

# UBC Teaching Practices Survey

## 2018 Vancouver Campus Results

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Responses to the question "Please write one word that describes your experience of the teaching environment at UBC." N = 500



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# 1 Preface

## 1.1 Survey Overview & Development

UBC ran the Teaching Practices Survey in 2014 and in 2018 to better understand how individuals with teaching responsibilities structure learning for students and to offer an opportunity to participants to provide confidential feedback on their perceptions of the teaching climate at UBC. Responses from the survey are used to inform strategic priorities and service offerings, as well as to assess change that could be attributed to institutional initiatives.

The 2014 Teaching Practices Survey was developed by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT, UBC Vancouver) and the Science Centre for Learning and Teaching (Skylight, UBC Vancouver). The 2018 questionnaire is a streamlined and updated version of the 2014 questionnaire where redundancies were removed, difficult-to-interpret questions were either reworded or eliminated, and extra questions were added to inform university initiatives (e.g., Student Diversity Initiative, Health Promotion & Education, CTLT Indigenous Initiatives, and Open UBC). The questionnaire was presented to an *ad hoc* committee including representatives from the UBC Associate Deans with teaching and learning responsibilities and Provost's Office, and their feedback was integrated into the final version which was then validated with faculty from across disciplines. Institutional ethics review and approval was sought to conform to research standards.

Preserving the 2014 format, the questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, participants are asked to provide data about a specific course they teach. In the second part, participants are asked to provide responses on their perceptions of teaching and teaching climate in both campuses.

## 1.2 Deployment & Analysis

The survey was open between February 27, 2018 and April 16, 2018. UBC Human Resource Management System (HRMS) data was used to identify all individuals with active teaching responsibilities on both the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses. Every eligible individual was sent a unique email invitation with a link to the online survey. There were 17 instances of the questionnaire, incorporating faculty-specific variations as requested.

Out of 3833 invited to participate in the survey, total of 888 participant responses were collected. However, 91 of these responses were considered incomplete and excluded from calculations resulting in an overall response rate of 20.7%. This report contains findings limited to Vancouver campus where 3374 individuals met the survey inclusion criteria and were invited to participate in the survey. 656 responses from this group were deemed complete resulting in an overall response rate of 19.4%. On the Vancouver campus, 595 participants provided responses to both parts of the questionnaire. An additional 38 participants only provided responses to part 1 (18.8% response rate for part 1), while an additional 23 participants only provided responses to part 2 since they reported not having taught in the past two years (18.3% response rate for part 2).

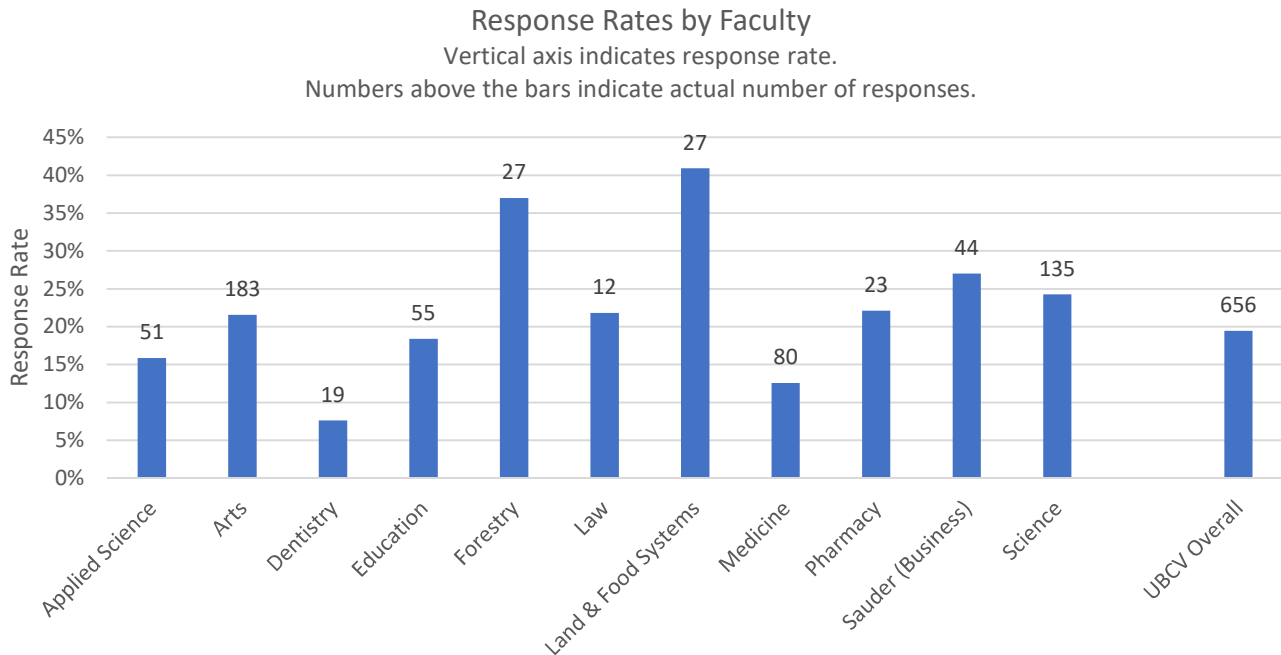
Data has been analyzed at the university, campus and faculty level and is available in separate reports. To simplify reporting, all numbers have been rounded to the nearest whole number. This may result in slight irregularities in both the graphs and totals. 2014 data was included in select cases for reference purposes.

## 1.3 Remarks

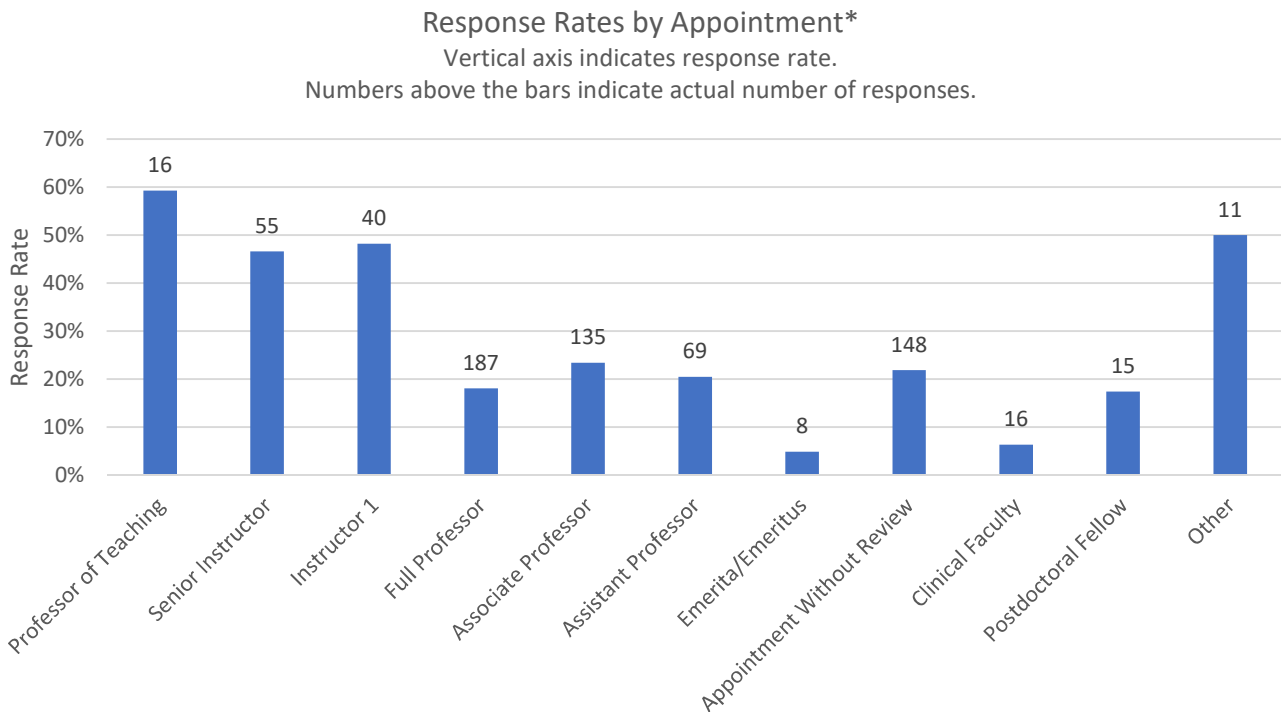
The intent of this report is to share findings based on descriptive statistics to facilitate further conversations around teaching and learning at UBC. We understand that it would require a thorough knowledge of the local context to draw meaningful conclusions or interpret these findings, and for that reason, we will leave it to the discretion of the units to draw their own conclusions. We are, however, available to present and discuss findings, to offer our services to further analysis if requested, and to provide support for additional exploration of findings to address specific questions.

## 2 Response Rates and Representation

### 2.1 By Faculty

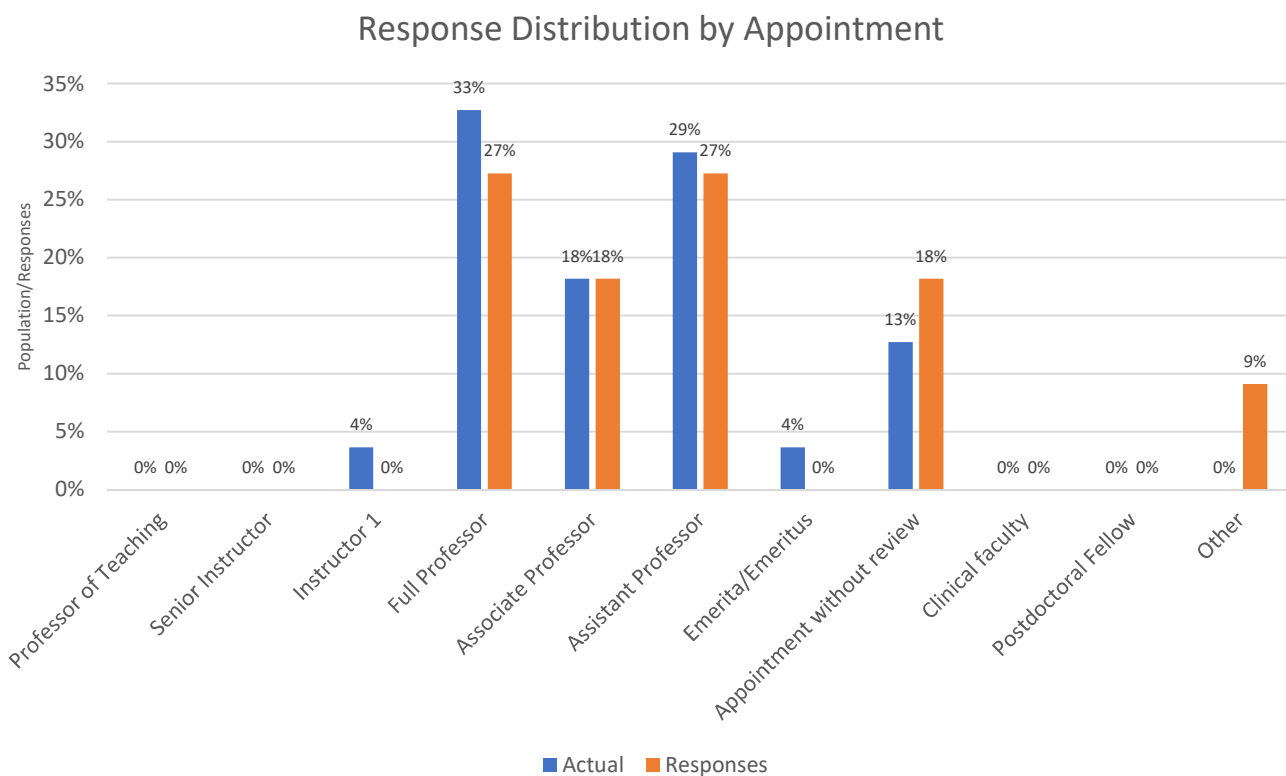


### 2.2 By Appointment



\*97 respondents did not answer this question so actual response rates for some appointments are higher.

### 2.3 Representativeness of Data

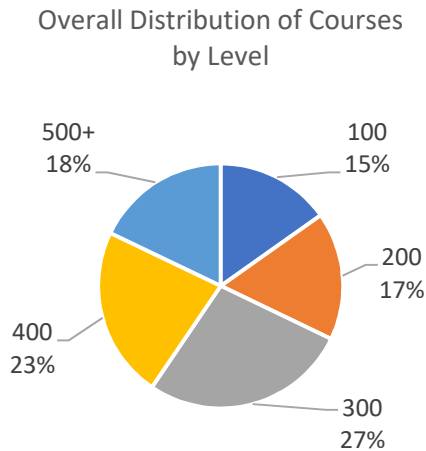


### 3 Course Characteristics

In the first half of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide responses on a specific course they teach. At UBC Vancouver, participants were randomly assigned to provide feedback on either their highest enrolment course or the course that was most representative of their teaching. In this report, the label HE is used to represent data related to the highest enrolment responses and MR for most representative responses.

#### 3.1 Course Level, Setting and Enrolment

Question: Please select the course level.

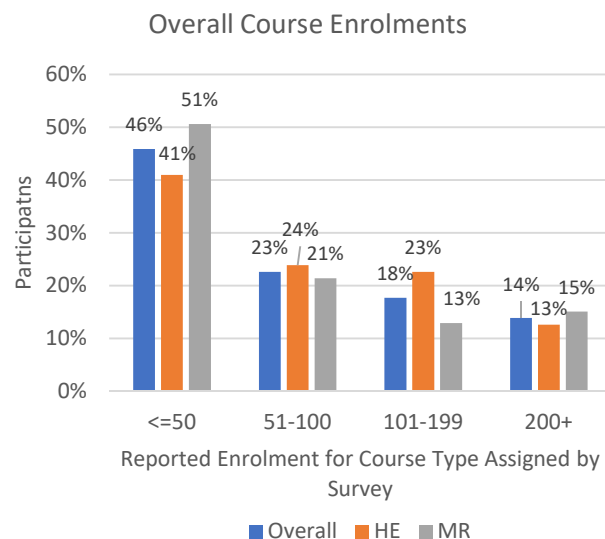


Distribution of Course Level by Course Type Assigned by Survey			
Level	Overall	HE	MR
100	96	57	39
200	107	55	52
300	173	79	94
400	143	67	76
500+	113	54	59

Question: Select the option below that best describes the setting in which [course type assigned by survey] is taught:

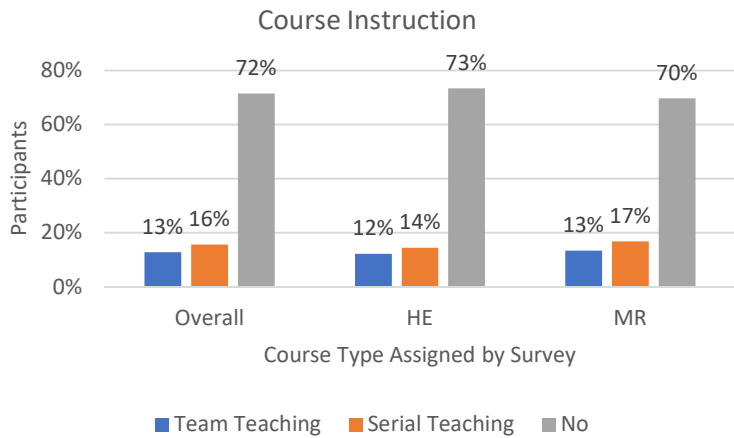
Course Setting by Course Type Assigned by Survey			
Setting	Overall	HE	MR
In Person	95%	94%	95%
Partially Online	3%	4%	2%
Fully Online	2%	2%	2%

Question: Please enter the approximate student enrolment in [course type assigned by survey]. If there were multiple sections, list enrolment in your section only. If you taught multiple sections, list enrolment in your highest enrolment section.



### 3.2 Collaborative Teaching

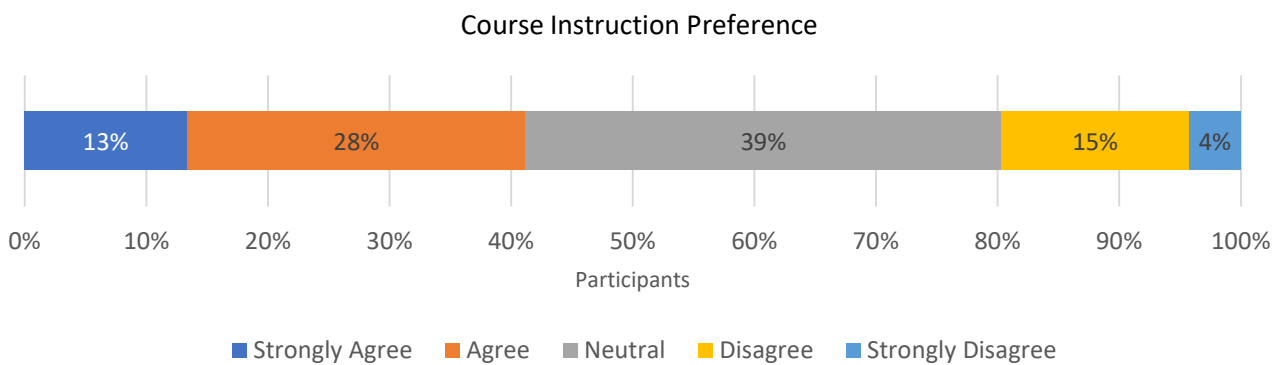
Question: Did multiple people contribute to teaching this section of the course?



**Team Teaching** - a team works collaboratively throughout the term

**Serial Teaching** - various people teach parts of the section with relative autonomy

Question: I prefer to teach as part of a collaborative team.



### 3.3 Instructor Expectations for Students

Question: Please indicate whether the following are required, optional or not a component in [course type assigned by survey].

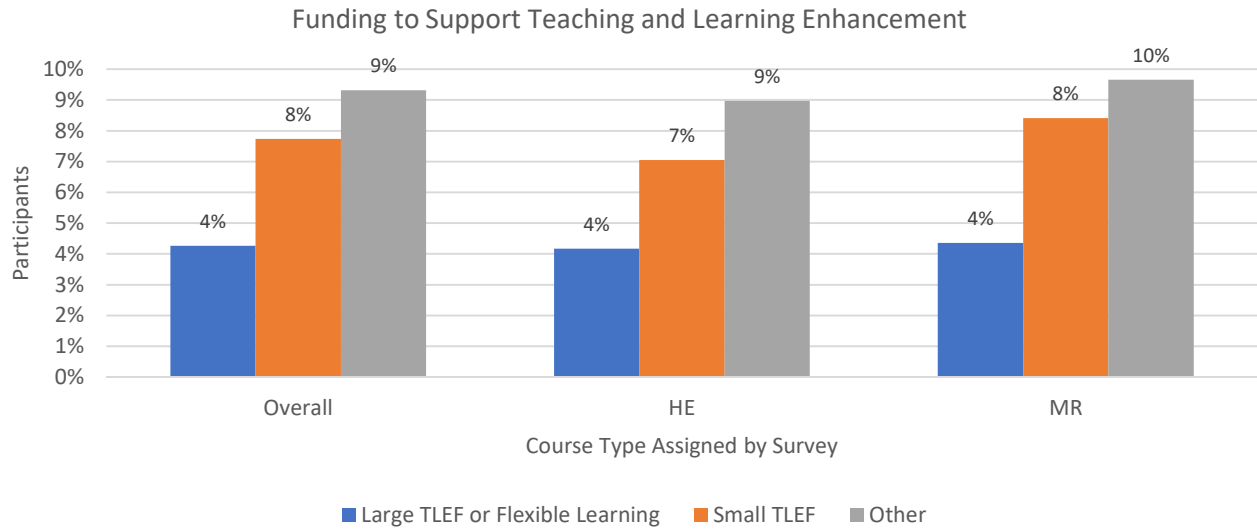
*Check all that apply.*

	Overall		HE		MR	
	Required	Optional	Required	Optional	Required	Optional
<b>Students work together in groups.</b>	66%	17%	66%	16%	65%	18%
<b>Students participate in community based experiential learning.</b>	15%	9%	14%	7%	17%	10%
<b>Students complete fieldwork or participate in field trips.</b>	16%	6%	16%	5%	16%	7%



### 3.4 Funding

Question: Have any of the sources below provided funding to enhance teaching and/or student learning?



## 4 Class Time

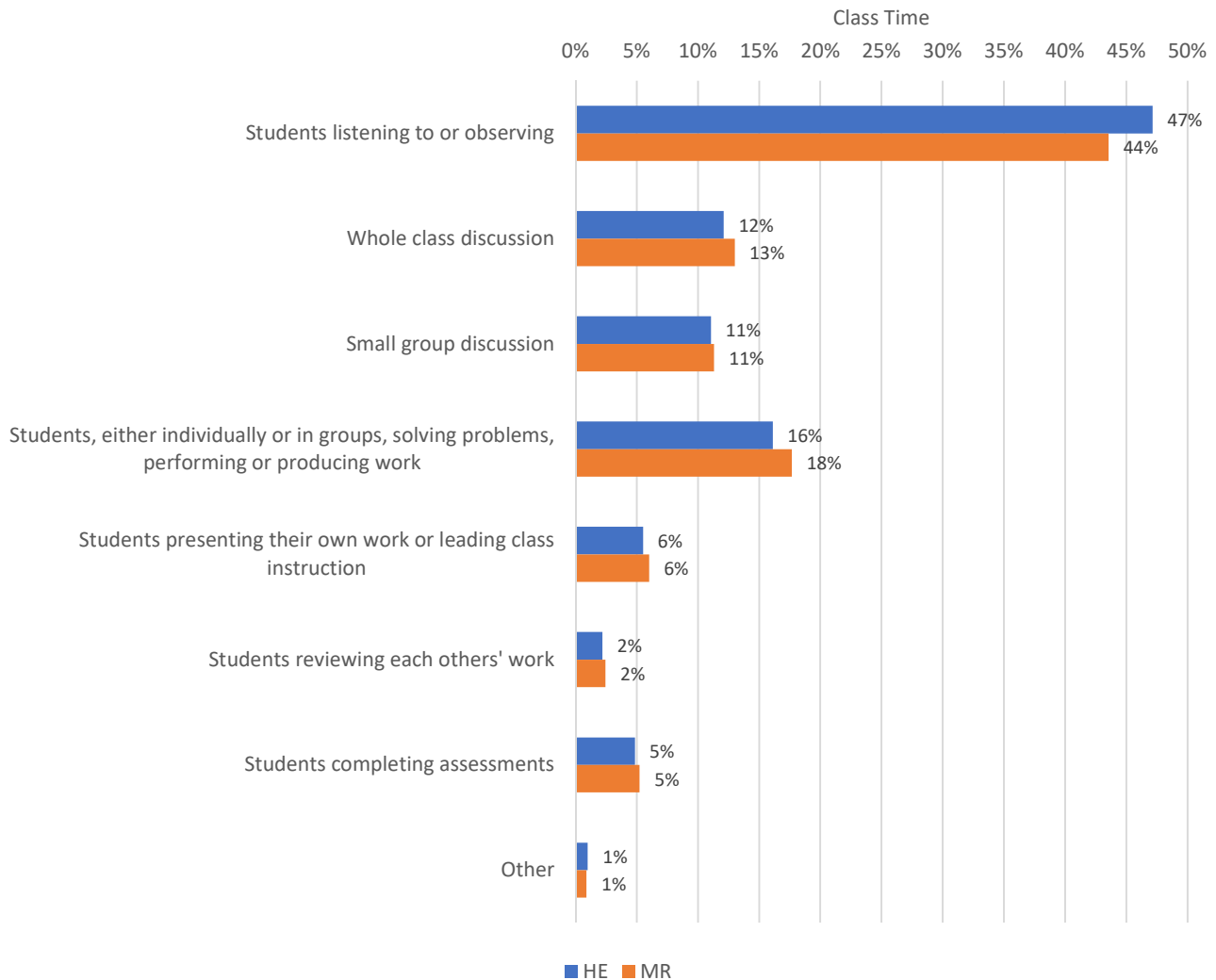
### 4.1 Structure of Class Time

Question: Please estimate how face-to-face class time is structured for students in [course type assigned by survey].

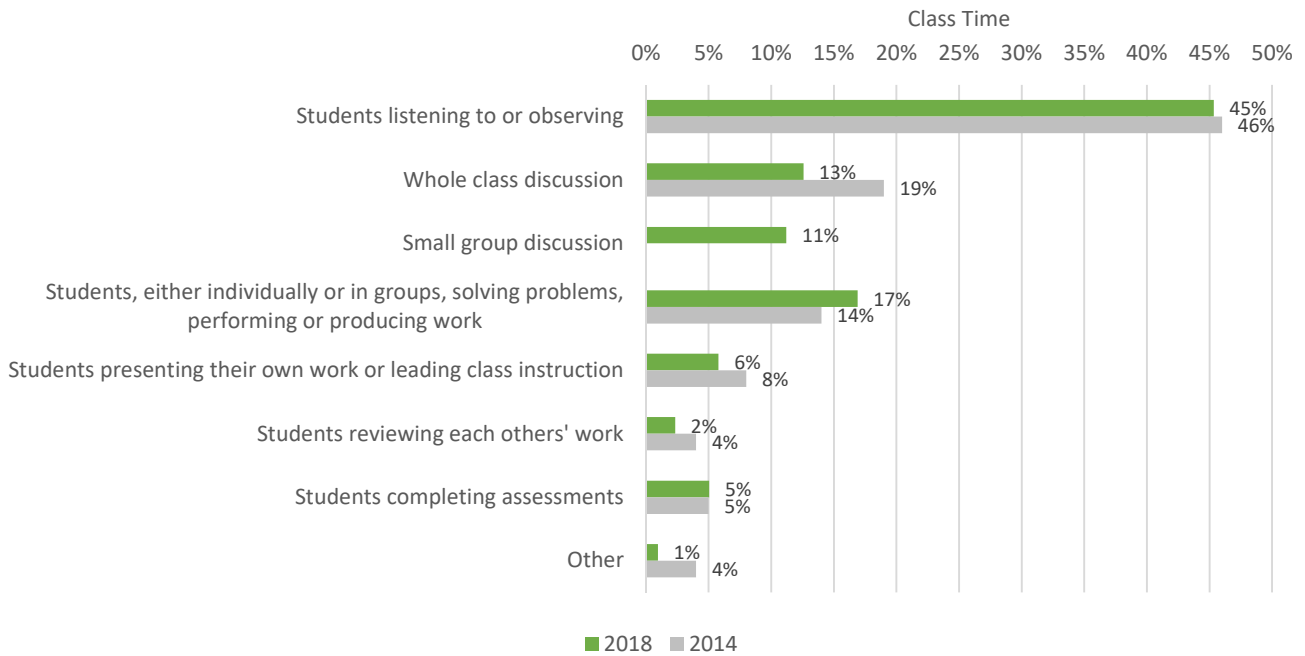
Full wording of response options (in order presented below):

- Students listening to or observing an instructor, TA or other non-student lecturing, performing a demonstration, recorded content, etc.
- The instructor/TA asking the entire class questions or students asking the instructor/TA questions
- Students participating in small group discussion
- Students, either individually or in groups, solving problems, engaging in experiential learning, performing or producing work (e.g. writing, field work, lab experiments, simulations, studio time, worksheets, etc.)
- Students presenting their own work or leading class instruction
- Students reviewing each other's work
- Students completing assessments (e.g. quizzes, tests, exams)
- Other

Average % of Class Time Devoted to Specified Activities  
Comparison of 2018 Responses by Course Type Assigned by Survey



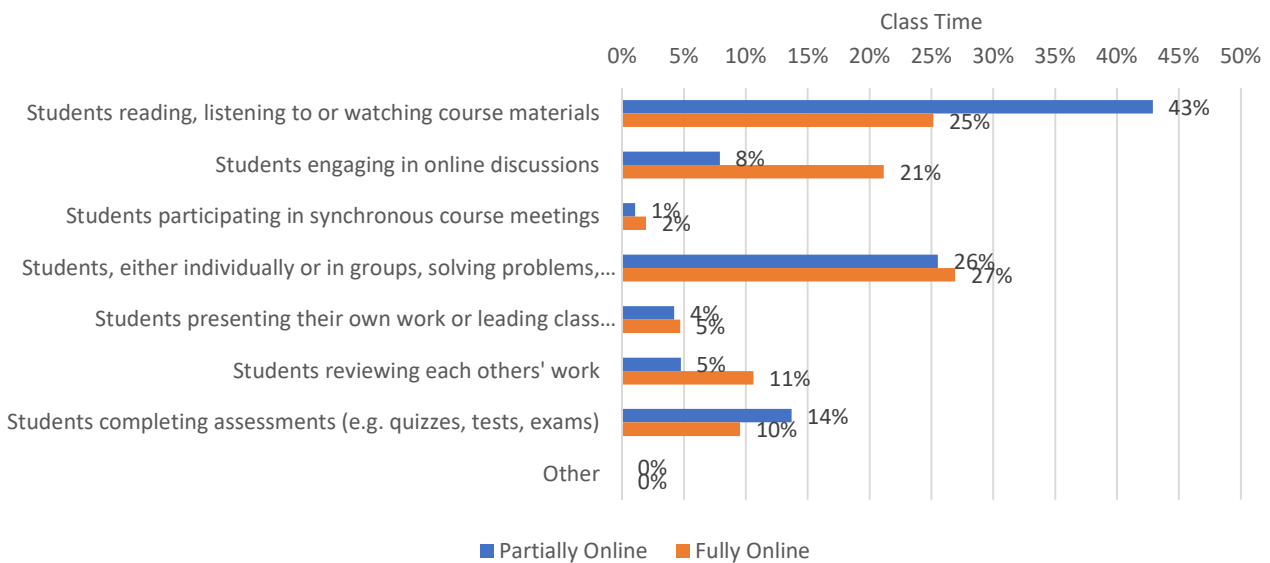
### Average % of Class Time Devoted to Specified Activities Comparison of 2014 & 2018 Responses\*



\* 2014 survey only asked about discussion in general. 2018 survey asked about whole class and small group discussion as separate categories. 2014 data is listed under category "Whole class discussion".

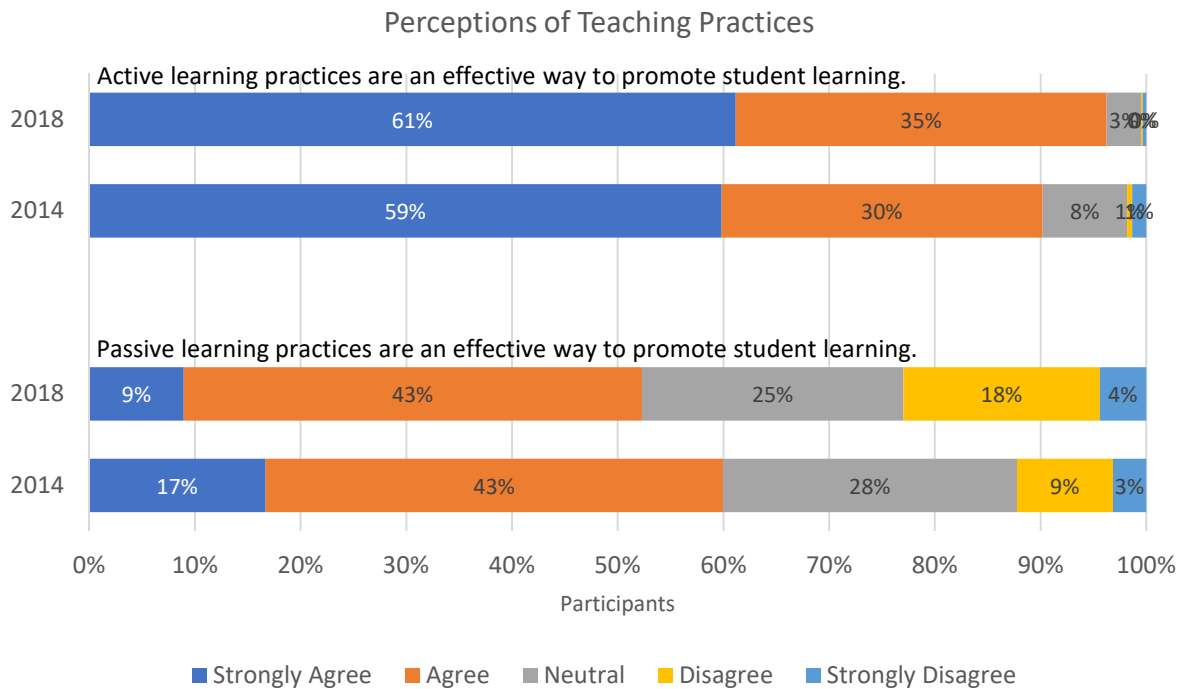
Question: Please estimate how online class time is structured for students in [course type assigned by survey].  
Response numbers for this question are too small to report breakdown by course type assigned by survey.

### Average % of Time Instructor Expects Students to Spend on Specified Course Activities Comparison of 2018 Responses for Partially and Fully Online Course



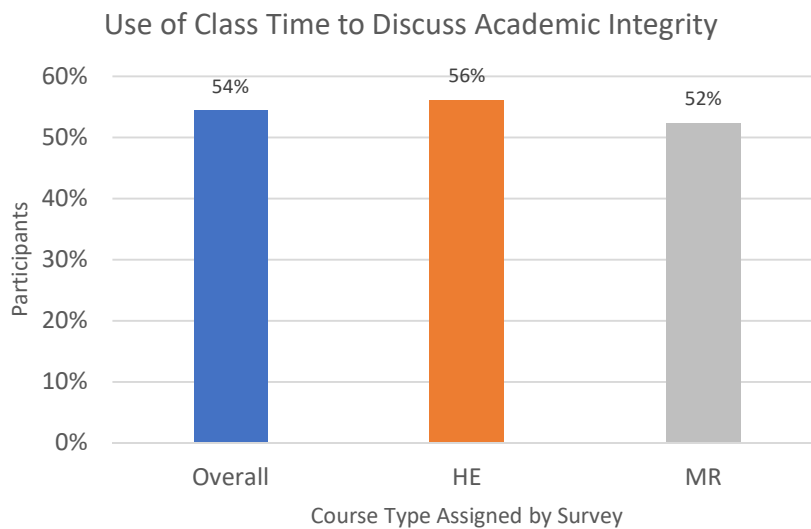
## 4.2 Perception of the Effectiveness of Passive and Active Learning

Question: Please rate your level of agreement with each of the statements below.



## 4.3 Academic Integrity

Question: During class time, I talk with students about academic integrity.

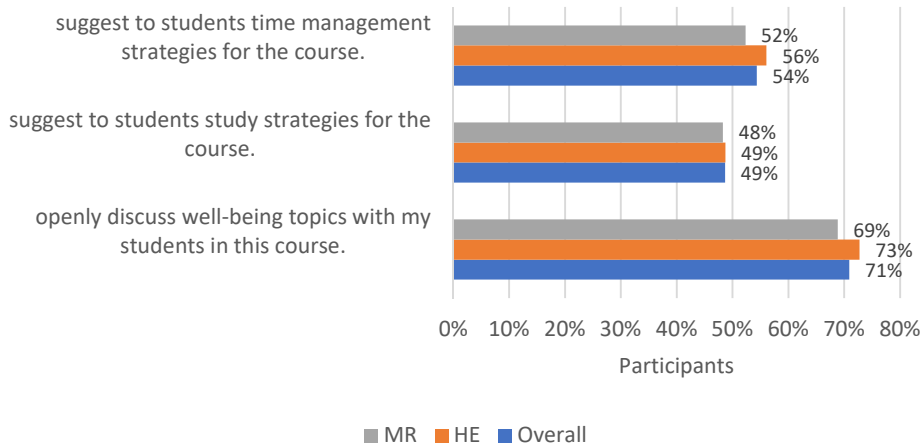


**86%** report agreement with the statement “It is important to discuss academic integrity with students.” (43% strongly agree, 43% agree)

## 4.4 Strategies to Promote Student Well-Being

Question: During class time, I...

Use of Strategies to Promote Student Well-Being  
% Positive Responses by Course Type Assigned by Survey



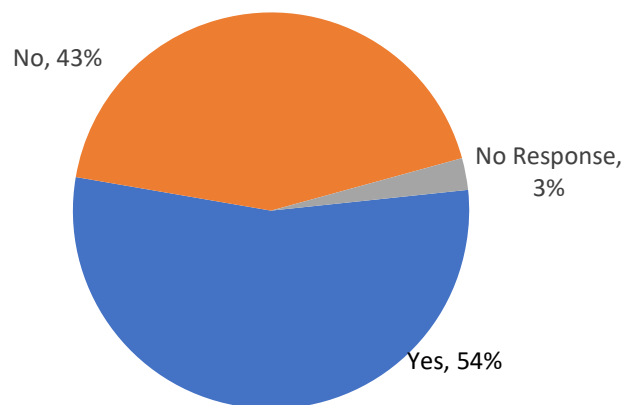
**49%** indicate knowing “most or all of my students’ names in this class.” (43% HE, 54% MR)

**86%** report agreement with the statement “My teaching practices have an impact on student well-being.” (40% strongly agree, 46% agree)

## 4.5 Teaching Spaces

Question: Do the physical spaces in which you teach support the practices you’d like to employ?

Satisfaction with Physical Spaces and Ability to Support Teaching Practices



Open-ended responses to “Why or Why not?” For participants responding “yes”, the top five reasons provided:

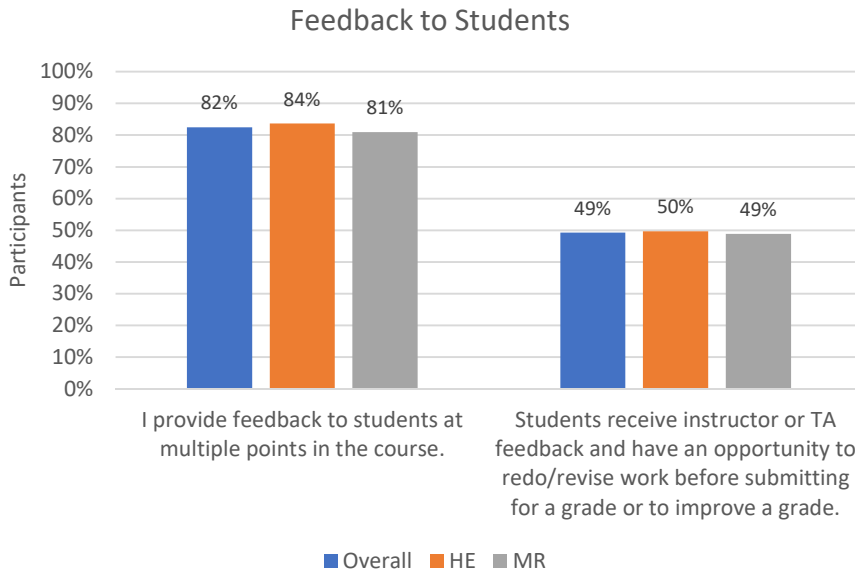
1. Space is well equipped, comfortable (temperature, lighting, acoustics), modern, good design or set up
2. Space has the right technology and AV
3. Space allows (inter)active learning activities (e.g. movable furniture, good acoustics)
4. Participant reported adapting teaching practices to room
5. Space is the right size for number of students

For participants responding “no”, the top five reasons provided:

1. Space does not allow (inter)active learning activities (e.g. fixed furniture facing forward, bad acoustics, lecture style halls)
2. Space is poorly equipped (not enough black/whiteboards, chairs), uncomfortable (safety issues, noise, dark, cold, too hot), old, has bad design or set up (small screens, high boards, unable to use both board and screens at the same time)
3. Space is either too small or too big (overcrowded or empty classrooms interfere with student interaction and engagement)
4. Space is lacking or has outdated technology and AV
5. Space is overbooked (not enough classrooms at peak times)

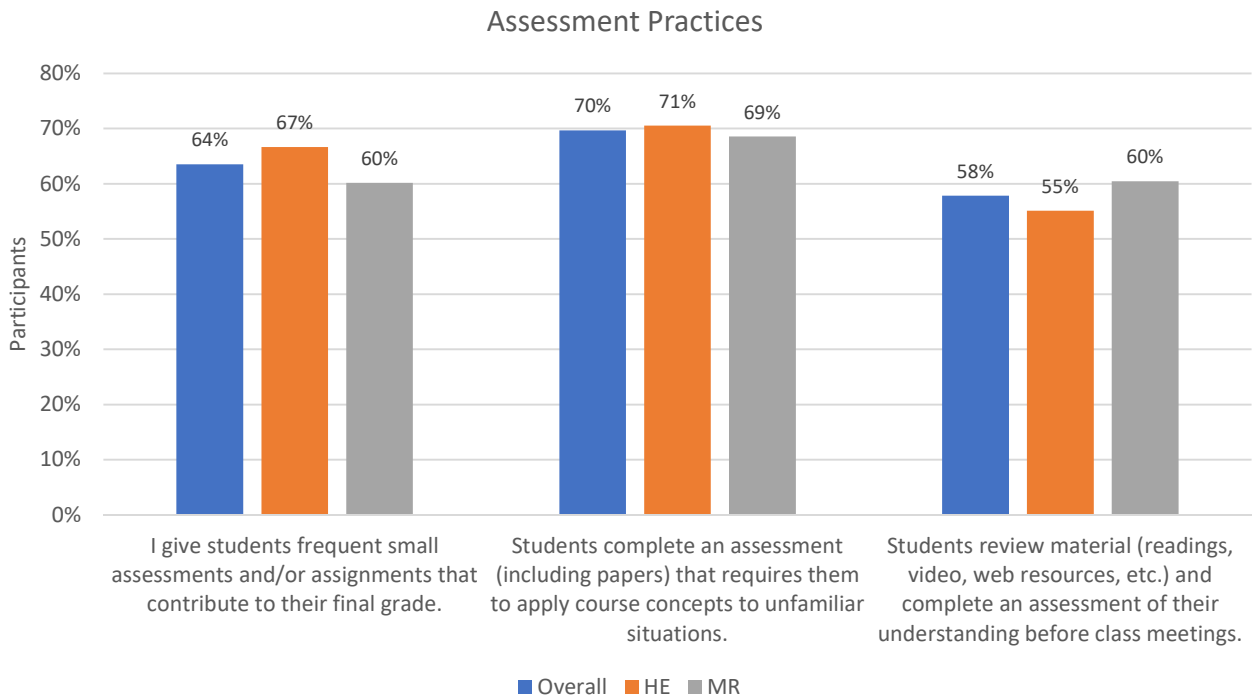
## 5 Feedback and Assessment

### 5.1 Feedback



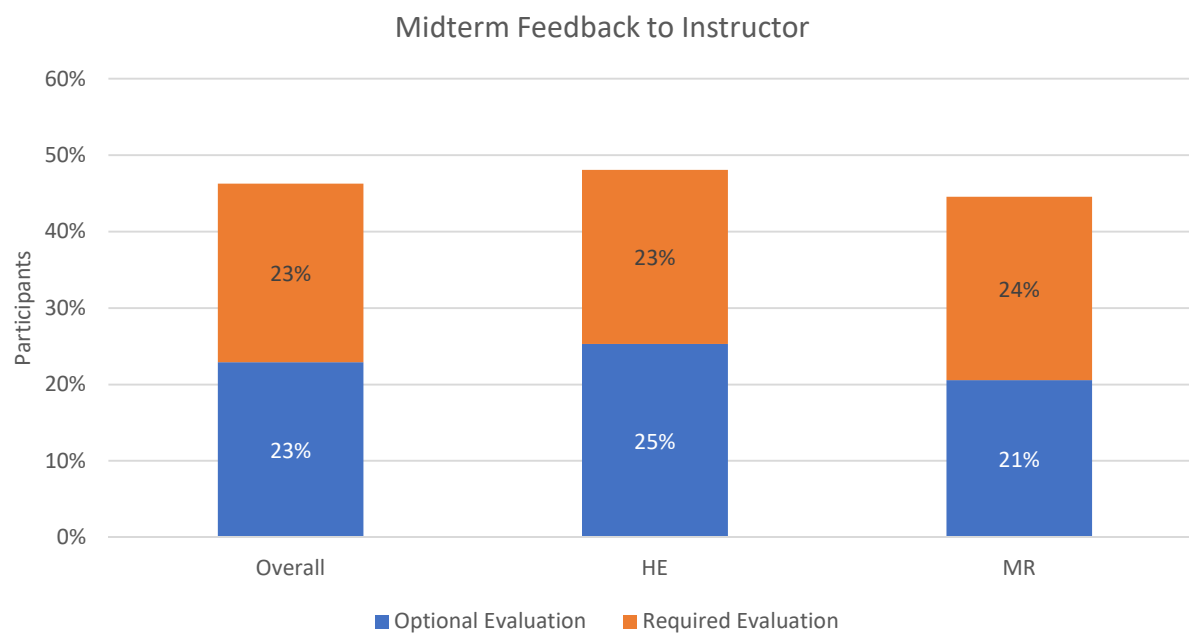
**~96%** report agreement with the statement “It is important to provide students with feedback at multiple points in a course.” (64% strongly agree, 32% agree)

### 5.2 Assessment Practices



### 5.3 Feedback on Teaching

Question: Students complete a midterm teaching evaluation or midterm survey about the course.





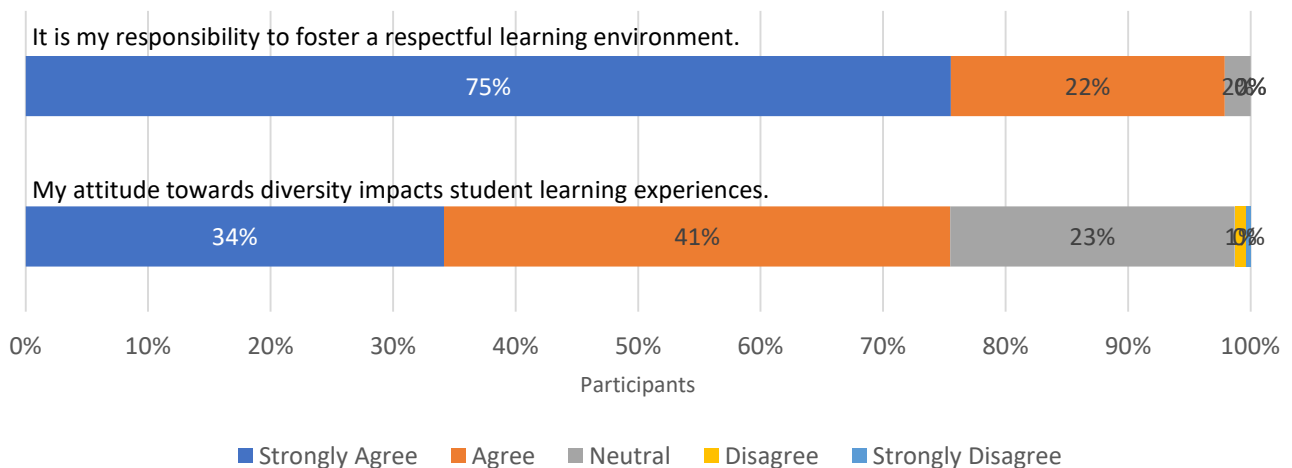
## 6 Equity and Diversity

### 6.1 Diversity

Question: Please indicate if any of the following are descriptive of your teaching in [course type assigned by survey].  
*Check all that apply.*

	Overall	HE	MR
I include materials or provide examples that reflect a range of diversity.	57%	59%	55%
I actively work to promote a classroom environment where diverse students feel included.	73%	73%	72%
I deliberately design my course materials, assignments and assessments to be accessible to students with diverse learning needs.	46%	47%	45%

#### Attitude and Perceptions of Responsibility



### 6.2 Indigeneity

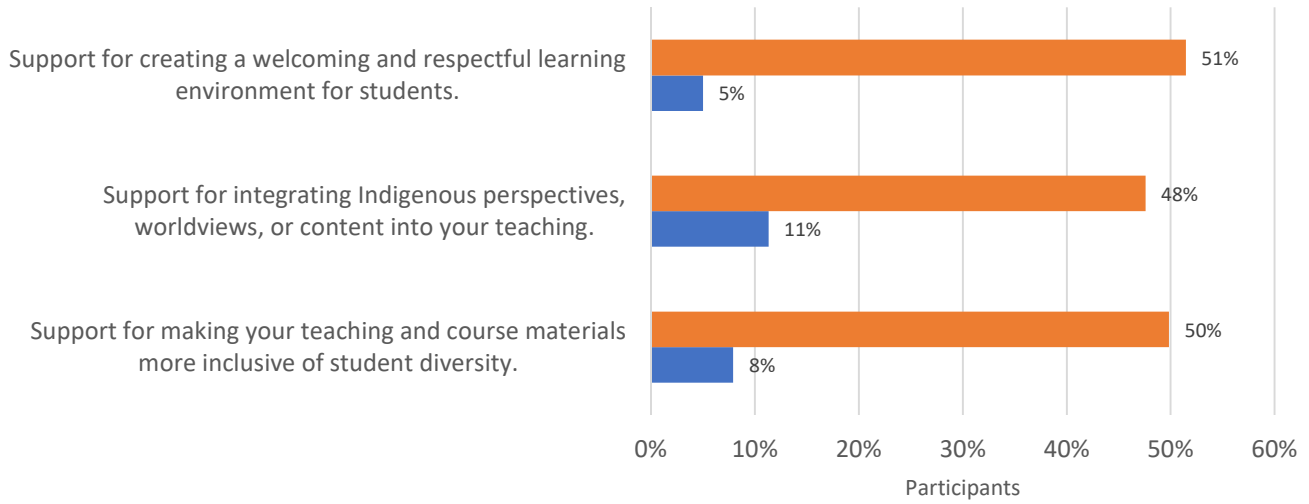
Question: Please indicate if any of the following are descriptive of your teaching in [course type assigned by survey].  
*Check all that apply.*

	Overall	HE	MR
Land acknowledgments in the syllabus, class meetings, or other materials.	22%	23%	21%
Case studies or examples involving Indigenous communities or individuals.	30%	32%	27%
Indigenous perspectives, world views, and contemporary realities relevant to the subject area.	29%	30%	27%
Opportunities to connect with Indigenous communities.	7%	7%	8%
Opportunities to generate research or knowledge in partnership with Indigenous communities.	6%	5%	6%

### 6.3 Demand for Support

Question: To help inform professional development opportunities, we'd like to better understand the faculty interest in specialized support. Please indicate your interest in the following types of support.

Demand for Support Around Diversity and Inclusion

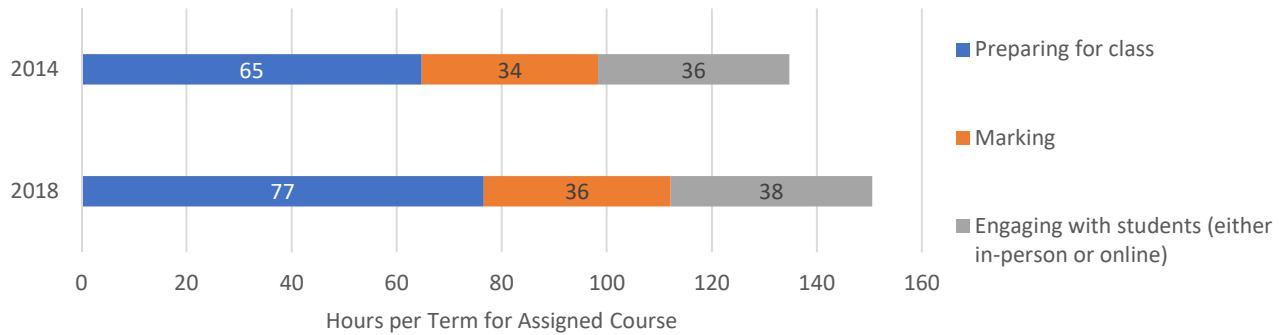


■ I would be interested in attending a workshop in this area. ■ I would like one-on-one support in this area.

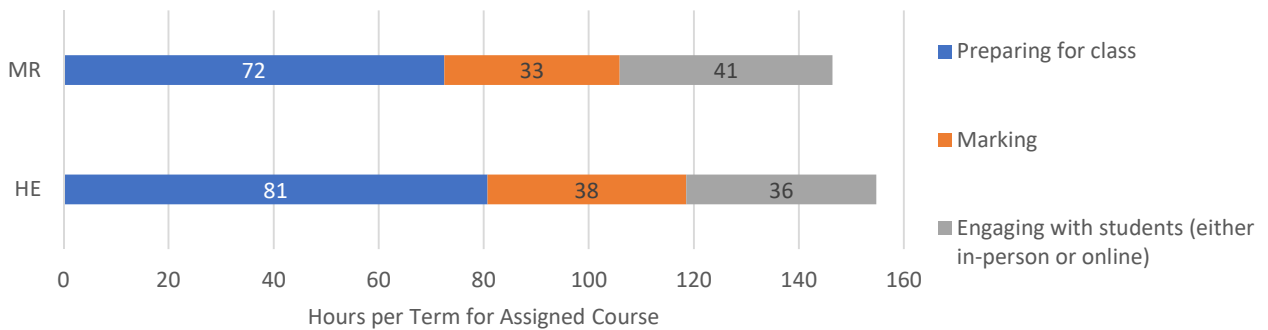
## 7 Instructor Time

Question: During a typical teaching term, please estimate the hours per term you spend on the following teaching-related activities in [course type assigned by survey].

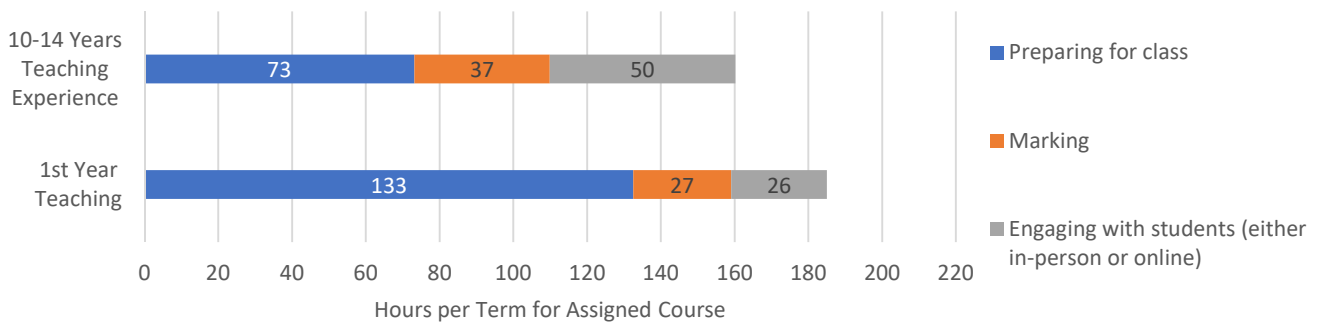
Instructor Time Spent on Course-Related Activities  
Comparison of 2014 & 2018 Responses



Instructor Time Spent on Course-Related Activities  
Comparison of 2018 Responses by Course Type Assigned by Survey



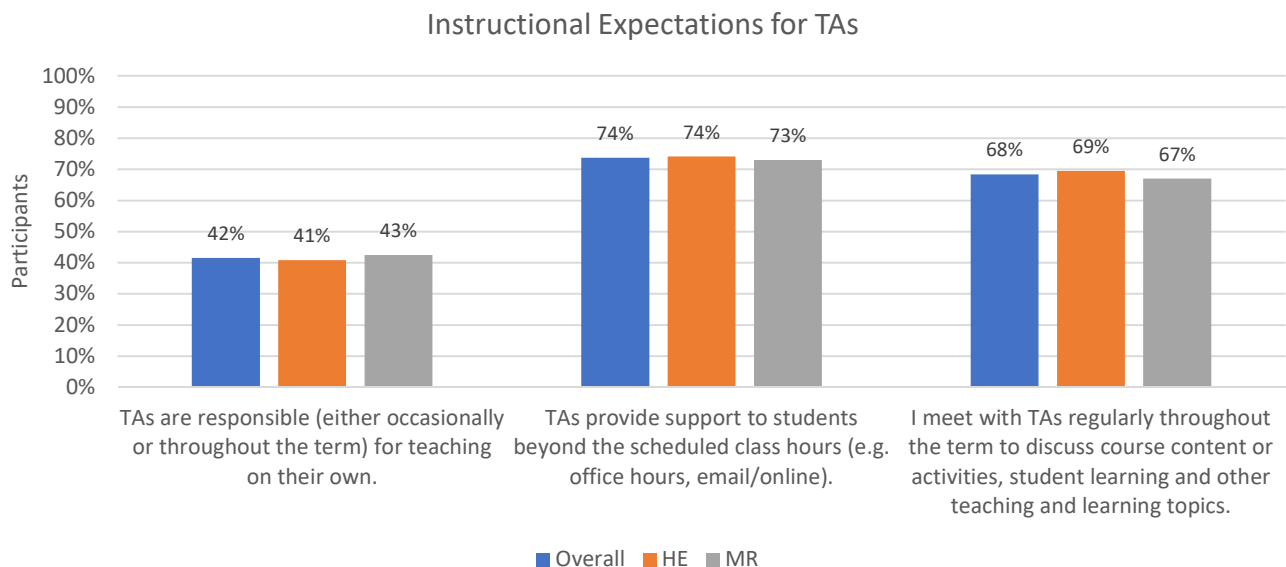
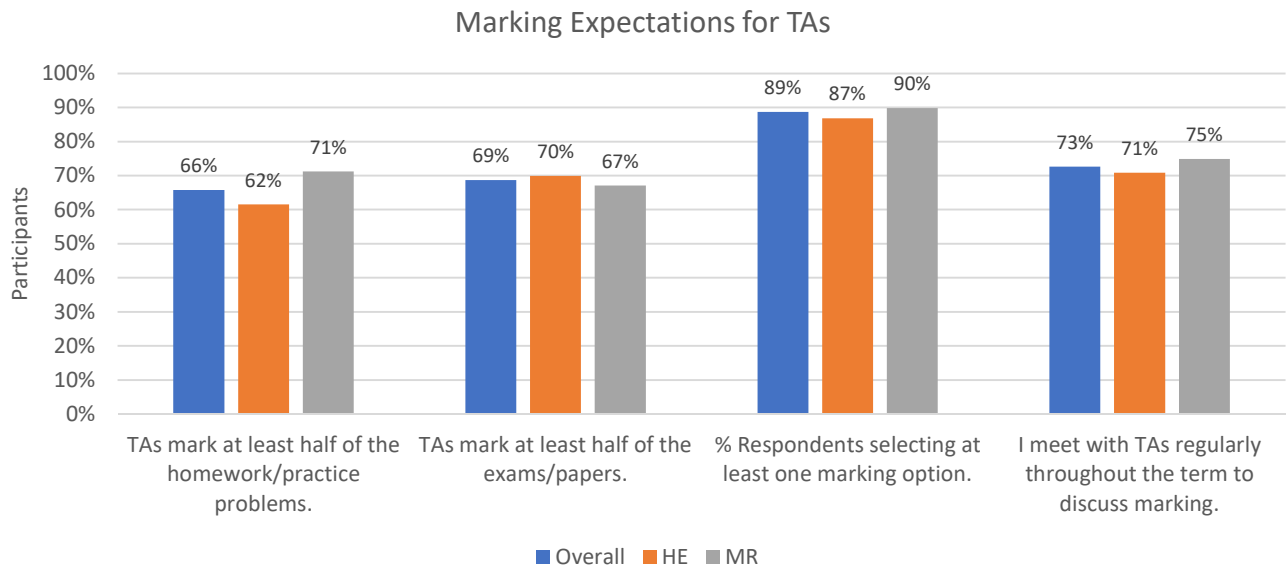
Instructor Time Spent on Course-Related Activities  
Comparison of 2018 Responses by Years of Teaching Experience



## 8 Teaching Assistants

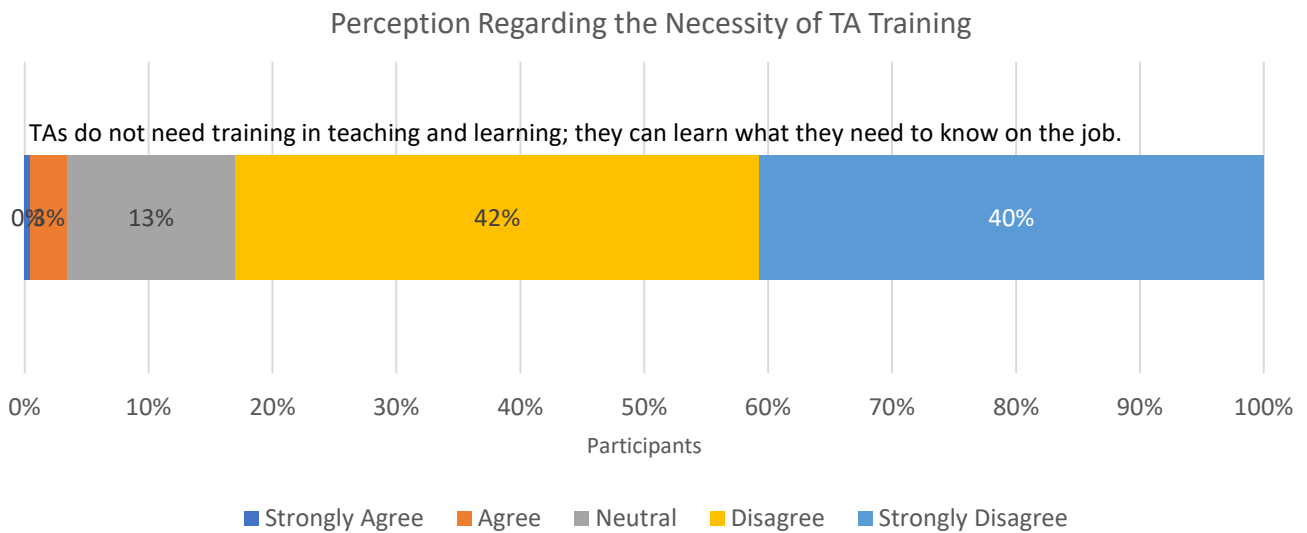
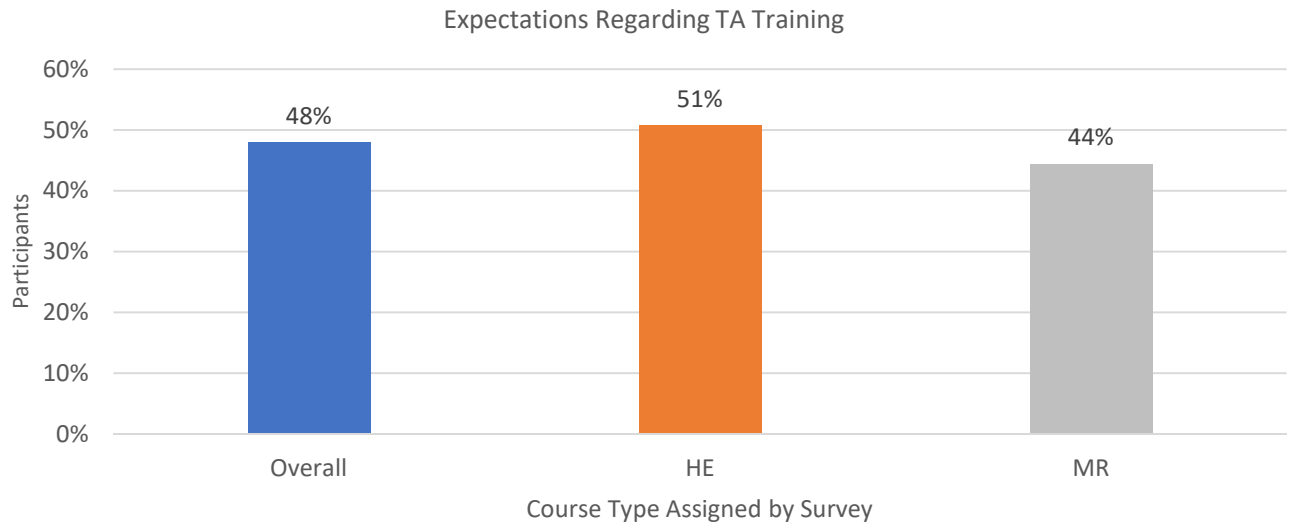
**60%** of respondents reported having TAs (or others serving in a similar role) in the course they were assigned to provide data on by the survey (68% HE, 52% MR).

### 8.1 TA Responsibilities



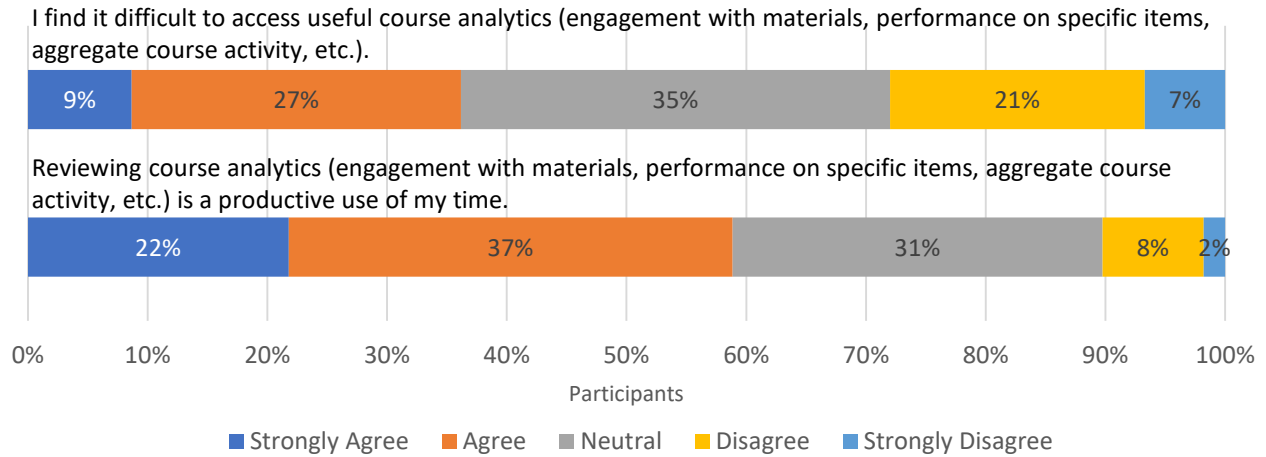
## 8.2 TA Training

Question: TAs are required to attend either general or course-specific training before or shortly after the start of the term.



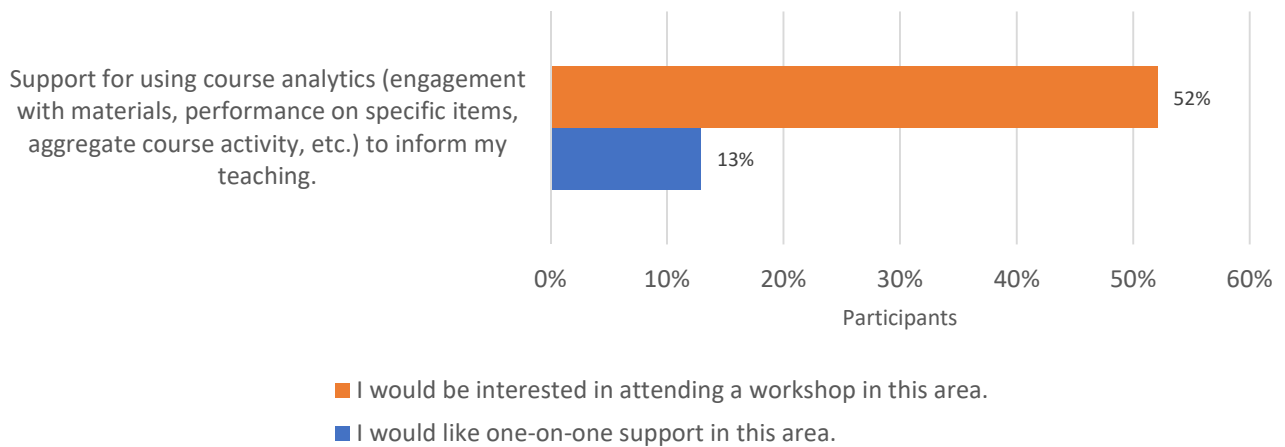
## 9 Analytics

### Perceptions Regarding Analytics



Question: To help inform professional development opportunities, we'd like to better understand the faculty interest in specialized support. Please indicate your interest in the following types of support.

### Demand for Analytics Support



## 10 Practice Improvement

### 10.1 Engagement in Practice Improvement Activities

Question: Please indicate if you have engaged in the following activities:

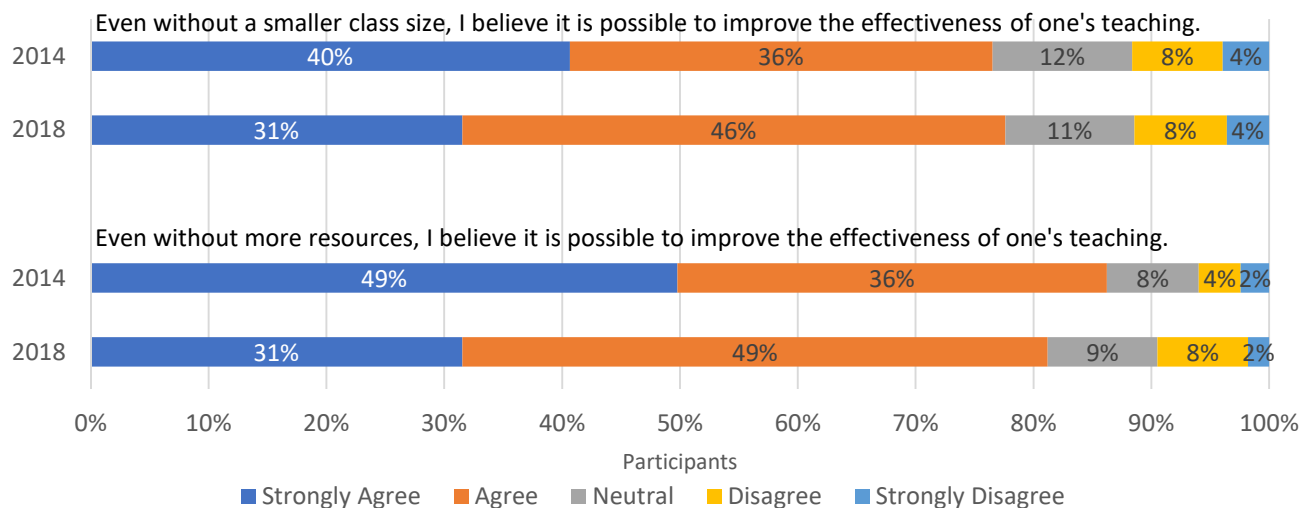
	Yes, in the past 12 months	Yes, but not in the past 12 months	No, but I'd like to
Teaching development events (i.e. talks, workshops, seminars)	53%	27%	10%
Teaching and learning-focused conferences	28%	21%	23%
Having a peer observe and provide feedback on your teaching	28%	43%	18%
Observing someone else's teaching	52%	25%	16%
Connecting with a mentor or other person to go for advice about teaching	36%	26%	19%
Connecting with a cohort of peers interested in improving teaching and learning	39%	18%	25%

**73%** agreement with the statement “I use research about student learning to refine my teaching practice.” (34% strongly agree, 40% agree)

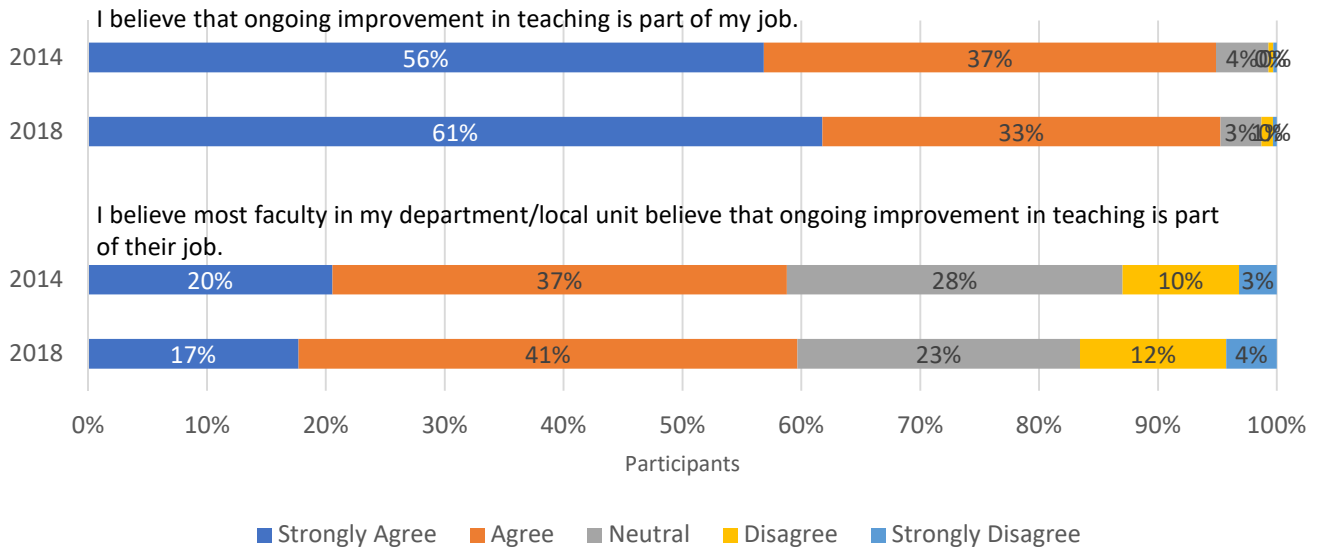
**39%** agreement with the statement “I find it difficult to incorporate innovative or new teaching practices due to the other requirements of my appointment (service, research, etc.).” (14% strongly agree, 25% agree)

### 10.2 Perceptions of the Accountability for and Factors Influencing Practice Improvement

Perceptions of Factors Influencing Ability to Improve Teaching



## Perceptions of Accountability for Teaching Improvement



### 10.3 Factors Influencing Teaching Practice Improvement

Question: Briefly describe one factor that has improved your teaching.

*The top ten factors for improvement cited by participants are listed below. Percentage indicates the fraction of mentions based on the total responses received for this question (n=545).*

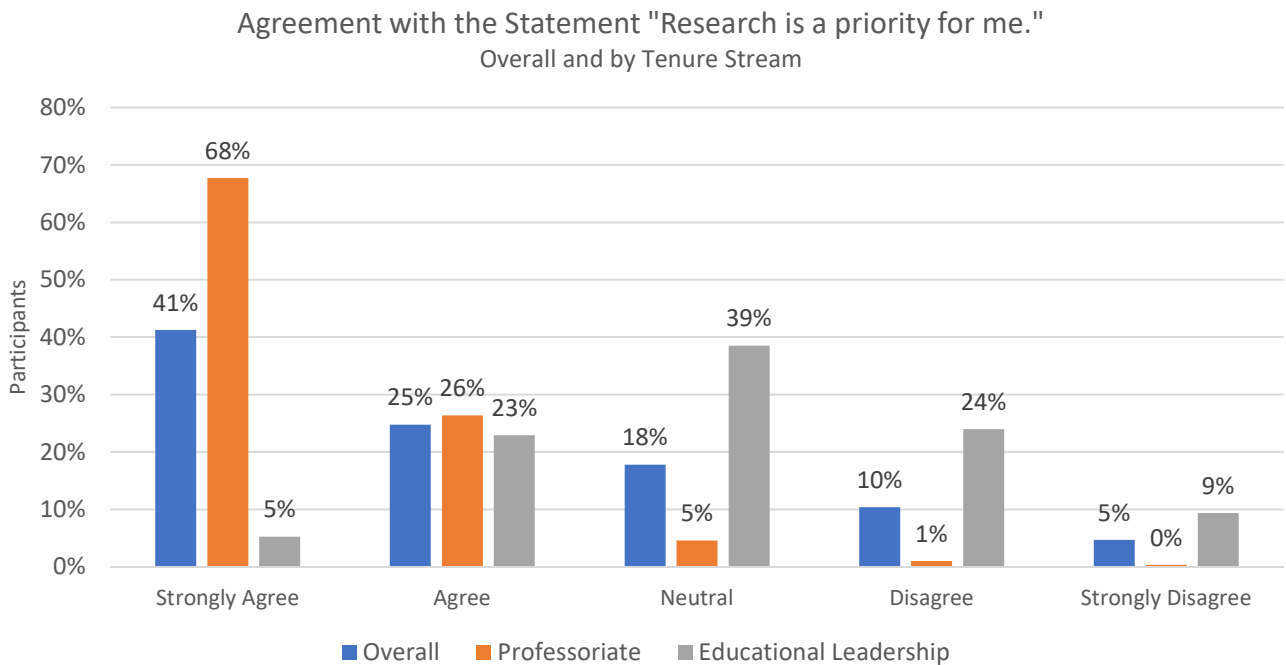
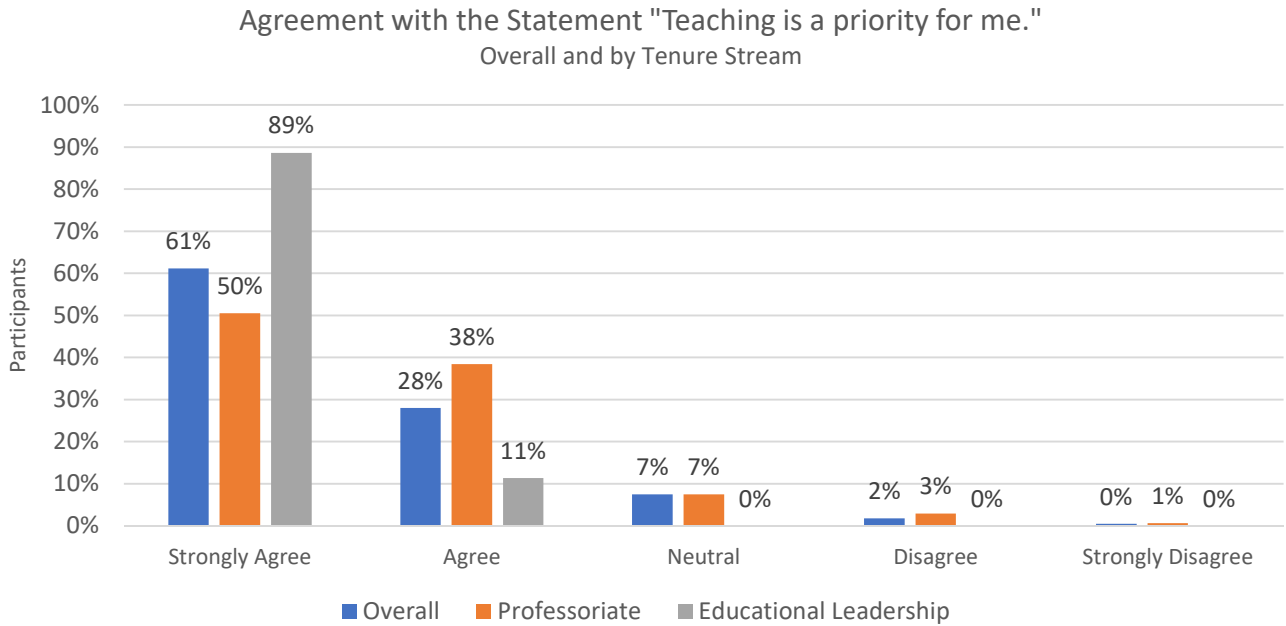
- 17%** Active engagement and discussion with other faculty
- 14%** Continuing interaction with students, responding to formal and informal student feedback
- 13%** Teaching experience, personal and professional maturity
- 11%** Participation in professional development activities
- 10%** Adding or adjusting approaches, pedagogies, or resources
- 6%** Engaging in scholarly teaching practice
- 5%** Incorporation of student-centered pedagogies
- 5%** Integration of learning technologies in the classroom
- 4%** Teaching in collaboration with other faculty
- 4%** Availability of funds and support for teaching

For representative feedback, please see Appendix A.



# 11 Perceptions of Whether Teaching Is Valued at UBC

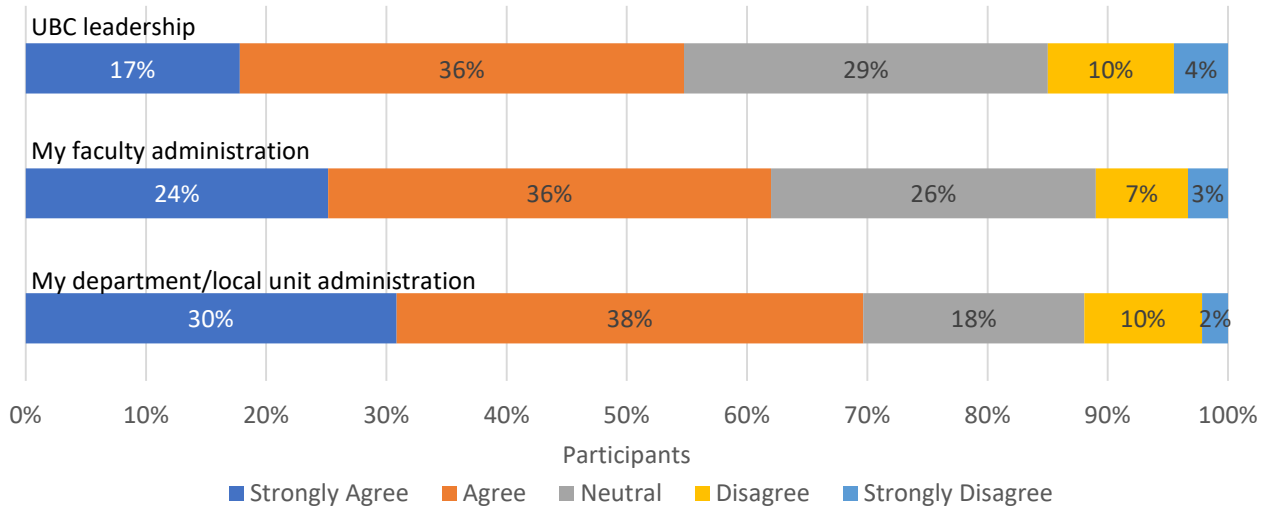
## 11.1 Personal Priorities



## 11.2 Perception of Institutional Recognition of Importance of Teaching

Question: \_\_\_\_ recognizes the importance of teaching by supporting faculty who want to improve their teaching

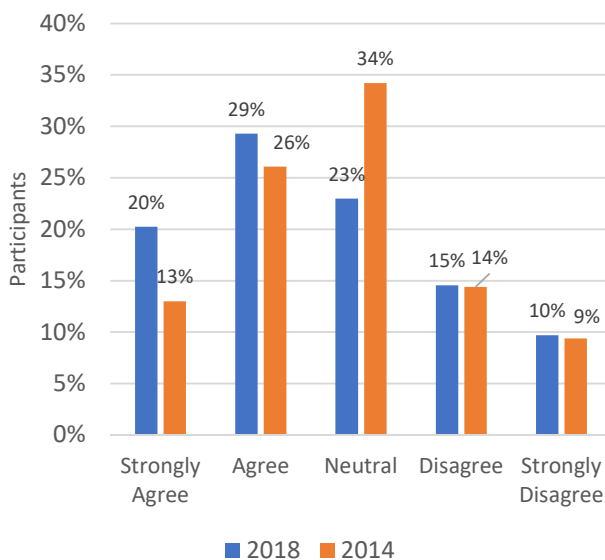
Perception of Institutional Support for Teaching Improvement



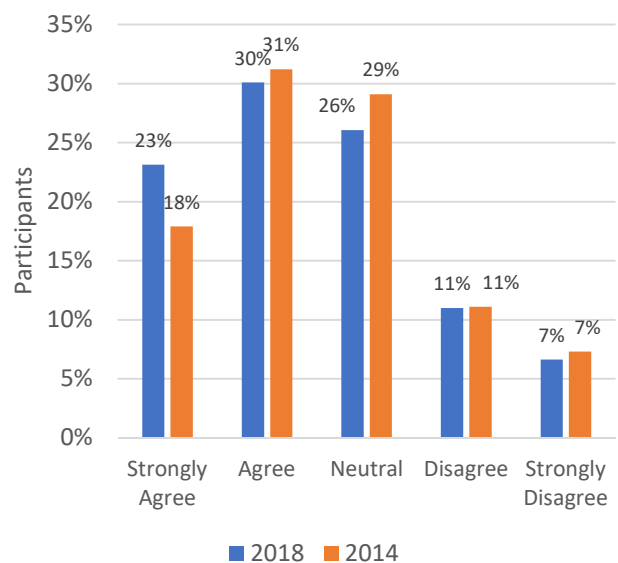
Question: In my unit, effective teaching plays a meaningful role in the annual review and salary decisions for faculty in the same stream as me.

Question: In my unit, effective teaching plays a meaningful role in the promotion and tenure processes for faculty in the same stream as me.

Perception of Teaching's Impact on Annual Review and Salary Decisions



Perception of Teaching's Impact on Tenure and Promotion Decisions



## 11.3 Recommendations for Change

Question: What changes could be made at UBC to help you teach more effectively?

*The top ten recommended changes cited by participants are listed below. Percentage indicates the fraction of mentions based on the total of responses received for this question (n=420).*

- 15%** Institutional culture move towards recognition, value, and reward of good teaching
- 15%** Reduction in competing priorities and responsibilities as well as in yearly teaching load
- 13%** Increase access to funds and support for teaching
- 13%** Reduction in number of students per class
- 8%** Improvement of classrooms and teaching facilities
- 5%** A different, more reliable, and motivating approach to the evaluation of teaching
- 5%** Increase accessibility of professional development opportunities
- 5%** More TA availability, support, and opportunities for growth
- 5%** More support to deal with administrative tasks
- 5%** Better timetables and course schedules

For representative feedback, please see Appendix B.

## 12 Contact Information

For more information about findings contained in this report, please contact one of the report authors using the information below:

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## 13 Appendix A

Listed below are the top ten factors for improvement cited by participants when asked to “Briefly describe one factor that has improved your teaching.” Percentage in parentheses indicates the fraction of mentions based on the total of responses received for this question (n=545).

### **1. Active engagement and discussion with other faculty (17%)**

*“Sitting in classes taught by senior colleagues who are good teachers.”*

*“Interacting with teachers who are passionate about their job and who have thought deeply about pedagogical practices.”*

### **2. Continuing interaction with students, responding to formal and informal student feedback (14%)**

*“Feedback from students. I talk to my students one-on-one frequently and I ask how they're doing, if there's parts of my lectures that could have been taught better, what are student's not understanding. It's sometimes hard for me to remember what level of knowledge I had at their stage of life so I like to make sure that I'm teaching at the proper level so that the students can understand.”*

*“Student feedback: I take their criticism and positive feedback seriously and revise/improve my own teaching a lot based on their comments.”*

### **3. Teaching experience, personal and professional maturity (13%)**

*“Teaching the same class multiple times-- each year, there is the opportunity to keep improving and making the format more interactive.”*

*“Having years of experience (allows me to be more comfortable in front of a class).”*

### **4. Participation in professional development activities (11%)**

*“On-going opportunities to attend professional development workshops/events and interact with faculty/staff who share experiences/strategies for teaching practice development.”*

*“Attending teaching and learning workshops on campus, whether through CTLT or elsewhere. In particular, the Course Design Institute has had a significant impact on how I design my courses. Sessions on inclusive teaching and Universal Design have also impacted how I design my courses and how I respond to students' diverse needs and requests for time, resources, etc.”*

### **5. Adding or adjusting approaches, pedagogies, or resources (10%)**

*“Realizing that “less is more”: i.e., assigning fewer readings and spending more time discussing them.”*

*“The ability to expose students to outdoor activities in support of socio-ecological understanding and first-hand experience.”*

### **6. Engaging in scholarly teaching practice (6%)**

*“Reviewing research-based best practices in university teaching.”*

*“Reflective practice - using literature and analysis to examine outcomes in the classroom and evaluate that against my expectations.”*

### **7. Incorporation of student-centered pedagogies (5%)**

*“The belief that the less I talk and the more students engage with in-class activities, the more learning occurs.”*

*“In-class discussion provides real time feedback of students have me tailor the scope and depth of the lecture to keep it interesting.”*

### **8. Integration of learning technologies in the classroom (5%)**

*“Use of technology in the right contexts. That is, it doesn't always work. It depends on the content of the class, more than anything else. When I have found the right technology for the content for a class, then my teaching improves.”*

*“Online engagement through Piazza markedly increased student participation in answering/asking questions outside of lecture.”*

**9. Teaching in collaboration with other faculty (4%)**

*“Collaborative teaching where I am able to learn from my peers.”*

*“Co-teaching with an instructor who shares a strong interest in improving the course and applying innovative and evidence-based approaches.”*

**10. Availability of funds and support for teaching (4%)**

*“Having access to resources through a TLEF and a support community at CTLT has allowed me to access, explore, and implement new teaching approaches that otherwise I would not have been able to.”*

*“Access to expertise of others in faculty e.g., teaching and learning fellows, science education specialists.”*

## 14 Appendix B

Listed below are the top ten changes cited by participants when asked to “What changes could be made at UBC to help you teach more effectively?” Percentage in parentheses indicates the fraction of mentions based on the total of responses received for this question (n=420).

### **1. Institutional culture move towards recognition, value, and reward of good teaching (15%)**

*“Research faculty currently have little to no incentive to improve their teaching. As long as teaching is not prioritized in tenure/promotion reviews, research faculty will continue to ignore it. Currently, as long as one is not a disaster in the classroom, it seems that anything goes.”*

*“More value for teaching stream faculty, it is as if we do not matter - look at even the salary difference between teaching stream and research stream faculty plus whose work is valued when the administrators talk!”*

### **2. Reduction in competing priorities and responsibilities as well as in yearly teaching load (15%)**

*“The course load for lecturers is counter to the excellence and research and professional development required to teach effectively. Change the course load!”*

*“Recognize/acknowledge/allocate/secure time for preparation, grading, faculty and student meetings. We are only recognized for Face-to-face time with students yet expected to do the rest on our own time (e.g. update/change curriculum, respond to accreditation needs, prep meeting reports, time to learn new technology (Vista -Connect-Canvas) etc.)”*

### **3. Increase access to funds and support for teaching (13%)**

*“Support with ever-changing course-management systems, assistance with updating my course materials for greater interaction, incorporating videos and gaming, virtual reality options for learning.”*

*“Hire more people to teach in my area so that I can spend more time improving each of my own lectures.”*

### **4. Reduction in number of students per class (13%)**

*“Smaller class sizes would allow more human-level relationships, more assignments/feedback/low-stakes assessment, and better teaching.”*

*“Reduce class sizes, or at least cap them. While we are able to improve our teaching in large class sizes, the additional workload of the additional administrative load is absolutely prohibitive to any kind of work-life balance.”*

### **5. Improvement of classrooms and teaching facilities (13%)**

*“Invest in more classroom space. The inability to find appropriate classroom space at times that are consistent with faculty obligations has been bad for a while, but in the last two or three years has become completely unacceptable. If UBC wants us to teach, it should provide the classrooms for us to teach in.”*

*“Classroom availability and layout flexibility. Our classroom spaces are too few, too dated, lack seating configuration and table flexibility. We lack large lecture halls that enable departments to manage the resource trade-off between some very large classes so as to offer smaller, more enriching experiences in their curriculum.”*

### **6. A different and more reliable and motivating approach to the evaluation of teaching (6%)**

*“Moving away from over-reliance on student evaluations to a more holistic analysis of teaching outcomes.”*

*“Effectiveness of teaching is never measured or discussed. We get meaningless student evaluations and softball peer reviews. Let's figure out how to determine what helps students actually retain information and use it afterwards.”*

### **7. Increase accessibility of professional development opportunities (7%)**

*“Creating mechanisms for workshops/seminars about teaching and learning to be accessible remotely. Not physically being at UBC Vancouver campus has resulted in fewer resources being available.”*

*“More pressure from Heads and Directors to participate in teaching improvement activities, such as workshops.”*

**8. More TA availability, support and opportunities for growth (7%)**

"TA contract time for training, in my humble opinion this should be a number of (paid) hours for training given to a general appointment".

"I do not know why there aren't discussion sections for my TAs to lead. They would learn how to teach better, the students could express their ideas and push each other... win/win."

**9. More support to deal with administrative tasks (6%)**

*"Administrative support for faculty (research, teaching, service areas) to free up more creative time-- we are kept very busy with miscellaneous tasks that take time away from creative endeavours in teaching and research."*

*"Empower program/administrative assistants to fully address the administrative aspects of the course and allow faculty to spend their time improving their teaching and engaging with students."*

**10. Better timetables and course schedules (6%)**

*"More flexibility in course schedule changes (nearly impossible to change MWF to TuTh course or vice versa)."*

*"Change teaching schedules. 50 min. slots are a waste of everyone's time. I spend as much time commuting as I do teaching. Update to 2-3 hour blocks once a week across all departments."*