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Virtual Learning: The Mentorship Model

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Virtual Learning: The Mentorship Model

Gabriela Zuniga, Academic Success Center

Teaching Practice & Need it Addresses

Due to COVID there was a rise in the number of virtual courses offered at the University level. Although in person classes have resumed, virtual courses have remained. Math 5x is an online/asynchronous math course in which each student's TA serves as a "mentor", who tracks their progress throughout the course. They provide feedback and community and create a "dialogue" that would otherwise not be possible in their online course. Virtual/asynchronous courses allow for courses to be more accessible to students who might otherwise be unable to take the course; however, they also provide barriers for students who are not champions of self-directed learning. The model of facilitation, or "mentorship" allows for students to build community and dialogue in an otherwise remote course.

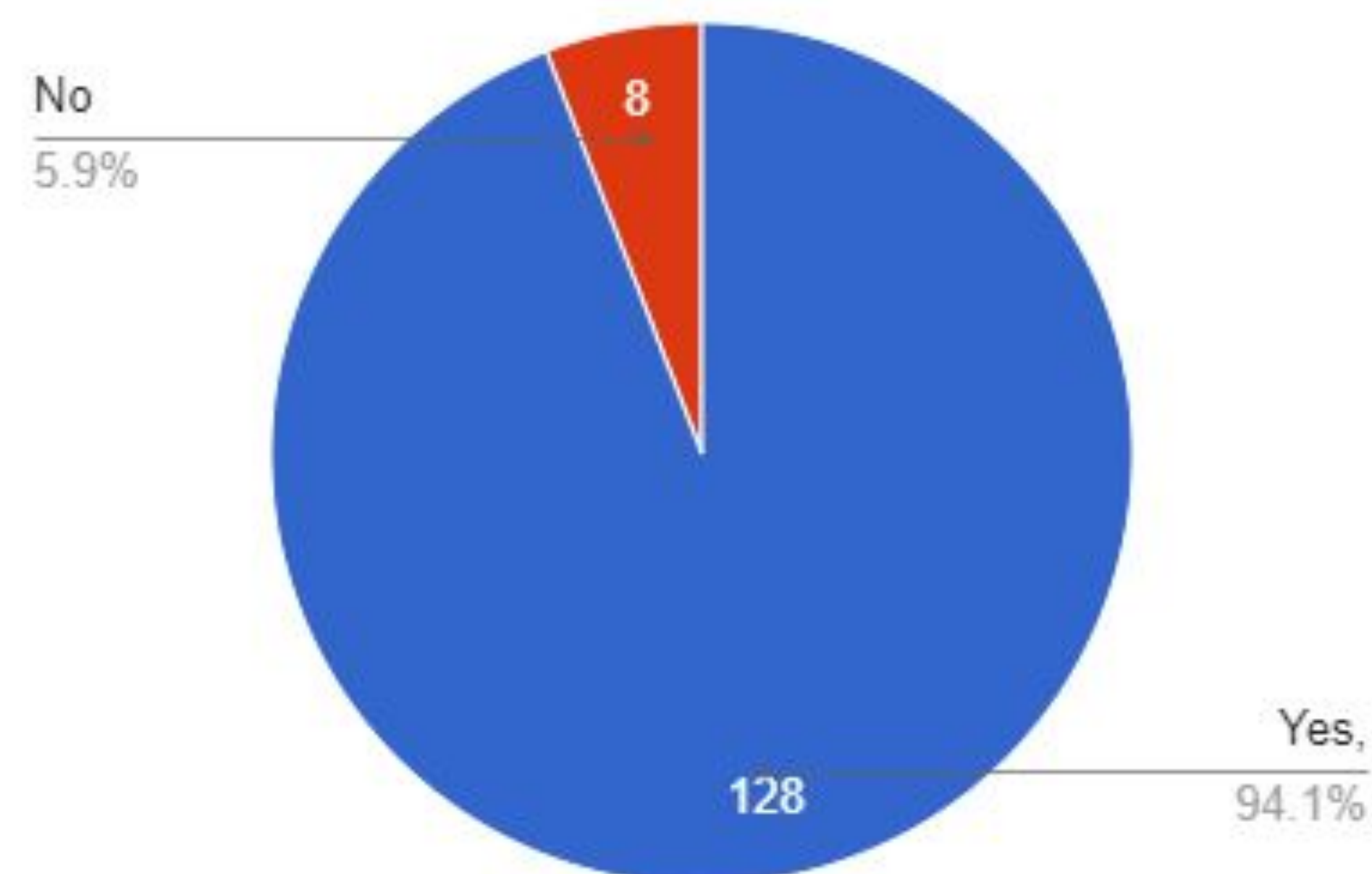
Evidence it Benefits Students

Students take an optional survey at the beginning and end of the course. Students who have taken this course state that the mentorship model in the course allowed them to be aware of resources on campus that they otherwise would not have been aware of (CAPS, Tutoring/SI, Peer Mentors). Through the survey, student relay they will be using those services during their time at UNLV (94% n=138/136). Students also mention that having someone consistent throughout the course of the class to guide them and believe in them allowed them to increase their math confidence level (89% n=121/136). The mentorship model also invites students to reach out to their TA and provides experience to first-year students on how to draft emails and reach out to future professors. The mentorship model in an entry-level course allows students to build community and strengthen their communication skills.

How Others Can Adopt This Practice

1. Build base knowledge of what a mentorship model is and brainstorm on how it correlates to their current content.
2. Have current GA's/TA's/high-achieving students participate in professional development associated with The Mentorship Model.
3. Evaluate their online course curriculum and employ best practices in embedding the mentorship model into their assignments.

Students Who Gained Knowledge of On-Campus Mental and Academic Support Through the Course 2022



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Resources and Where to Find Them

1. The Mentorship Model serves to bridge the gap between first-generation low income students and their counterparts in reference to unspoken tendencies and jargon that take place in higher education settings. This 12 minute [TEDx video](#) further informs the viewer how to differentiate diversity and inclusion efforts to best support students of minoritized backgrounds.
2. Understanding how to communicate is key for this model to work effectively, [This article](#) provides differentiation of the components of communication and how they play a part
3. TA's obtain training on inclusivity, active listening, and power dynamics. Sample training slides can be found [here](#).

References

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