College of Marin Spring 2020 Faculty Remote Instruction Survey Results

Introduction

In March 2020, College of Marin moved all face-to-face courses to a distance education format to comply with statewide emergency measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In May 2020, an online survey was administered to 260 COM faculty with face-to-face course sections in Spring 2020 who underwent the transition to teaching remotely.

The purpose of the survey was to gauge faculty response to remote instruction, gather information on technologies and strategies faculty found effective or challenging, inform efforts to conduct remote instruction training over summer 2020, and give faculty the opportunity to request equipment and technology needed to effectively continue remote instruction in Fall 2020. 130 faculty completed the survey, for a 50% response rate. Response rates varied by department (see Response Rates by Department, page 3). Therefore, the survey results are overrepresentative of faculty from ESL/Noncredit ESL, Performing Arts, Behavioral Sciences, and English/Humanities, and underrepresentative of faculty from Health Sciences, Kinesiology/Health Education, Physical Science, and Social Science.

Key Findings

Prior experience

- Most of the faculty responding to the survey had little to no prior experience in remote instruction prior to the transition. 58% had none; 18% had limited experience, and 22% had taught 4 or more courses prior to Spring 2020.

Use and effectiveness of Instructional methods and technology

- Almost all faculty respondents used Zoom and Canvas, and a majority rated them as effective tools. Those who struggled cited unreliable high speed internet (for both instructors and students), lack of feedback from seeing student reactions during lectures, the need for more training, and difficulty engaging students in discussions.
- Most faculty (81%) held synchronous classes. The synchronous methods were rated as more effective overall; instructors felt they kept students engaged and connected, though some had students with conflicting schedules. Those who recorded sessions for students to view on their own time or held small group sessions at different times of the day reported these strategies worked well.
- Just over half of respondents used asynchronous methods (prerecorded lectures and discussion boards). These strategies were rated overall as less effective than synchronous methods, though most said they were at least somewhat effective. The main challenge with discussion boards was student participation and engagement. Technical issues with recording and posting lectures as well as video quality were challenges for some.

- 72% also used external lectures or website content, such as YouTube videos. Most rated them at least somewhat effective.
- 69% also used online quizzes or exams, and just under half rated them as very effective. Several mentioned challenges in proctoring exams because of scheduling and the ability to ensure academic integrity.

Feedback from students

- Most faculty (79%) had sought feedback from their students on their experience with the transition. Two-thirds asked for feedback about students' access to technology and about half asked about student engagement, communication, and specific course strategies and assignments.
- All respondents who received student feedback said they had adjusted their instructional methods in some way in response. The largest proportion (61%) said they allowed more flexibility in turning in assignments, and 48% sought additional training for Zoom and/or Canvas. Many also adjusted communication strategies, availability, and course formats.

Challenges

- The most challenging aspects of adapting face-to-face courses to online learning had to do with familiarity and comfort with new methods. Major challenges: 44% said their preference for face-to-face learning, and 28% said their face-to-face lessons or activities did not translating well to an online environment. A majority also felt that students hadn't been adequately available or responsive, citing this as a major or minor challenge in their courses.

Training needs

- More than half of respondents said training in ensuring equity/access/inclusion and blended course design would be very valuable. Training on engaging students, using Canvas, and accommodation strategies for students with disabilities were also among the top training topics.
- Assessment strategies, synchronous course design, and creating higher quality video recordings were also rated as vary valuable training topics.

Equipment needs

- The most pressing needs for equipment were access to better cameras/video recording equipment, followed by reliable high speed WiFi access and requests for laptops, monitors or other computer equipment at home.

Suggestions for further analysis:

- Review effectiveness ratings by prior instructor experience in remote instruction
- Compare instructor effectiveness ratings of technologies and strategies to student ratings of the same using the data from the student survey

Response Rates by Department

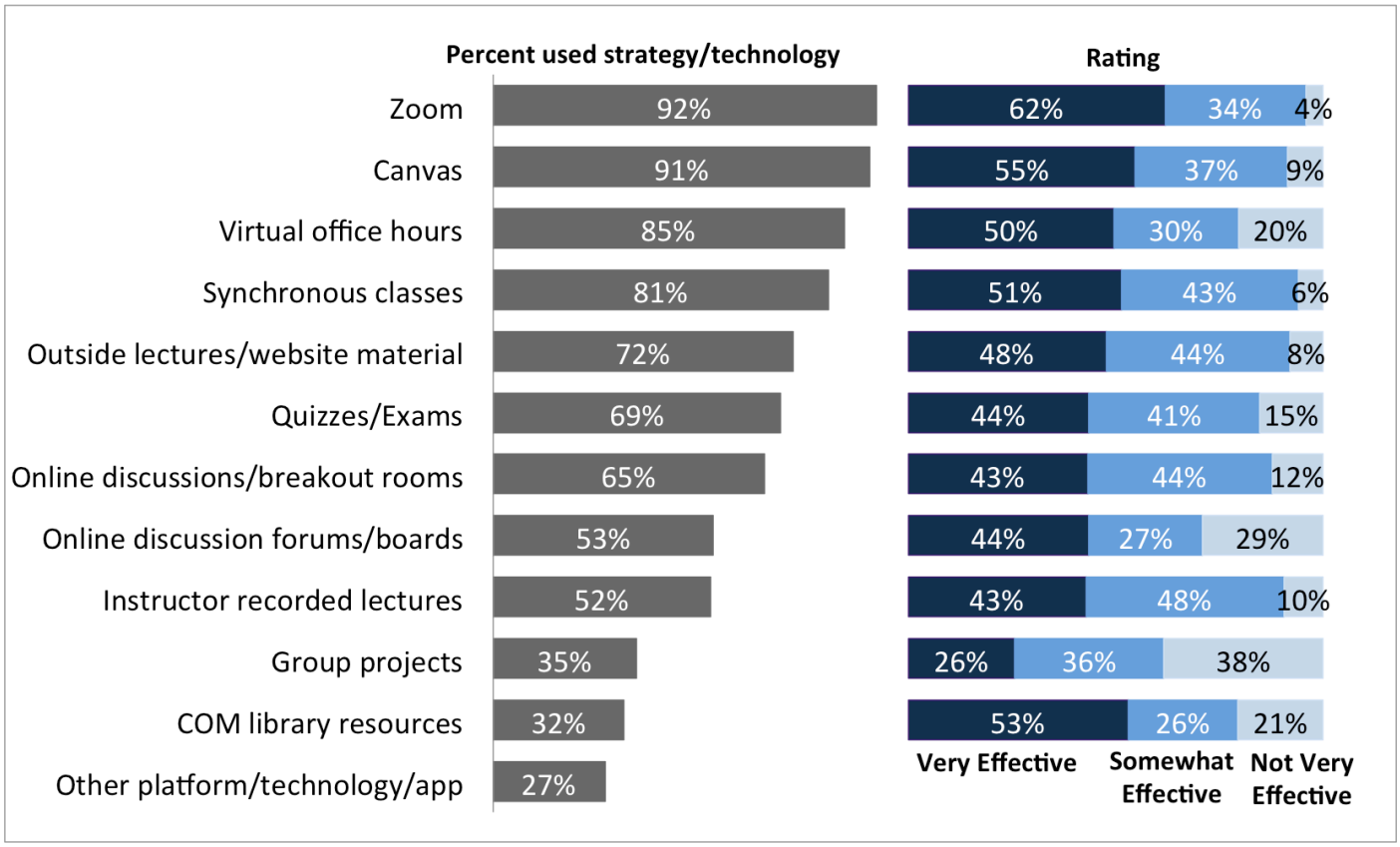
Department	# of completed surveys	Response Rate
Behavioral Science	8	73%
Business & Information Systems	7	47%
Career Education	9	47%
Communication/Film/Speech	5	83%
Counseling	1	17%
Early Childhood Education	3	60%
English Skills	1	50%
English as a Second Language	6	60%
English/Humanities	12	67%
Fine & Visual Arts	9	50%
Health Sciences	9	35%
Kin, Health Ed and Athletics	2	15%
Life & Earth Sciences	10	56%
Mathematics	7	58%
Noncredit ESL	14	61%
Performing Arts	12	71%
Physical Sciences	7	37%
Social Science	4	29%
World Languages & Cultures	4	44%
Total	**130**	**50%**

Question Responses

Q1. Prior to the Spring 2020 semester, how much experience in college-level online/remote instruction did you have?

	#	%
None at all	75	58%
Very limited experience (1-3 courses)	24	18%
Extensive experience (10 or more courses)	14	11%
Some experience (4-9 courses)	14	11%
No answer	3	2%
Total	**130**	**100%**

Q2. If you've used the following remote/online instructional strategies and tools for Spring 2020 courses that transitioned from in-person to remote instruction, how effective were they?



Q3. Thinking about the online/remote instructional methods that worked best, why do you think they were effective?

Response Categories (Coded from openended responses)	#	%
Synchronous course meetings, Zoom tools-fostered personal interaction and kept students engaged	53	40.8%
Canvas tools for communication, organizing course content and student assignments	15	11.5%
Instructor made consistent efforts to keep students engaged/connected	8	6.2%
Asynchronous lectures/assignments worked for students' schedules and allowed access for more students	7	5.4%
Blended (synchronous and asynchronous) methods worked well for content delivery and student engagement	7	5.4%
Used technology accessible to students and easy to use	5	3.8%
Instructor participated in training to learn remote instruction skills/technologies	4	3.1%
Timely communication/feedback to and from students	4	3.1%
Students made the effort and had the skills	4	3.1%
Students and instructor already had a good relationship prior to transition	3	2.3%
Program/instructor already used online tools	3	2.3%
Scheduled small group meetings/Offered synchronous course meetings on a flexible schedule	3	2.3%
Instruction improved with some experience and adaptation	2	1.5%
No idea-didn't get feedback from students	2	1.5%
Low number of students in the course	2	1.5%
Used technology/methods students already knew	2	1.5%
Well designed and developed course material	1	0.8%

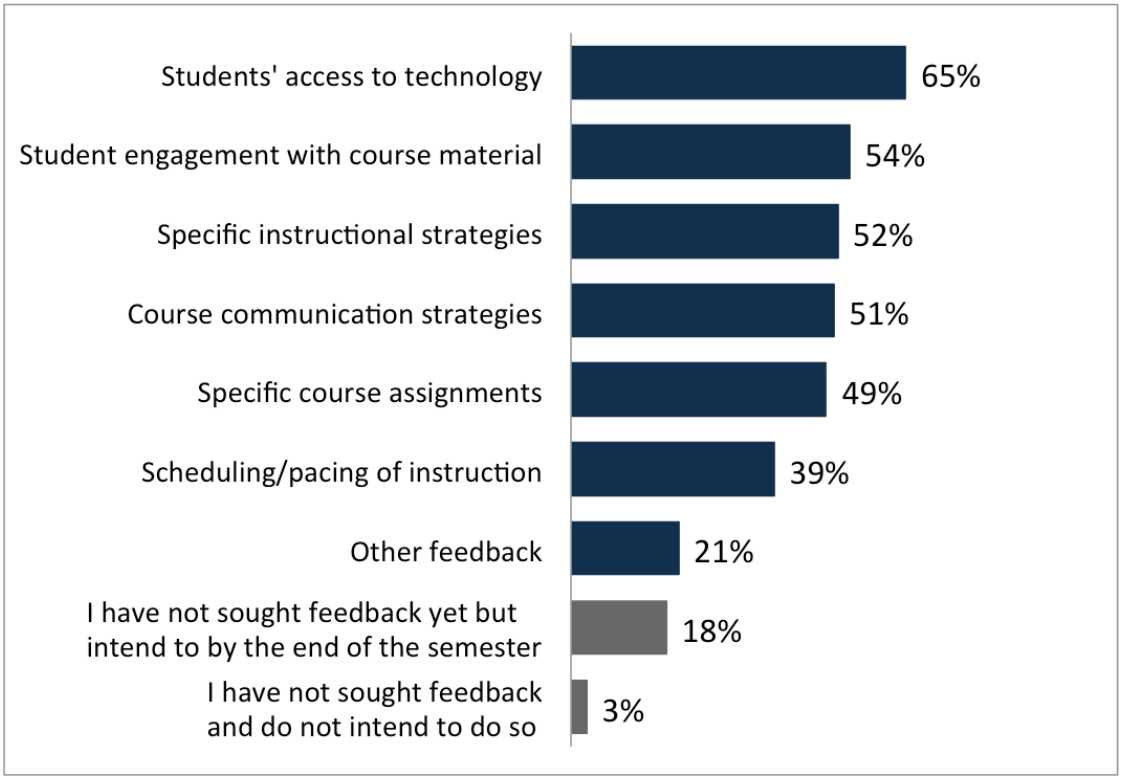
Verbatim responses for each category are listed in the "Openended Responses" section.

Q4. Thinking about the online/remote instructional methods that didn't work well, why do you think they weren't effective?

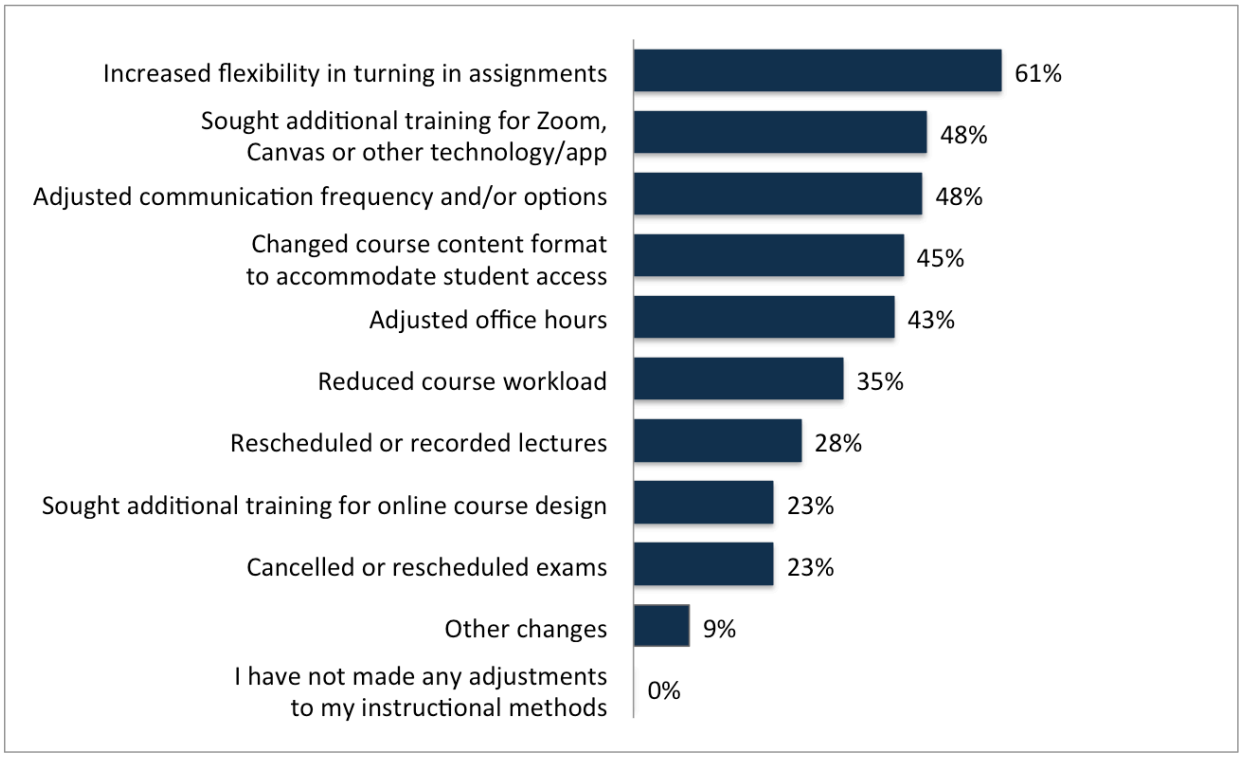
Response Categories (Coded from openended responses)	#	%
Student engagement, participation	30	23.1%
Difficulty with Canvas, Zoom, or other learning app	28	21.5%
Lecturing remotely less effective than in person	19	14.6%
Need for training in remote instructional methods/technology	16	12.3%
Student/instructor unreliable/lack of internet access	15	11.5%
Lack of necessary technology or equipment	12	9.2%
Assessment, test administration difficult to oversee	7	5.4%
Different scheduling needs, poor attendance	6	4.6%
Students struggle using the technology for remote learning	6	4.6%
Insufficient communication from COM	2	1.5%
Miscellaneous	6	4.6%

Verbatim responses for each category are listed in the "Openended Responses" section.

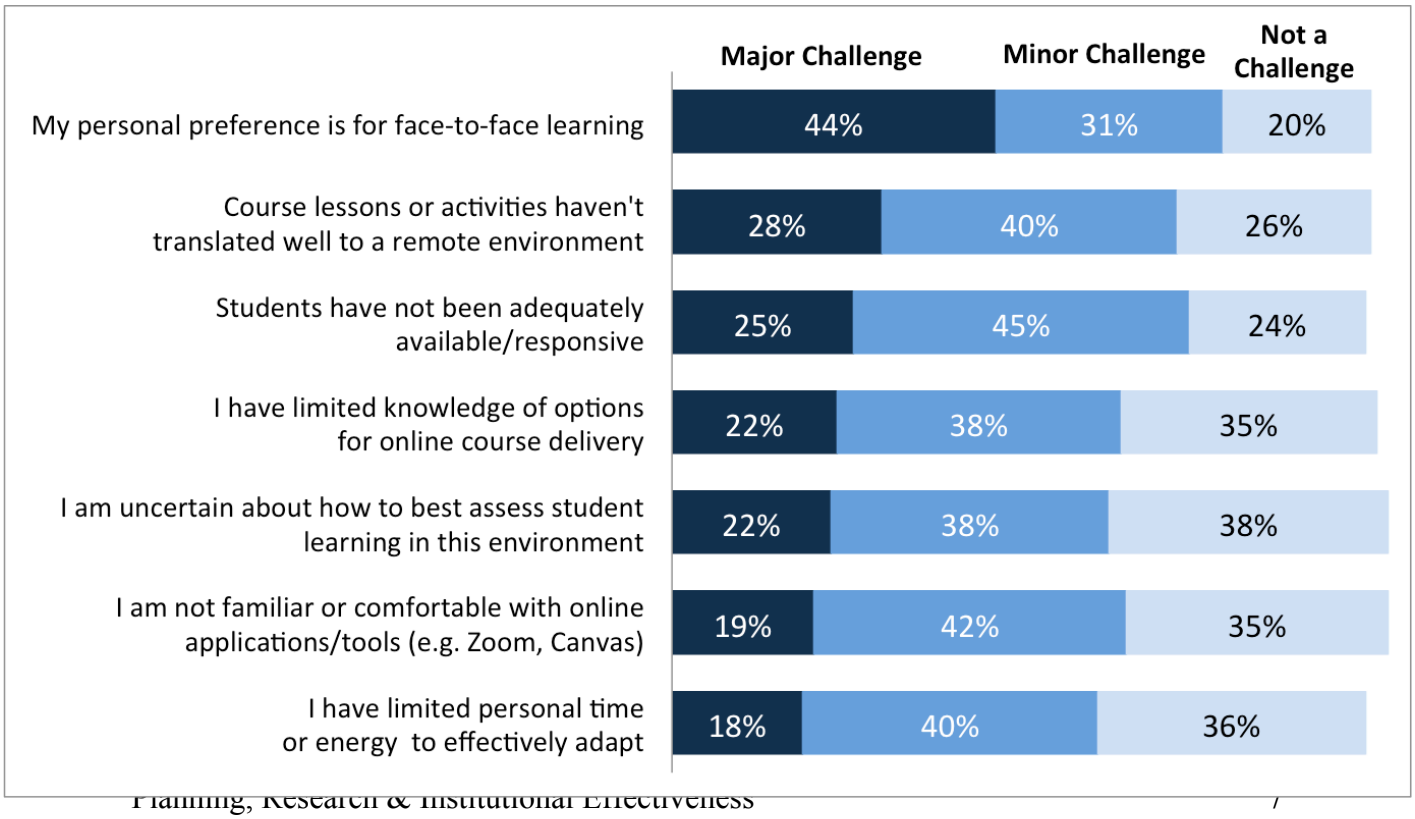
Q5. For which of the following have you sought feedback from your students regarding their experience in courses that have transitioned to online/remote instruction?



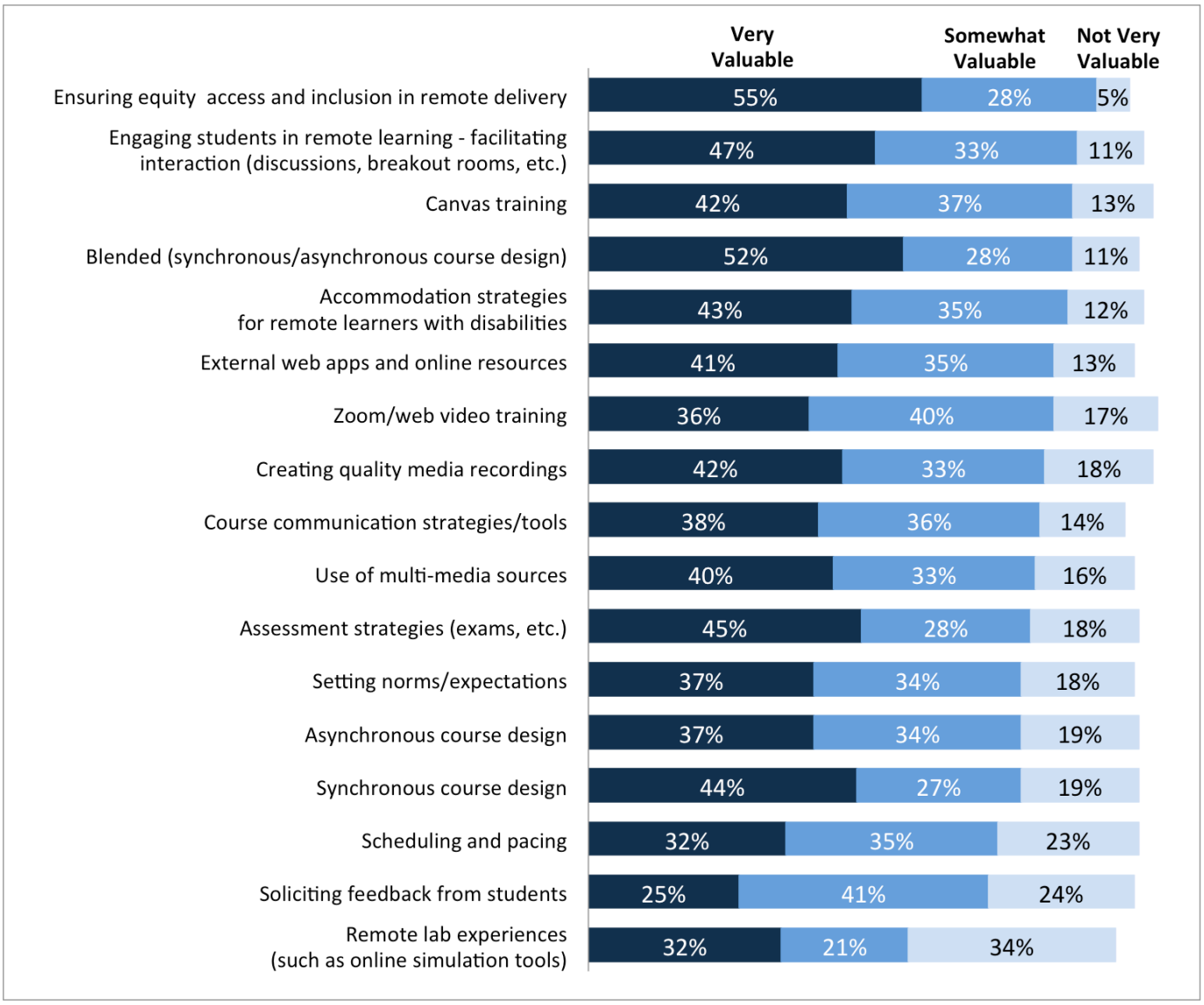
Q6. In which of the following ways have you adjusted your instructional methods in response to students' feedback?



Q7. How challenging have the following been for you in adapting course design and/or assignments to remote learning?



Q8. How valuable would you find training/professional development in the following areas to improve the quality of your remote/online instruction?



Q9. Please list specific equipment or technology that would be the most important for you to be successful in providing quality remote instruction going forward.

Response Categories (Coded from openended responses)	#	%
Camera/Video recording equipment	15	11.5%
Reliable high speed Wifi	14	10.8%
Laptop/Monitor/Computer	14	10.8%
More training on DE methods and technology	9	6.9%
Microphone/speakers	8	6.2%
Scanner/Document camera	7	5.4%
Access to online resources	6	4.6%
Equipment or high speed Wifi for students	6	4.6%
Mark-up tool	4	3.1%
Desk	2	1.5%
Music equipment	2	1.5%
Access to COM space	2	1.5%
Printer	1	0.8%
DVD player	1	0.8%
Headset	1	0.8%
Green screen	1	0.8%
Video microscopy equipment	1	0.8%
Miscellaneous (not specific equipment or training)	19	14.6%

Verbatim responses for each category are listed in the "Openended Responses" section.