

## Portland Community College – SE Center

### Math component of “Zine Project” designed by Bjorn Larson

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Each of you must come up with and submit two “telling” quantitative comparisons that give greater insight into your experience of “service learning.” Your examples should reflect a discovery of some fact that caught your interest while doing your service learning. Your examples should also contextualize this striking fact within a broader perspective of our society. You must submit the final write up the comparisons electronically. Dates are given on the Integrated Project handout.

#### What’s a quantitative comparison?

Quantify means give it a number. Compare means to consider as similar. So an example might be something like: “I worked with seniors with Loaves and Fishes. Sixteen percent of seniors live below the poverty line compared with 14.3% for people below the poverty line in Oregon.

To make this more personal and therefore more interesting or “telling,” you might figure out what the poverty line is for a single senior. You might figure out how many people in your demographic are below the poverty line and use that as the comparison.

#### What’s interesting or telling?

We will decide what is “interesting” or “telling” by popular vote. We will take all the examples and choose nine to make into a brief factoid sheet that will be included in the ‘Zine. (This number may be negotiable.) We will correspond the different facts to their respective service learning experience.

#### What’s the point?

To gain knowledge we answer the question, “What is the pattern that connects?” One way to connect things is by understanding their quantity. One way to understand a quantity is then to compare it to another quantity. To compare two quantities is to make the quantities commensurable. This lies at the heart of most concepts in Math 20 (incorrectly named “Basic Math.”)

The web is a treasure trove of this kind of data; in fact it’s overwhelming. Here is one of many websites with some interesting quantities:

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41000.html>