ACRES Virtualizing STEM

Formative Evaluation Report

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Online surveys were sent to educators that completed a Virtualizing STEM cohort between the months of July 2020 and August 2020. We received a total of 54 surveys with cohort sample sizes ranges from 7 to 17.

Participants' had varying degrees of experience programming for youth. Most participants were still new to the field of youth programming and education with 31% reporting having 2 to 4 years of experience. Still, many were veterans with 28% reporting having more than 11 years of experience in the field (see Figure 1). Most cohort participants (72%) had worked in youth extension programs such as afterschool programs (54%) and summer camps (50%). Many had worked in the school system (46%), usually as a teacher (19%). Several of the workshop participants worked for 4H in some capacity (30%). Most of the participants (78%) knew at least one of their cohort members.

As seen in Figure 2, most or 64% of participants reported that their programs *very often* to *always* served rural youth.

When asked what they had hoped to gain from this experience, most stated that they hoped to improve their program delivery (72%) (see Table 1).   Many participants were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and were in search of ideas for how to transition their programs online (52%). Several were most interested in learning new tools to engage students (26%).
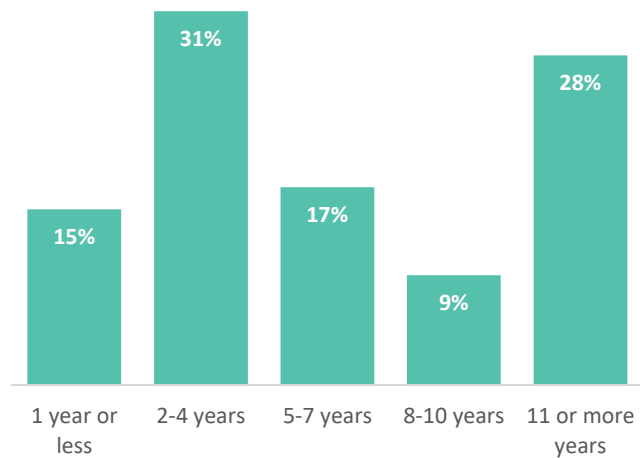
Figure 1
Number of Years in STEM Education

Figure 2
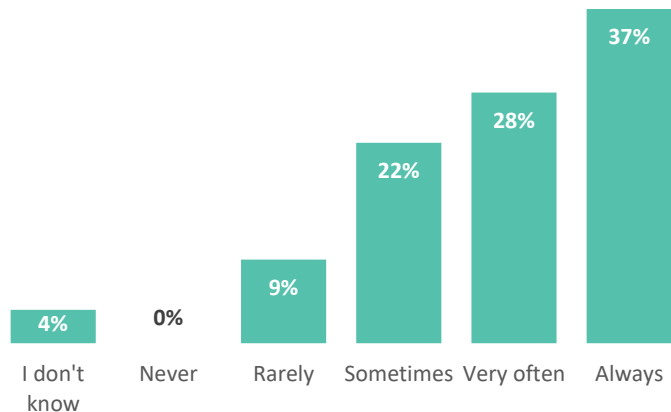Frequency of Youth Served by Program

Table 1
Reasons for attending the training

Improve their program delivery	*I was hoping to learn about different sites that our program can use to make our program more virtual, and also keep students excited about participating in our club.* *New ideas for inspiring youth to get engaged in science in their own backyards when I can't work with them outdoors in person.* *More platforms and ideas for interactive virtual programming to bridge nature and technology.*
Seeking ideas for transitioning their programs online	*Some new information that will help with after school programming if we can't meet in person and have to do things online with our 4-H'ers.* *Activities to do with my STEM groups if we do online learning for our After School Program this fall.* *To get ideas on how to transition lessons and programs to online platform(s).*
Learn new tools to engage	*Ideas and resources for making virtual programming more interactive and attractive for youth participants.* *Different platforms to use to engage students in learning and make the virtual lessons more fun and "hands-on".* *I was most interested in tools that would increase student engagement during virtual teaching.*

Participants received what they had hoped for with 59% reporting the workshops *exceeded* their expectations (see Figure 3) and 54% stating that they were *extremely likely* to recommend the program to a friend.

Sixty-three percent of survey respondents reported that they found the workshops to be *extremely useful*. The most useful features of the workshop that were the tools and resources, interactions and discussions with colleagues, and the fact that they were given the opportunity to try out new things as well as share or adapt skills and techniques. See Table 2 for illustrative quotes in participants' own words.
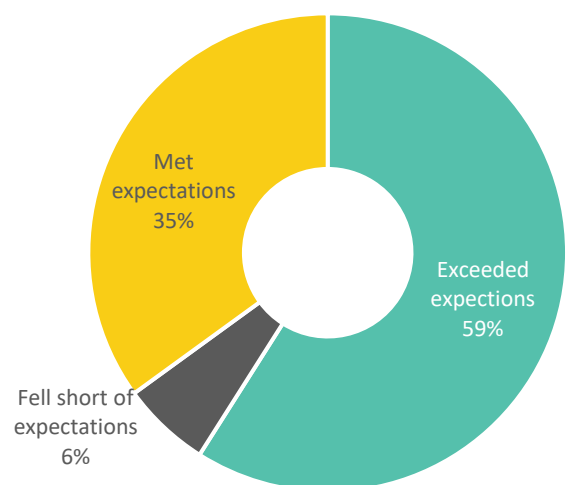
Figure 3
Expectations of Training

Met expectations 35%

Exceeded expectations 59%

Fell short of expectations 6%

Table 2
Ways that the Virtualizing STEM training was useful

Tools and Resources to Use	*All of the resources shared will be super useful and it was great to see that virtual programs can actually be engaging.* *The course did show me some new sites that will help me in programing but I am on my own to really dig deep and figure them out* *I am leaving with many resources that I had no clue how to use prior to class, she pushed us to learn! LOVE IT!*
Interactions with Colleagues	*The ideas shared from the instructor and the other cohort members were very useful and helpful in the programming that I do with youth. I learned new techniques and ways to make simple activities virtually friendly and fun.* *Since COVID-19, my job expectation has changed drastically. I found myself needing to broader my virtual capabilities and offerings to the youth I work with, and on my own, I did some plugging away, but with this group, I gained more ideas MUCH quicker.* *The active collaborative efforts really got my mind focused on the possibilities for my own upcoming program, and allowed me to help others. I also really appreciated that we got to be active participants and got the chance to try the technology we were introduced to during the sessions. The homework also really set the information, so I am much more likely to use it.*
Try new things	*I have used many of the ideas already and hope to use more in the future.* *Provided a few new facilitation skills. Course goals/expectations were not communicated clearly up front. A syllabus with resource list should be provided.* *My work often centers upon getting students off screens, but Covid has thrown a wrench in the works on that! I knew going into this that it would be a stretch to virtualize outdoor programs, but I knew I would learn something. It ended up being very useful, especially because I was able to explain my situation and Perrin was ready to suggest modifications of each resource for my circumstance.*

Most participants (52%) stated that workshops were *extremely enjoyable*. Participants explained that the workshop was facilitated well, and they enjoyed the hands-on nature of the workshop. They, too, enjoyed learning and collaborating with their peers, even in stressful times, such as a pandemic. See Table 3 for representative quotes from participants.

Table 3
Ways that the Virtualizing STEM training was enjoyable

Facilitation	*Often forced participation and discussion is not enjoyable in virtual or face to face settings. However, this training was facilitated well and was very fun! We had great attitudes and lots of positivity that made the training enjoyable.* *The instructor was very knowledgeable and gave chances to ask questions. She also made it very interesting and fun. The homework we were given helped me to practice what was taught and very helpful.* *First meeting was a little awkward. But our teacher worked hard to build community. I enjoyed meeting and seeing everyone.*
Learning from Colleagues	*The breakout groups were awesome! I loved all the opportunities to talk informally and meet other educators across the country facing similar challenges as me.* *I enjoyed bouncing ideas of colleagues and gaining new insight from educators across the nation.*
Hands-on	*To be fair it really should be a "4" rating but the anxiety associated with distance learning and the uncertainty of the fall, the concern about being ready to meet these challenges, and how tired I was at 6:30 in the evening (I work in the summer and spent most of the day prior to the class on zoom) makes it hard to say it was "extremely enjoyable". I loved meeting the other teachers, our instructor was excellent, the class was so well organized (especially the first two classes), but I MISS being with colleagues in person, I get exhausted by zoom meetings, and the emotional stress of preparing for the fall are just challenges I can't avoid at the moment.* *I looked forward to our homework assignments and getting to use new platforms and work out new ideas and any problems that may arise ahead of time.*

Workshop participants found both the tools and resources reviewed in the program and the new skills and techniques they developed to be helpful. Many reported that they are now more comfortable using virtual platforms due to the program. Workshop participants also found the ability to meet and learn from peers and colleagues to be helpful. As seen in some of the quotes in Table 4, some of the participants spoke to the fact that the workshop helped them respond to the new challenges they were facing due to COVID-19.

Table 4
Ways that the Virtualizing STEM training was most helpful

Tools and Resources to Use	*I was offered many tools that help create engaging programs for youth, but am now struggling with how to adapt our current programs to be used in these formats* *Before this training, I was extremely overwhelmed and did not feel prepared to attempt this new world of online teaching. However, when we were done, my confidence had greatly improved and now I feel like I have knowledge about interactive tools available.* *I was extremely pleased with the resources provided and asked to use. I have learned how to use new learning platforms and cannot wait to continue to work with students and provide meaningful content.* *.*

New skills and techniques	*I had a very basic level of experience with only a handful of virtual platforms. Not only did this training help me learn and try new platforms, but I also learned new applications for the ones I was already using.* *The Desmos card sorting task was the most valuable tool that I learned and as a result I created a Desmos activity I will be using with my chemistry classes the first week of school in the fall. I can also see the use of this tool in professional development like the way Perrin modeled for us. I know I will use the photo elicitation activity as well and shared this with a group of new science teachers last week. Another benefit was simply seeing our instructor model effective use of break out rooms for discussions and engagement. I have a better understanding of how to share a screen and to give students a chance to do that together, as well as use flipgrid for ongoing discussions that could happen asynchronously.* *I now have several more tools in my "virtual toolbox" to use when I am doing online programming. It has helped me think outside the "slide show" box, and find unique ways to keep kids engaged and keep the subject matter interactive.*
Comfortable using virtual platforms	*Our county school system is 100% virtual, so this training was very helpful to me, because I was very uncomfortable about teaching students virtually. Having this training not only helped me learn new skills and techniques to make class more engaging, but it also helped me get used to talking on camera with the Flipgrid reviews at the end of each session. I would definitely recommend this class to anyone that has little to no experience with virtual teaching.* *Before this training, I was extremely overwhelmed and did not feel prepared to attempt this new world of online teaching. However, when we were done, my confidence had greatly improved and now I feel like I have knowledge about interactive tools available.* *We now live in a virtual world, wither we like it or not. ACRES and the virtual learning course has supported myself and my team during what could have been a challenging transition, to a time where we are thriving. I believe our (virtual) program success is in great thanks to our support from our partners at ACRES*
Learning from colleagues	*The training was helpful. I was able to meet professionals who had great experiences to share. The facilitator was knowledgeable and friendly. I would take another class again.* *It allowed me to hear from other individuals in similar situations around the country. Even though our professional responsibilities with youth may be similar, they are also different enough (and the organizations for which we work are also different enough) for there to be a lot of room for learning and growth from one another.* *This training certainly opened my eyes to more platforms that are free and available. I also enjoyed working through challenges with other collogues that we struggling with the same obstacles. Bouncing ideas and hearing new ways to do things were so very helpful*
COVID-19	*Working with students in Newton Georgia has been a challenge. The students have not participated in any online or virtual classes. I could not even get them to participate in voting for council members. Many live with grandparents or aunts and uncles. I am hoping the instructions and information will help me to reach them in ways I was not able to reach them before. I am excited about the information I learned in this class. I am also hoping to school will let me put together some videos to share in the lunchroom while the kids are eating, because at this point I am not allowed in the school.*

When the global pandemic resulted in quarantine, 4-H lost all its in-school and after-school face-to-face programming. For a while, I feared for my job. As an older 4-H educator, I am accustomed to hands-on learning. Using technology is outside of my comfort zone. The ACRES Cohort introduced a huge number of virtual formats. It could have been overwhelming, but it addressed all levels of digital literacy. I enjoyed working with other educators and exploring new ways of programming. I am confident that I can continue to provide high-quality educational experiences for youth.

In this crazy time of COVID it has helped me gain confidence to want to try some new online and virtual experiences with the children I work with!

Participants were asked to report on changes in their confidence levels after the training. As shown in Figure 4, respondents reported that they were significantly more confident in their ability to connect virtually after participating in the program ($t=-7.49$, $p<0.01$). In addition, after completing the program, participants reported that they were *confident* to *extremely confident* in their ability to experiment with virtual tools at significant levels ($t=-9.23$, $p<0.01$). Participants' confidence in trying new things also increased significantly from the beginning of the program to the end ($t=-5.14$, $p<0.01$).

Participants were also asked to explain why there was a change. Those who reported an increase in their confidence to connect virtually, explained that it was the result of practicing using various platforms and tool. Additional reasons included simply learning about additional tools, the possibilities of technology and their supportive cohort.

Figure 4
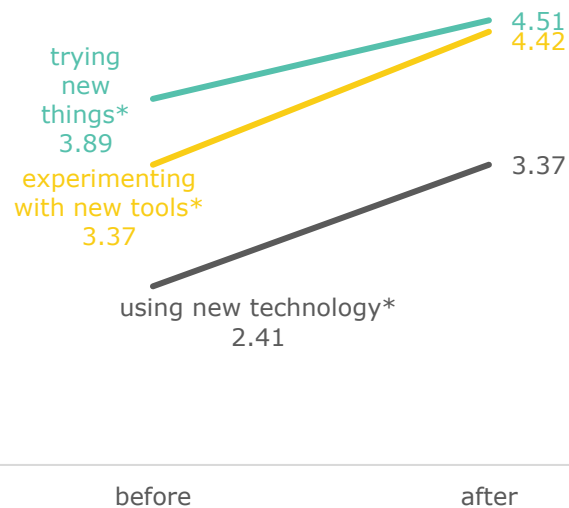Changes in Participants' Confidence
in Doing New Things

trying new things*
3.89

experimenting with new tools*
3.37

4.51
4.42

3.37

using new technology*
2.41

before   after

Table 5
Participants Explanations for their Increase in Confidence in Connecting Virtually

Practice Using Tools and Platforms	*We were given the opportunity to utilize some of the new resources through the program, which in-turn increased confidence levels.* *I definitely feel more confident than when we started the course, but I still feel that I have a long way to go. I think as I am able to implement the things that I learned that my confidence will continue to increase.* *Being introduced to the technology, having it demonstrated, and being presented opportunities to actually use it in assignments.*
Learning additional tools	*Yes. The trainer shared a lot of resources that I have not heard before.* *Teaching virtually is not just about knowing about the tools or how to use the tools - but how to use the tools effectively in conjunction with the personality of the teacher.* *The tools provided helped me gain confidence and see how to take the bland and mundane to exciting.*
Learning from colleagues	*Being able to try new things in a safe space was helpful. Also hearing from others who were in a similar space made the transition seem more do-able.*

Respondents who reported an increase in their confidence in their ability to experiment with virtual tools explained that this was associated with learning additional tools and resources, having the opportunity to practice with some of those tools, and learning with and from peers. They shared:

> *I did not have any knowledge of the any of the programs that were talked about in our sessions. Now, I do feel confident to experiment with those that I haven't look into already, but I am not sure I would say I am extremely confident just yet.*

> *We were given the opportunity to utilize some of the new resources through the program, which in-turn increased confidence levels. Both during the synchronous meetings and homework assignments.*

> *In our group, we spoke a lot about grace, and at this time we all need to understand that things will never be perfect and that sometimes our efforts will flop. But knowing this, and hearing that others have similar shared experiences- it is OK to try something and have it not work. Also by trying news things out (and offering that information to the kids involved), you can really learn about the capabilities of the youth you are working with especially if they feel like their opinion matters on what/how you are experimenting*

The participants who reported an increase in their confidence in trying new things shared that they were generally open to new things and comfortable experimenting with new technology. For example, participants shared:

> *I have always been open to new ideas and willing to learn about and try new things.*

> *After seeing the Desmos card sort I was able to create an activity in a short amount of time. I am more willing to try tools. Prior to this training I think I believed it would take hours and hours to learn how to effectively use a tool.*

I have always like to know HOW things were going to go before I did them, which led to using the same techniques because they felt comfortable. However, I know about so many other things now that I have access to and the freedom to explore them a bit and try them out with youth. Now, I think there is a lot of fun to be had trying out new things and that does give me more confidence when doing so

Participants' confidence in the activities they could offer students also increased after the training. Respondents reported that they were significantly more confident in their ability to offer a variety of virtual activities ($t=-10.17$, $p<0.01$) (see Figure 5). Thirty-three percent reported that this change was because they were now more aware of the tools available to them.

There was also a significant increase in confidence to convert activities to a virtual format ($t=-8.22$, $p<0.01$), with 47% reporting feeling confident in their ability to do so at the end of the program. Respondents reported that their new access to tools contributed to an increase to their confidence.

There was also a significant growth in participant's confidence to use virtual field trips ($t=-9.64$, $p<0.01$). By the end of the program, 38% were extremely confident in their ability to use them. Respondents reported that their new access to tools added to their confidence gains. The most salient reasons for increased confidence are presented in Table 6.

Figure 5
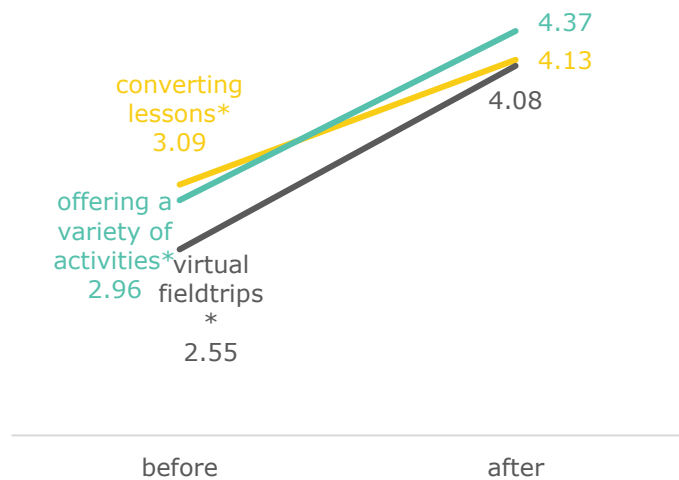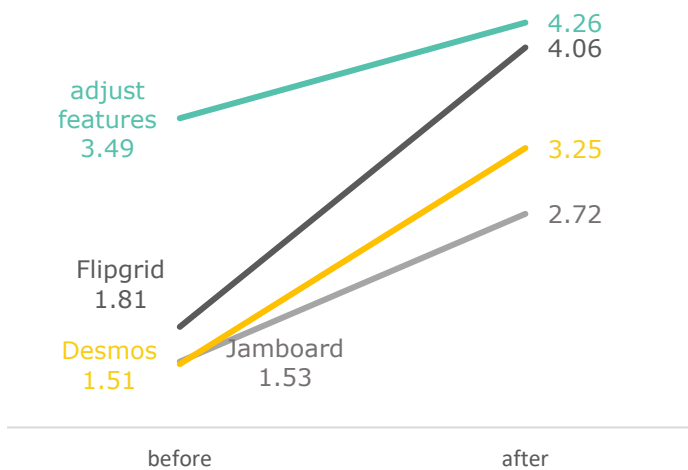Reported changes in participants' confidence in virtual teaching

converting lessons*
3.09

offering a variety of activities*
2.96

virtual fieldtrips*
2.55

4.37
4.13
4.08

before   after

Table 6
Participants' reasons for increased confidence in virtual teaching

Aware of available tools	*I was introduced to many new platforms.* *Before the course, I felt restricted to recording a video with instructions and information and posting it on YouTube for them. Now I know I have a bunch more methods to foster engagement.* *My toolbox was limited prior to the class and I also thought there were simply some activities (like card sorting) that just could not happen in a virtual setting without becoming a computer genius. I am more confident now that the right tool is out there to help me create activities that can engage the learner in a way like I would have in the classroom.*
Access to tools	*Now that I have more tools in my tool belt I feel like I can better adapt things that have worked in the past.* *I had previously used ones that others developed (like National Park Service, etc.), but now I know the platforms to create my own which will help to highlight local areas where we previously were able to go physically together.* *Learning by doing. Not only going on virtual field trips together, but trouble shooting problems that may occur with youth, how to engage youth in an virtual field trip, and asking the right questions.*

Almost all of the workshop participants (98%) reported that they were using Zoom for videoconferencing with students in their program. Some also reported using Google Meet (26%). Only a few had used Cisco Webex (6%), Skype (2%), GoToMeeting (2%) or Facebook Live (2%).

Figure 6
Changes in Participants Confidence Using Virtual Platforms

adjust features 3.49 → 4.26

4.06

3.25

2.72

Flipgrid 1.81

Desmos 1.51   Jamboard 1.53

before   after

After completing the workshop, participants were more confident in their ability to use and adjust features in a video-conferencing platform ($t=-5.91$, $p<0.01$) (see Figure 6). Forty-five percent reported that they felt extremely confident to do so.

Participants also reported their knowledge and confidence in using some of the tools used in their program, before and after completing the workshop. At the end of the workshops 85% felt *confident* or *extremely confident* using Flipgrid which was a significant increase from before the workshops ($t=-12.30$, $p<0.01$). Thirty percent stated that the workshop was the first-time hearing about Flipgrid. Respondents stated that using Flipgrid in the workshop gave them the confidence to use it.

Most or 72% of participants were not comfortable or confident using Jamboard when they started the program. This number dropped to 30% by the end of the workshops. Although there was statistical growth in this area ($t=-7.15$, $p<0.01$) there appears to be room for growth for participants using this platform. A few workshop attendees (11%) did not remember learning about the platform at all.

Those that did remember reviewing Jamboard stated that they felt they needed additional time to explore the tool.

Thirty-one percent of respondents reported that they were introduced to Desmos as part of the training. At the beginning 74% stated that they were not confident using this program. This number decreased to 8% by the end of the three workshops as there was significant growth in confidence (t=-10.72, p<0.01). Participants responded well to the Desmos platform, with some stating that they had already experimented with it or planned to use it in the future.

The range of feedback provided on each online tool is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Participant comments about virtual platforms

Flipgrid	*I fell in love with Flipgrid - thank you for encouraging me to use the platform. I had an account for months, but finally took the plunge to try it out.* *I didn't even know what Flipgrid was before the course, now I am using it for my clubs.* *I had never used Flipgrid before, but now seeing how easy it is and how youth would be able to leave something very unique and personal related to the activities we would be doing was really cool! Super helpful!*
Jamboard	*I don't recall learning about Jamboard.* *I have not played around in Jamboard enough to feel confident yet.* *I need more time to explore this one.*
Desmos	*The idea of Desmos is awesome for formative assessment. However the format to design your own is still time consuming. Totally worth the practice and patients. Seeing other people create and implement has increased my own confidence, "second-hand confidence".* *I am working on a lesson for plant and animal classification and I am thinking about try Desmos card-sort. I did not know about this app before the training.* *I didn't even know that card sorting tasks could be created on Desmos and now I am making my own card sorting tasks.*

Almost half of the program participants did not have an opportunity to try anything with a group of youth, but many were making plans to do so. Some had already tried using virtual experiences, interactive Zoom sessions, Desmos and Flipgrid. A few participants mentioned using other tools and techniques shared in the training, including icebreaker games, Mentime, creating a speaking order, Padlet, Tessellations, and Jamboard. Still, all of the respondents stated that they felt that participation in this training would impact the youth they work with. They stated that they believe using the tools shared in the training will allow them to create experiences that are engaging and/or interactive. See Table 8 for a range of quotes that share the plans and uses that ACRES participants have for the online tools they learned about during the training.

Table 8
Participants current plans and uses of tools

Plans to use tools	*I plan to use Flipgrid to teach students wise consumer buying choices for one of our contests. I have not had a chance to use it yet.* *I won't begin working with youth until the school year begins, so we'll see! I am planning to use Jamboard with an adult group to be able to show the meeting agenda and allow for more hands-on participation next week, however!* *Created a density card sorting tasks, created a photo elicitation activity that I shared with colleagues at a content session creating virtual lessons working with new science teachers in Maine. As a result the teachers started to use the tools as well and are creating lessons that incorporate these strategies. I will have an opportunity to use these tools with students in the fall.*
Currently using tools	*Virtual field trip was offered- and people were amazed at the abilities to see and do what they could do from behind a computer!* *DESMOS card sort, students were extremely engaged and truly thought about their sort and explained their choices, etc. GREAT discussion!* *Tried interactive Zoom meetings - youth seemed to like it. Plan to do games on Zoom and a bookclub.*
Additional tools being used	*Using the "get to know you" activities where kids selected a color M&M and answered questions. I also was starting to look into Padlet and had more confidence to try it out as a live activity with the youth in my group.* *I've started using a speaking order and it has been amazing! Especially for the younger students, it helps them stay more engaged and listen more actively since they know they'll also have their turn/time to talk.* *I tried a word cloud generator on mentimeter. They enjoyed seeing how the more a word is said, the bigger it gets. It was so much fun they didn't realize they were actually learning.*
Potential	*I will be able to reach and engage them in a different way compared to traditional in-person programming. This is very important in the age of coronavirus.* *The resources and techniques learned through this course will increase engagement and opportunities with our youth.* *This training gave me some very interactive resources to use with thestudents, and I think it will impact them by making the classes more fun. Being able to do things instead of just sitting and listening to a lecture or looking at a PowerPoint will make them more attentive.*

Participants were also asked to consider the impact of some of the program's structure on their experience. When considering the impact of having an experienced ACRES coach to guide the group, participants rated it a 5.45 on a scale of 0 to 6 (see Figure 7) with most of the respondents reporting that it was *extremely impactful*. Workshop attendees felt that the coaches were helpful and knowledgeable, and they were appreciative of their guidance and organization.

She provided assistance in keeping the conversation moving, helpful suggestions and insight. She was also very knowledgeable in virtual tools used during the training as well as others we might want to try.

My instructor was helpful and knowledgeable in this area. Easy to reach and very welcoming.

[ACRES COACH] was very knowledgeable about the different resources she showed us and walked us through each one. That was so much better than having to just go through and figure out things on our own, it also helped to have her impact to help address some of the situations we are dealing with individually.

Figure 7
Impact of experienced ACRES coach on guiding their group

5.45 average rating

Almost all or 98% of the workshop attendees found the reflection assignments to be at least *somewhat impactful* on their practice with an average rating of 4.75 (see Figure 8). Respondents reported believing reflection is an important practice for their professional development.

Thinking and responding to your own practice makes you a better teacher.

One of the only times to have dedicated time to reflect on my personal professional growth is through ACRES. busy or consumed to reflect. Being a more reflective educator has drastically impacted my teaching and coaching.

Figure 8
Impact of Reflection

4.75 average rating

Some participants reported that the reflections were actually encouraging (9%) and increased their confidence (7%).

The assignments were helpful in solidifying what I was learning and where I want to go with it.

It has given me the encouragement to continue learning more about this type of communication and learning!

Reflecting on past and current programming has increased my confidence in my future abilities to provide impactful opportunities for our youth.
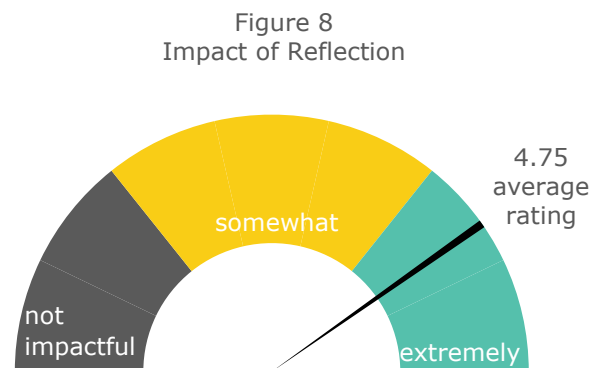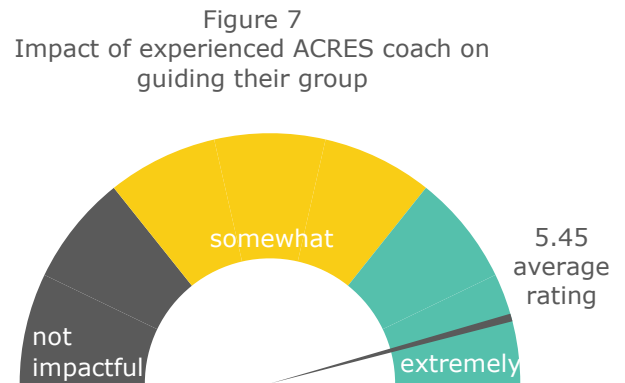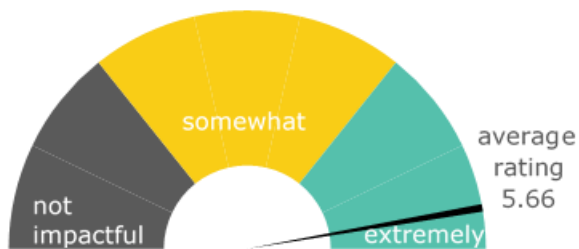
Figure 9
Average Rating on Working with a Cohort

The majority of respondents felt that sharing ideas and experiences with a cohort of peers was *extremely impact* with an average rating of 5.66 (see figure 9). Respondents felt that the opportunities to collaborate and discuss with peers were paramount to their learning.

With most of us working in the same organization and having some of the same issues, it helped to talk through the problems and work together to find ways to fix them. We were also able to make connections and share things outside of the meetings.

Talking and sharing ideas was great and we came up with a lot of new ideas and ways that will help us all year long.

We were able to help each other solve problems, and it kind of gave an accountability aspect.

The participants had some internet connection issues which made some of our collaboration challenging. It made me realize how big an issue internet availability and reliability is terms of equity and engagement.

It was valuable to have people from different educational settings and from different places in the country. We all brought in our own pieces of knowledge to share with each other.

I am glad to have this cohort of trusted people to continue conversation with.

Several respondents stated that sharing with their peers helped them feel as if they were not lost or alone.

The collaboration was helpful - in this pandemic work at home environment sometimes I feel like I am the only one with the challenges of trying to serve kids but not in person.

Great ideas come from peers! Also knowing you're not alone in feeling lost with virtual programming is somewhat of a relief.

We are all in the same boat. We can learn from each other, share ideas, and know that if we share struggles they probably have similar struggles.

Sharing ideas and comparing experiences with peers struggling with the same issues was moral and confidence building.

Learned so many useful things from my peers - but it was also helpful to have a space to communicate fears and troubles with others. So - the training also became a space for lifting each other up and praising each other.

In addition to sharing with their cohort, most participants felt that having the same group or cohort members throughout the program was *very impactful* with a rating of 5.21 (see Figure 10). Respondents reported that maintaining the same group allowed for continuous engagement, relationship building, and bonding to occur.

Figure 10
Impact of Meeting with the Same
Group More than Once

somewhat

not
impactful

extremely

5.21
average
rating
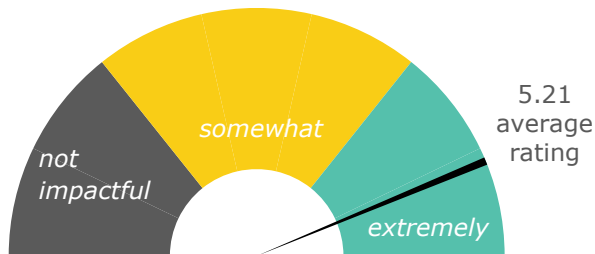
We were able to build some camaraderie and grow as a group better. If we had different people each time we would have had to spend time introducing and getting comfortable with each other. We were able to spend more time learning and engaging with each other because we were the same cohort.

It allowed for discussion to continue around the topic without having to get to know a new group every time.

This aspect is my favorite things about ACRES. There is no 1 and done. It puts some responsibility on the participants to really learn something and share it back out.

*I could see the growth of everyone in the group throughout the course of our meetings. I was appreciative of both individual contributions and group input.*

Relationship building helped - could circle back and make connections with colleagues.

Building relationships and trust, extremely important in the environment in which we were learning.

Camaraderie was developed, and it made it more personal. You felt everyone that showed up was invested.

Figure 11
Impact of Cohort Bond

somewhat

not
impactful

extremely

average
rating
4.67
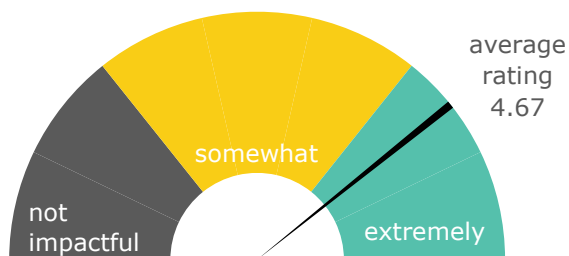
The cohort structure also allowed participants to feel safe and comfortable.

Increased comfort with the members of the group helps to reduce anxiety and over time we feel more comfortable with discussions and sharing out.

It was nice to build on what we had done in the previous session so most of our comfort levels were about the same.

Figure 11 shows how *impactful* cohorts' bonds were with a rating of 4.67. Some workshop participants explained that they were happy with the connections they were able to make and the relationships they were able to build.

Even though we only met 3 times we created a great connection.

I noticed this bond during our last class but not as much during the first two classes. I think it takes time to build safety and relationships.

It was great to bond with my support group even if it's just virtual since I don't see them often.

Again, we all were able to commiserate about our COVID-19 experiences with youth, and the ability to do so really adds to the level of connectedness the group had.

I always felt a sense of security and trust with in the group. We were free to share our thoughts and concerns.

I got to know other agents around the state a little better. I work in a rural county where internet and electronic devices are not readily available to our youth. I was surprised by the resources in some other 4-H programs that they have generously offered to share.

Relationship building helped - could circle back and make connections with colleagues.

The space felt open and accepting and would not have if I didn't feel some connection with everyone else.

Again, participants referred to sharing similar struggles, using colleagues as resources, and collaborating with peers.

There was less of a personal bond (like friendship), but more of a professional understanding and respect for each other that I appreciated.

It was a short training, but I would definitely reach out to group members again if I thought they could be useful or if I could be useful to them!

Like I said, the majority of the participants are in the same organization as me. But I felt bonded to even those who are not in the organization because we had common interests and struggles.

It made conversation easier since our audiences were similar, but I can't say that I feel like I made any new friends that I'll call up now that the training is over.

I really enjoyed their input. Many of the cohorts have used some of these tools and it was very helpful to hear their stories. Also their was a lot of ideas they thought of after seeing this program and it helped me with new ideas.

As mentioned earlier, it's good to feel like you have others in your corner and folks you can ask for help or bounce ideas off of when you need it.

Although they enjoyed the workshops and found resources very useful, some participants still had a few suggestions to improve the program. Some respondents shared that three workshops were not sufficient and more should be added to the program.

Increase number of sessions to 5.

Make it longer than 3 meetings :)

I would have liked more sessions or chances to meet with my cohort. When we had the third and final session, I had not realized it was only three and wanted to continue meeting!

Some people recommended that the program create some sort of workbook or master list of resources covered or available.

Maybe create and share a master list of resources that we can refer to after the class ends.

As a visual learner, it was hard to follow and remember all of the activities we tried because it was mostly auditory. I would have liked to have some kind of handout or summary of the topics covered during each session. Although I took notes, I may have missed a few things I did not have time to write down!

It would be nice if there was a debriefing email that had a little breakdown of what platforms are best suited for doing specific tasks.

A few people requested a bit more substance or in depth in covering resources.

Sharing is great, but a little more substance in the core would be great. I think this would be better for someone starting out. I've already been around the block and few things are new or cutting-edge anymore. Chick made things very entertaining so I did enjoy my time with the group. They were very open.

Add in some info on how to think about virtual activities when planning, and sum up each session visually (maybe everything that was covered on one slide at the end of each session)

Add a bit more (skill, activity) to the third session to keep it as engaging as the first two sessions.

Maybe going a little more in depth with a couple of the platforms to show the fun tricks and make us feel proficient rather than showing a lot of different platforms.

Instead of just talking and break out rooms maybe go into more detail a little more.