

***VIRTUAL TERM ABROAD:
CONNECTING STUDENTS AND
CREATING COMMUNITY USING
VIRTUAL TOOLS***

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POLL

Is your institution discussing or implementing actions to “internationalize” the curriculum or create more global awareness?

Yes

No

Not sure

SUNY AND THE WORLD

In the globalized economy, students with a broad cultural and international perspective have distinct competitive advantages. To create a globally competent student body, we must increase the opportunities for international exposure throughout all courses and degrees.

(The Power of SUNY, 2010)

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



EMPIRE STATE
COLLEGE

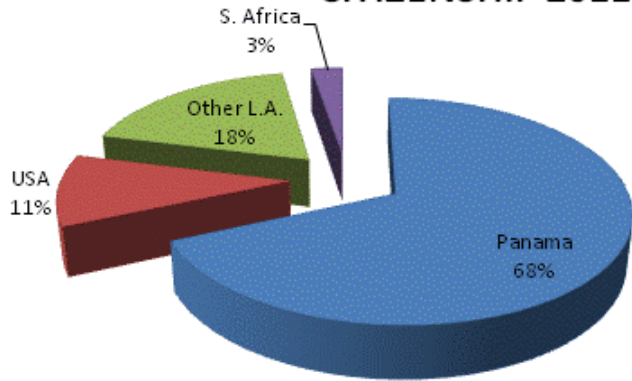
ESC PARTNERS

UNAPEC – Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic - since 2007

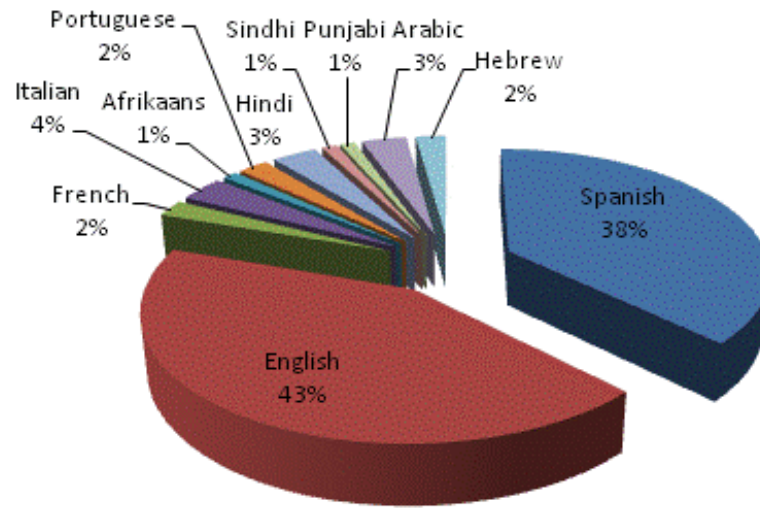
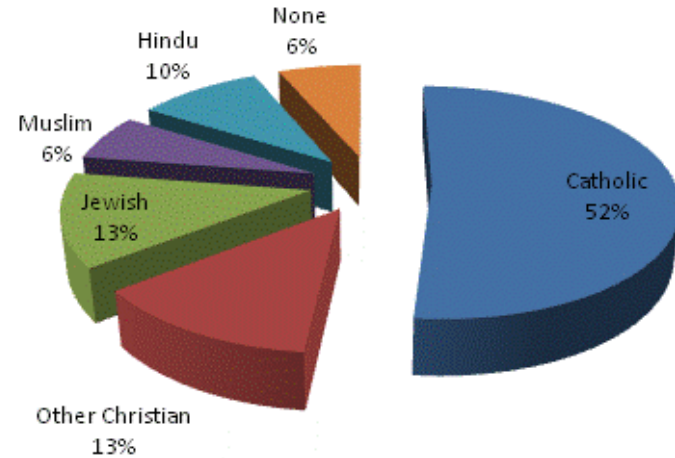
Quality Leadership University (QLU) – Panama City, Panama - since 2009



CITIZENSHIP 2011-12



RELIGION



LANGUAGES SPOKEN WELL - 2011-12

WHY BLENDED?

Panama / D.R.	Online
High Context	Low Context
Collective	Individualistic
High Power Distance, discouraged from asking questions, only one right answer	Understanding through Participation, encourage opinions, no “right” answer
High uncertainty avoidance	New medium to students, lots of uncertainty
English second or third language	Heavy reliance on reading and writing

POLL

Have you participated in a study abroad or other international experience?

Yes

No

POLL

What impact did that international experience have on you?

- A. Transformational**
- B. Continues to impact my world view**
- C. Was a lot of fun, but then got back to the real world**
- D. Not much**
- E. Doesn't apply/ No experience**

WHY VIRTUAL TERM ABROAD?

“Only a small percentage of students participate in study abroad programs and many groups are underrepresented. There is little diversity in race, gender and ethnicity nor access for non-traditional, lower socioeconomic groups, those with disabilities and first generation college students” (Fischer, 2012).

SUNY IIT GRANT

Development, application and assessment of innovative use of instructional technology to improve student engagement and learning across disciplines

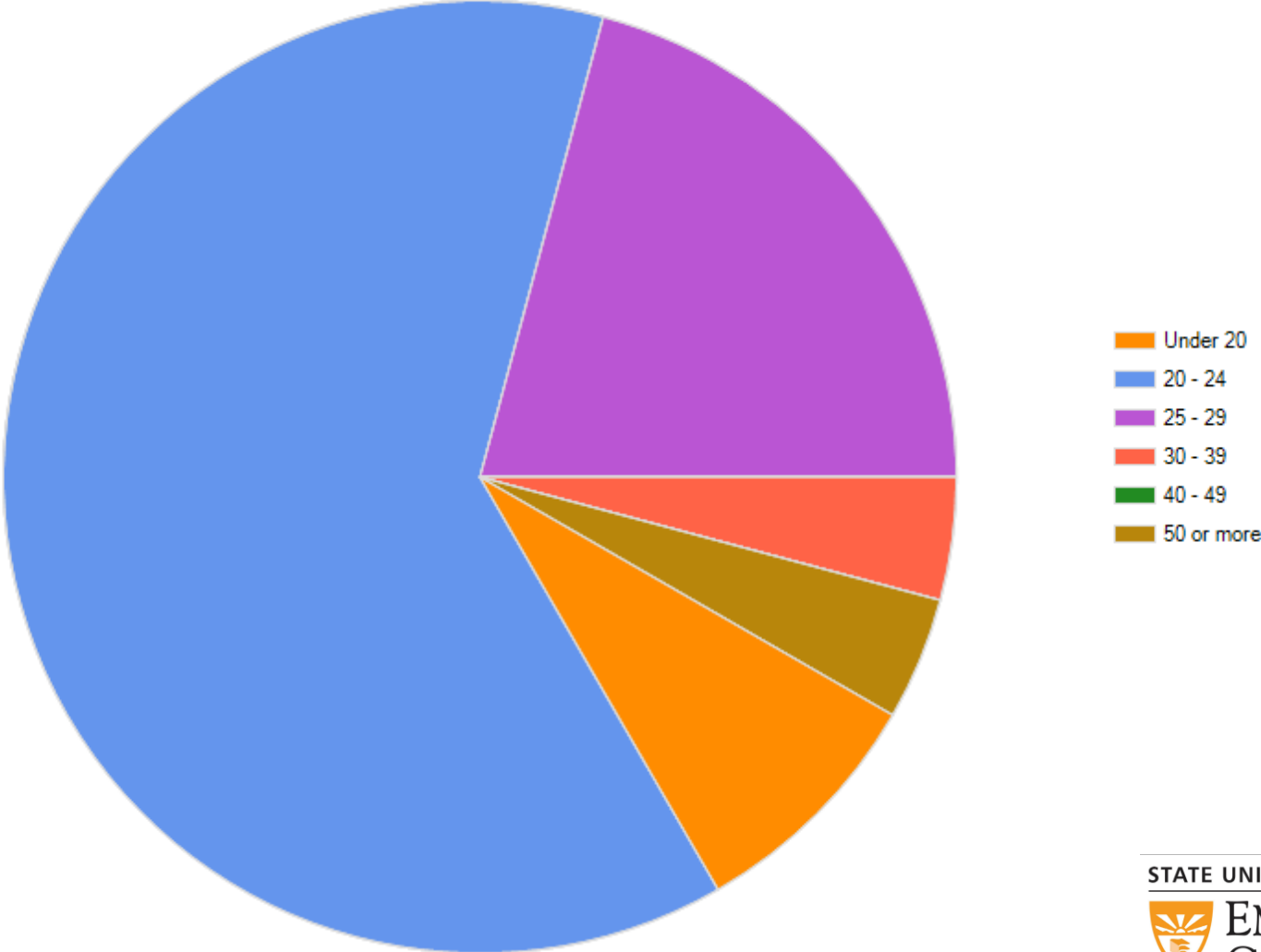
- Improve quality of learning experience
- Power of SUNY
- Shared Services

PROJECT GOALS

- **Opportunity for all students to participate in a virtual term abroad**
- **Analyze use of virtual tools and mobile technology**
- **Promote cross cultural and/or international interaction**

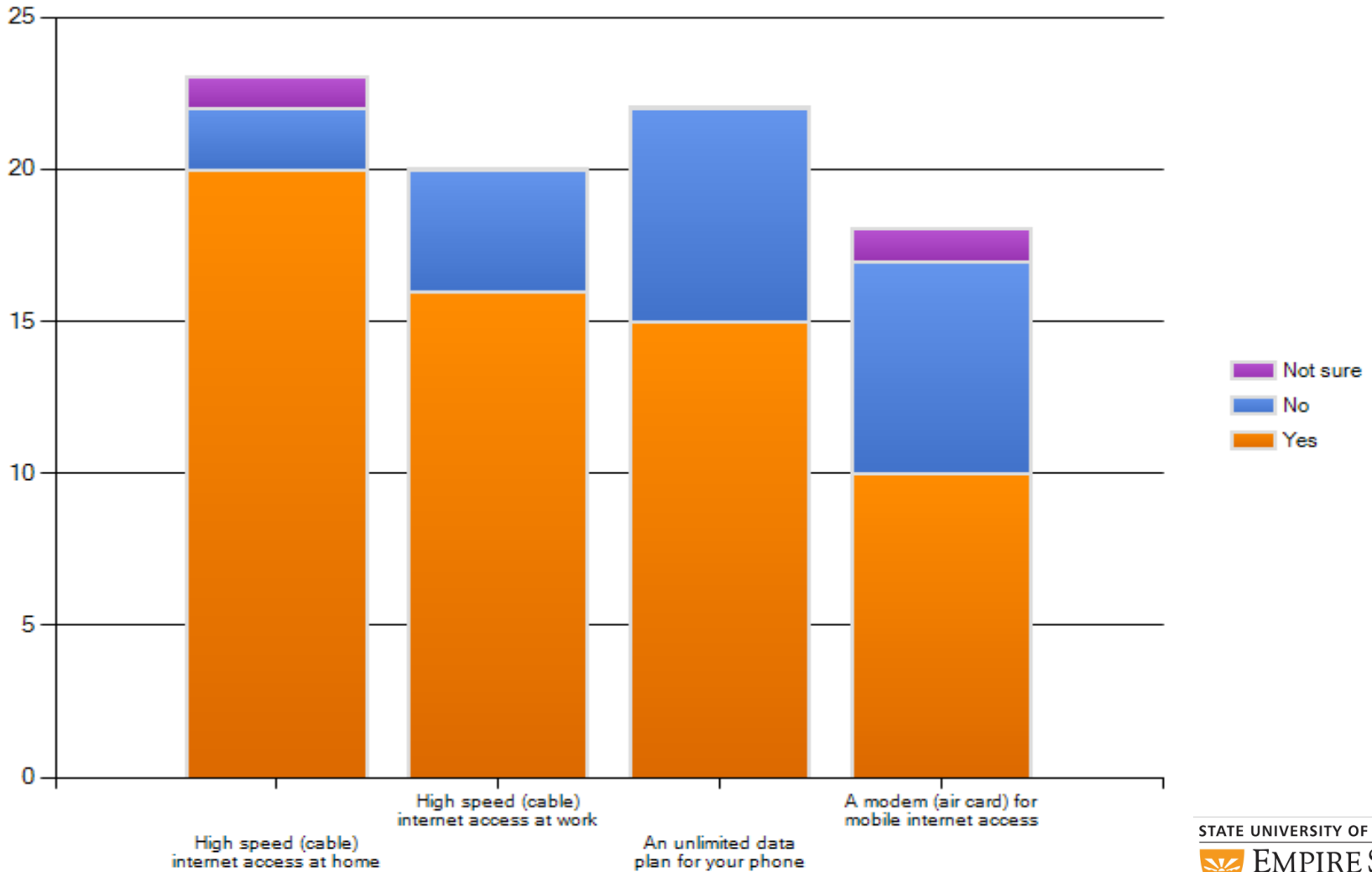
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your age?



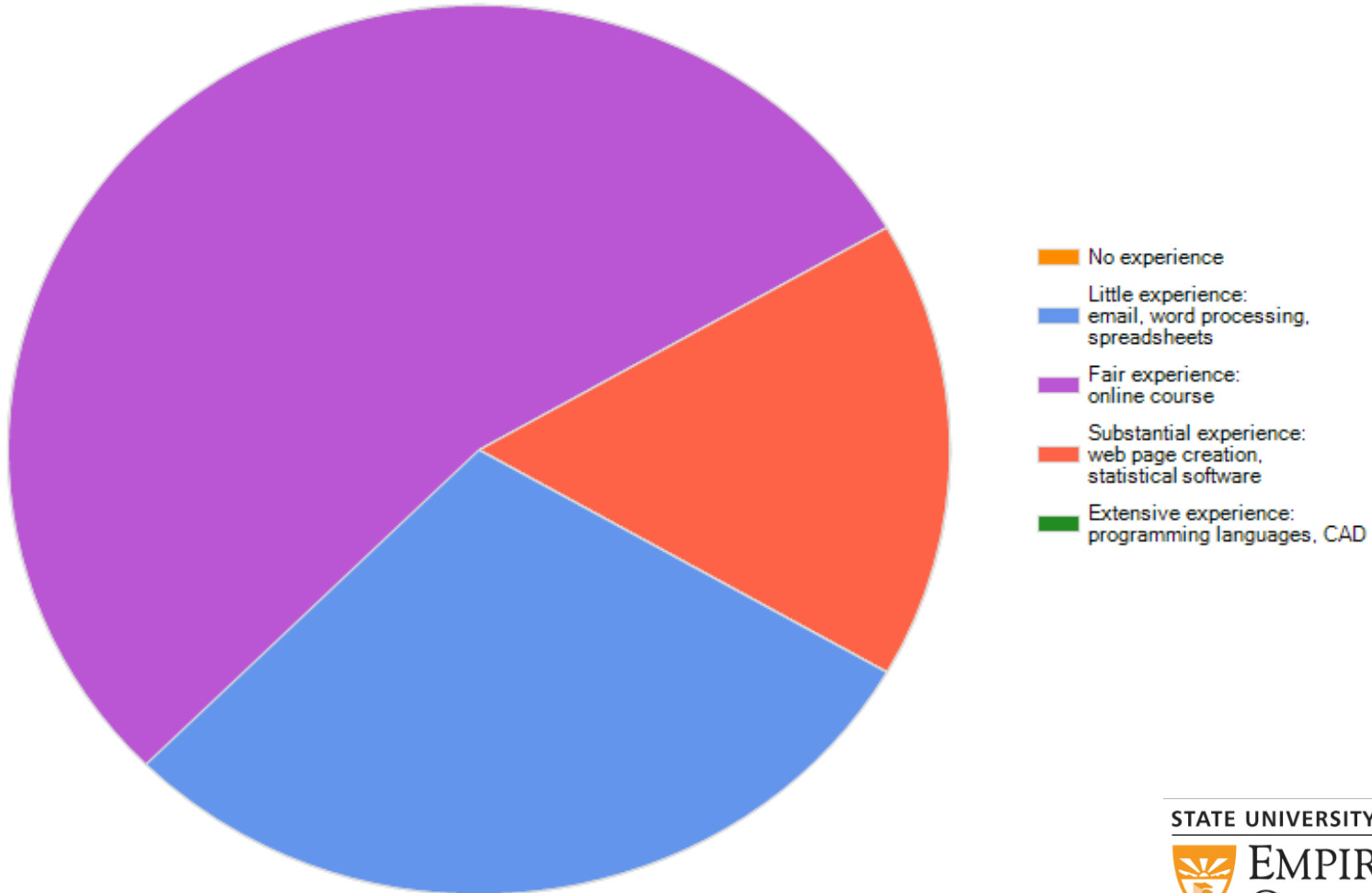
PANAMA/CONNECTIVITY

Do you have....?



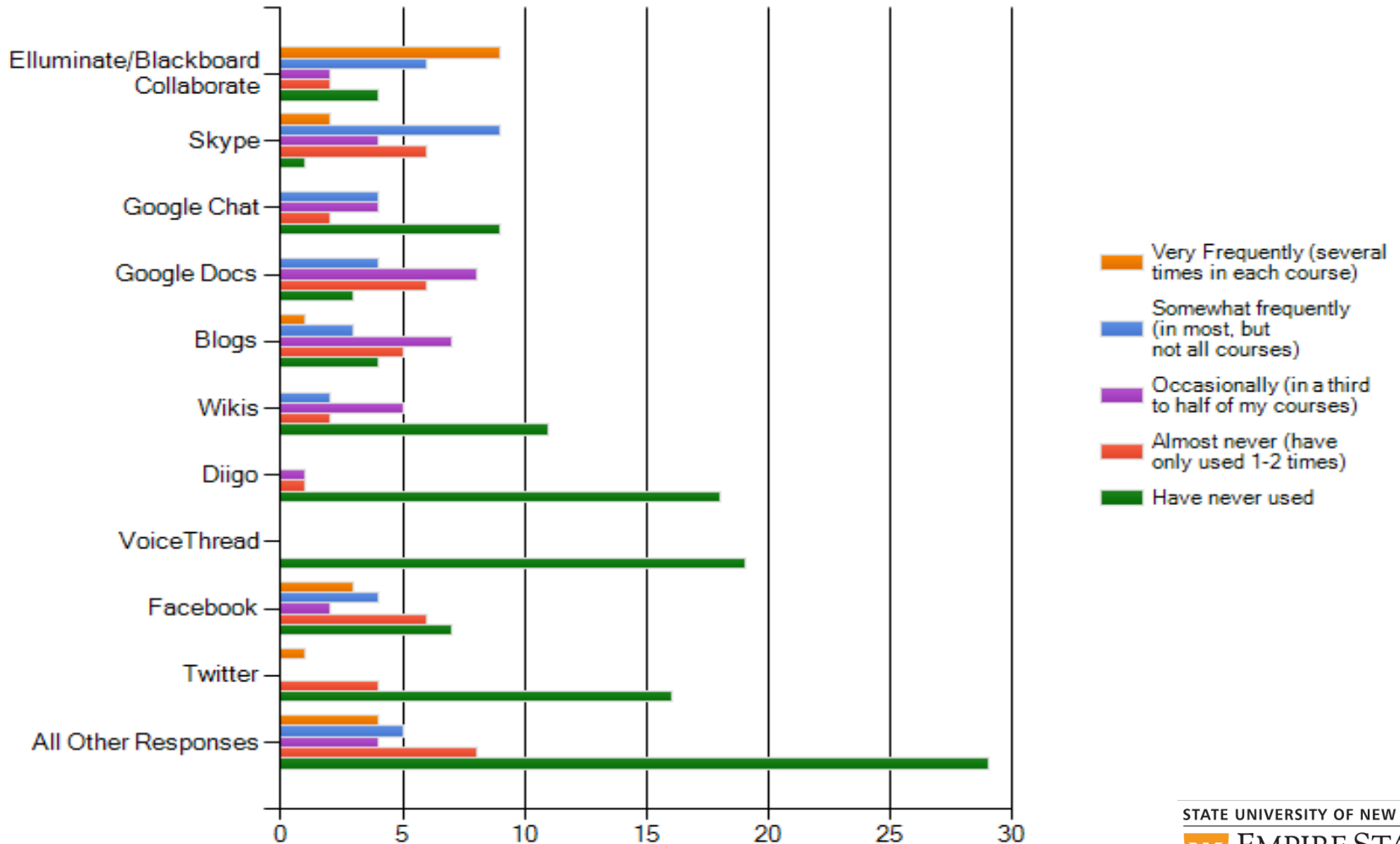
PANAMA/DR TECHNOLOGY

How do you consider yourself with regards to technology use?



PANAMA/DR TOOLS

Which of the following tools have you used for course related work?



SAMPLE COURSE COLLABORATION

Duration 2-3 weeks

Initial asynchronous icebreaker

2-3 Virtual sessions

**Asynchronous discussion in
between virtual sessions**

Team written assignment

COLLABORATIONS COMPLETED

Pilot: ESC Panama – SUNY/Cortland

ESC Panama – College of Westchester

<http://commons.esc.edu/cowcollaboration/>

ESC Panama – ESC CDL

<http://sunyescimmigrationexperiment.blogspot.com/2013/02/guidelines-for-the-international.html>

ESC Panama – University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia

<http://habitatsk.wordpress.com/>

ESC Panama (Market Research) – College of Westchester

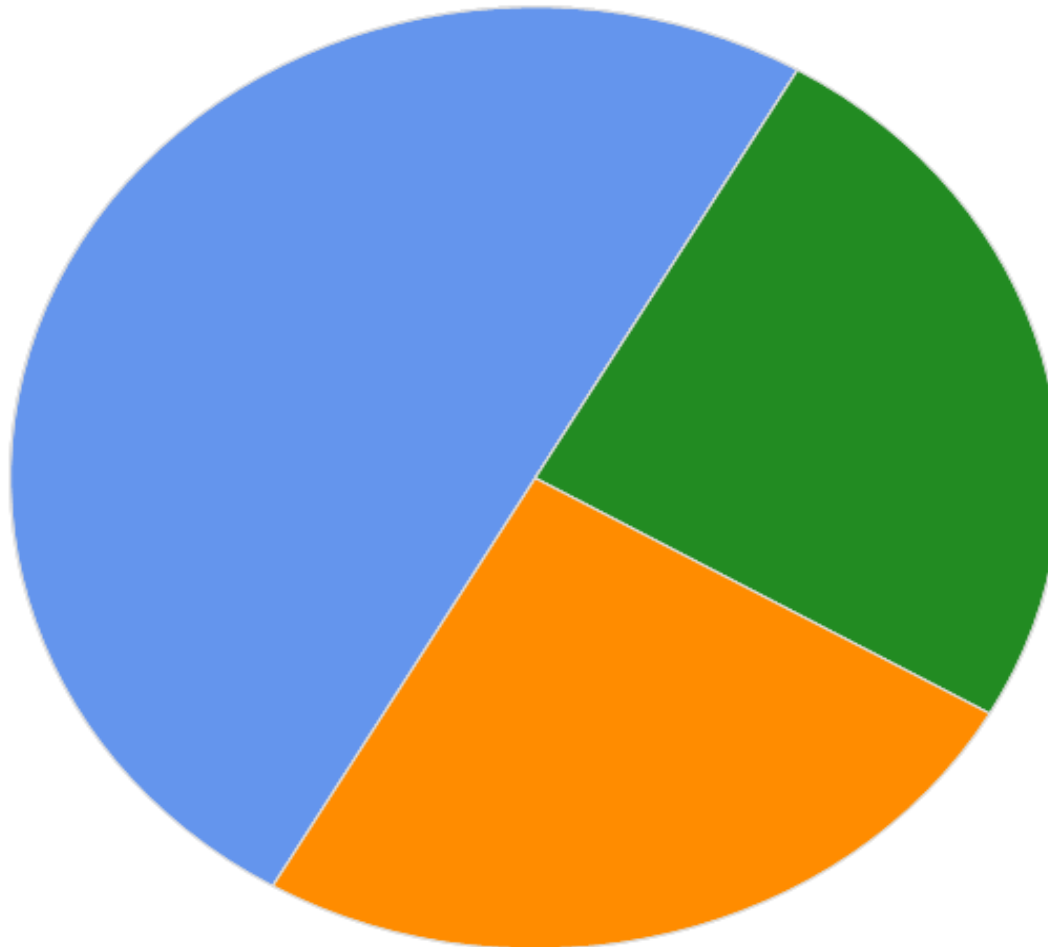
<http://commons.esc.edu/cowcollaboration2/>

ESC Panama (International Finance) – College of Westchester

<http://commons.esc.edu/internationalcollaboration/>

FACULTY OPINION: STUDENT LEARNING

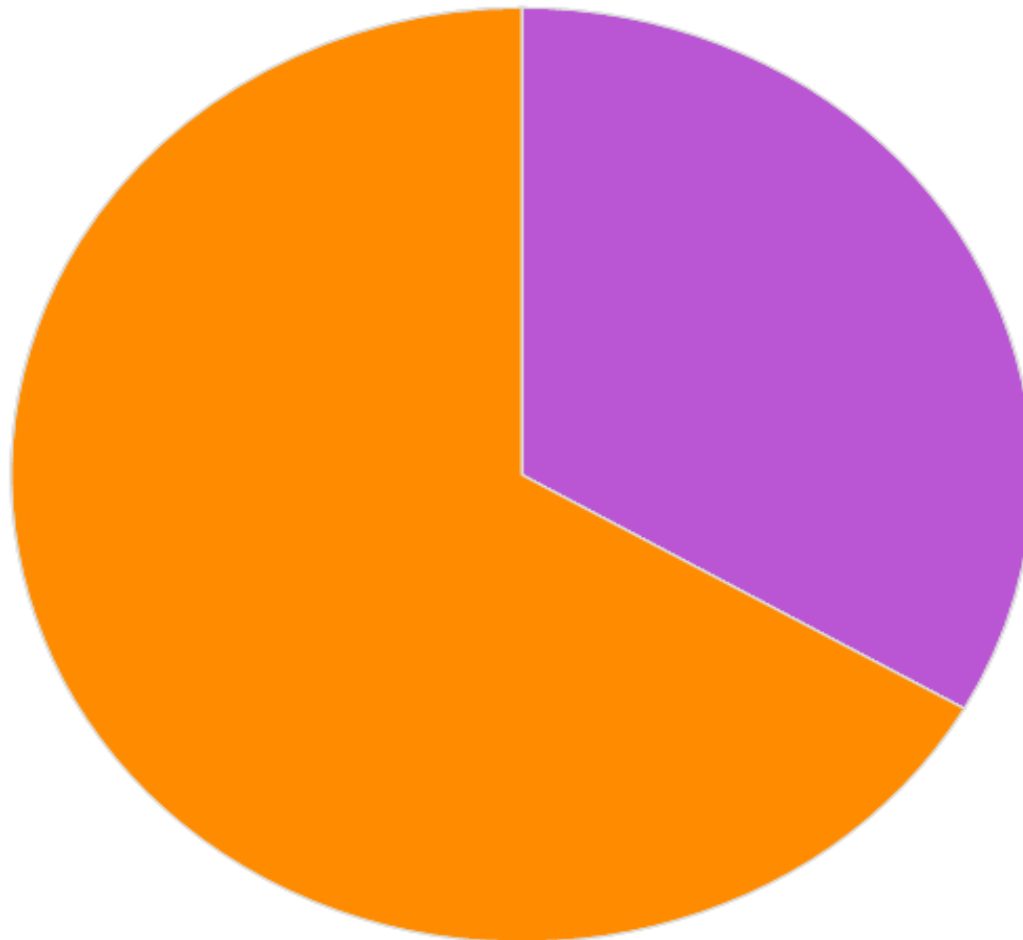
Compared to other courses I have offered, I feel students in this collaborative project:



- Demonstrated significantly more learning
- Demonstrated slightly more learning
- Learning seemed about the same
- Demonstrated less learning
- Not sure

FACULTY OPINION: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

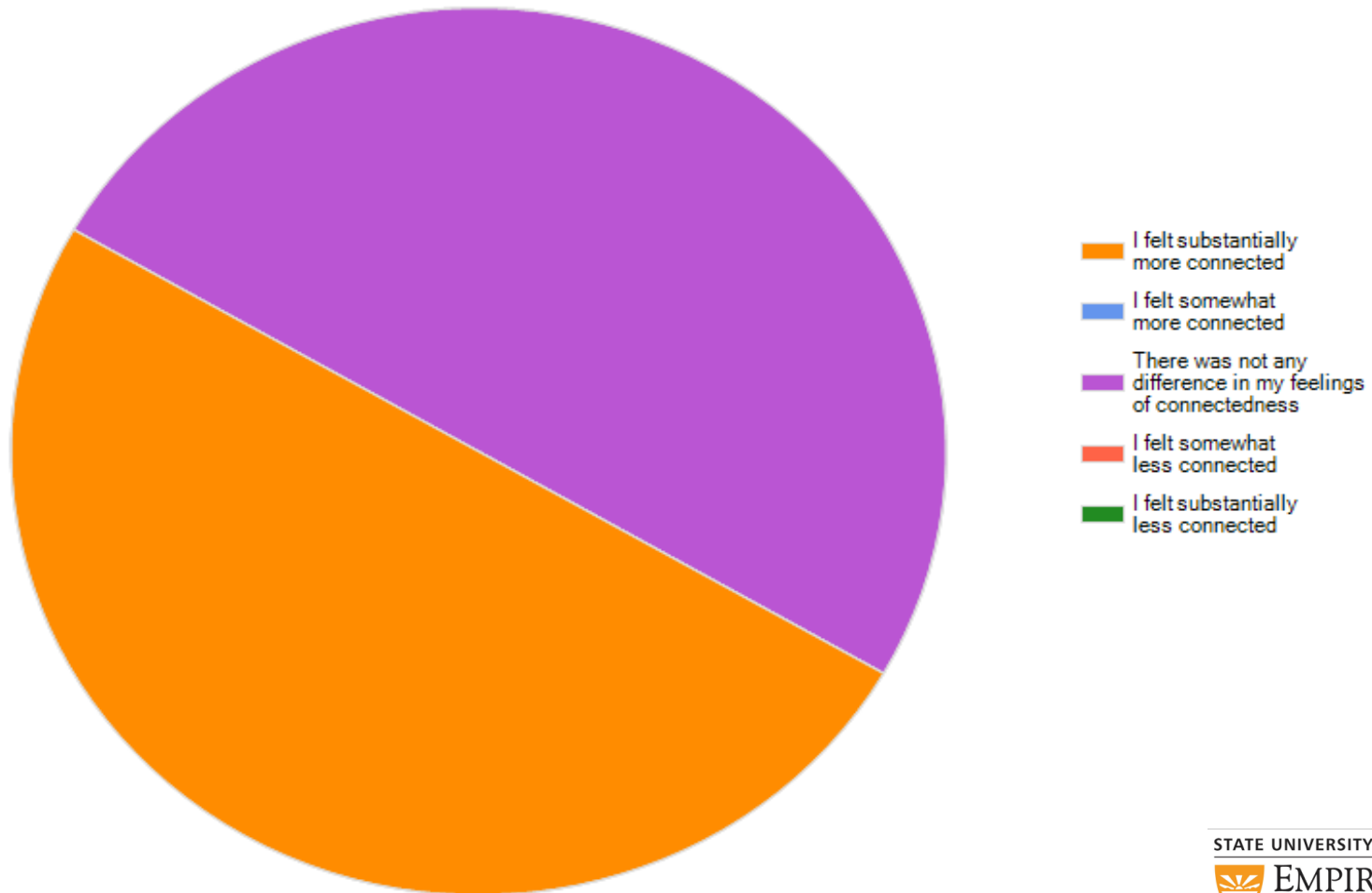
Did having virtual meetings help your students stay more engaged with their coursework compared to student engagement in courses in which you haven't used virtual meetings.



- Yes, students were substantially more engaged with virtual meetings
- Yes, students were somewhat more engaged with virtual meetings
- I didn't notice any difference in student engagement
- No, the students seemed slightly less engaged
- No, the students were significantly less engaged.

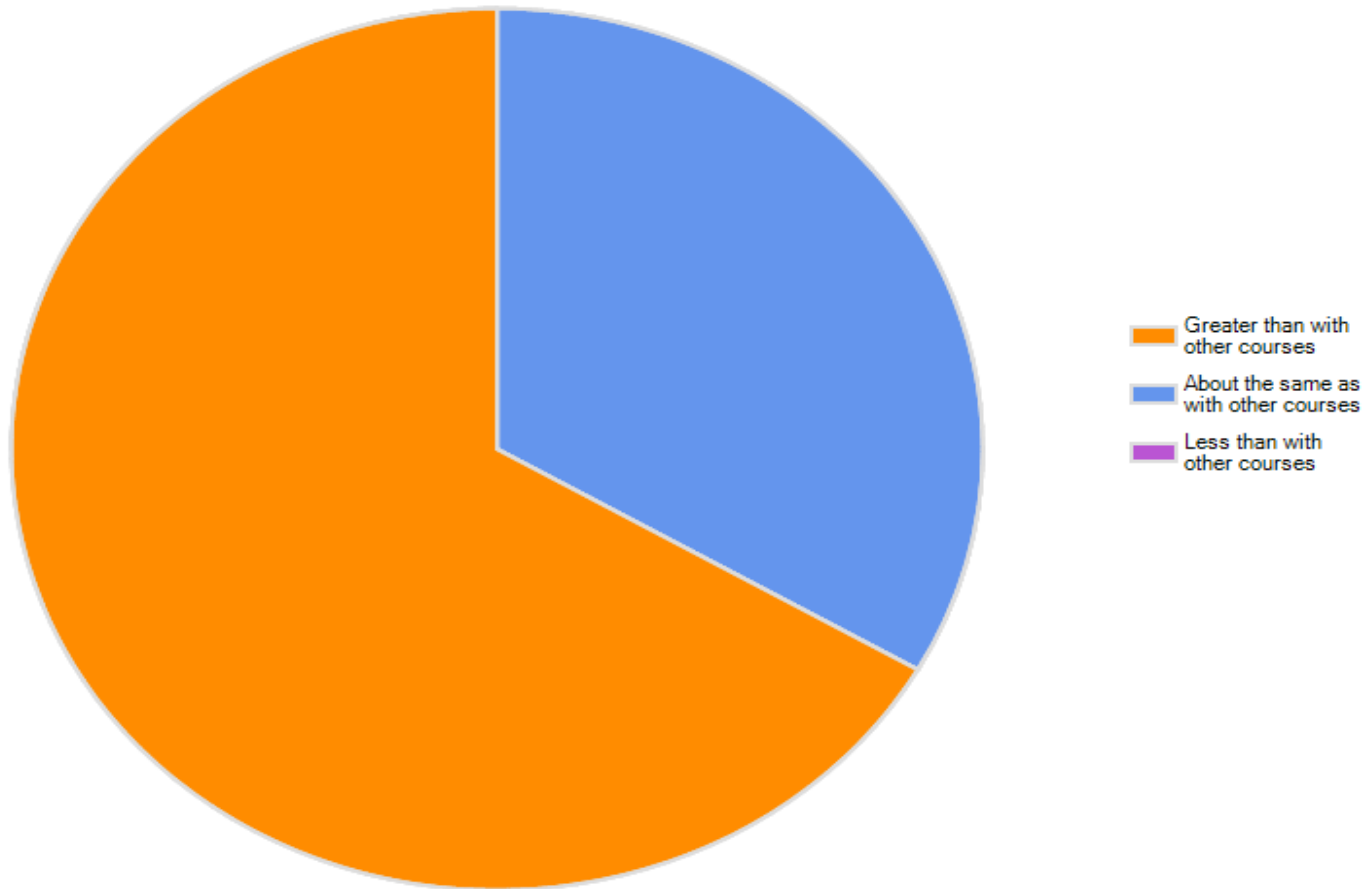
FACULTY OPINION: CONNECTION TO STUDENTS

Did virtual meeting tools help you feel more connected to your students during the online portion of the course compared to when you teach entirely online between residencies?



FACULTY OPINION: SATISFACTION

Overall, my satisfaction with this collaboration using virtual meeting tools is:



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Icebreaker builds enthusiasm**
- **Close communication crucial**
- **Test the equipment in advance; have a Plan B**
- **Give students sufficient advance notice of schedule**
- **Collaboration should be required and factor into grade**
- **Plan virtual sessions to include student activities**
- **Provide more faculty training and student orientation**

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework:

Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework (Etienne Wenger, et al 2011)

Value Creation

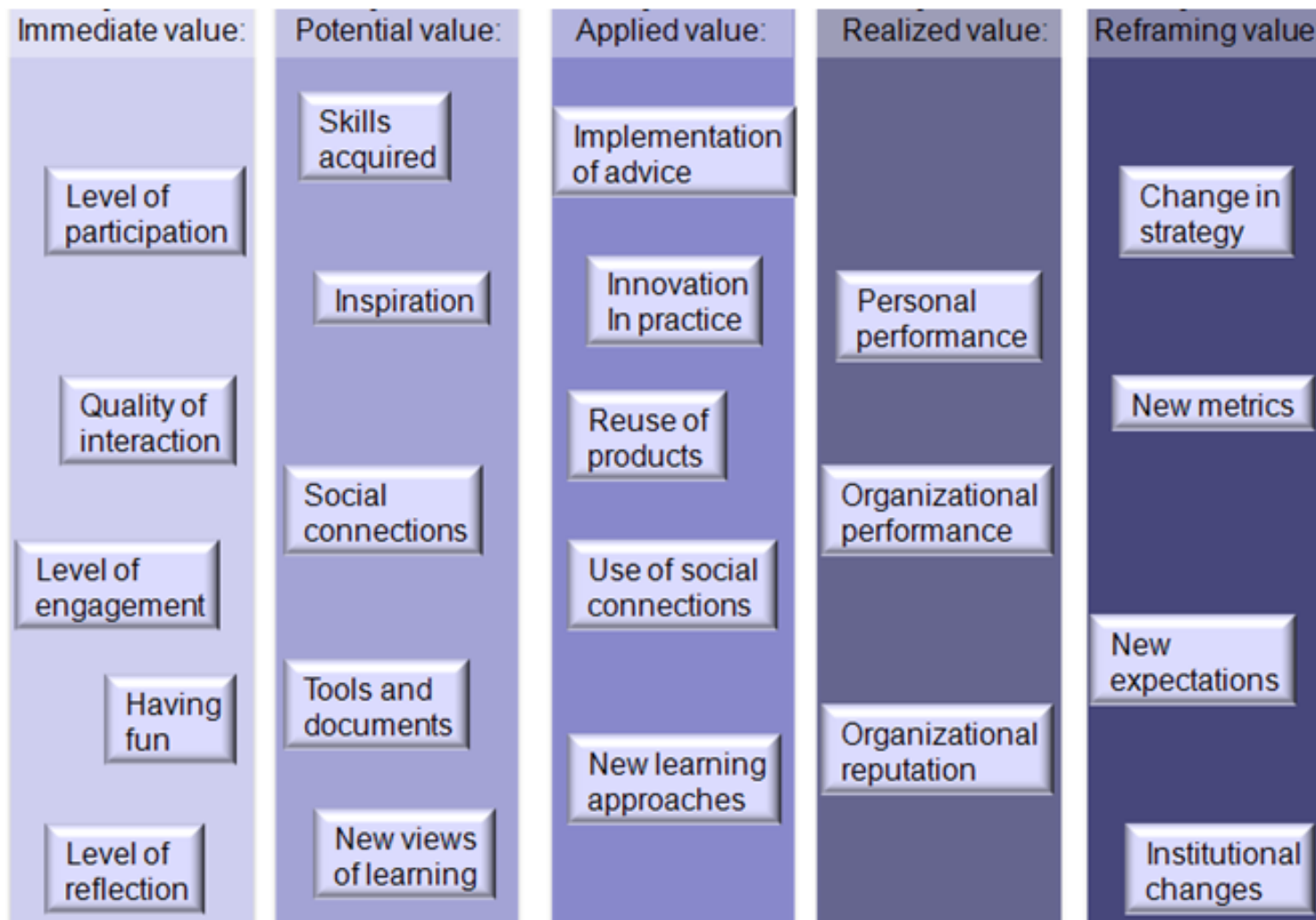
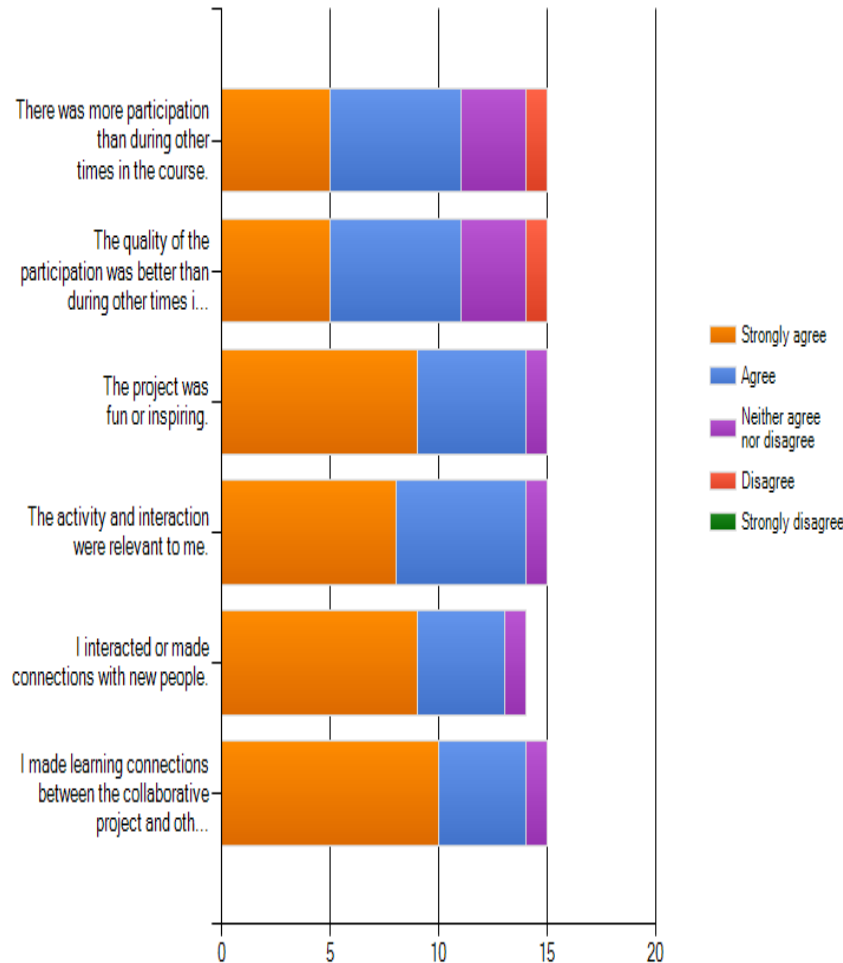


FIGURE: WENGER, E., B. TRAYNOR, AND M. DE LAAT. CHART FROM ASSESSING VALUE CREATION FOR COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND NETWORKS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

RESULTS: IMMEDIATE VALUE

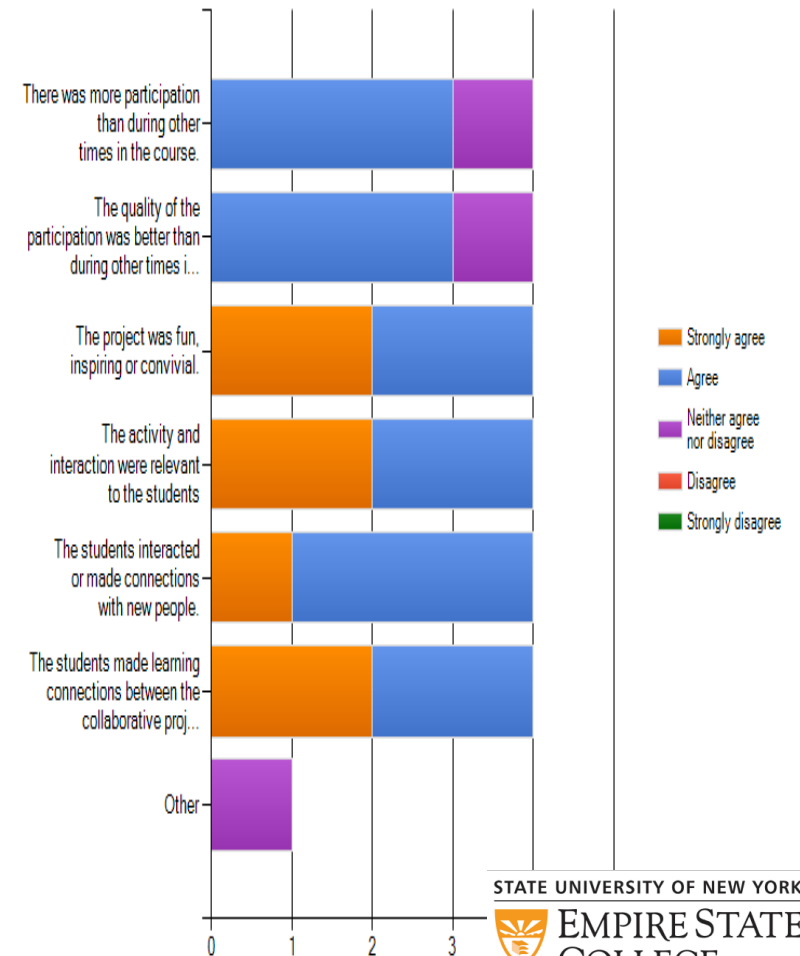
STUDENTS

What happened and what was your experience during the collaborative project?



FACULTY

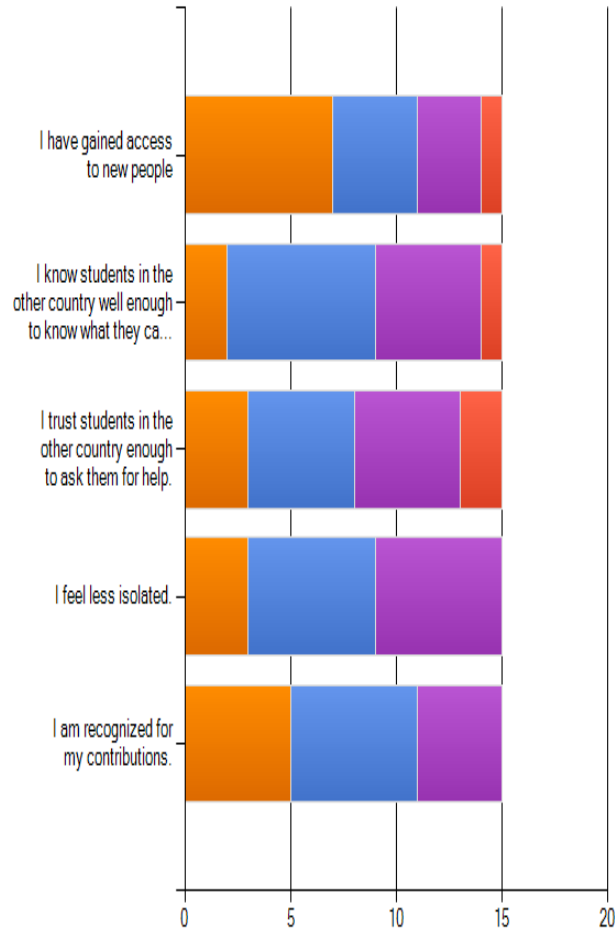
Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements related to what happened and the student experience during the collaborative project.



RESULTS: POTENTIAL VALUE

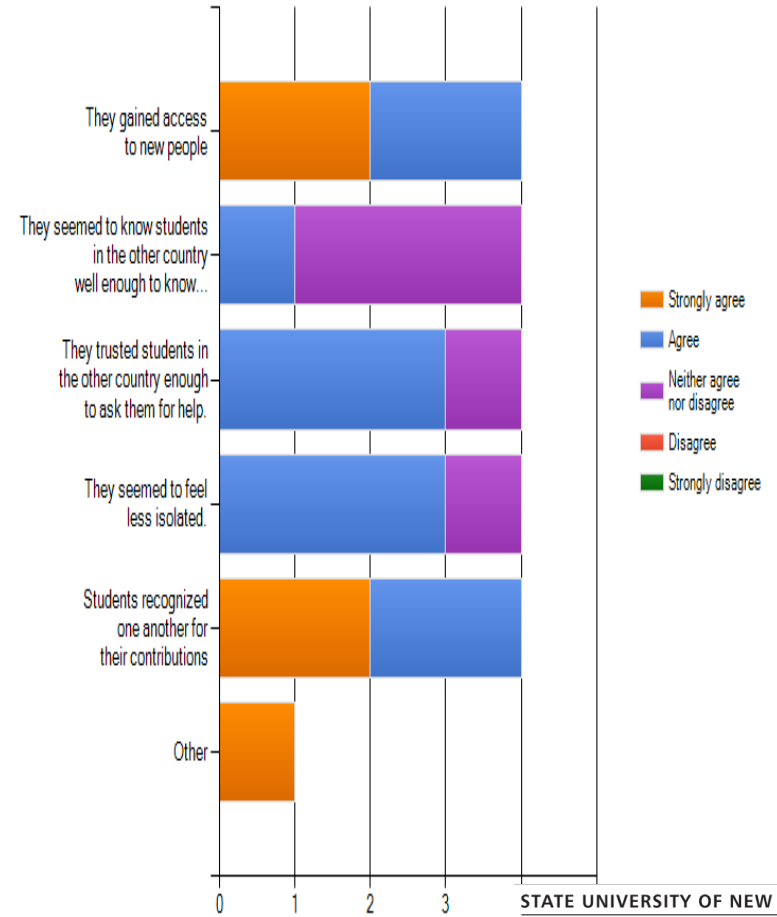
STUDENTS

How has your participation in the collaborative project changed your social relationships?



FACULTY

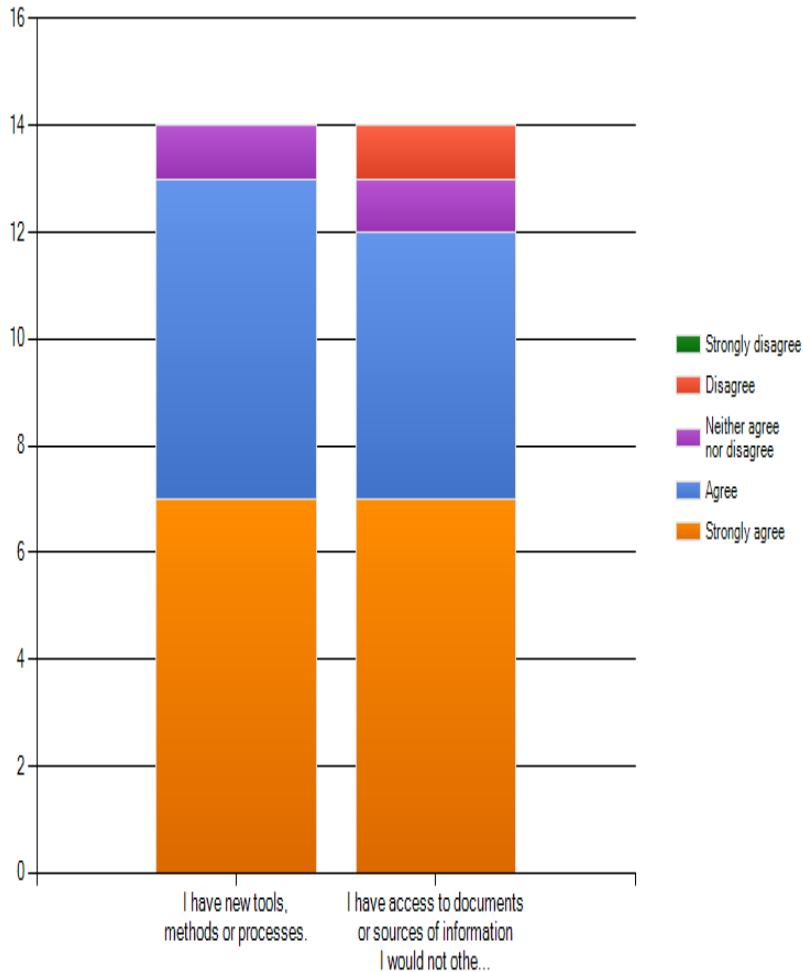
Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements related to how participation in the collaborative project change student social relationships.



RESULTS: APPLIED VALUE

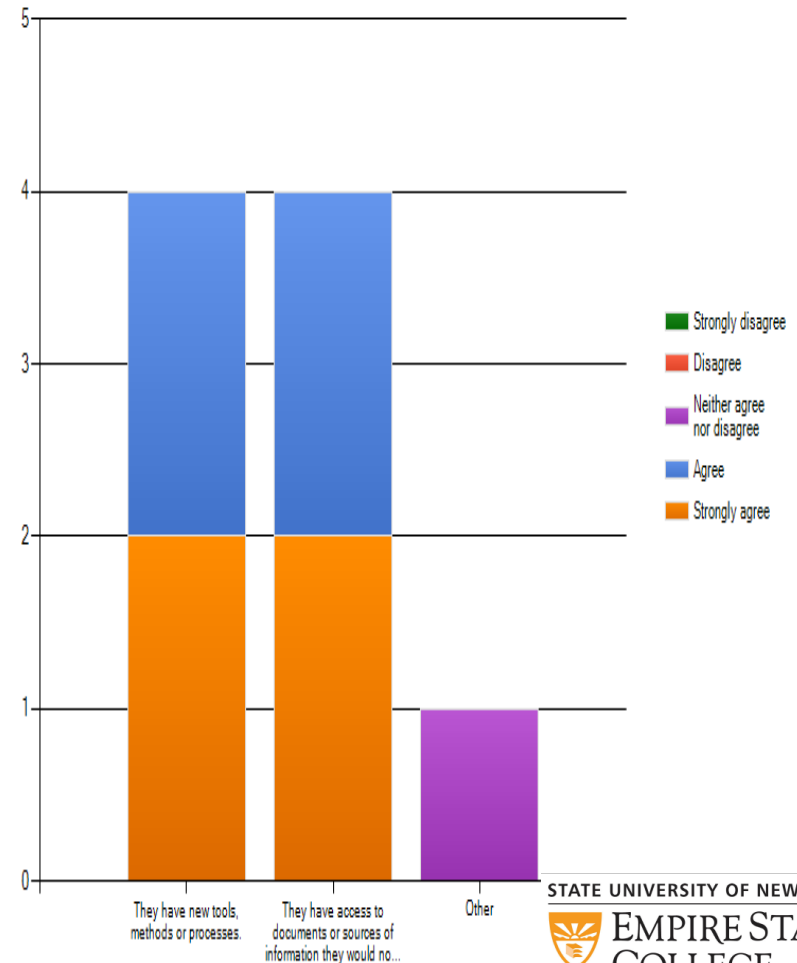
STUDENTS

What access to resources has your participation in the collaborative project given you?



FACULTY

Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements as to how participation in the collaborative project changed student access to resources:



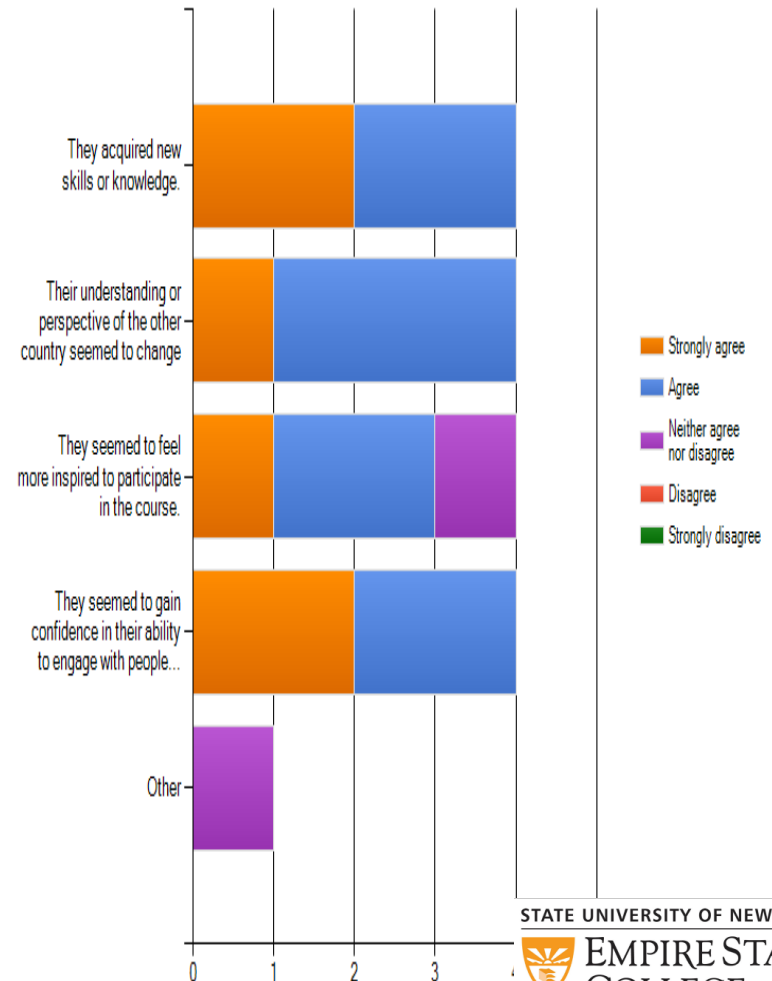
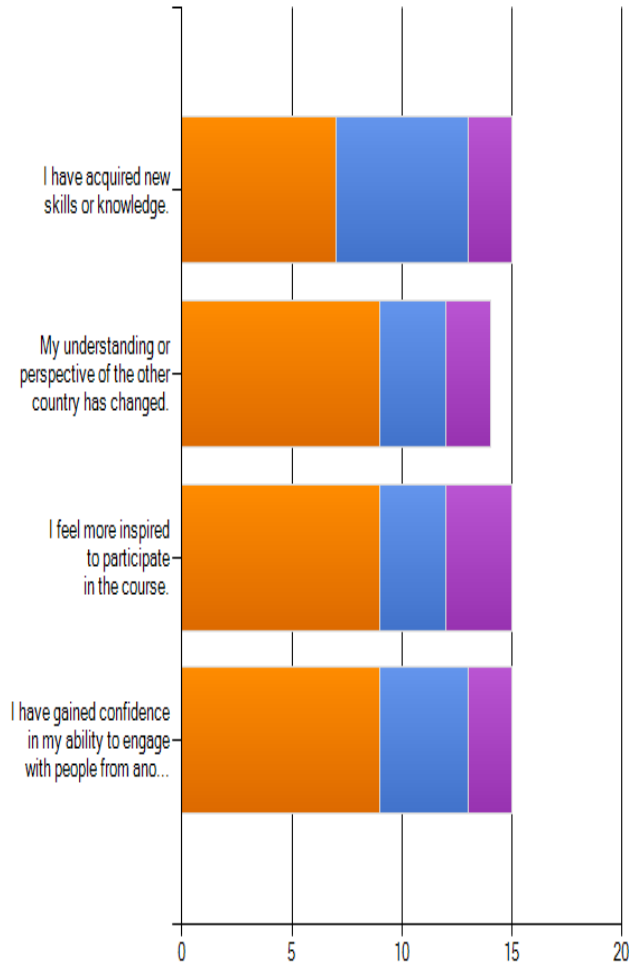
RESULTS: REALIZED VALUE

STUDENTS

FACULTY

How has your experience in the collaborative project changed you?

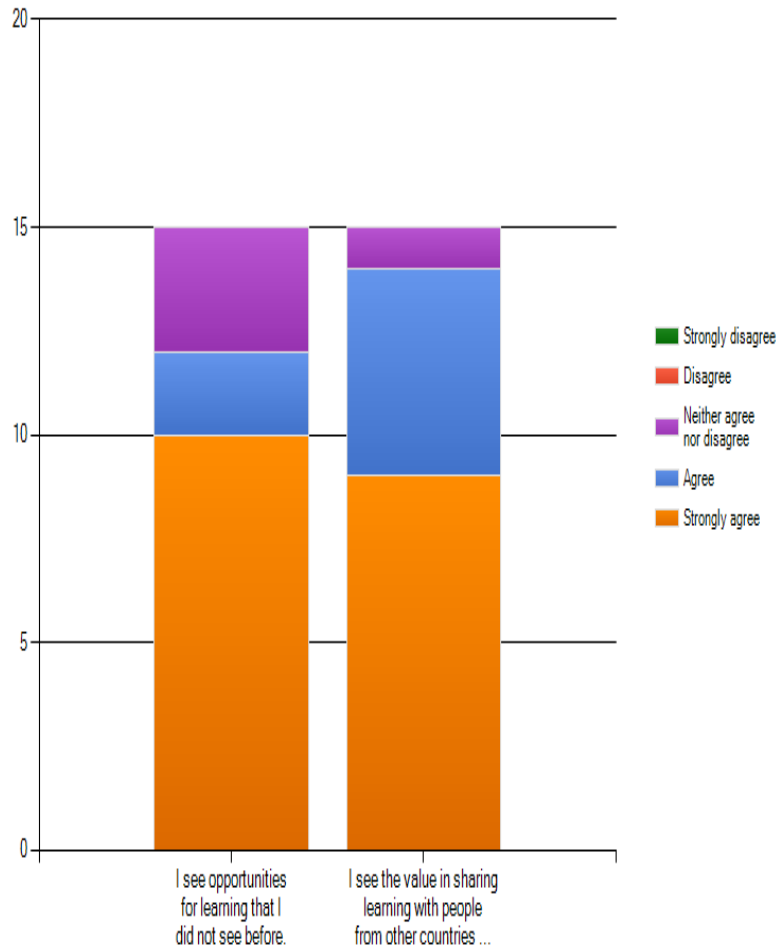
Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements related to how student experience in the collaborative project seem to change them.



RESULTS: REFRAMING VALUE

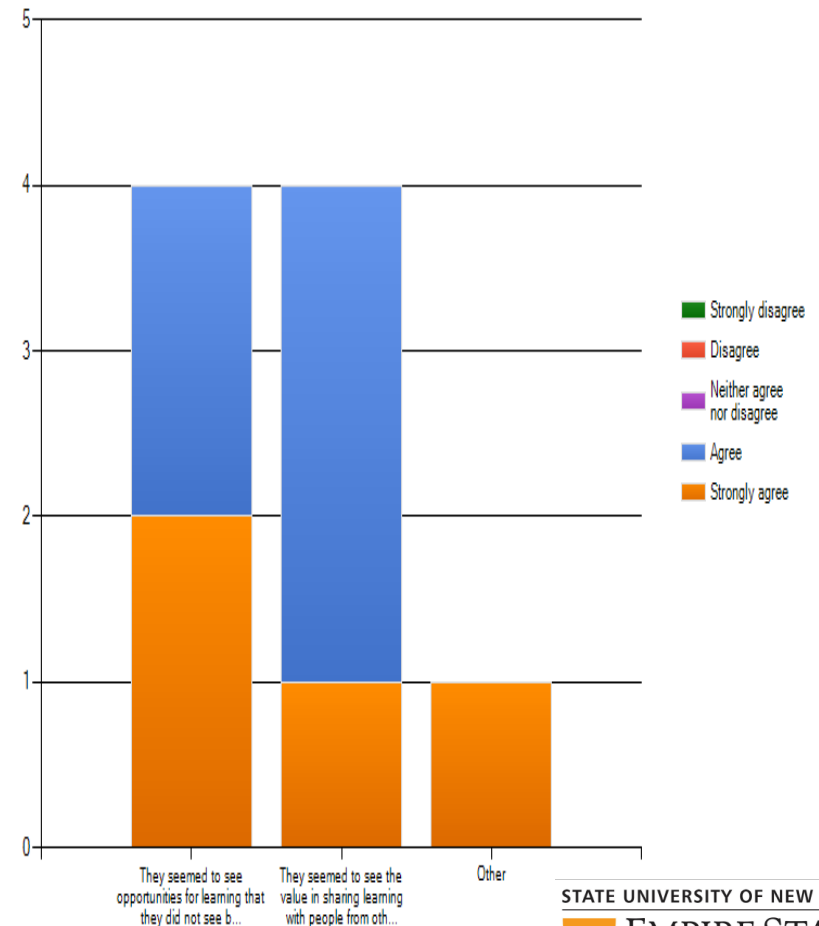
STUDENTS

How has your participation in the collaborative project changed your view of learning?



FACULTY

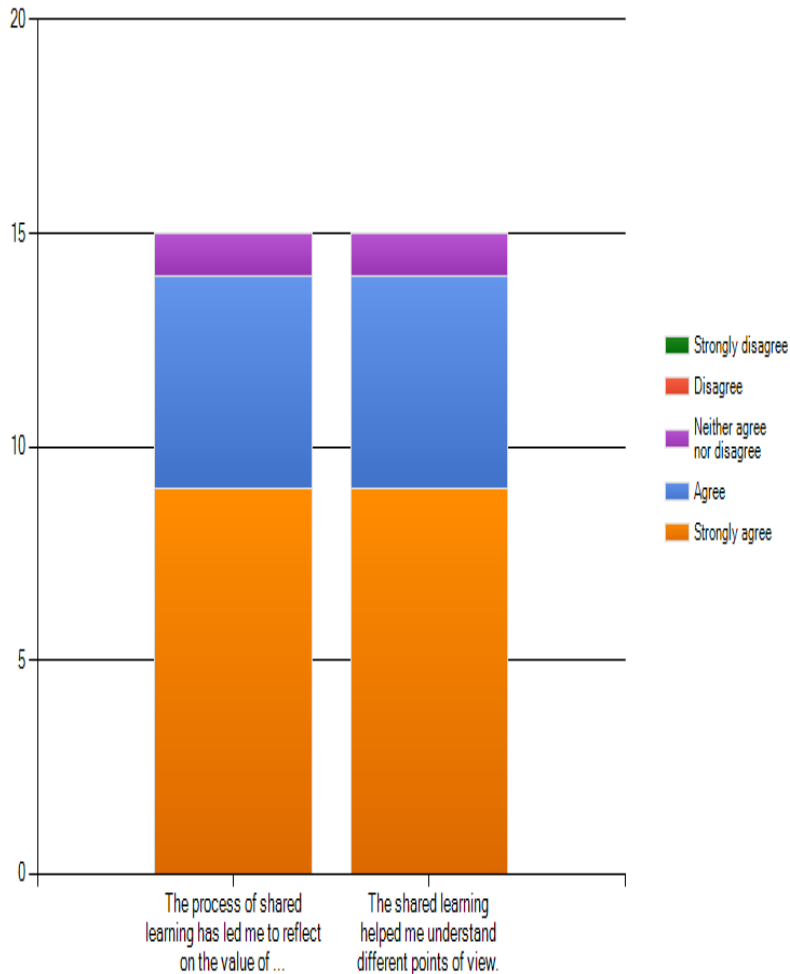
Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements as to how participation in the collaborative project seemed to change the students' view of learning.



RESULTS: REFRAMING VALUE

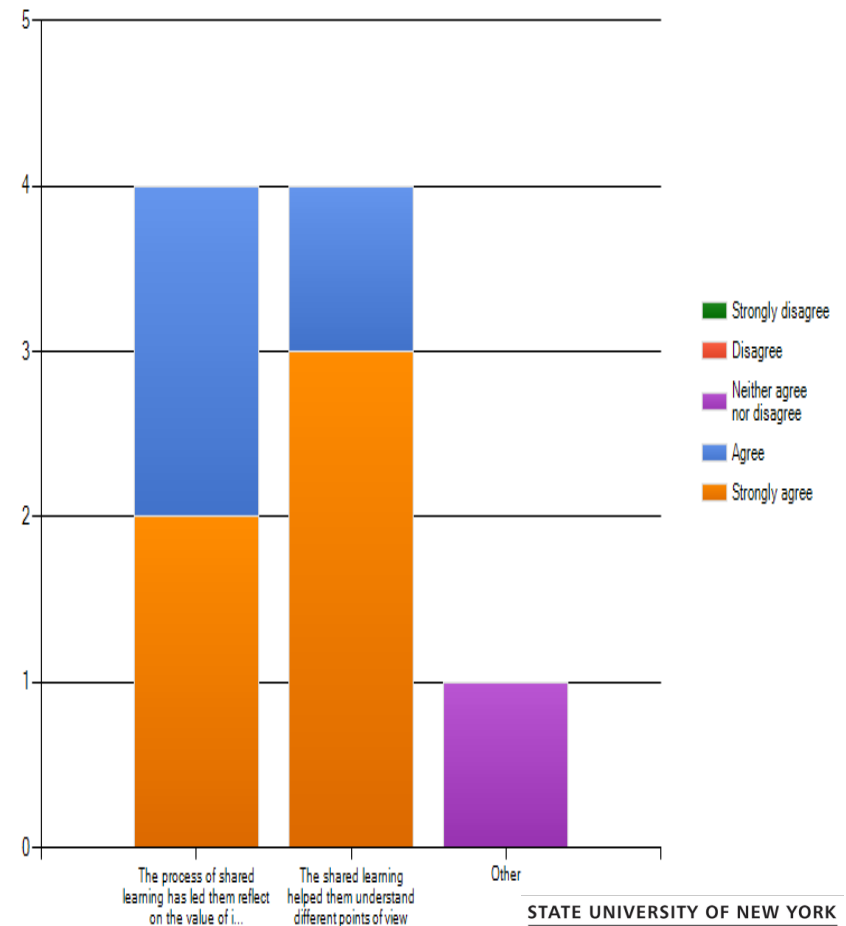
STUDENTS

Has participation in the collaborative project changed your understanding of the value of international perspectives?



FACULTY

Please rate your level of agreement on the following statements related to whether participation in the collaborative project changed student understanding of the value of international perspectives.



POLL

How much experience do you have using virtual tools (anything from Google Docs through Teleconferencing)?

- A. A routine part of my work**
- B. Occasional user; fairly confident**
- C. Infrequent; still uncomfortable**
- D. Don't use, but interested**
- E. Try to avoid them**

POLL

**What problems or obstacles do you perceive related to the use of virtual tools?
(Mark all that apply.)**

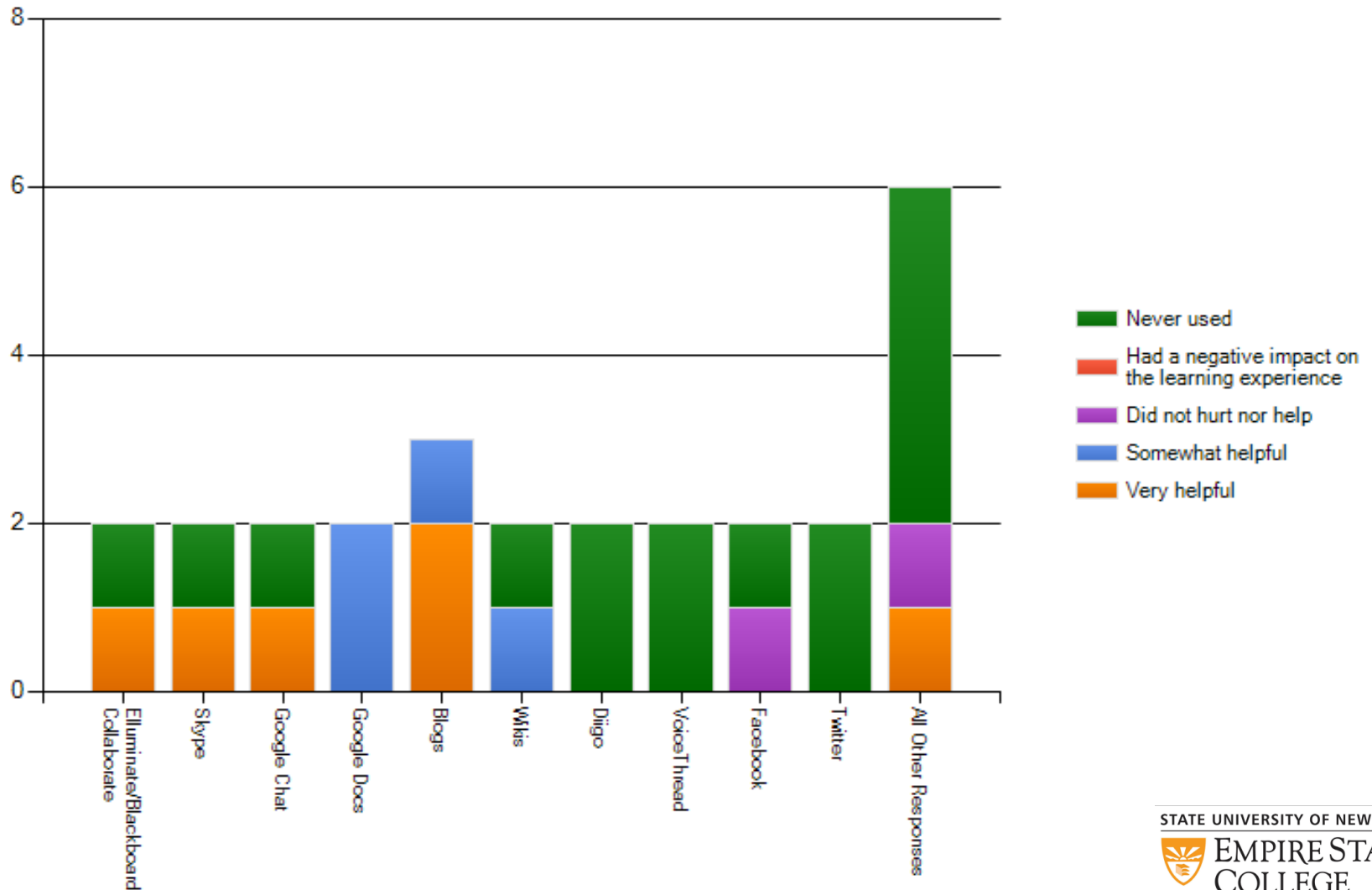
- A. Technical problems like bandwidth issues**
- B. Not sure how to use the tools to meet course objectives**
- C. Student resistance**
- D. My institution doesn't supply or support the tools (including training)**
- E. I am not interested in using them**

EXPERIENCES WITH TOOLS

- **Students logged in from computers, phones and tablets**
- **Visual, real time interaction increased engagement and focus**
- **If no visual, students opted for chat (even when mike enabled)**
- **Chat feature important**
- **Use the right tool for the job**
- **Some tools don't work with teleconferencing equipment**
- **Windows 8 still doesn't work with a lot of tools**

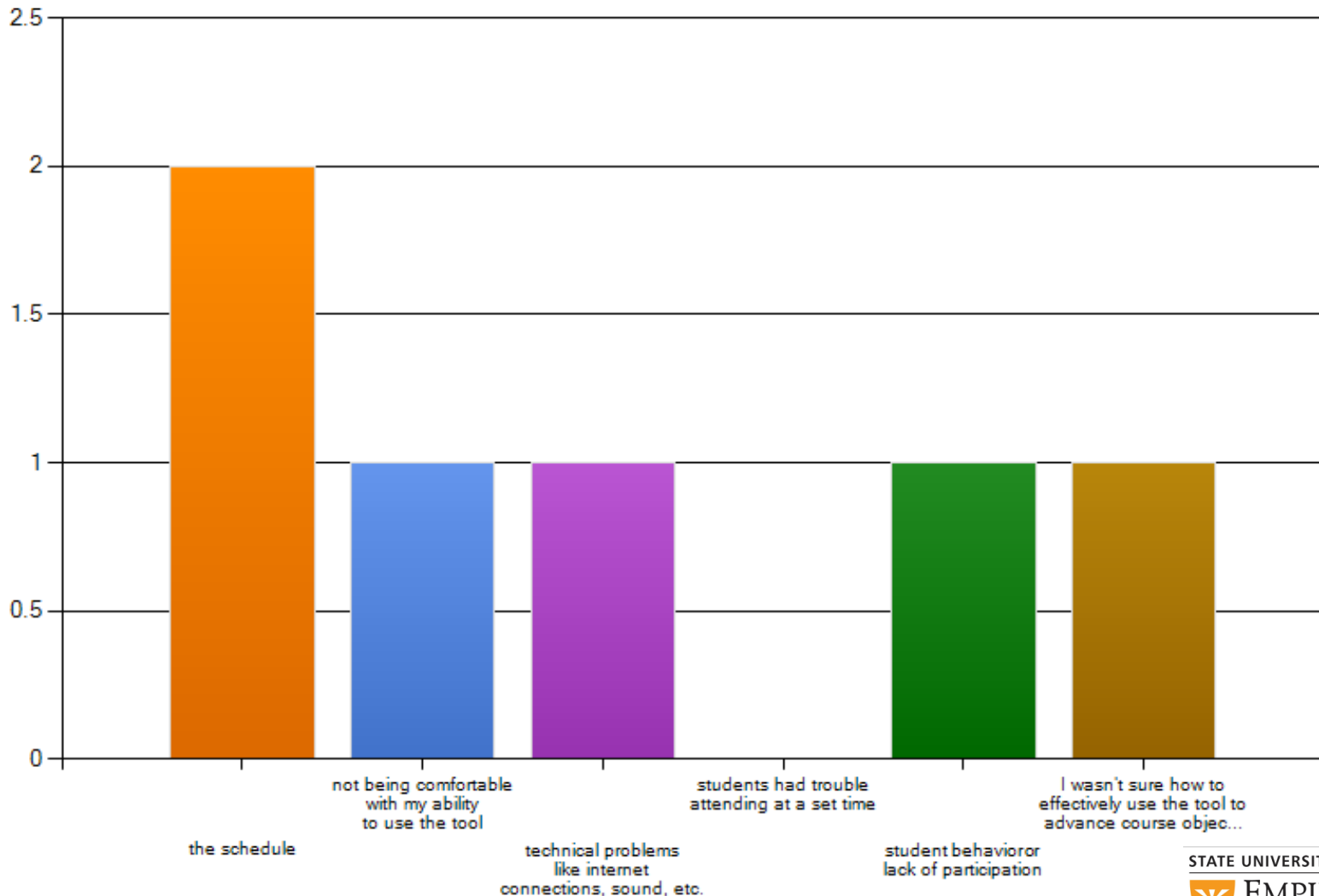
FACULTY OPINION: TOOLS

Please rate each of the tools you used for how you feel it contributes to the students' learning experience:



FACULTY OPINION: PROBLEMS

The biggest problems with virtual meetings were (mark all that apply):

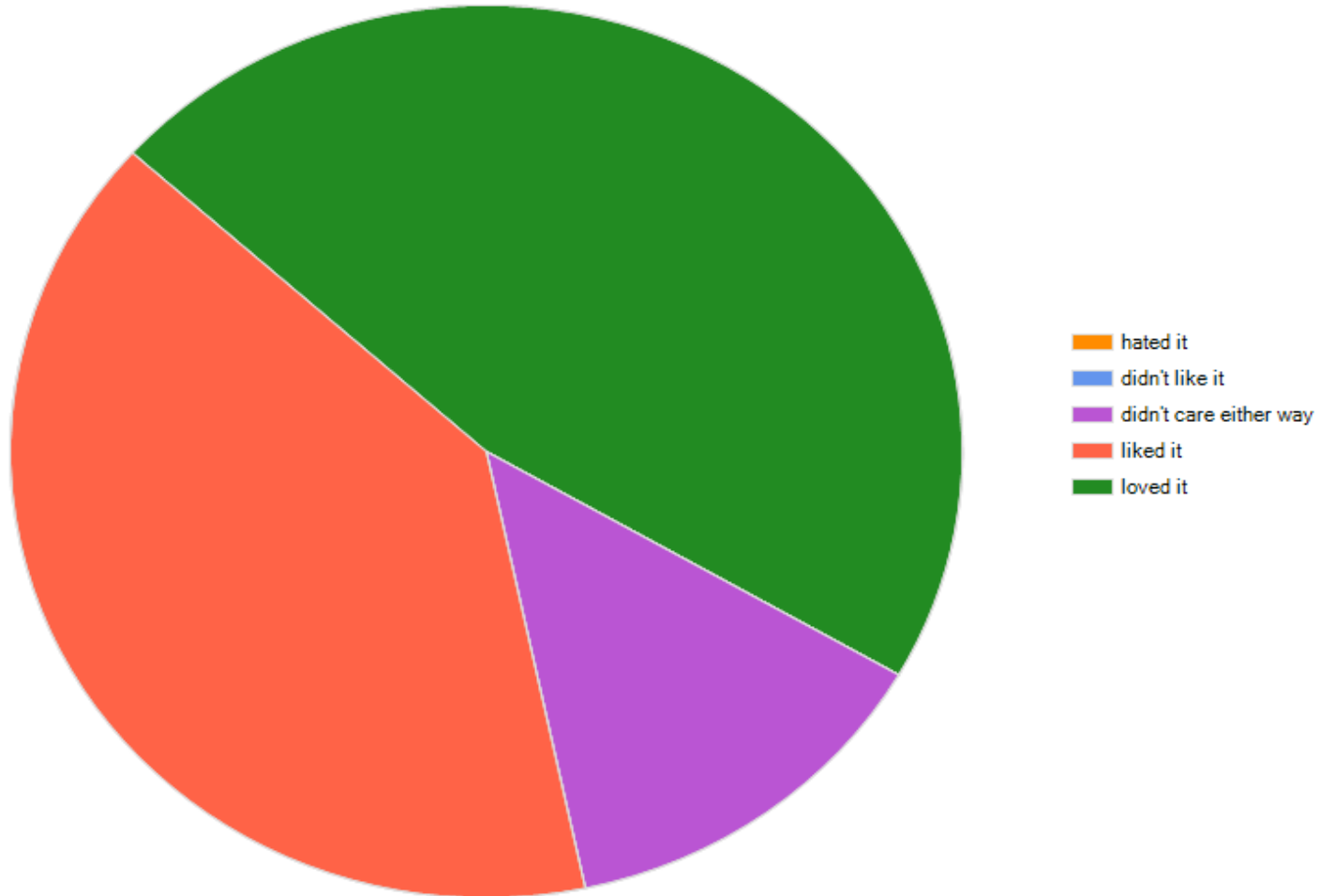


POSITIVE RESULTS

- **Student insight and knowledge about the other country**
- **Students recognized a change in their view of the importance of international perspectives**
- **Relationships established for future collaborations**
- **Lessons learned improve future collaborations**

RESULTS: STUDENTS

How much did you enjoy the collaborative project?



FINAL STUDENT OBSERVATIONS

Very engaging learning experience - expanded my knowledge of Panama.

I like the fact that I was introduced to new tools of communication

I personally enjoyed being a part of the program. I hope the school continues with it. It's an experience all students should be a part of.

In international business you can't always be face-to-face with the person you are communicating with. Technology has really helped to shorten the gap and make communication easier. I feel like in the classes we were constantly having problems with technology: a microphone wouldn't work, the video wouldn't stream, or the internet connection was not stable. But that is the way it is. While doing my internship at Philips I had to communicate with other countries everyday and I would have the same problems. I have learned that I need to be patient and deal with the occasional flaw in technology because it is key to communicating with other countries.

FINAL FACULTY OBSERVATIONS

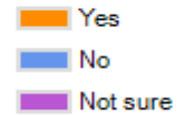
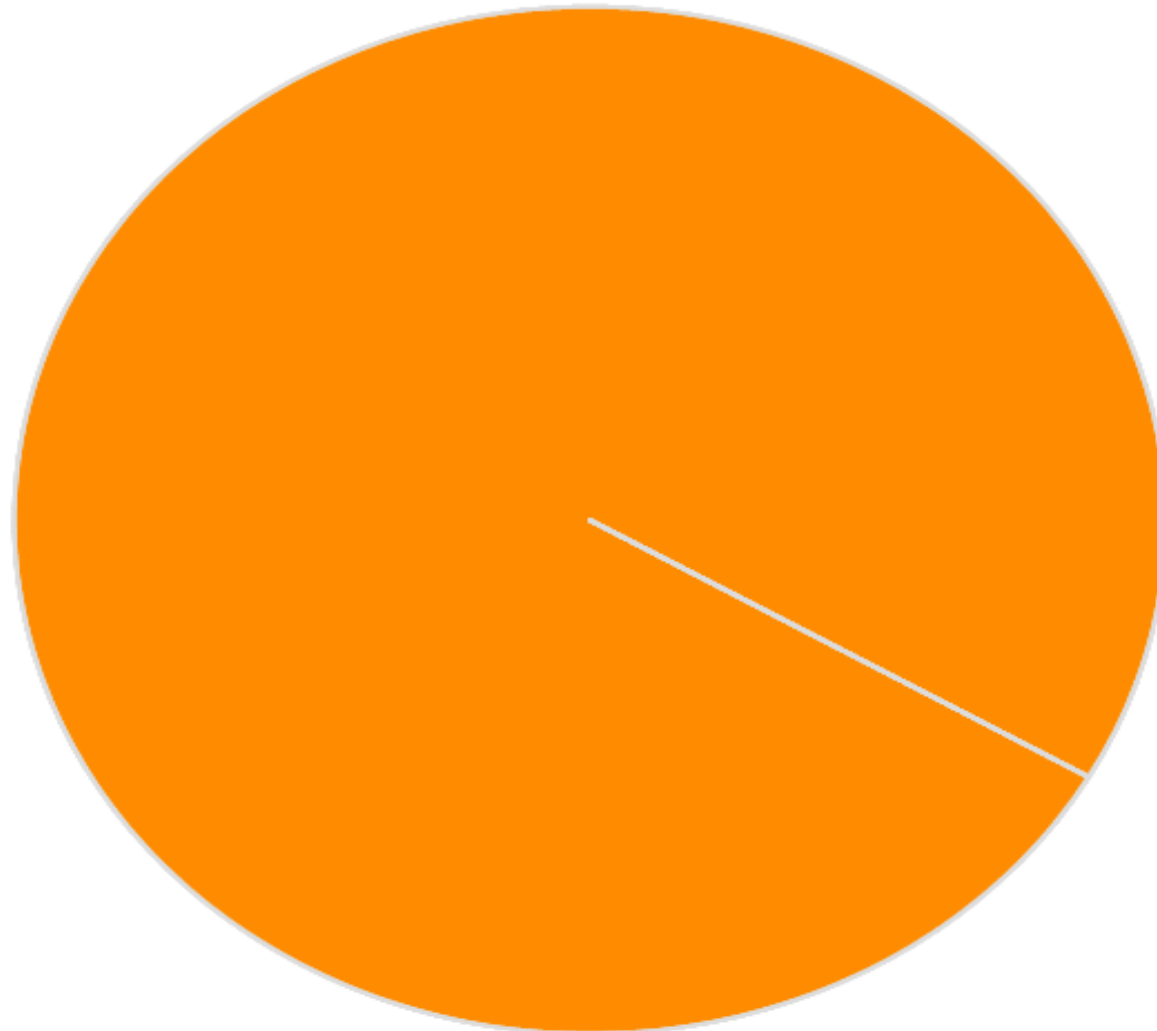
I found the level and substance of student engagement made this an invaluable project.

I think that if it was a bit more organized it could have done even better...that said, students enjoyed the experience!

it was a good experience indeed even with overloading my time -😊 I enjoyed it as new experience. Thanks for the opportunity.

FACULTY OPINION: DO IT AGAIN?

I would like to use virtual meeting tools with other courses.



FUTURE EXPLORATION

- **Does the impact last?**
- **Does collaboration have a positive impact on post-collaboration course activity and final grades?**
- **More exploration with mobile devices**
- **Try to measure changes in cross cultural understanding**
- **Design collaborations with learning objectives specific to fomenting the international experience rather than JUST course related objectives**
- **More trials involving international faculty and institutions**
- **Test voice tools especially to see if help overcome time differences**
- **Test with larger sample and larger class sizes**
- **Test longer collaborations/full term courses**

USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Zoom <http://zoom.us>

Blue jeans <http://bluejeans.com>

Blackboard Collaborate

Skype

Google Apps

Wordpress (blogs)

Facebook

What's App

CONTACT INFORMATION

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THANK YOU!