



Emotional Learner

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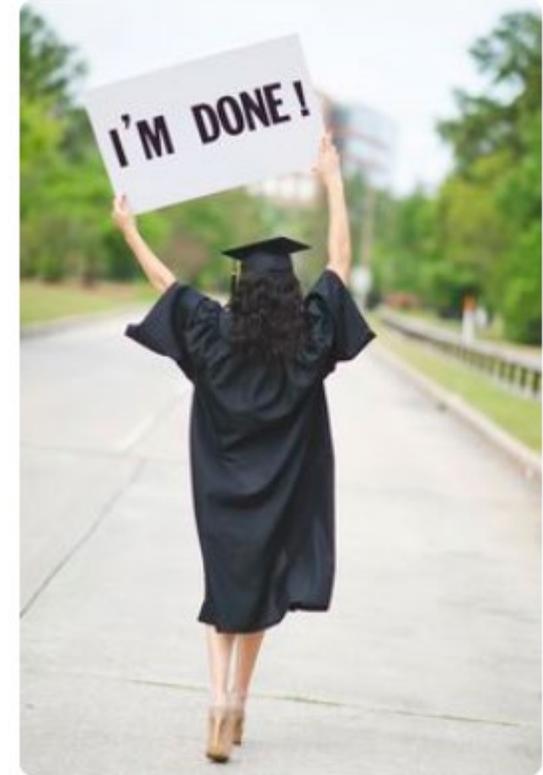
Maya Angelou

- People will forget what you said,
- People will forget what you did,
- But people will never forget how you made them feel.



Sounds Familiar?

- Happy start, bitter end
- Run-away top student
- Misunderstood trouble-maker
- Simply overwhelmed and burnt-out



Welcome To My Classroom Workshop

- May 31, 2018
 - Supported by EDC, WTMC series
- Initial Partners
 - **Robert Biddle**, *School of Computer Science*
 - **Rachelle Thibodeau**, *Centre for Initiatives in Education*



Student Survey

- Started on Feb 11, 2019
 - Upon Ethics approval
- Added Partners
 - **Lisa Meyer**, *Linguistics and Applied Language*
 - **Shannon Noonan**, *Students Mental Health Support*
- On-line and In-person
 - 116 on-line responses
 - 5 in-person interviews

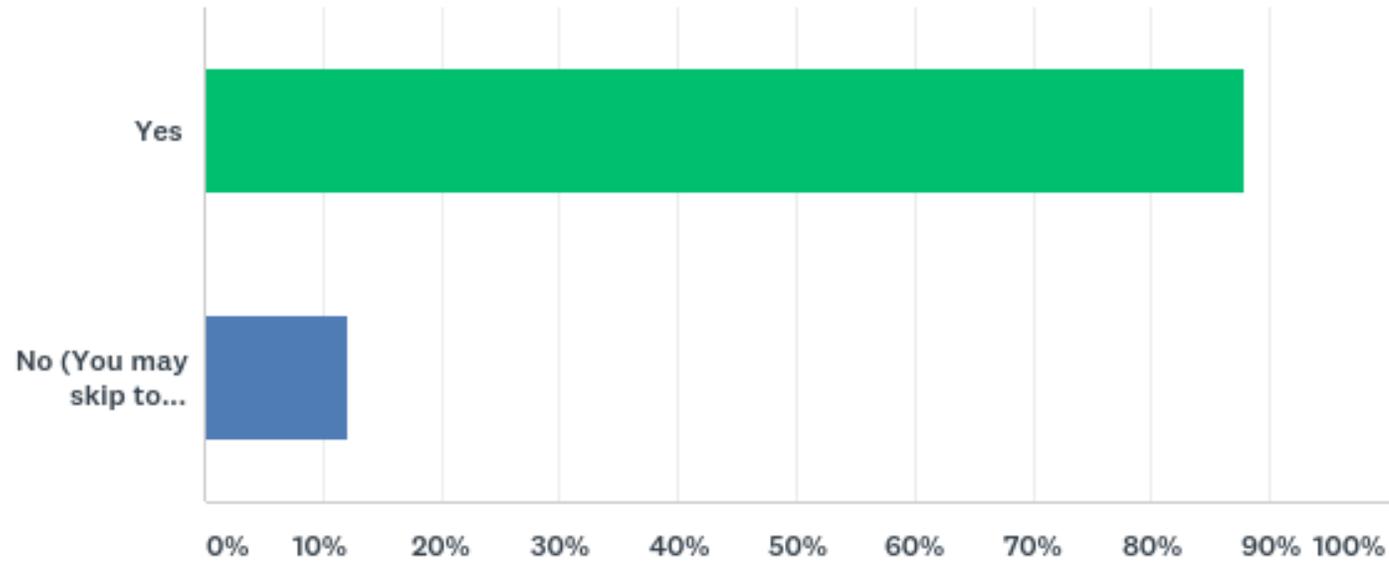


Summary of Findings

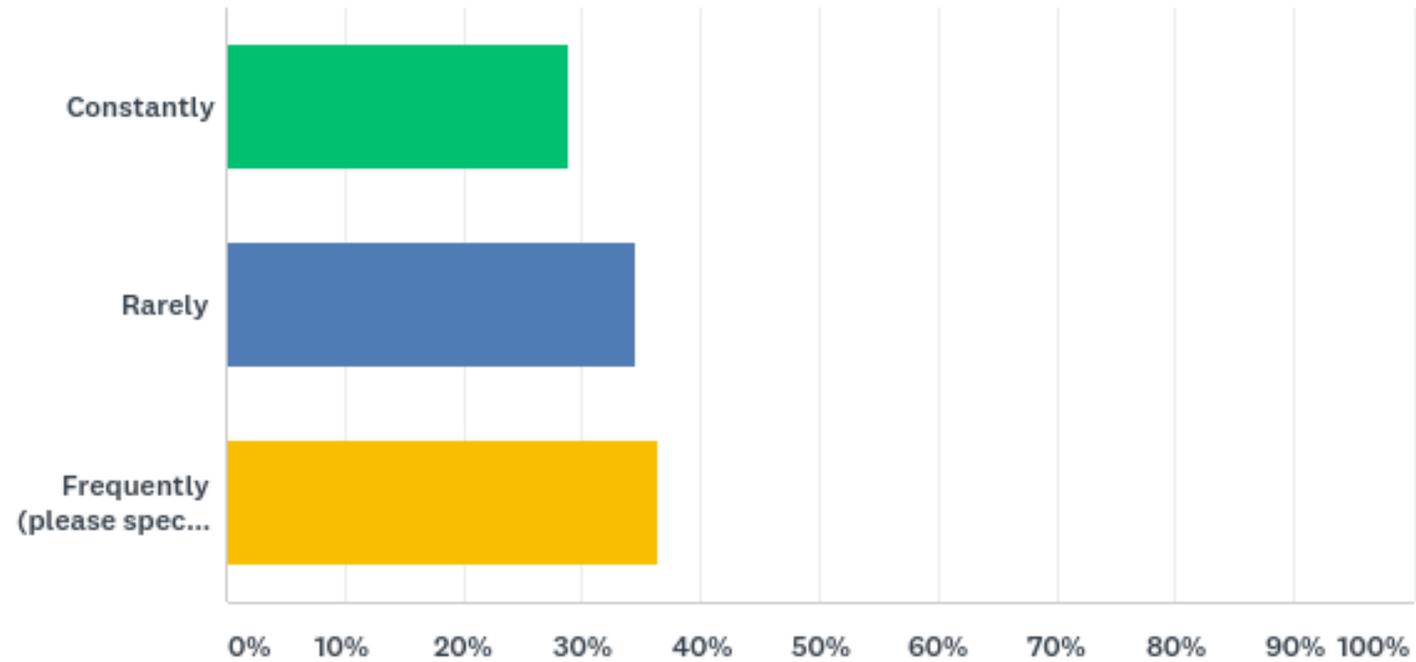
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-5BGGQXWL/>
- More than half of respondents have experienced stress.
- More than half reported getting discouraged, losing confidence, and having physical and mental health results.
 - Also encouraged to do better in many cases.
- Majority of respondents who answered the demographic questions were female.



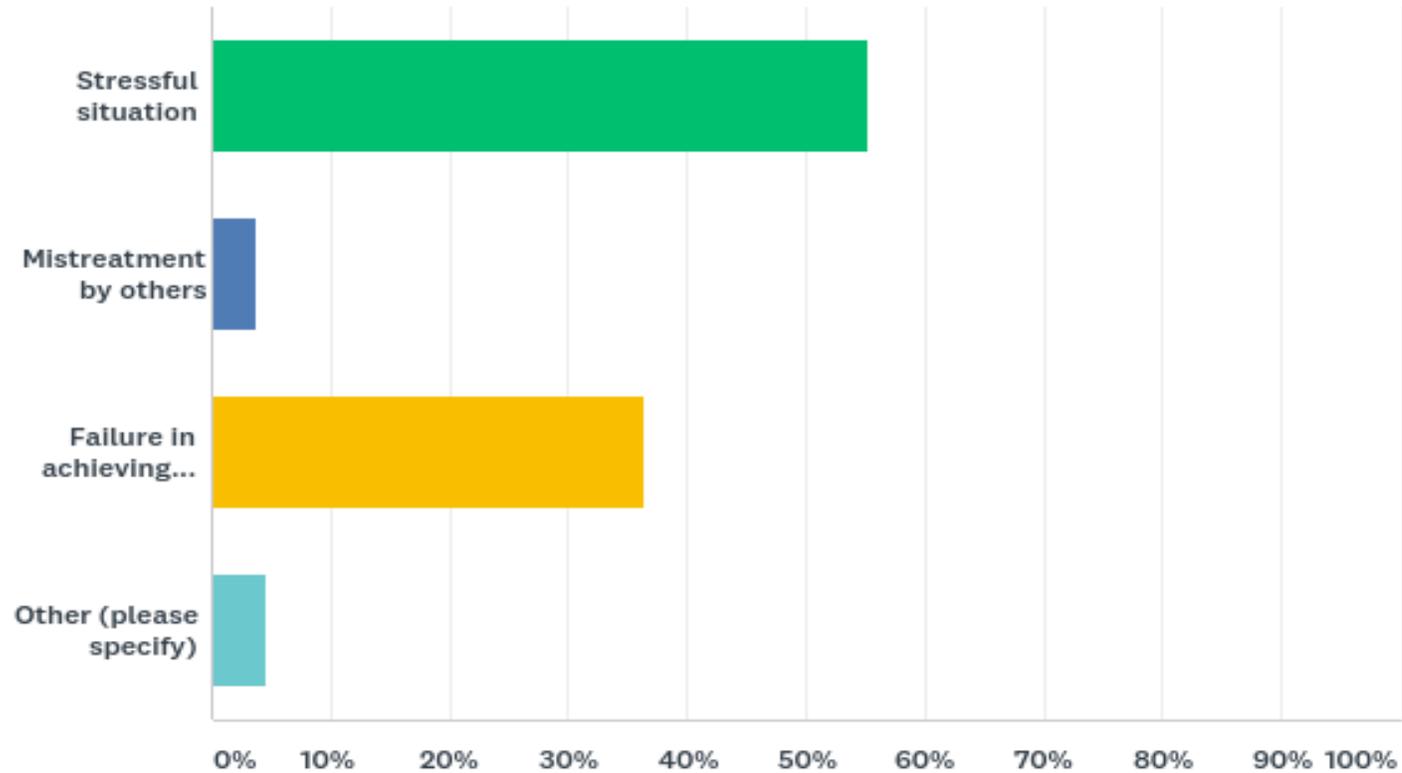
Q1 Since the start of 2018-19 academic year, have you had an academic experience that elicited negative emotions such as anger, fear, disappointment, anxiety, and sadness?



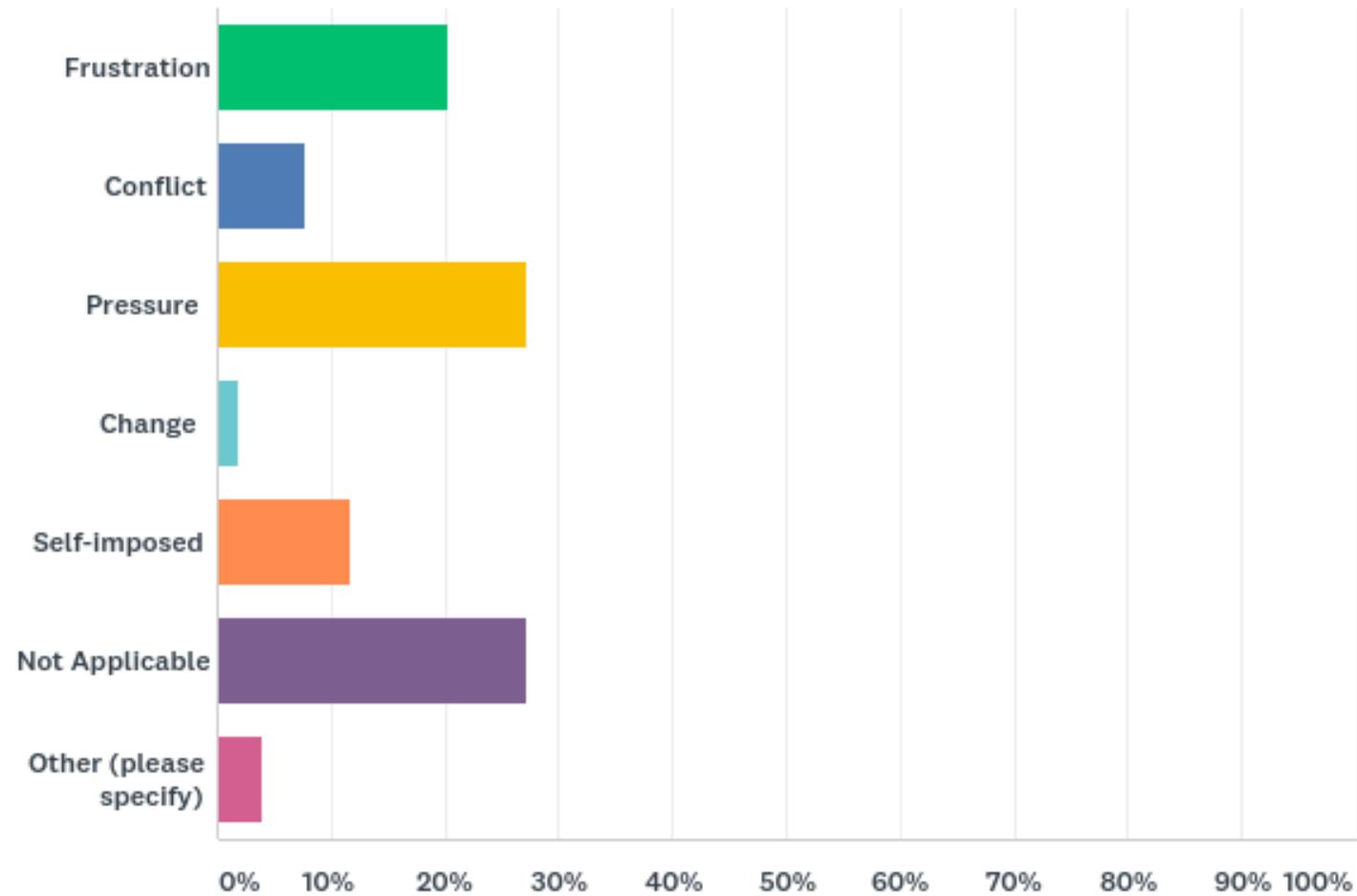
Q2 How often have such experiences happened?



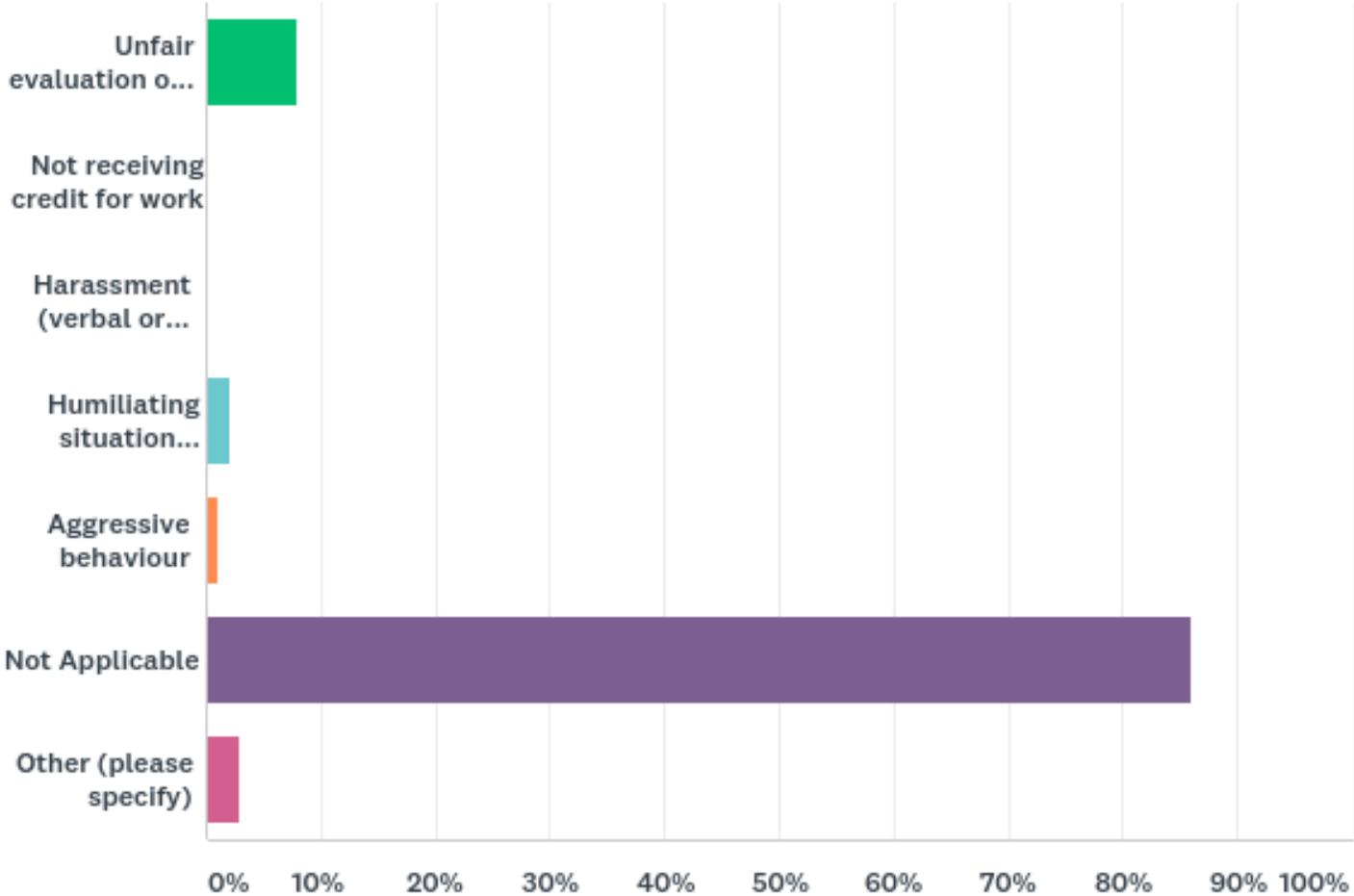
Q3 What was the main cause of the negative emotion? If you had more than one experience, please consider the most significant one.



Q4 If your answer to question 3 was Stress, what was the stressor?



Q5 If your answer to question 3 was Mistreatment, what type was it?



Some Thoughts

- Negative emotions are normal (to some level)
- Stress is not necessarily negative
- Even Pressure can still be positive
- Frustration is where we should be concerned
 - There is pressure, we do what we can, but still don't succeed
- Feeling negative due to “unfair evaluation” at the level we see can be normal and acceptable.
 - Very few other types of mistreatment were reported.
 - Harsh and offensive judgment is still a concern.

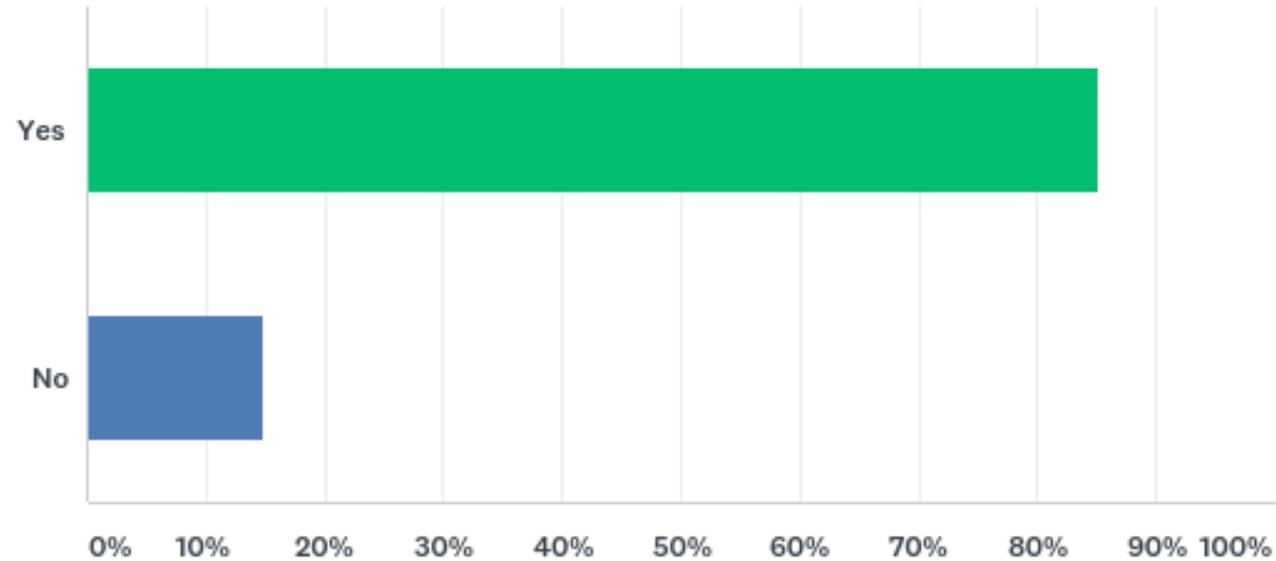


About Academic Pressure

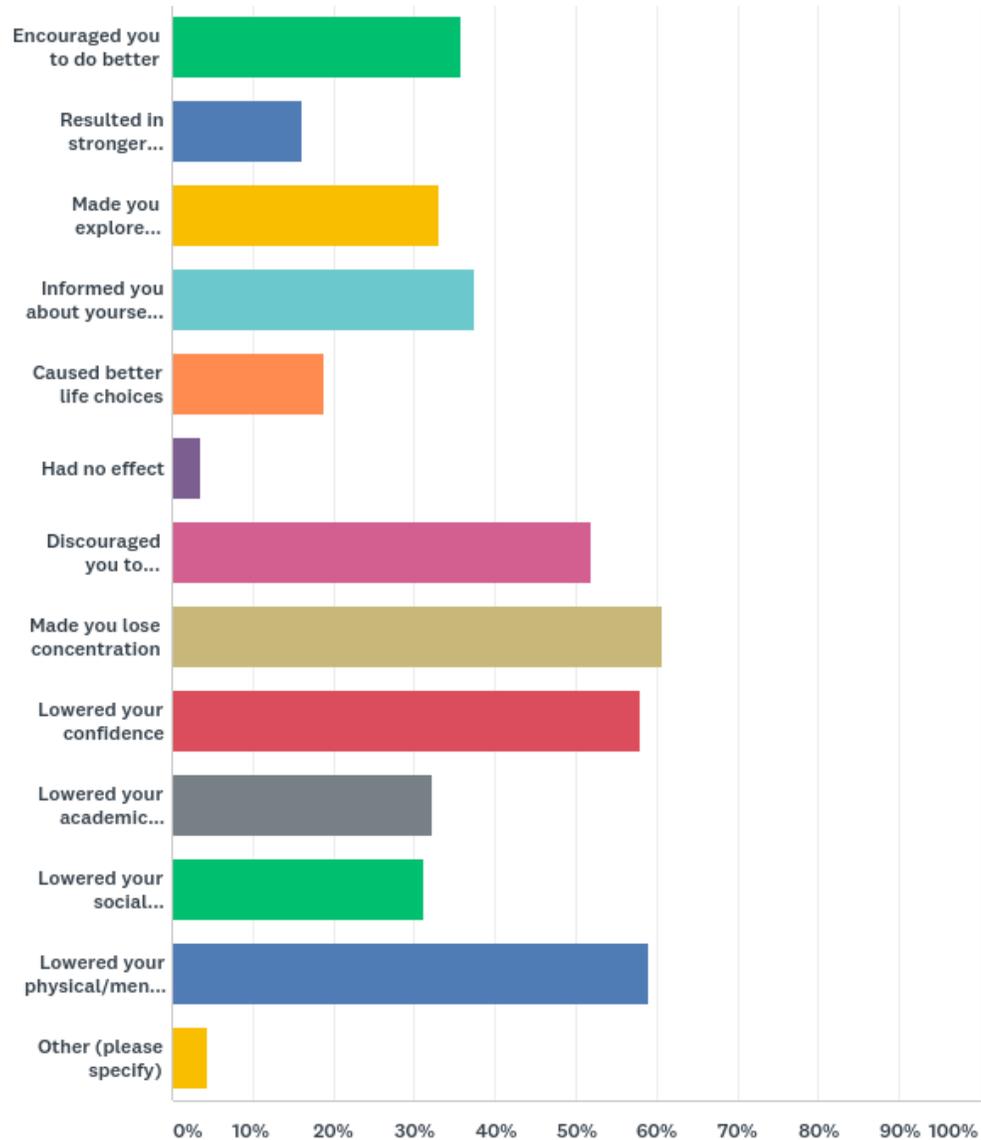
- Certain level of pressure is required. Students need to learn the value of hard work and prepare for it.
- Being aggressive, tough, and unforgiving to “prepare for real world” can promote, approve, or accept a bad work environment.
 - We should set good examples for students
 - We should encourage them to critically analyze the world and improve it



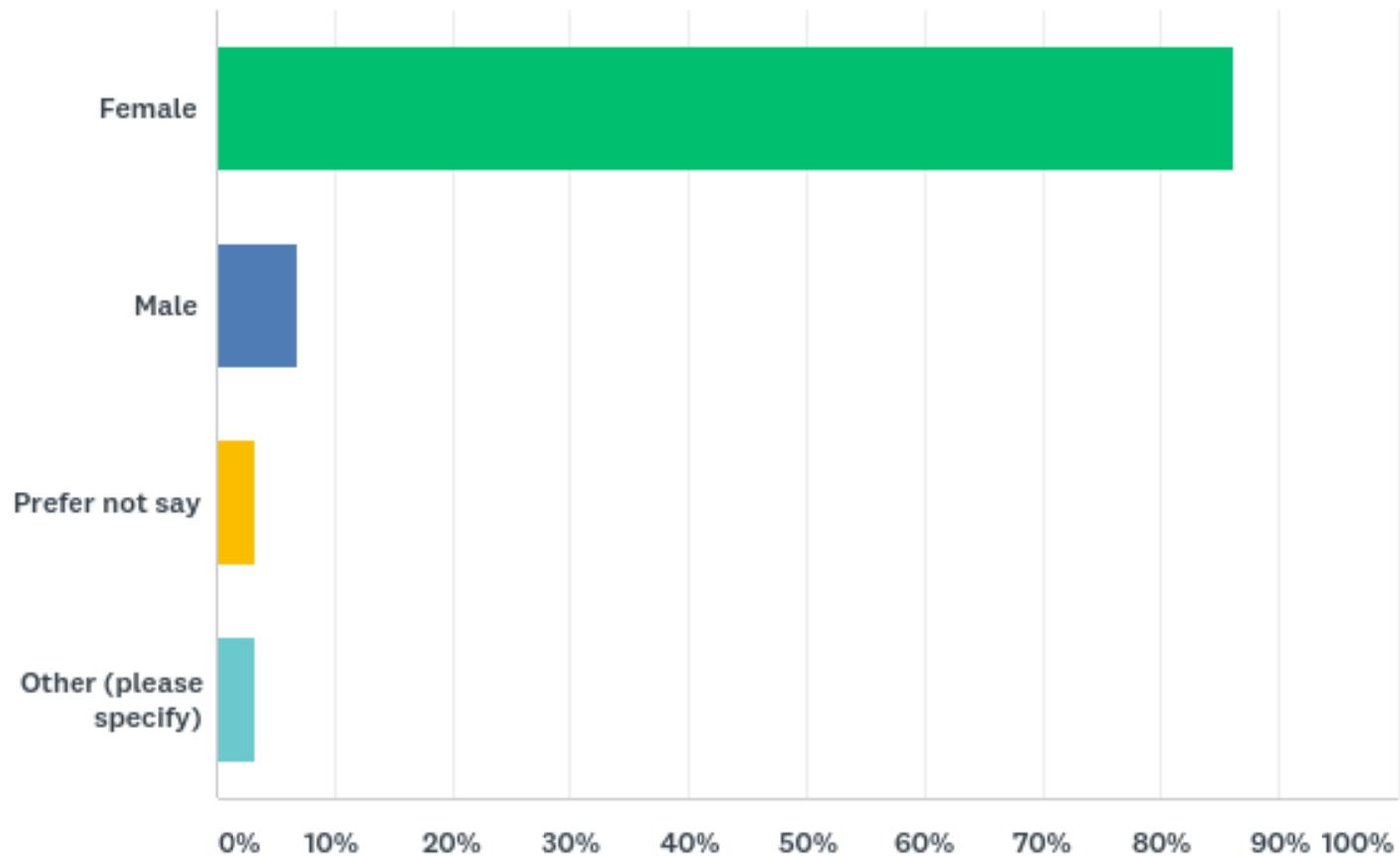
Q6 Since the start of 2018-19 academic year, have you had a personal experience that elicited negative emotions such as anger, fear, disappointment, anxiety, and sadness?



Q7 If you have had an academic or personal experience resulting in negative emotions since the start of 2018-19 academic year, what helpful AND/OR harmful effects has it caused on your academic experiences moving forward? Choose as many as needed.



Q9 Which gender do you identify with?



Possible Explanations of Gender Differences

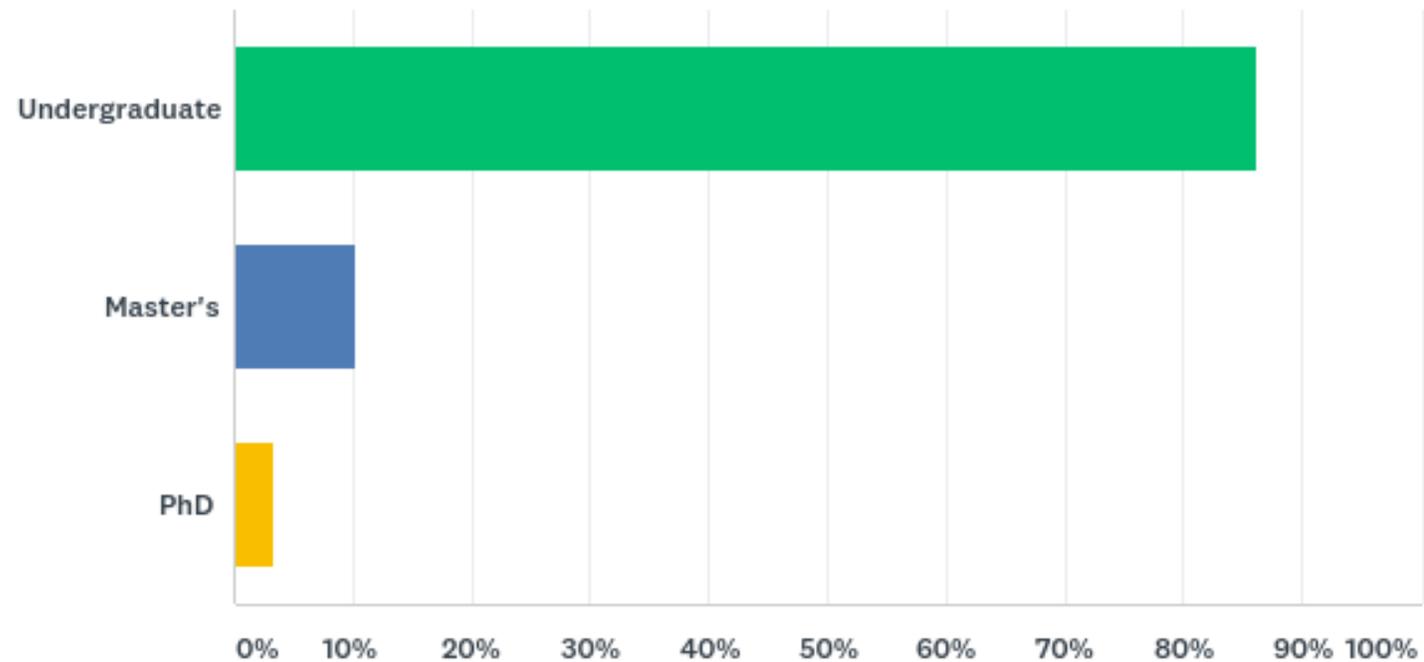
- Female students face more emotional problems
 - Due to still-existing gender biases and discrimination
- Female students recognize the problems more often
- Female students are more willing to talk about the problems

- Probably a combination

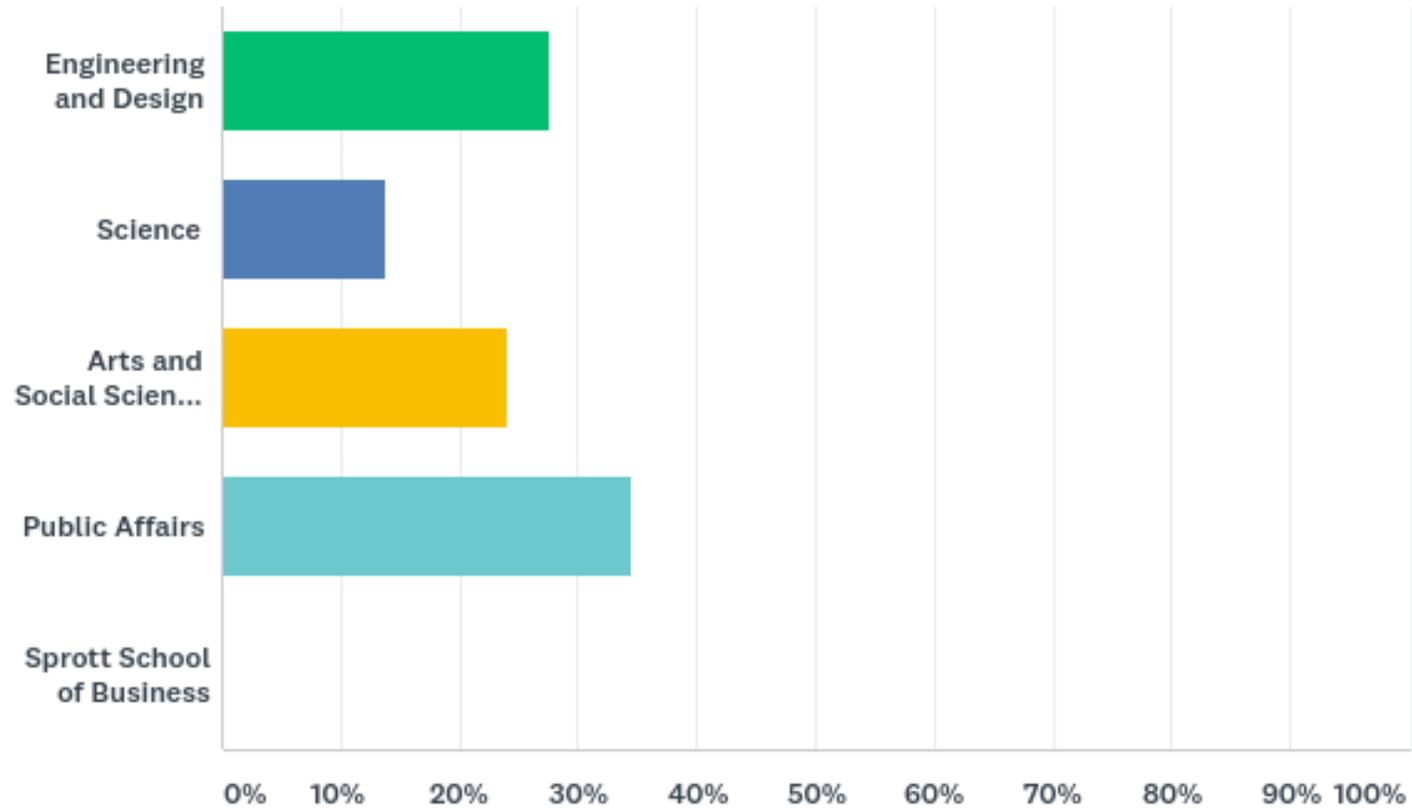
- We need to reach out to male students in a better way



Q10 Which level is your program of study?



Q11 Which faculty is your program of study?



Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- School is stressful (too much work and pressure)
 - No time for anything else (life, work, etc)
 - Scheduling and deadlines
 - Different system
 - Too much weight on tests
 - Lack of accommodation



Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- Communication problems
 - Lack of attention to concerns and thoughts
 - Lack of long-term and high-level insight
 - About university, program, career, etc
 - Contradicting or missing information
 - Fear of asking for help
 - In class or outside. From faculty, TA, peers, etc



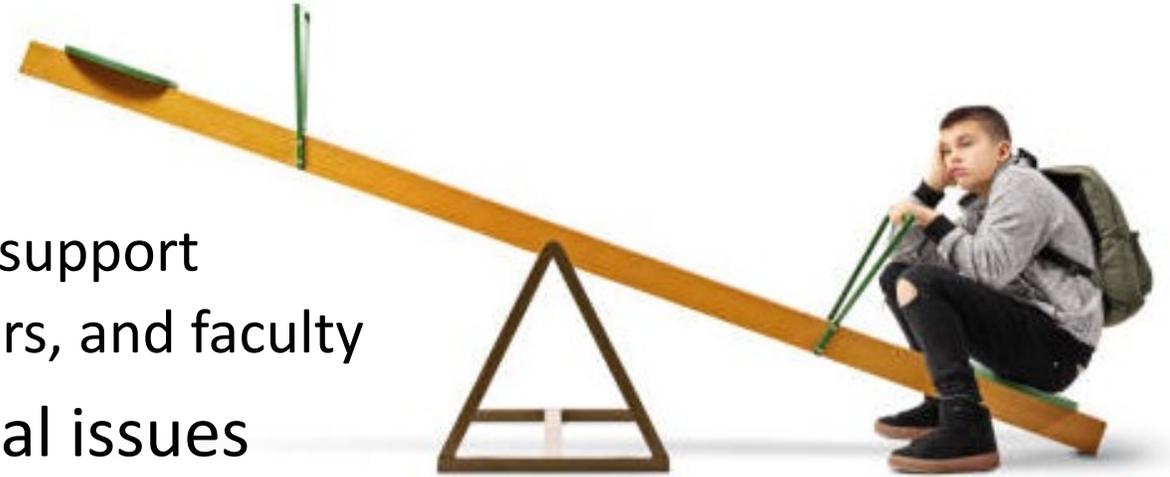
Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- Wrong place
 - Unfit for university/program
 - Culture shock and unfulfilled expectations
 - Difficulty of living in university residence
- Traumatized and burnt-out
 - Questioning your intellect and ability
 - School should open up options
 - Students who just want to pass



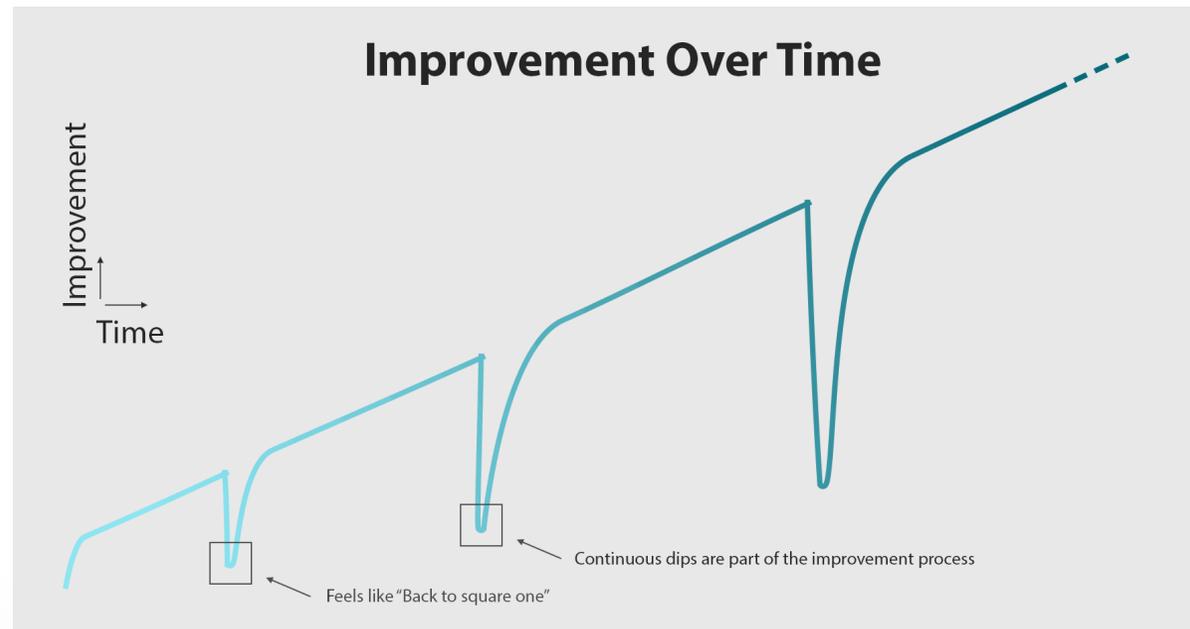
Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- Lonely experience
 - Lack of social activity and social support
 - Lack of support from family, peers, and faculty
- History of mental and emotional issues
- Work and other outside problems
- First year experience not preparing students for what is coming up



Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- Negative experiences are personal learning experiences
 - Motivating to do better
 - Resulted in emotional/cultural wisdom



Key Points from Qualitative Responses

- Poor quality teaching vs Highly professional and safe environment
 - Both types of responses
- There is a need for faculty to be trained
 - Teaching styles
 - Academic support
 - Emotional support



Research

- Bloom: Affective vs. Cognitive
- Dewey and other Constructivism: Learning Experience
- Kolb: Experiential Learning and Learning Cycle
 - Vince: the role of emotion and power
 - Learning by doing vs. learning by sensemaking
 - Reflection and reflective learning
- Emotional Intelligence
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Gamification and Game-based Learning
 - Exploration



What to **NOT** do

- Lower academic standards
 - Learning objectives
- Pamper students
 - We have to be fair and train them properly
- Consider this a “health problem”
 - We are all “emotional”.
 - Needs to be addressed in classroom
 - Specific health problems do exist, of course
- Stay isolated
 - Needs a systematic approach



What we CAN do

- **Acknowledge** the fact that we are emotional beings and learning is an emotional process
 - Students are not machines. Do not treat them that way.
- **Relate** to the students.
 - **Observe** without judging and reacting
 - Be more **positive** than negative
 - **Explain** the reason for decisions, changes, etc
 - **Listen**
- **Yet.** They are not there **yet**, but are they growing?
 - The Power of **Yet**.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2Ic>
 - What can we do?
 - Use **online courses/material** and proper **support** system
 - Cover **what is really needed** and important
 - Provide opportunities for **sense-making** and **reflection**
 - When possible, **personalize**, give **options** and allow **flexible pace**
- **Admit** problems, issues, and your mistakes, weaknesses, and human side
 - Honesty pays by establishing trust



Notes

- A systematic effort is needed
 - Faculty and staff are not rewarded appropriately
 - Faculty and staff do not have time, support, and resources
- There are still things that each individual can do
- Tools (lectures, online material, gamification, etc) are all potentially useful
 - Tools, content, and people combined make the experience.
 - Right combination is really the instructor's decision and not one-size-fit-all.



Reflection Example 1 – Ali Arya

- STEP 1: Explicit Story? Example Questions:
 - What were you asked to do in this assignment?
 - What was the process that you went through?
- STEP 2: Implicit Story? Example Questions:
 - What did you think about difficulty and clarity of this assignment?
 - How did that make you feel?
- STEP 3: Upcoming Story? Example Questions:
 - How do you think this experience will affect your learning process?



Reflection Example 2 – Rachelle Thibodeau

- STEP 1: Assess the Demands of the Assignment
- STEP 2: Evaluate Your Own Skills/Knowledge
- STEP 3: Plan Assignment Approach
- STEP 4: Monitoring Your Assignment Progress and Adjusting your Strategies
- STEP 5: Self-Evaluate Your Assignment
- STEP 6: Self-Reflect on Graded Assignment and Plan for the Future

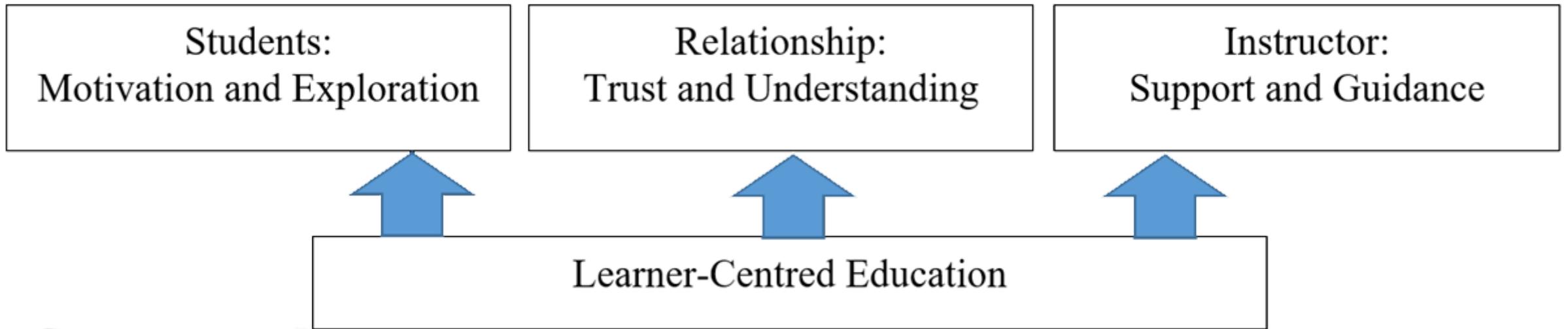


Reflection Example 3 – Lisa Meyer

- What?
 - How well did you do in the assignment?
- So what?
 - How do you feel about the feedback you received?
 - Which course objectives did this assignment help you to achieve?
- Team Considerations
- Now what?
 - What strategies might you use to do better on the next assignment?



Learner-Centred Education



Robert Biddle

- Make material easier to learn.
 - Cognitive strategies: diagrams, scaffolding, ...
- Make students better learners.
 - Affective strategies: respect, encouragement, enthusiasm,...
- Cheerful Dedication to Subject (Enthusiasm, Excitement,...)
- Respect for Student Experience (Of various kinds...)
- Encouragement of Community (CU and Subject,...)
- Stories about Research and Subject Community
- Humour (Role-Play, Self-Deprecating...)



Rachelle Thibodeau

- Stimulate positive emotions that foster learning
 - Connection
 - Novelty/variety
 - Curiosity
- Reduce negative emotions that hinder learning
 - Feedback for you and your TAs
 - Feedback for your students
 - Facilitate planning
 - Normalize effort
- Managing anger and confrontation
 - Calm voice and body
 - Eye contact
 - Listen to feelings
 - Use “we”
 - Slow down



Thank you

