Beyond Hearing: Listening to Student Voices Through Anonymous Surveys

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East Windsor High School English Teacher and Former Administrator

RESC Alliance Virtual Conference July 13, 2020

Agenda

- Background

- Participants' initial survey

- Example of a feedback loop and survey use in a grade 9 English classroom

- Considering survey uses: Brick & mortar (in school) and distance learning

- Examining potential benefits of using surveys

- Participants' final survey

- Addressing participants' questions

Background

- Educational Background

- Student Voice & Surveys

  - Ed.D. Comprehensive Project, 2018-2019

  - Informed Instructional Approach 2019-2020

    - Brick & Mortar + Distance Learning

Surveys are integral to Dr. Hellerich's instructional approach within her English class

Initial Survey

- Please go to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BEYONDHEARINGINITIAL

- Complete the 4 survey questions

- Your answers are anonymous and will serve as a way for me to gauge your initial thoughts

- We will review the data together

The initial survey will gauge current perceptions of surveys—prior to the presenter's presentation

Reviewing Initial Survey Data Results

- Review data results
- Identify participants' key questions to be addressed

Participants' responses will be reviewed in real time to provide key information for the presenter
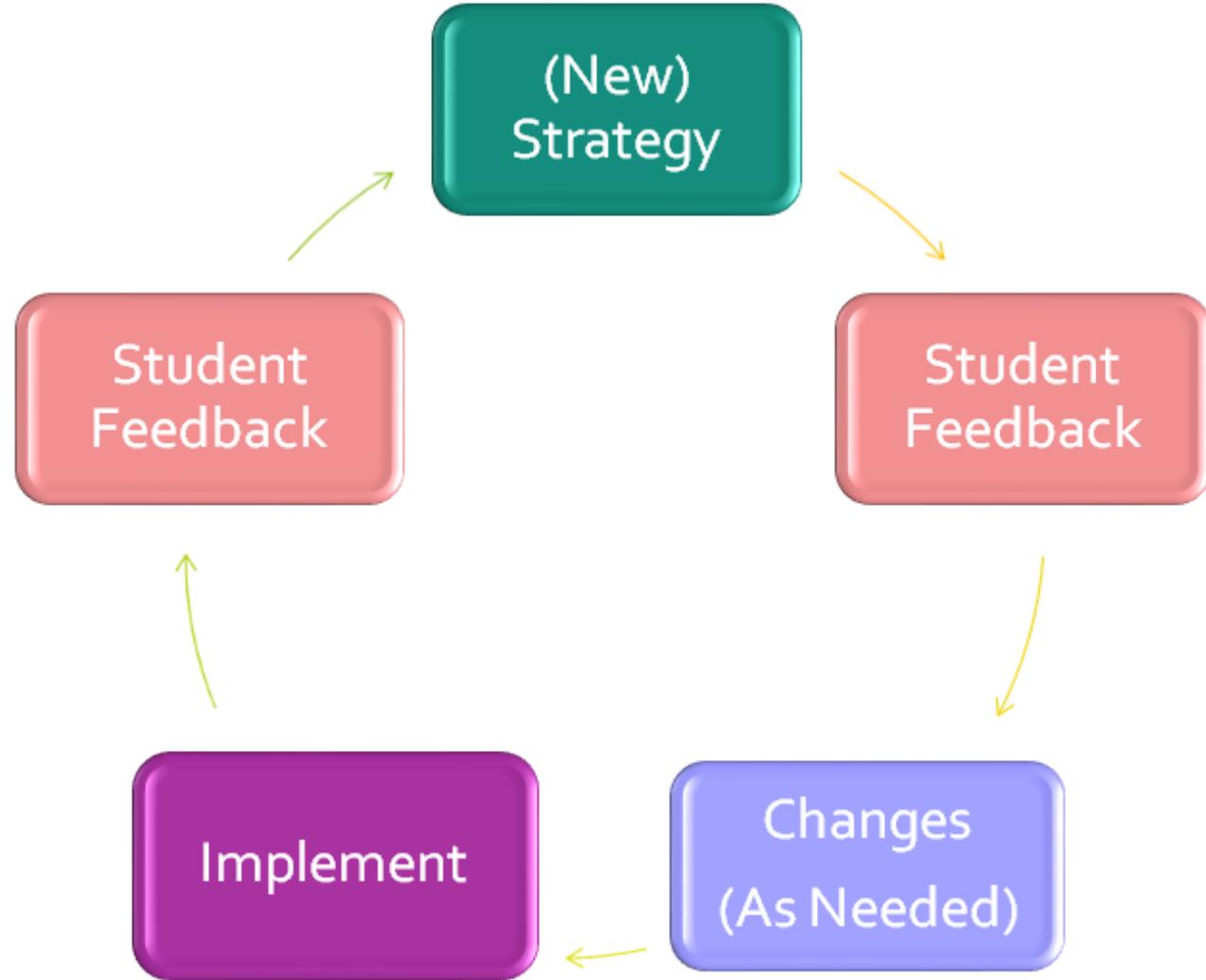
Student Voice in the Classroom

Ted Talk entitled, "When Student Voice is Heard" by Andrew VanderMeulen

Fostering opportunities for students' voices to be heard is imperative

Feedback Loop

Student feedback process utilized within a Grade 9 English classroom in East Windsor

2018-2019 Survey Use in Grade 9 English

- Ed.D. Comprehensive Project: 8 students' input and guidance

- Participatory Action Research (PAR) Emphasis

Surveys have provided vital information about students' perceptions of effective strategies used in English class

Voices Heard from 2018-2019: "What was it about English class that made you feel LEAST stressed?"

assignments
Reading
listen
Outside
Talking
breaks Going things
Brain Kahoot way comfortable
Peaceful rush Knowing
Seminar teach work
Freedom Music
class
Smoothly Rework
classmates
Explaining Calm Feel Knew
nice
Circles Teacher

Feedback included: "...the way you teach and listen to the students makes it a lot easier to feel comfortable in the room."

Voices from 2018-2019:

"What did you value most in English this year?"

- "What I valued most about English this year is that everything we learned tied together."

- Content/Activities: Poetry and music lyrics assignment, *Romeo and Juliet,* discussions

- "I valued the opportunities we got as the year went along to change things about class and that you listened to what we said throughout the year especially when it came to lessons."

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Beyond Hearing: Listening and Influencing Approach in 2019-2020

Instructional Strategy/Activity	2018-2019	2019-2020
Standing in certain spot (Agree/Disagree)	3.49	3.0
Turn & Talk/Think-Pair-Share	3.59	3.69
Kahoot!	4.40	3.92
Discussion Questions	3.41	4.04
Use of Mindful Music	3.62	3.58

Response data reflects the overall weighted average, with 5.0 being the highest score possible
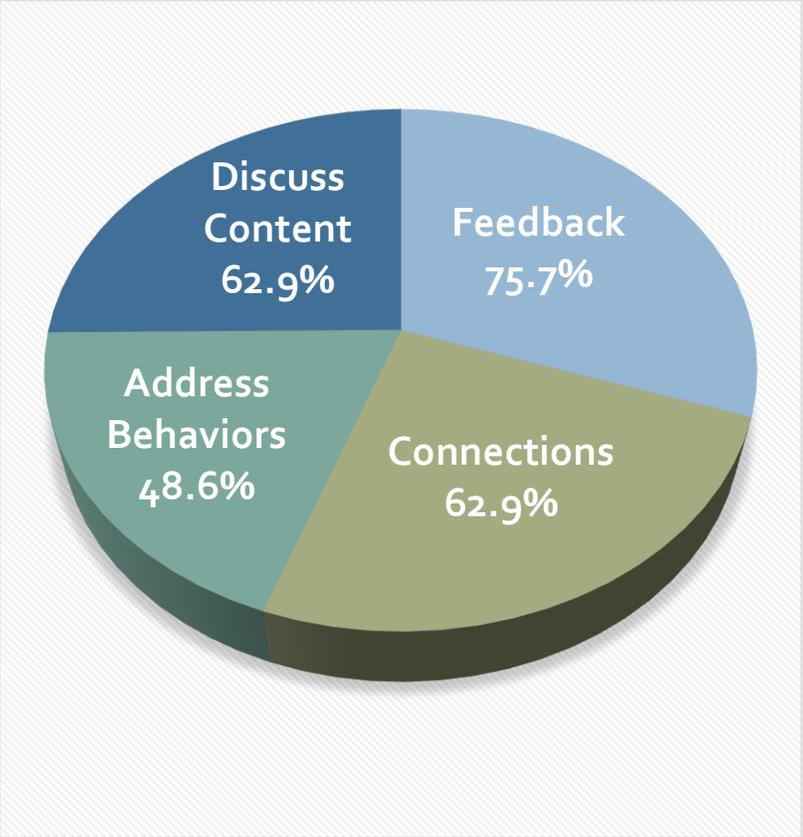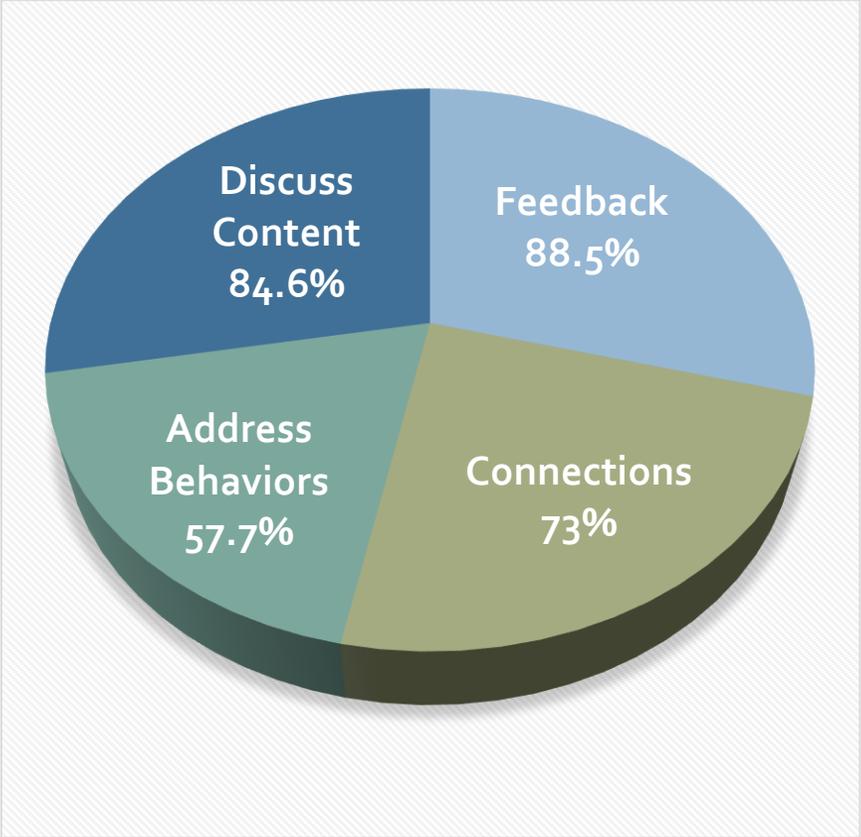
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Beyond Hearing: Influencing 2019-2020 Instructional Approach

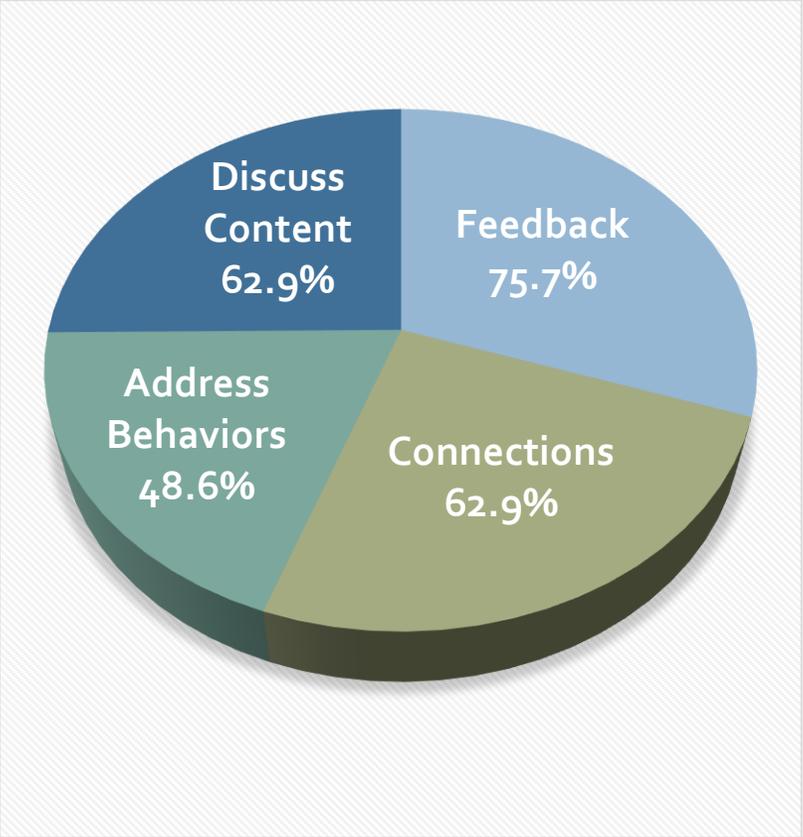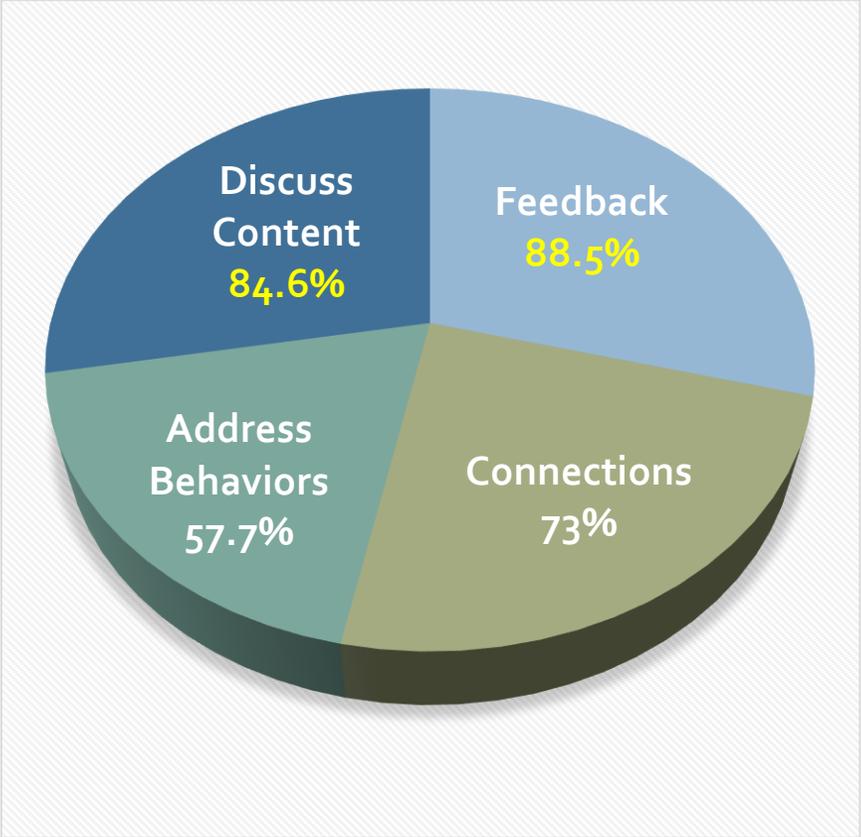## How effective were community circles?

2018-2019

Discuss Content 62.9%
Feedback 75.7%
Address Behaviors 48.6%
Connections 62.9%

2019-2020

Discuss Content 84.6%
Feedback 88.5%
Address Behaviors 57.7%
Connections 73%

Perceived effectiveness of community circles at the highest levels (4 & 5)

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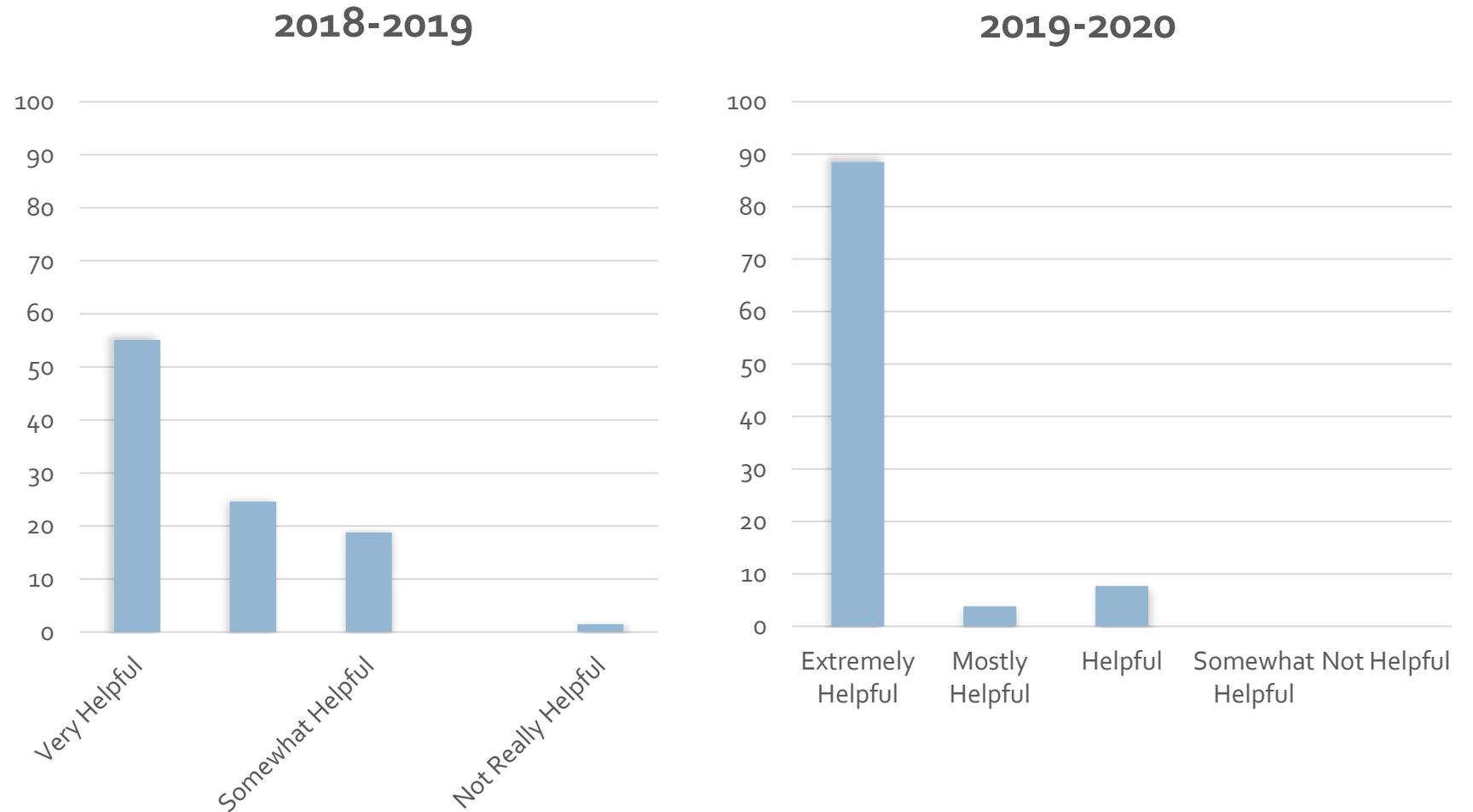Discuss Content 84.6%
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Beyond Hearing: Listening and Influencing Approach in 2019-2020

How helpful was it that your teacher made an effort to make school meaningful?

2018-2019

2019-2020

Weighted average increased from 4.32 (2019) to 4.81 (2020)

2019-2020: Use of Surveys

Brick & Mortar

September 2019-February 2020:

- Beginning of year
- Midyear

Distance Learning due to COVID-19

March 2020-June 2020:

- 2 weeks into distance learning
- 4 weeks into distance learning
- End of year survey

Survey use became more important during Connecticut's move to distance learning

COVID-19 : Online Learning Survey #1

- "The way it's been divided up is great, and the feedback works very well. I think the way you've handled things is working well for me."

- "EVERYTHING IS WORKING!!! You're one of the teachers...that have been the best with communicating. I really thank you for that. :)

- "Teachers are assigning more work then they did at school, and are not considering the students daily life in their planning."

- "You make us more stressed with emails, you can ask if we want help, but reminding is about the work is more stressful"

- "You are assigning too much work, and your due dates are too short"

- "Don't give so much reminders, they are not necessary, they only make us more stressed. You are also assigning to much work, and you don't realize how much stress that puts on a student."

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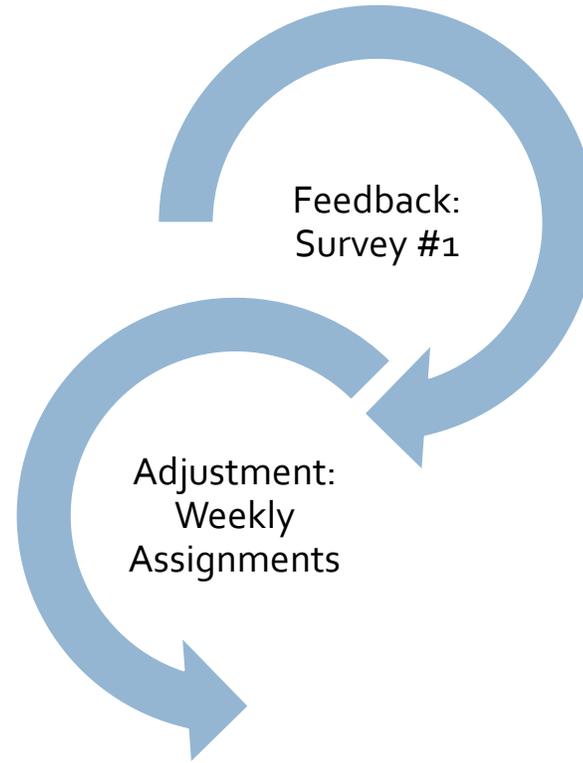
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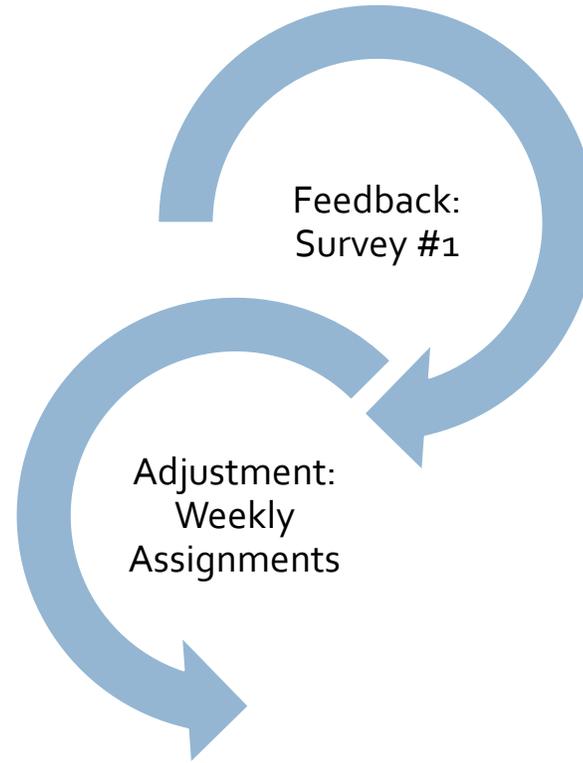
March-June 2020

COVID-19 Distance Learning Feedback Loop

Feedback: Survey #1

Adjustment: Weekly Assignments

"I like your strategies and I really love how you post the daily assignments on Plus Portals but for me it would be better if you just post what we have to do for that whole week because I like to get my work done quicker and things out the way."

Instructional adjustment based on student feedback during distance learning

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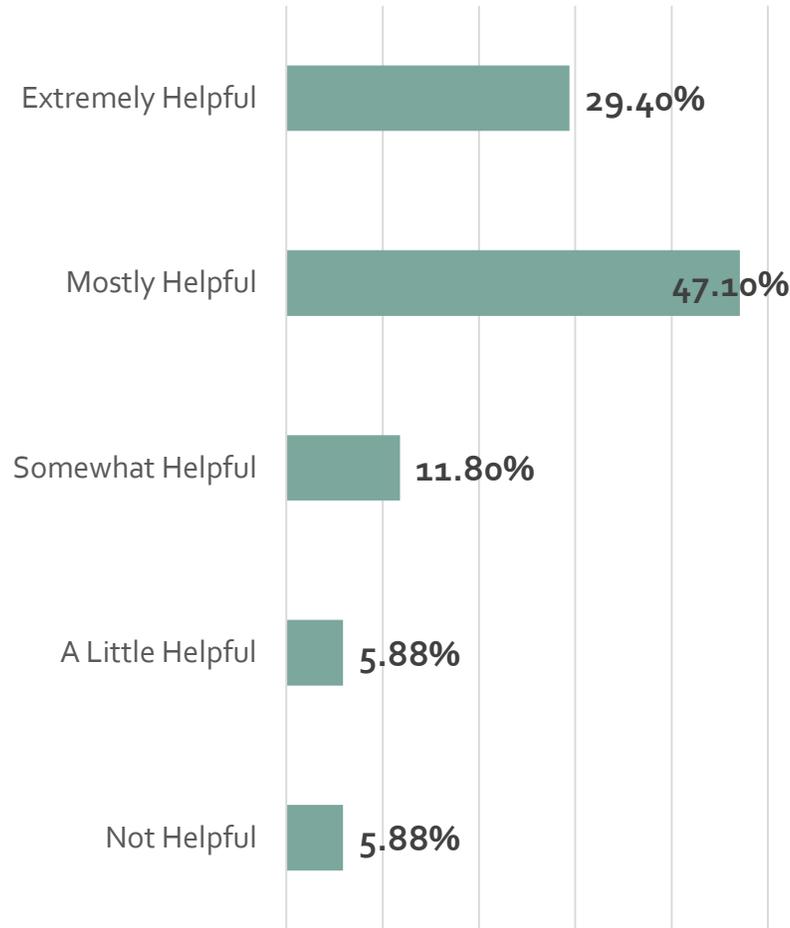
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Survey Feedback:

Posting Assignments Weekly

Assignments Posted Weekly

- Extremely Helpful — 29.40%
- Mostly Helpful — 47.10%
- Somewhat Helpful — 11.80%
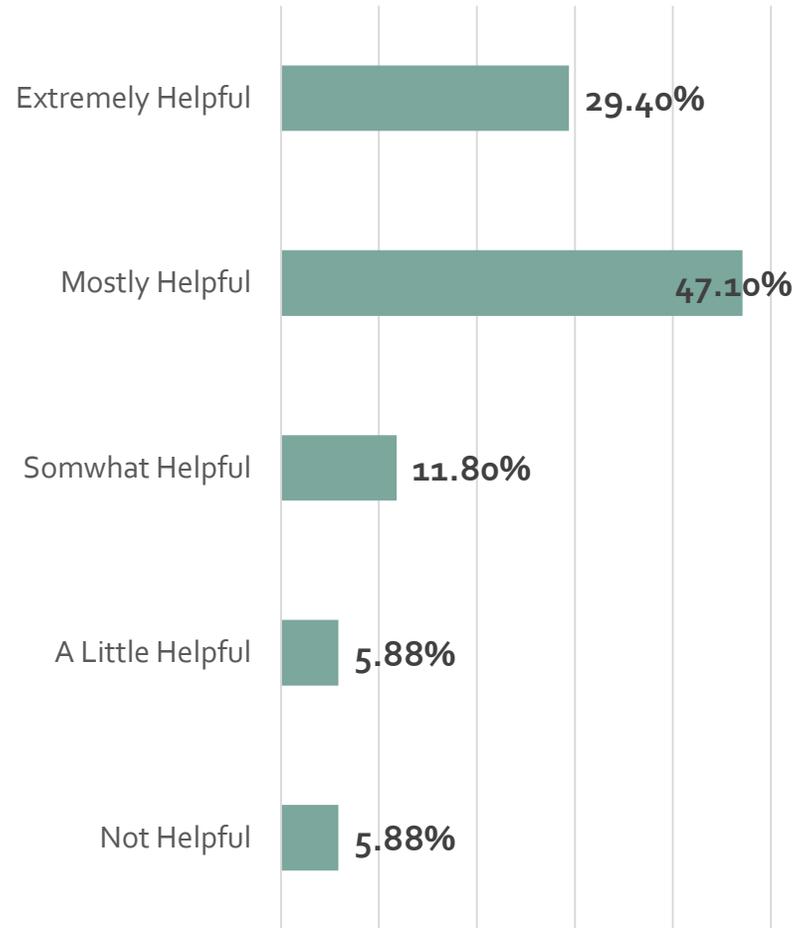- A Little Helpful — 5.88%
- Not Helpful — 5.88%

- "Can we keep doing this because it was so helpful. I wish this is what all the teachers did."

- "I appreciated the switch to week long assignments as it allowed me to plan out what I was going to do over the course of the week."

- "I liked the week long assignments because I had less stress when it came to handing everything in on time."

Quick survey assessed students' feelings about weekly assignments

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COVID-19: Online Learning Survey #2

- "Since we switched to weekly assignments and readings on Zoom I think that class has been great. I will certainly email if I think of any suggestions."

- "I like how we have a week to do everything it makes it easier"

- "The only thing that I can think of is to tell us if we have any missing work. Only because I is very hard to keep track of all the assignments that are due on Wednesday or Thursday or Friday. Thanks!"

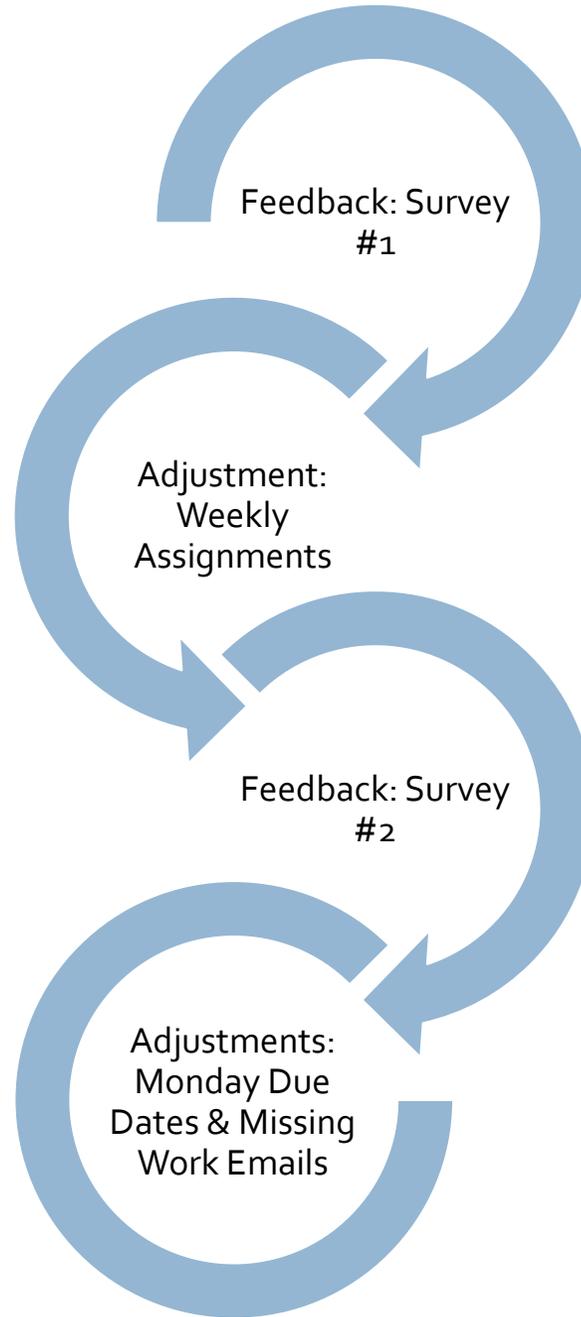Student suggestions influenced Dr. Hellerich's approaches

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March-June 2020

COVID-19 Distance Learning Feedback Loop

Feedback: Survey #1

Adjustment: Weekly Assignments

Feedback: Survey #2

Adjustments: Monday Due Dates & Missing Work Emails

Feedback process utilized during distance learning

End-of-year Survey 2019-2020

- Brick & Mortar Experiences

- Distance Learning Experiences

- Perception on Use of Surveys

- Open Ended: Caring, Teacher Characteristics, Motivation, Role of Teacher vs. Principal

The end of year survey included various questions including those focused on distance learning experiences

Perceived Effectiveness of Survey Use: 2019-2020

Effectiveness Level	Brick & Mortar	During Distance Learning
Extremely Effective	15.38%	30.77%
Mostly Effective	57.69%	34.62%
Effective	15.38%	15.38%
Somewhat Effective	11.54%	15.38%
Not Effective	0%	3.85%

The weighted averages were comparable, whether in school (3.77) or learning remotely (3.73)

2019-2020 Student Voices about Survey Use

Continue survey use as it had been implemented:

- "I definitely recommend that you keep doing them in school as well."

- "No I don't they were effective and got the job done with those students who didn't feel as comfortable as others."

- "No this setup has worked very well and allows people to speak freely without the worry of a comment or correction"

- "No not really but it's a good thing that you use"

Students answered the open ended question, "Do you have any recommendations for me to consider for next year regarding the use of surveys?"

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2019-2020 Student Voices about Survey Use

- Students value being listened to:

  - "Not really, just actually take our opinion to heart, and listen to us because for some people giving advice anonymously is better than an actual conversation"

  - "Surveys during distance learning were extremely helpful since you couldn't talk to the teacher."

- Recommendation to extend surveys to content:

  - "I think having a survey after every test/ Unit Assessment would be nice to see how it was and how the kids thought about it."

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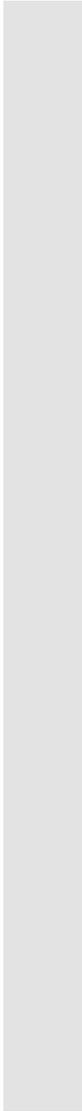
# Potential Benefits of Using Surveys

Culturally Responsive Teaching
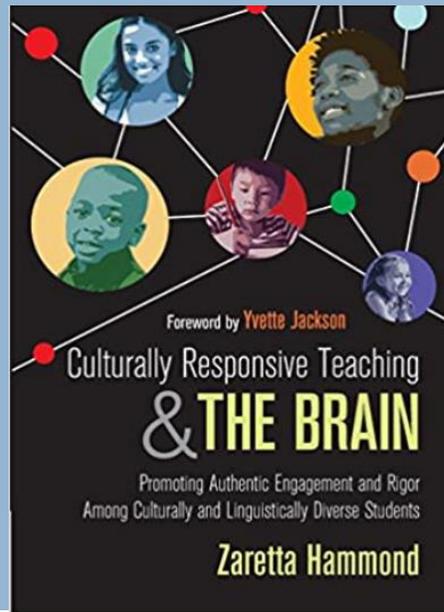
- **Fits within Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices**

- "We cannot downplay students' need to feel safe and valued in the classroom....It is important to act according to students' definitions [of welcoming or threatening] not your own" (p. 47)

- Listening to students' voices fits within Hammond's view of "reframing and repositioning student-teacher relationships as the key ingredient in helping culturally and linguistically diverse dependent learners authentically engage" (p. 73)

- "Practicing **a pedagogy of listening** may be simple but it isn't always easy" (p. 78)

Using surveys fosters a "learning partnership" between students and teachers, offering equitable opportunities

Trauma-Informed Practices
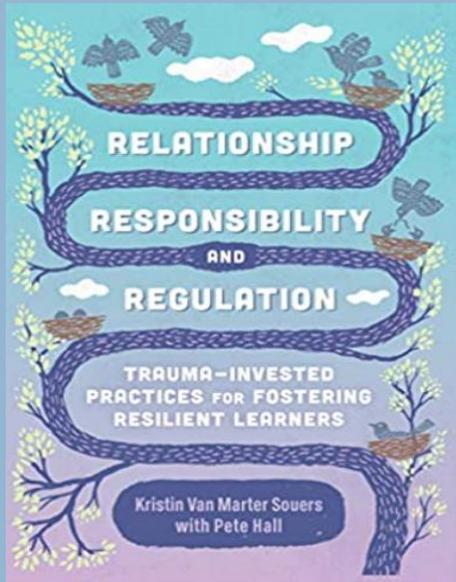
- **Fits within Trauma-Informed Strategies**

- Relationship: meaningful connection, in particular relationship with the teacher
- Responsibility: "A sense of self-worth, efficacy, and competence" (p. 66).
- Regulation: ability to manage emotions when taking in stimuli

- *Edutopia*: https://www.edutopia.org/article/trauma-informed-classroom-strategies

RELATIONSHIP RESPONSIBILITY AND REGULATION

TRAUMA-INVESTED PRACTICES FOR FOSTERING RESILIENT LEARNERS

Kristin Van Marter Souers with Pete Hall

Surveys can assist with teachers' implementation of trauma-informed strategies within their classrooms

Teachers' Professional Growth

- **Provides Valuable Input & Feedback for Teachers' Personal Growth**

- "Establishing a feedback system is necessary so teachers are constantly aware of whether their instructional practices are successful" (Domenech, 2016, para. 13).

- Aligns with Connecticut's TEAM model for new teachers, as well as SEED

Listening to students' perceptions can foster teachers' professional growth

Follow Up Survey & Contact Information

- Please go to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BEYONDHEARINGFINAL

- Please complete the 5 question survey

- Contact information for Kimberly D. Hellerich, Ed.D.
  - Khellerich@ewct.org
  - Kimberlydhellerich@gmail.com

Thank you for participating today!

References

- Domenech, D.A. (2016, November). Bolstering teachers' professional growth. *School Administrator*, 73(10), 42.

- Hammond, Z. (2015). Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

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- VanderMeulen, A. (2014). TedTalk: When student voice is heard. [online]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjEr4ZoRbj0