



COLLEGE
of the **DESERT**



***Guided Pathways
Student Support
Research Report***



***SORTING
RESULTS***



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Identifying “Meta-Majors”

Sorting of Majors into Similar Groups

Sorting Task

As part of a larger project, College of the Desert students who participated in the focus groups were asked to sort a deck of 69 cards with college majors printed on them (one per card) into “similar piles” to understand how to group majors into “meta-majors” for presentation on the college’s website. The sorted piles for each student were recorded and the aggregated sorting data were submitted to a CLUSTER analysis using SYSTAT to reveal the underlying groupings.

Results

Results of the CLUSTER analysis, which reveals distinct groupings of similar items, showed that the students were able to sort the cards into recognizable and coherent sets of majors. The CLUSTER analysis showed that two levels of organization accounted for the sorting data:

First level: Four overarching themes emerged that organized the set of majors into broad conceptual categories
Theme A: Physical Fitness, Training, & Sports Programs
Theme B: Applied & Theoretical Programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Education, & Business)
Theme C: Design & Art Programs (Graphic Design, Photography, Music, Radio, Film, Theater, Art)
Theme D: Communications & Language Programs (Communication, Journalism, Reading, Languages)

Second level: The overarching themes were composed of 17 unique and coherent groupings of majors
Theme A: Physical Fitness, Training, & Sports Programs
<i>Grouping 1: Physical & Athletic Studies</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Self Defense (major)2. Fitness (major)3. Athletic Training (major)4. Varsity Sport (major)5. Physical Therapy (major)6. Kinesiology (major)

Theme B: Applied & Theoretical Programs

Grouping 2: Human & Psychological Studies

1. Addiction Studies/Human Services (major)
2. Sociology (major)
3. Psychology (major)
4. Philosophy (major)

Grouping 3: Historical & Global Studies

1. History (major)
2. Global Studies (major)
3. Political Studies (major)

Grouping 4: Justice & Police Sciences

1. Administration of Justice (major)
2. Police Science (major)

Grouping 5: Health Sciences

1. Emergency Medical Technology (major)
2. Nursing (major)
3. Health Sciences (major)

Grouping 6: Education

1. Adult Basic Education (major)
2. Early Childhood Education (major)

Grouping 7: Service Industries

1. Culinary Arts (major)
2. Hospitality (major)
3. Golf Management (major)

Grouping 8: Business & Management

1. Entrepreneurship (major)
2. Business/Management (major)
3. Accounting (major)
4. Economics (major)

Grouping 9: Scientific Studies

1. Math (major)
2. Astronomy (major)
3. Physics (major)
4. Chemistry (major)
5. Biology (major)
6. Anthropology (major)

Grouping 10: Natural Sciences

1. Geology (major)
2. Geography (major)
3. Plant Science (major)
4. Natural Resources (major)
5. Agriculture (major)

Grouping 11: Construction Technologies

1. Engineering, General (major)
2. Real Estate Development (major)
3. Construction Management (major)
4. Construction Technology (major)
5. Architecture/Drafting (major)

Grouping 12: Technical & Mechanical Systems

1. Energy Systems Technology (major)
2. Automotive Technology (major)
3. Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration (major)
4. Fire Technology (major)

Grouping 13: IT & CIS Systems

1. Cyber Security (major)
2. Computer Science (major)
3. Computer Information Systems (major)

Theme C: Design & Art Programs

Grouping 14: Design & Art Studies

1. Graphic Design (major)
2. Commercial Photography (major)
3. Digital/Commercial Music (major)
4. Radio Production (major)
5. Film Studies & Production (major)
6. Theater Arts (major)
7. Art (major)
8. Music (major)

Theme D: Communications & Language Programs

Grouping 15: Human & Mediated Communication

1. Communication Studies/Speech (major)
2. Mass Communication (major)
3. Journalism (major)

Grouping 16: English

1. Reading (major)
2. English (major)

Grouping 17: Language Studies

1. French (major)
2. Spanish (major)
3. German (major)
4. Japanese (major)
5. English as a Second Language (major)
6. American Sign Language (major)

Summary & Conclusions

Overall, the sorting of majors into groups showed that four overarching themes organize the 69 majors into 17 distinct groupings. Each grouping is composed of a set of majors that students perceived as similar to each other on a variety of explicit and/or underlying features.

In terms of “meta-majors,” the results present two distinct levels, including the “theme” level and the “grouping” level. The “theme” level is akin to a supra category and the “grouping” level is more in line with the concept of “meta-majors” as conceptualized by Guided Pathways. That said, use of the four overarching themes and the 17 groupings together may prove to be an effective approach to present major/degree options to students on the college website.