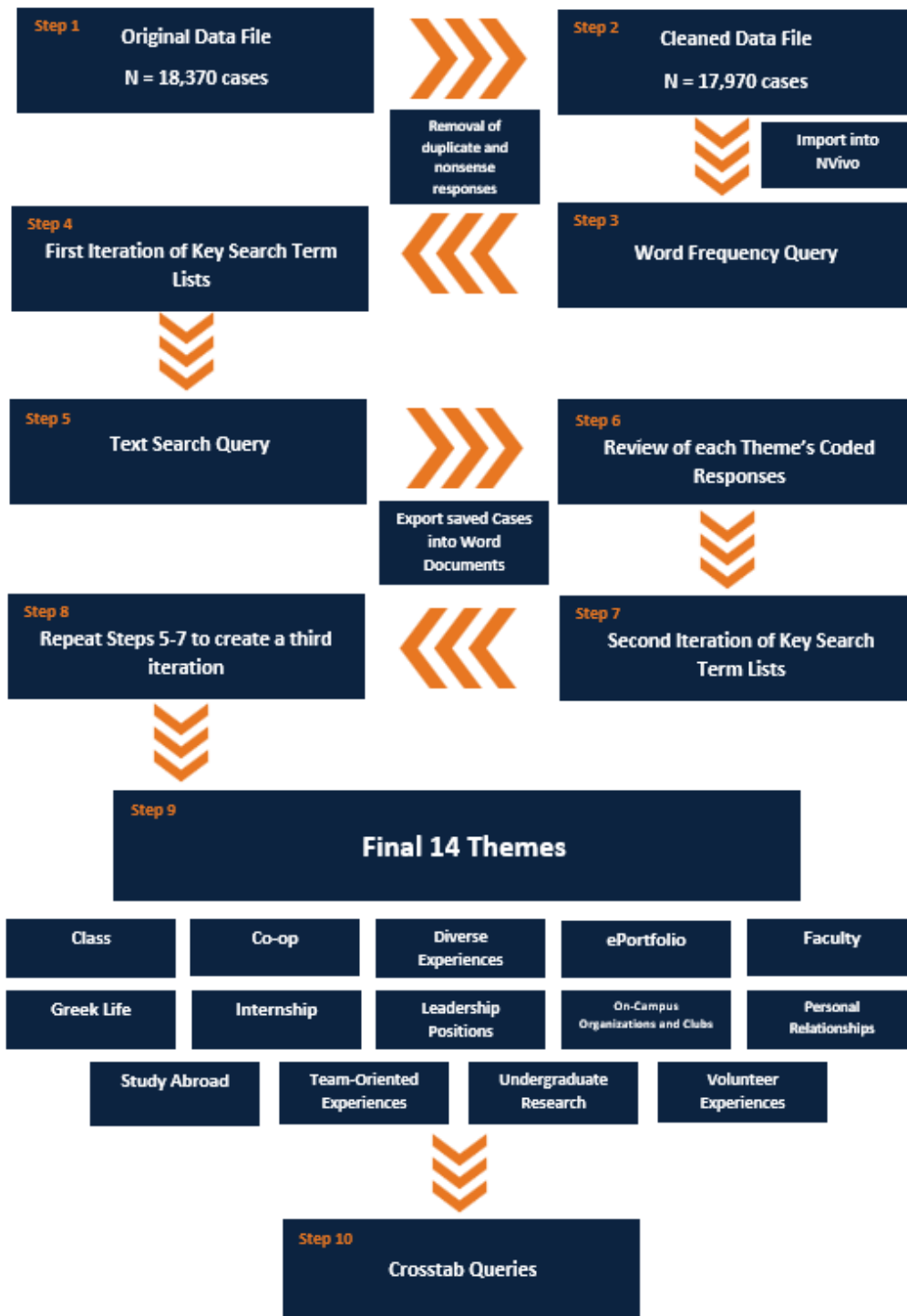


Define High Impact: A Qualitative Analysis from the Student Perspective

Sample: Ten semesters of graduating student responses about their peak learning experiences at Auburn University (from Spring 2020 to Spring 2023)



Top 14 Themes with Counts and Example Responses

Theme	N	Example Responses
Class	3108	“I would say that the most transformative learning experience was my Capstone project for my apparel design degree. We were asked to work in a group and create a collection for a brand of our choosing that could help that brand branch out to new customers. We created an androgynous line of clothing for the brand XX. We were required to create a manufacturer packet called a spec pack. We had to be so thorough with the project that we could send off what we made to a manufacturer they could understand it and start creating our fashion line if we wanted to. I learned so much and applied a lot of my learning and experience to the entire project.”
Co-op	334	“My co-op experience took me from a person that had a strong interest in engineering and technology to someone that could act on any ideas and identify any blocks preventing implementation.”
Diverse Experiences	218	“Taking a diverse populations course (COUN 1000) during my freshman year and engaging in a "immersion experience" assignment where I interviewed women from different backgrounds about their culture. Going out of my comfort zone to physically interact with different cultures was so impactful and has shaped my entire college experience.”
ePortfolio	24	“As an international student, this was the first time that I was exposed to eportfolio in Auburn University, so making eportfolio itself was a new experience for me. Since I had two courses that required me to make eportfolio, I can see the growth of my personal experiences.”
Faculty	2101	“A learning experience I had at Auburn that helped shape the person I am today is that I was struggling to pass a certain part of my flight training and had a fantastic professor invest their time and effort to help me get through the obstacle I was attempting to overcome.”
Greek Life	1410	“Joining greek life was one of the best decisions I have made in college. I found my people and they helped me become the person I am today.”
Internship	1932	“My internship has helped to shape me into the person I am today - during this time I have matured both personally and professionally. I have learned what real-life is going to be like outside of college. I know what is expected of me, and what I expect from my employer.”
Leadership Positions	439	“A transformative learning experience for me was working as a COSAM Peer Advisor. This job allowed me to make connections with faculty, staff, and students and expand my leadership skills. I was able to learn more about myself and others.”
On-Campus Organizations and Clubs	667	“One transformative learning experience I had while at Auburn University was my exposure to the Ethical Hacking Club. I have found the career path that I want to pursue from attending the meetings, I have met some of my closest friends, and I have learned a tremendous amount about security, trust, and leadership. I believe that all students should find their 'club' or place of interest, and I am happy that I found mine.”

Personal Relationships	1340	“When I first moved to Auburn, I did not have many friends. During my coursework, I was placed in a cohort. Our cohort all took the same classes, and this really made my experience at Auburn better. We all became great friends.”
Study Abroad	742	“If I had to single out one experience it would have to be my study abroad experience. Not only was I able to apply the things that I had learned over the previous three years at Auburn University, I was challenged academically and personally in a completely new environment. The experience of studying abroad not only shaped my personal view on the world, it also shone a different light on my remaining year at Auburn.”
Team-Oriented Experiences	796	“Competing for Auburn University was a transformative learning experience. Entering the Auburn Soccer program as a transfer student-athlete, I was able to successfully transition to a new collegiate program, and I became a strong contributor to the team’s character. I adapted to and embraced a new style of play, coaching techniques and team dynamics. I grew within my role even as challenges and levels of internal competition heightened. Competing for an Auburn program and enduring its disciplines, while, simultaneously, reaching academic excellence, are accomplishments of which I will remain proud. This team heightened my personal growth during my undergraduate experience at Auburn University.”
Undergraduate Research	772	“Doing undergraduate research with Dr. XX really showed me how capable I am at conducting high quality research and achieving the highest degrees of success in engineering. It helped me believe in myself in this field.”
Volunteer Experiences	290	“As a freshman I frequently volunteered at the Lee County Humane society. During this experience I learned that I have a passion for volunteering and making a difference in people and animals lives. This has ultimately shaped where I look for jobs now, as I would love to work for a company that values giving back to the community.”

Note. Not all 17,970 responses were categorized into the above 14 institutional themes.

NVivo Tips

NVivo, a software based on the work of Lyn and Tom Richards, handles all sorts of qualitative data via coding, searching for patterns, reporting/exporting data, complex searches and queries, and different modes of output (numeric, visual, and textual) (Jackson & Bazeley, 3rd edition).

Before importing a file into NVivo:

1. Spend a considerable amount of time formulating research questions and identifying which variables in your data will be useful for analysis.
 - a. For example, to run a crosstab query, you will need to have all necessary columns present in the file you import into NVivo.

Text Search Query:

2. Stemmed words will catch any words that stem off the words you have in the search box (i.e. searching the word *friend* with stemmed words will pull *friendly*, *friends*, etc.)
3. Exact matches will pull the exact terms you search and nothing else. Also, if you put a word or a phrase in "", like "*peer advisor*", that will find exact matches.
4. Select "Broad Context" in the "Spread-to" drop-down menu.
 - a. This allows for your responses to be coded only once per the search terms when you are saving the themes. If you do not click this, your cases or codes will include every time the search terms were referenced, which could be multiple times in one response.
 - b. For example, a response could be "I valued time with my *internship* company. I believe that I gained great experience during my *internship*, and I made some great contacts for my future career." Although this is only one student, their response will be coded as two references in the *internship* theme since they mentioned it twice.
 - c. Broad Context, in a sense, removes response duplication.
5. Typically, I run separate searches for terms that are in quotations, and I will later just merge that case into its related one. For example, I can search *diverse AND diversity* in one search with stemmed words and save those results as "Diverse Experiences 1", and then I can search "POC" AND "DEI" with exact matches and save those results as "Diverse Experiences 2". These two cases can easily be merged using the Clipboard function in NVivo.

Memos:

6. Create a memo within NVivo to keep track of notes throughout your project!

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