or 13% of total
Creativity/design skills	33, or 9.8% of total
Assertiveness/self-confidence	31, or 9.2% of total
Pitching to client/presentation or public speaking skills	26, or 7.7% of total
Interpersonal communication/listening skills	17, or 5% of total
Procrastination/punctuality	13, or 3.8% of total
Client communication/presentation/ proposal/service	12, or 3.5% of total
Team-based communication & collaboration	12, or 3.5% of total
Research strategies/applications/citation format	11, or 3.2% of total



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**Figure 5**  
**Actions desired if offered an agency do-over (categorized)**  
 n = 340 respondents; 269 actions offered

**If you were to do the agency experience again, what would you do differently?**

<i>Academic responsibilities</i>	
Enroll in fewer academic units while working in the agency	9, or 2.6% of total
Would want to see more structure in the agency course	9, or 2.6% of total
<i>Agency responsibilities</i>	
Work with a different client, team, or team member	74, or 21.7% of total
Dedicate more time to the agency experience	14, or 4.1% of total
Have more communication with instructor	10, or 2.9% of total
<i>Client responsibilities</i>	
Have more communication with client	13, or 3.8% of total
<i>Team responsibilities</i>	
Be more assertive/take more initiative	39, or 11.4% of total
Take more personal responsibility for the project	18, or 5.2% of total
Have more communication with team	10, or 2.9% of total

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