



ACADEMIC COURSES SURVEY

Prepared for Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School
District

May 2025

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW

In this report, Hanover Research presents the results of the Academic Courses survey conducted on behalf of Mountain View – Los Altos Union High School District.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are students' perceptions of their academic courses?
- How do these perceptions vary across subject areas?

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION & SURVEY SAMPLE

- The survey was administered online in April and May of 2025 using the Qualtrics platform.
- The analysis includes a total of 1356 respondents following data cleaning.
- Results are segmented by grade level (grade 9 or grade 10) within this analysis. Additional segmented results can be found in the accompanying data supplement.

RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be a current 9th or 10th grade student at either Los Altos or Mountain View High School.
- Must be currently taking Ethnic Studies (9th graders) or must have taken Ethnic Studies in the past (10th graders).

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY

- Sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents.
- Conclusions drawn from a small sample size ($n < 20$) should be interpreted with caution.
- Statistically significant differences between groups (at the 95% confidence level) are noted with **an asterisk**.
- After data collection, Hanover identified and removed low-quality respondents.
- “*Don’t Know or Not Applicable*” responses, and equivalent, are often excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who expressed an opinion.
- Question text and answer options marked with [†] are truncated for clarity and brevity. Please consult the accompanying data supplement for the unabridged question/answer text.
- Some data points mentioned in the analysis may not be included as part of the slide visuals to support legibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the analysis of this survey, Hanover recommends that Mountain View-Los Altos:

- ❖ **Delve further into course rigor for the Ethnic Studies course to determine underlying causes and consensus on perceptions shared in this report.** Fewer than half of respondents agree that the Ethnic Studies course is/was appropriately challenging or included a workload similar to other courses ([page 15](#)). However, the majority of student respondents did not rate their Ethnic Studies course as easier than other classes with regard to collaboration, communication, critical thinking, reading, or writing ([page 16](#)). An important next step could be to gather staff perceptions of the course and determine what dimensions of the course should be more or less challenging and what student skills should be further developed.
- ❖ **Ensure that the learning objectives in Ethnic Studies are actionable and lead to greater sense of community.** While generally most respondents expressed positive perceptions of their Ethnic Studies course, less than half agreed that they feel/felt a greater sense of community or more connected to their peers ([page 17](#)). Most agreed that their Ethnic Studies course uses/used lesson materials that include[d] many different perspectives and helps/helped them think about topics and events from another person's point of view ([page 15](#)), so the district could research best practices for translating that instruction into community engagement.
- ❖ **Continue monitoring progress of the Ethnic Studies course.** Across most experience, content, rigor, and impact items; Grade 9 respondents express more positive perceptions of the Ethnic Studies course than Grade 10 respondents. To further develop and improve this curriculum ([page 19](#)), consider collecting longitudinal data to examine ongoing strengths and areas for growth, ensuring the course meets expectations for all community partners.

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS-COURSE EXPERIENCE

When evaluating their overall course experience, most respondents express positive perceptions of, and similar experiences with, their Ethnic Studies and English courses ([pages 13 and 14](#)).

- For both the Ethnic Studies and English courses, over two-thirds of respondents agree that their teacher provides/provided opportunities for all students to contribute to class discussion (83% and 78% respectively), effectively handles/handled conflicts or difficult situations between students (71% and 69%), presents/presented the course content in a neutral way (69% and 70%), and uses/used different methods to encourage participation from all students (67% and 76%).
- Similarly, at least two-thirds of student respondents agree that in their Ethnic Studies and English course experience their opinions are/were listened to and respected by classmates (73% for both courses), their perspective is/was valued (70% and 72% respectively), they feel/felt comfortable asking questions in class (69% and 72%), and they felt comfortable sharing their opinions in class (66% and 68%).
- More than half of respondents agree that their teacher uses/used student feedback to improve classroom interactions in their Ethnic Studies (61%) and English (64%) courses.
- Also, more than half of respondents across both courses agree that their background, experiences, and perspectives are/were acknowledged (67% and 61% for Ethnic Studies and English course experiences respectively) and appreciated in class (64% and 59%).

KEY FINDINGS-RIGOR AND CONTENT

Respondents suggest that they feel their English course was more rigorous than their Ethnic Studies course ([page 15](#)).

- More student respondents say the English course is/was appropriately challenging (67% vs. 45%), the workload is/was similar to other courses (54% vs. 41%), and the teacher is set[s] high expectations for all students in the course (78% vs. 59%).
- Similarly, compared to the Ethnic Studies course, respondents more frequently agree that the English course is/was taught in an engaging way (58% vs. 49%) and topics covered are/were interesting (57% vs. 51%).
- However, more respondents did agree that the Ethnic Studies course uses/used lessons and material that include(d) many different perspectives (74% vs. 69%) and helps/helped respondents think about topics or events from another person's point of view (69% vs. 63%) compared to their English course.

When looking at specific skill requirements, fewer than half of respondents rate the difficulty of skills required in their Ethnic Studies or English course as easier than other classes ([page 16](#)).

- Compared to their English course, more respondents say that skill requirements for Ethnic Studies are easier than that of other classes.
- However, for Ethnic Studies, the plurality of respondents say the level of difficulty required of communication (48%), collaboration (45%), reading (44%), critical thinking (39%), and writing (39%) is about the same as other classes.
- In contrast, for English, a plurality of respondents rate the level of difficulty required of reading (39%) and writing (39%) as somewhat harder than other courses. Over two-thirds rate the level of difficulty required for critical thinking in English compared to other classes about the same (37%) or somewhat harder (35%), and more than half say collaboration (56%) and communication (57%) are about the same.

KEY FINDINGS-IMPACT & BY GRADE COMPARISONS

Most agree that the Ethnic Studies course educates students about other cultures and identities, but fewer feel that it is connecting them to their peers and community or teaching them about their own culture ([page 17](#)).

- Over three-fourths of respondents agree that they learned about other cultures and identities in their Ethnic Studies course (77%), and 59% agree that they feel/felt more understanding of other people.
- However, fewer than half agree that they feel/felt a greater sense of community or more connected to peers (42%) or have learned about their culture and identity (42%).
- When responding for their English course, agreement is more than 10 percentage points lower than for all items except feeling a greater sense of community or connection to peers.

Across items related to course content, rigor, experience, and impact, Grade 9 respondents generally express higher rates of agreement for items related to their Ethnic Studies course than that of Grade 10 respondents ([page 19](#)).

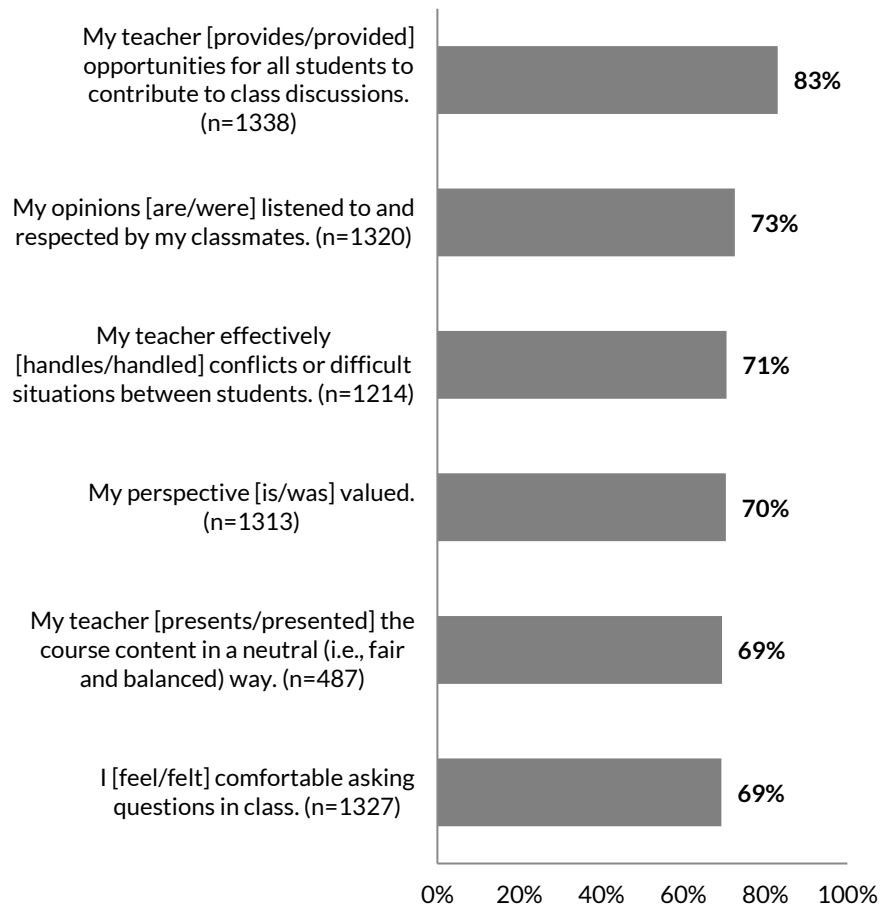
- By comparison for these items, Grade 9 and 10 respondents show similar levels of agreement when expressing perceptions of their English course experience.
- One exception is for required course skills, where Grade 10 respondents more frequently rate both their Ethnic Studies and English course as easier than other courses compared to Grade 9 respondents ([page 23](#)).

TOPLINE RESULTS

COURSE EXPERIENCE (1 of 2)

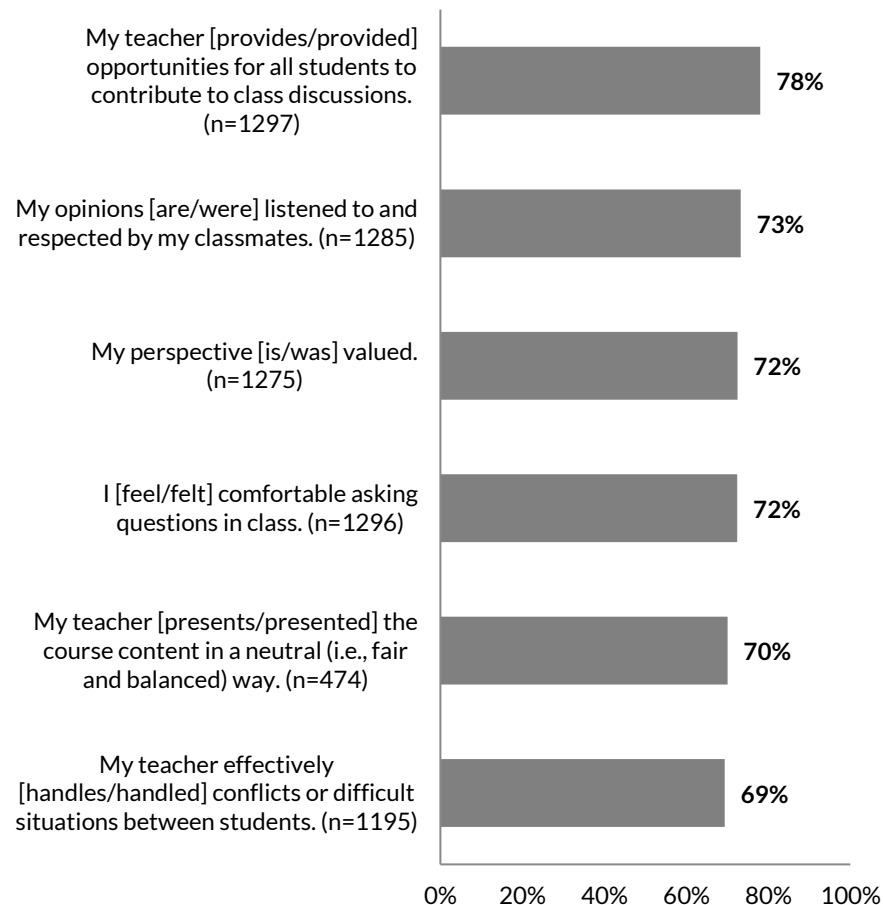
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] English course experience.

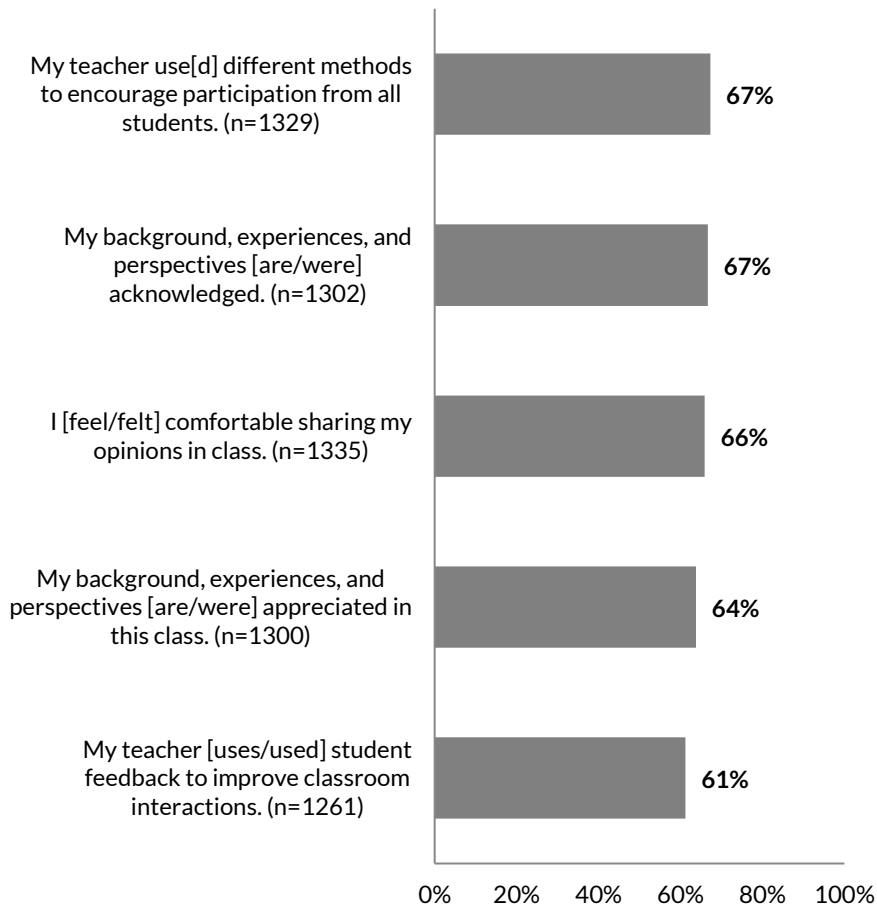
% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



COURSE EXPERIENCE (2 OF 2)

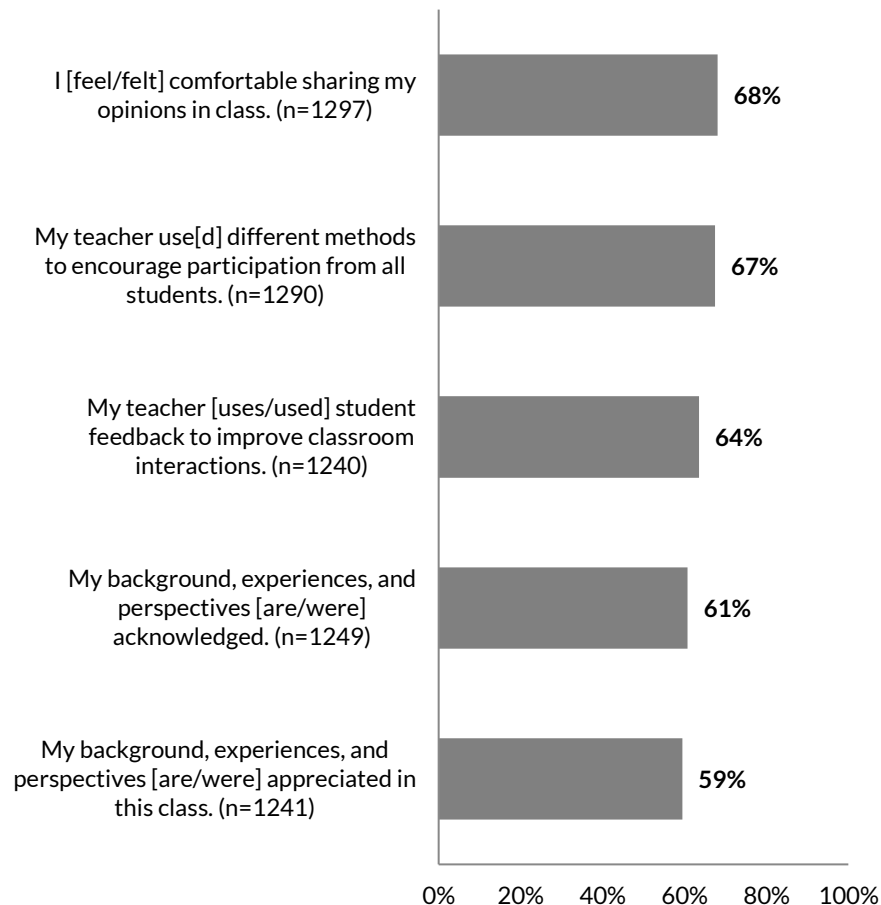
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] English course experience.

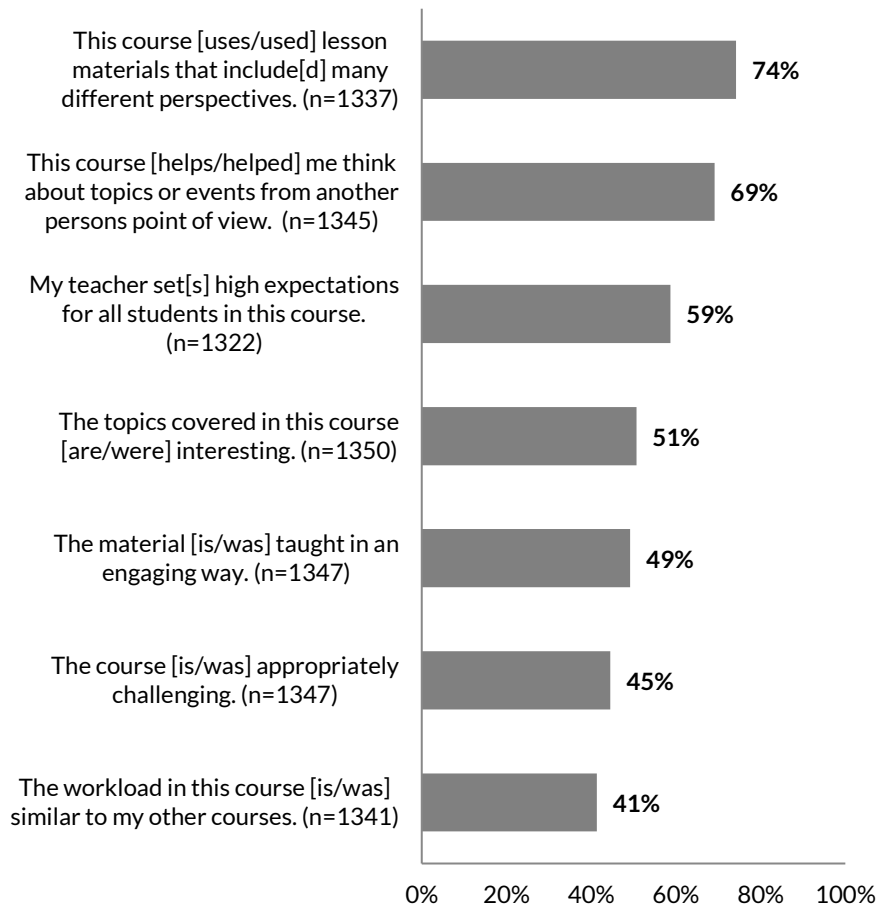
% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



COURSE CONTENT & RIGOR

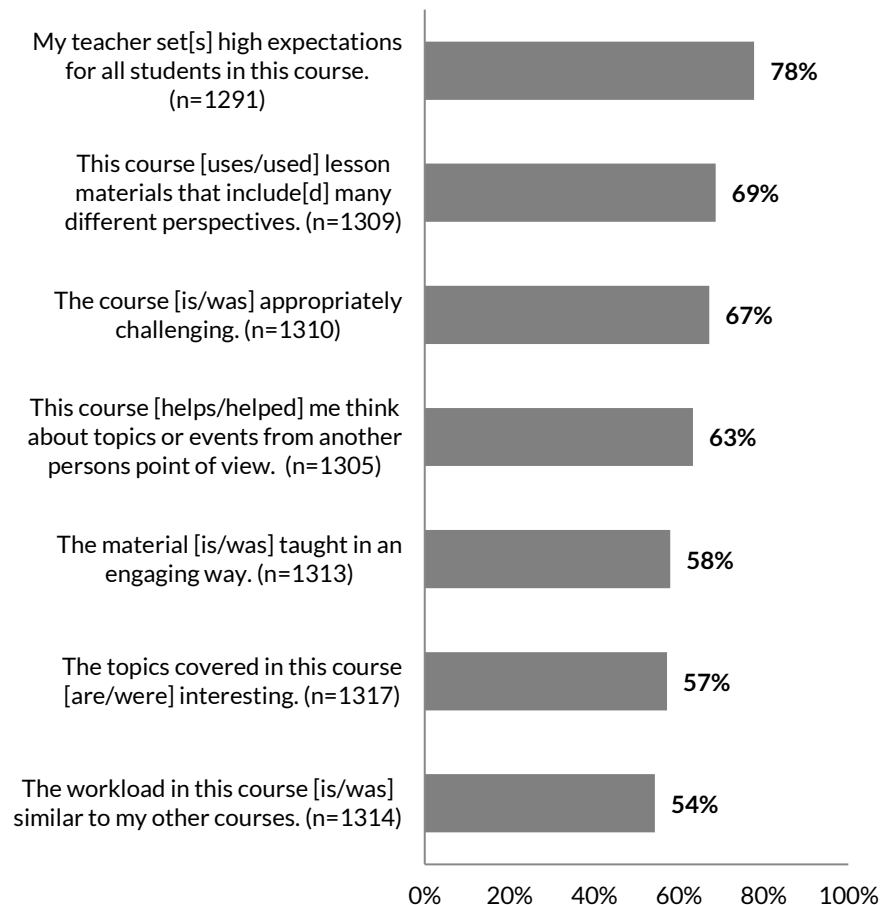
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the content and rigor of your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



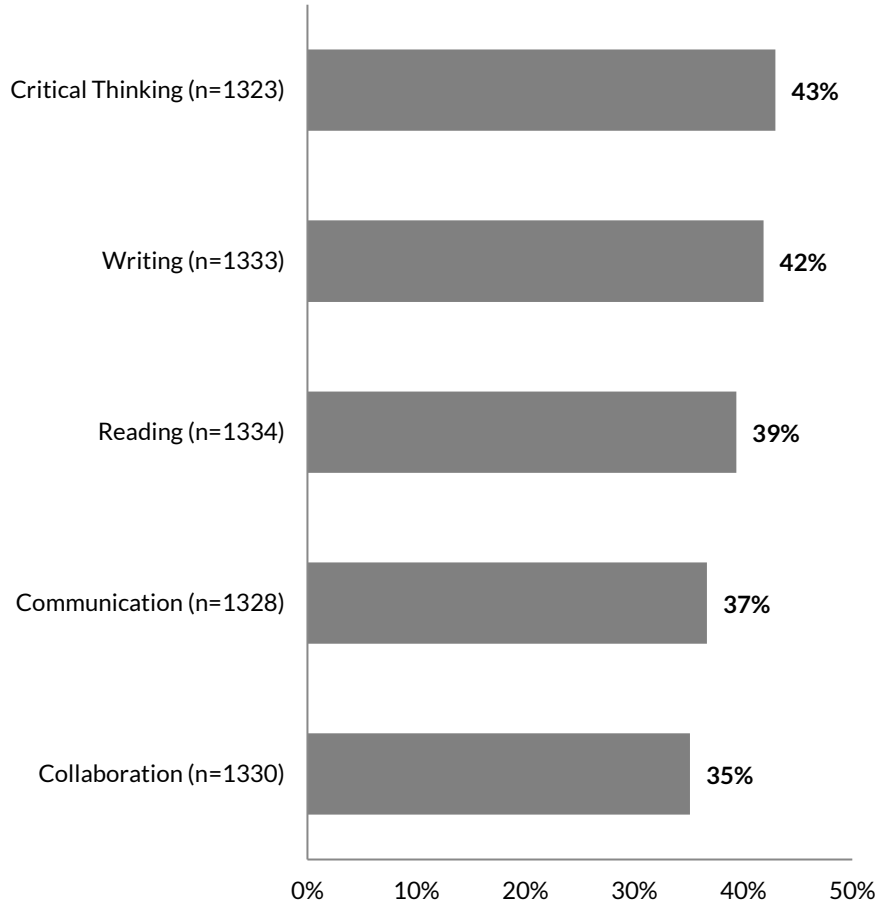
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the content and rigor of your [current/Grade 9] English course.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

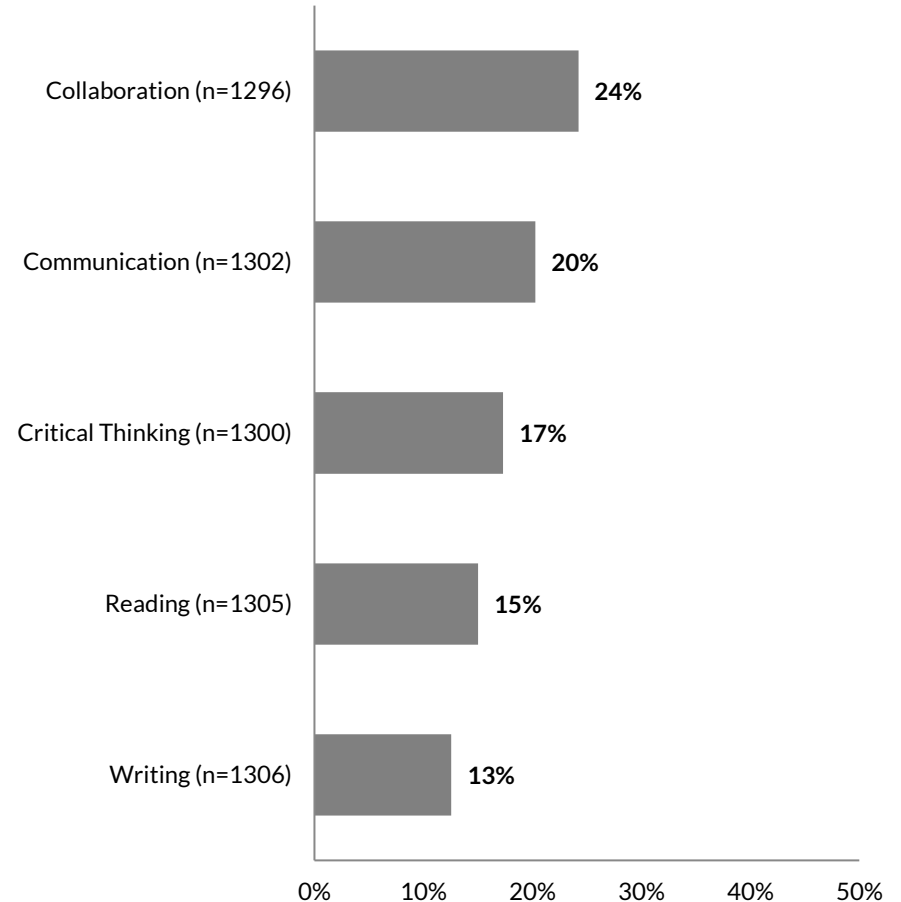


COURSE SKILL REQUIRED

How would you describe the level of difficulty required of the following skills when comparing your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course with your other classes?
% Somewhat Easier + % Much Easier



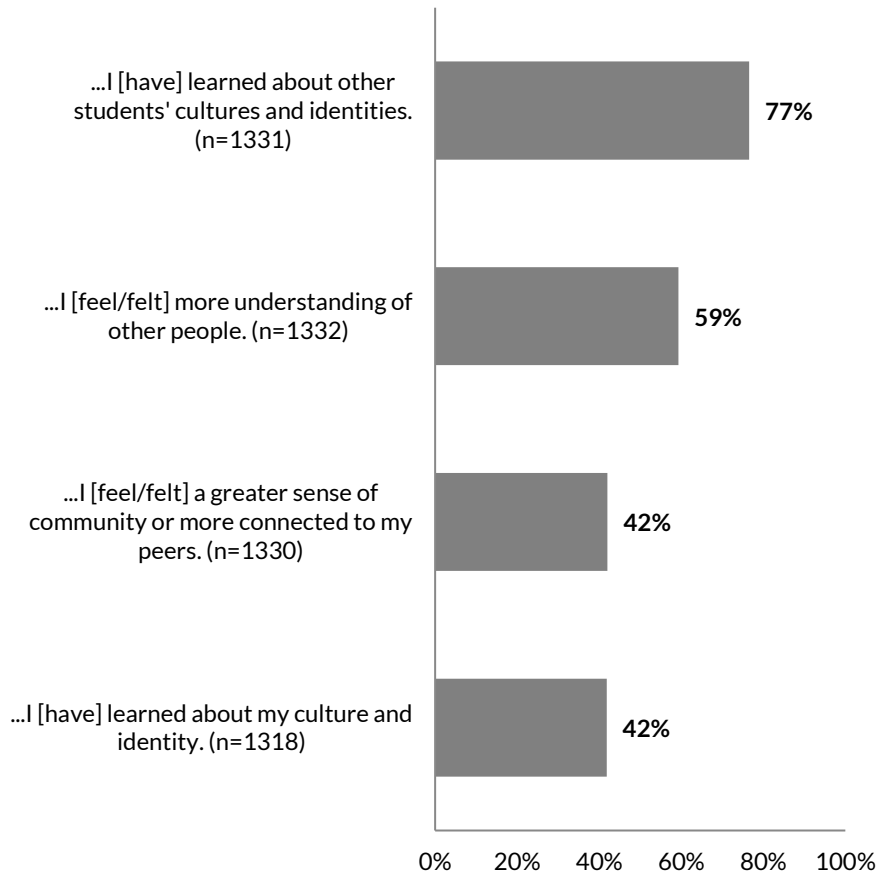
How would you describe the level of difficulty required of the following skills when comparing your [current/Grade 9] English course with your other classes?
% Somewhat Easier + % Much Easier



COURSE IMPACT

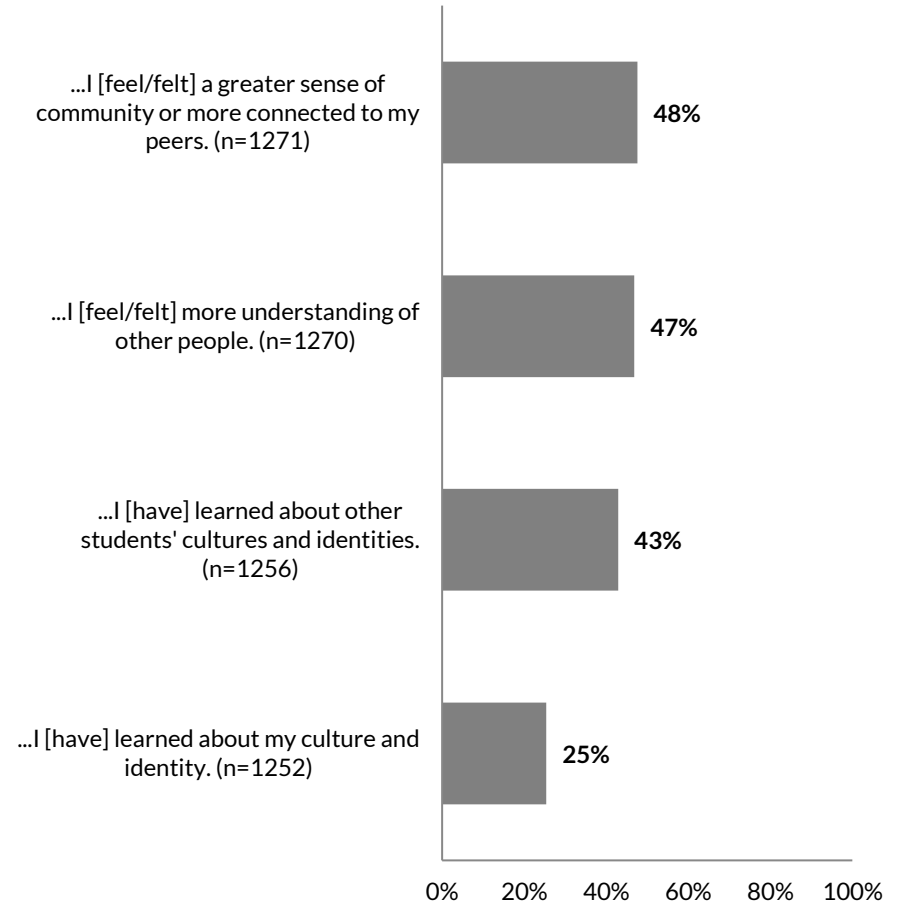
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of the [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course. Because of this course...

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



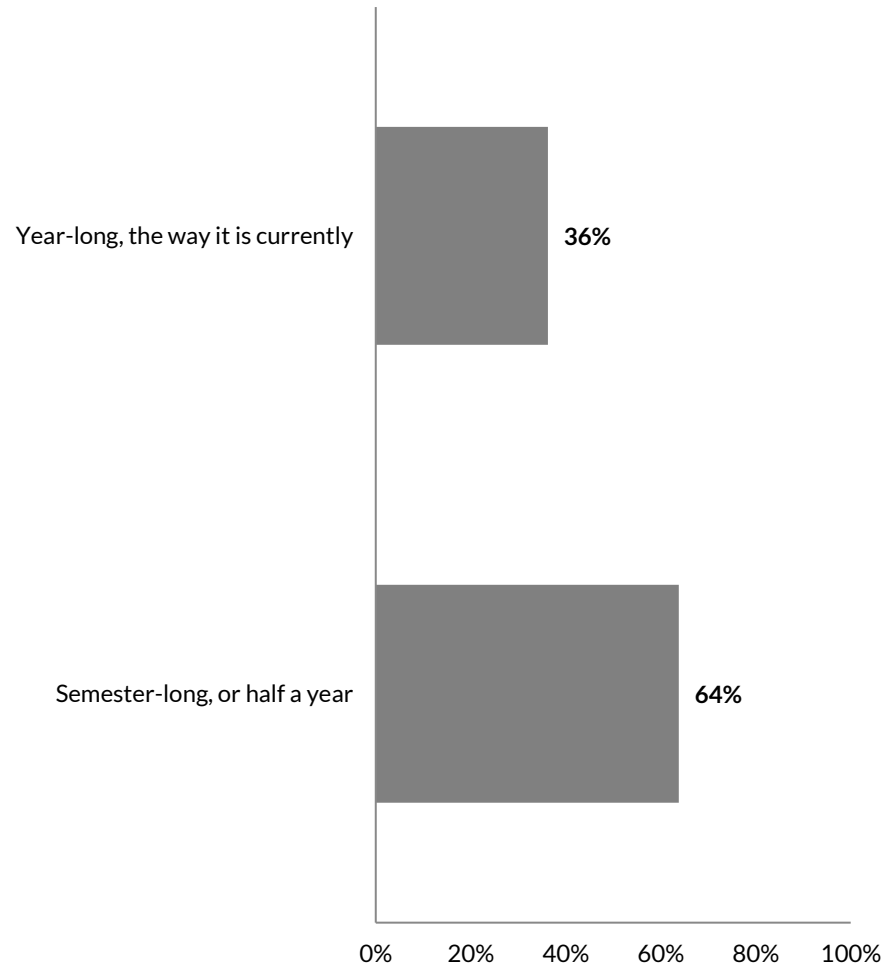
Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of the [current/Grade 9] English course. Because of this course...

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree



COURSE LENGTH

Based on your experience, how long do you feel is best for the Ethnic Studies course? (n=1342)



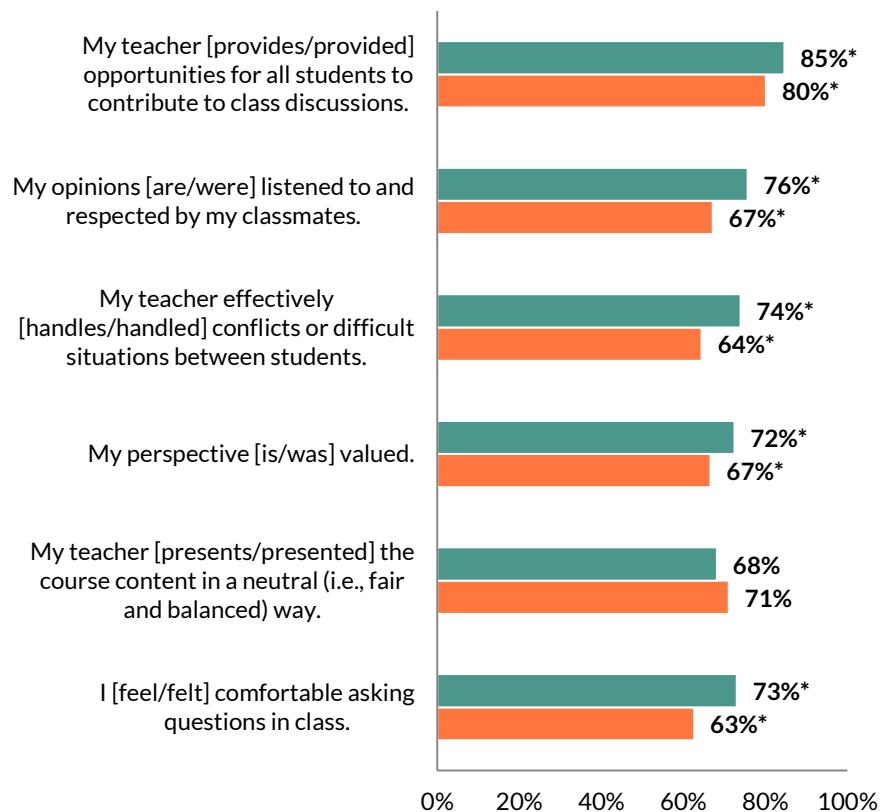
RESULTS BY GRADE LEVEL

COURSE EXPERIENCE (1 of 2)

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

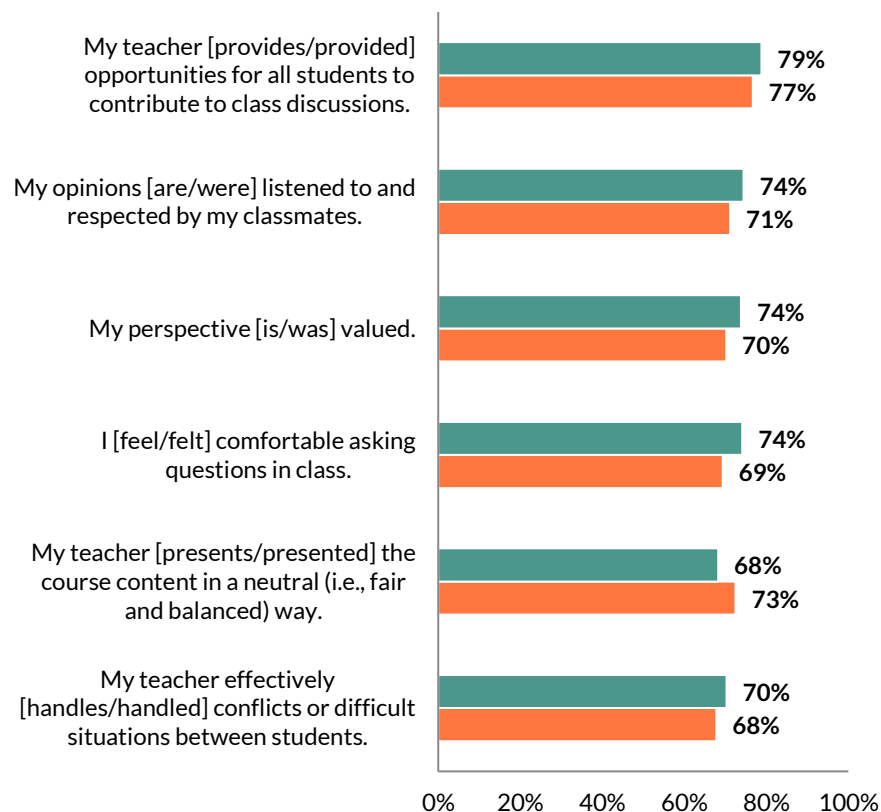
■ Grade 9 (n=283-849) ■ Grade 10 (n=204-489)



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] English course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

■ Grade 9 (n=274-823) ■ Grade 10 (n=200-476)

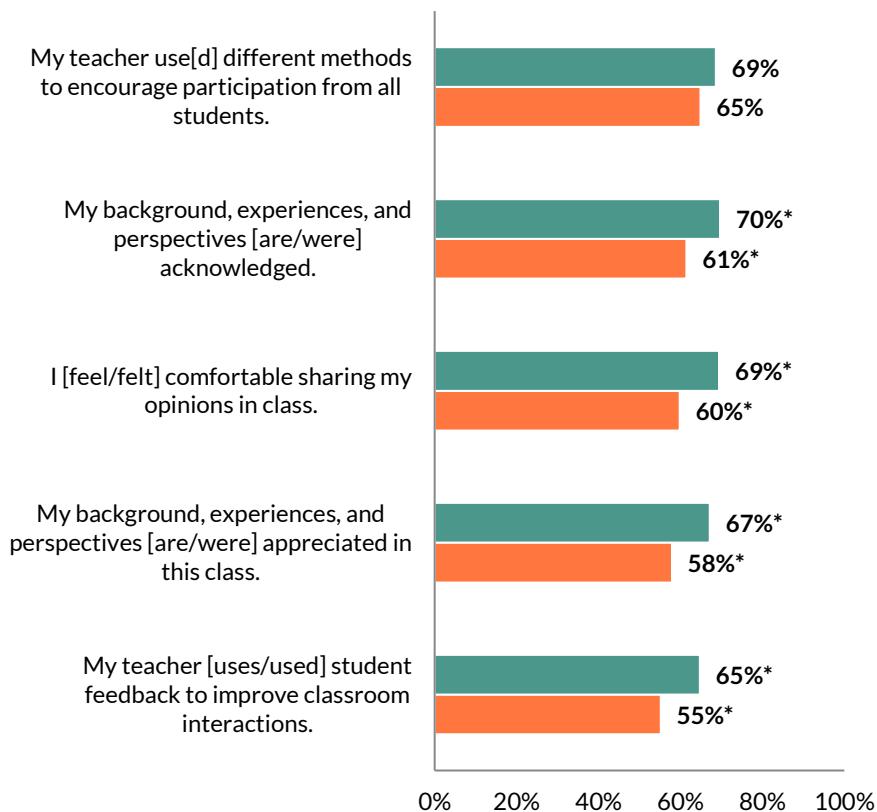


COURSE EXPERIENCE (2 OF 2)

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

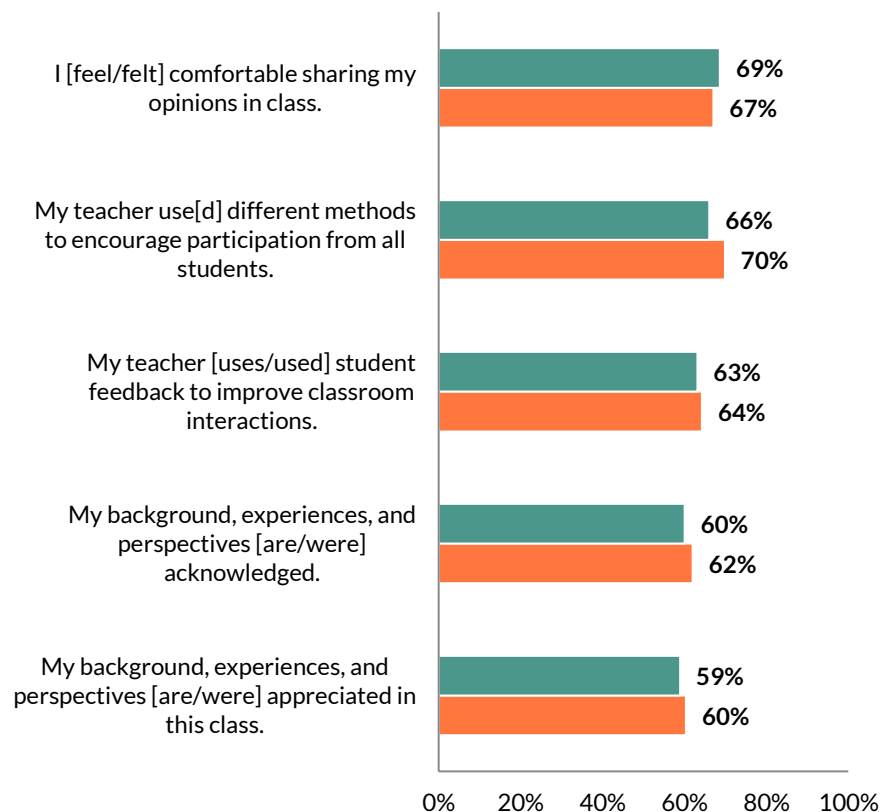
■ Grade 9 (n=283-849) ■ Grade 10 (n=204-489)



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [current/Grade 9] English course experience.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

■ Grade 9 (n=274-823) ■ Grade 10 (n=200-476)

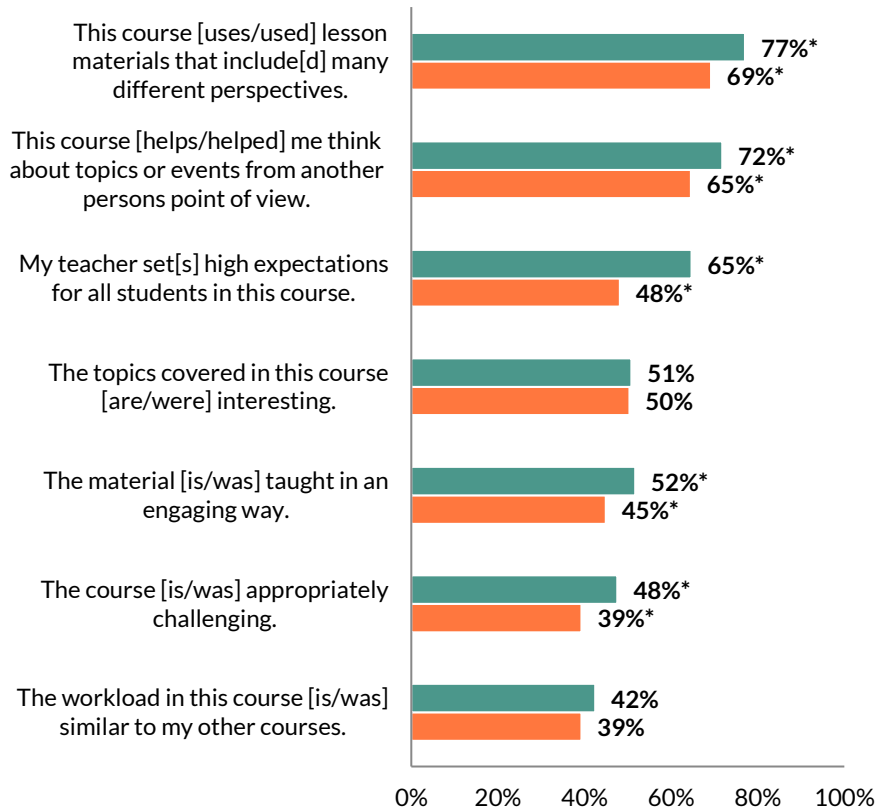


COURSE CONTENT & RIGOR

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the content and rigor of your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

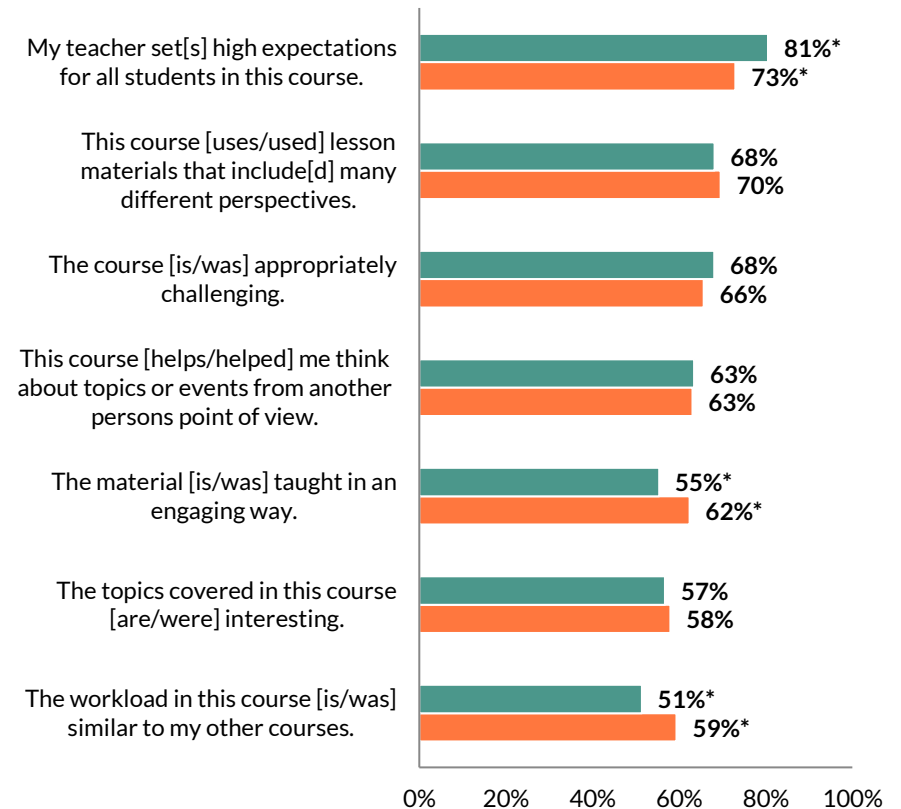
■ Grade 9 (n=842-856) ■ Grade 10 (n=480-494)



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the content and rigor of your [current/Grade 9] English course.

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

■ Grade 9 (n=817-834) ■ Grade 10 (n=474-484)

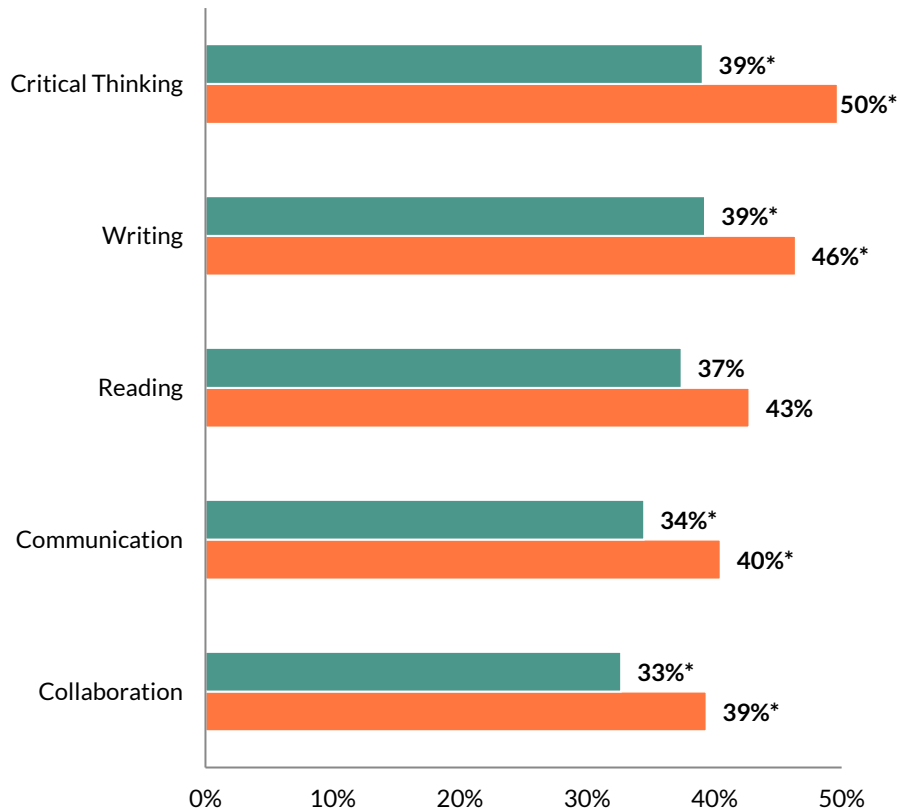


COURSE SKILL REQUIRED

How would you describe the level of difficulty required of the following skills when comparing your [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course with your other classes?

% Somewhat Easier + % Much Easier

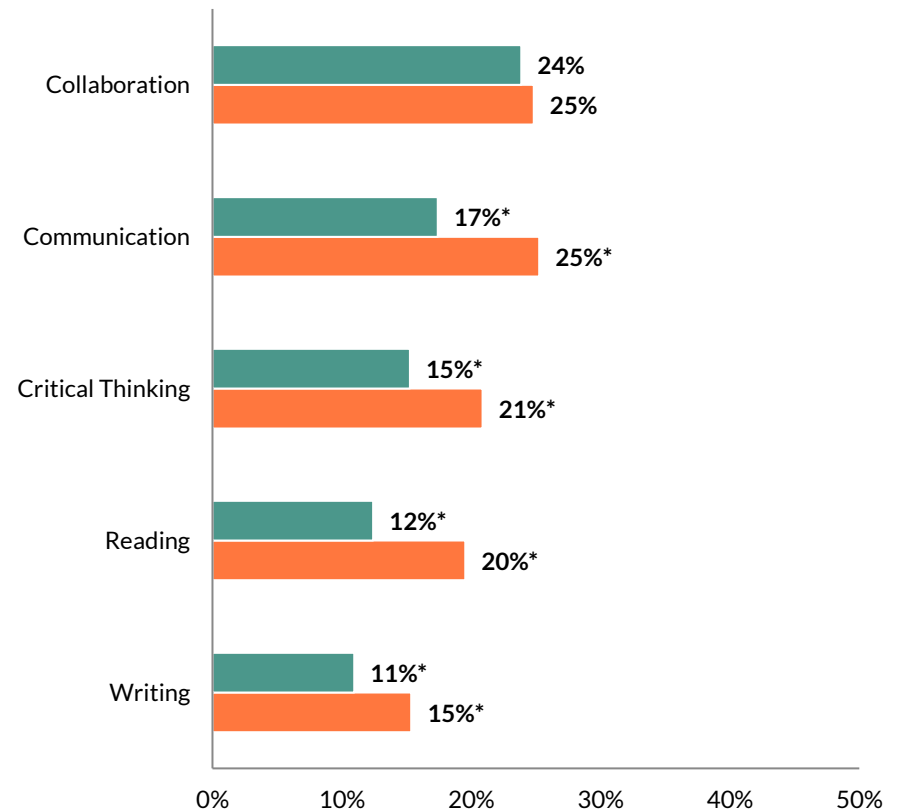
■ Grade 9 (n=842-850) ■ Grade 10 (n=481-485)



How would you describe the level of difficulty required of the following skills when comparing your [current/Grade 9] English course with your other classes?

% Somewhat Easier + % Much Easier

■ Grade 9 (n=821-831) ■ Grade 10 (n=474-476)

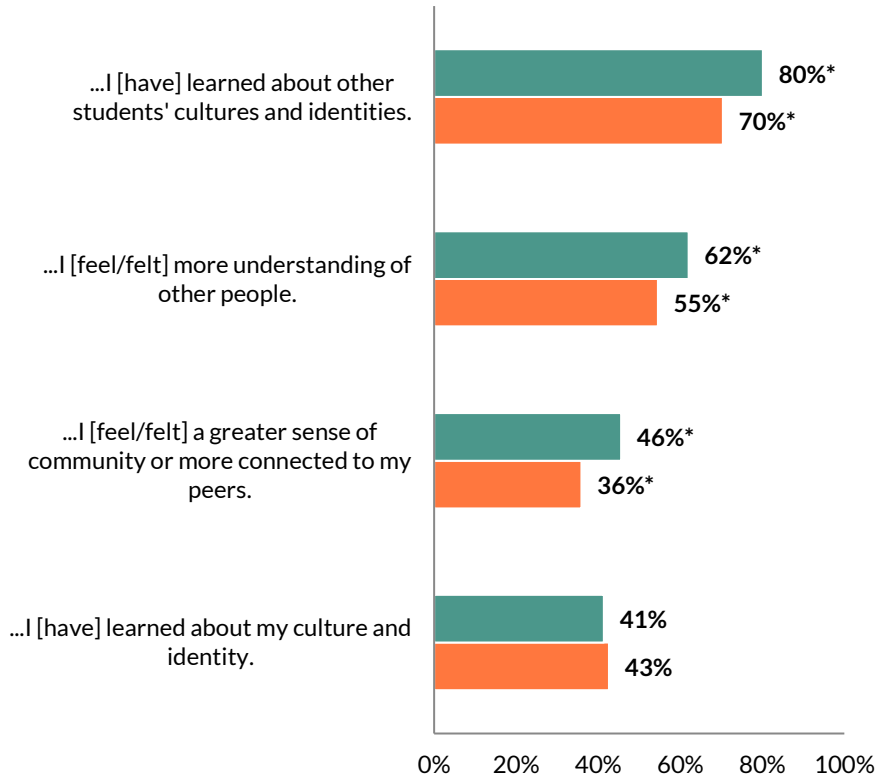


COURSE IMPACT

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of the [current/Grade 9] Ethnic Studies course. Because of this course...

% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

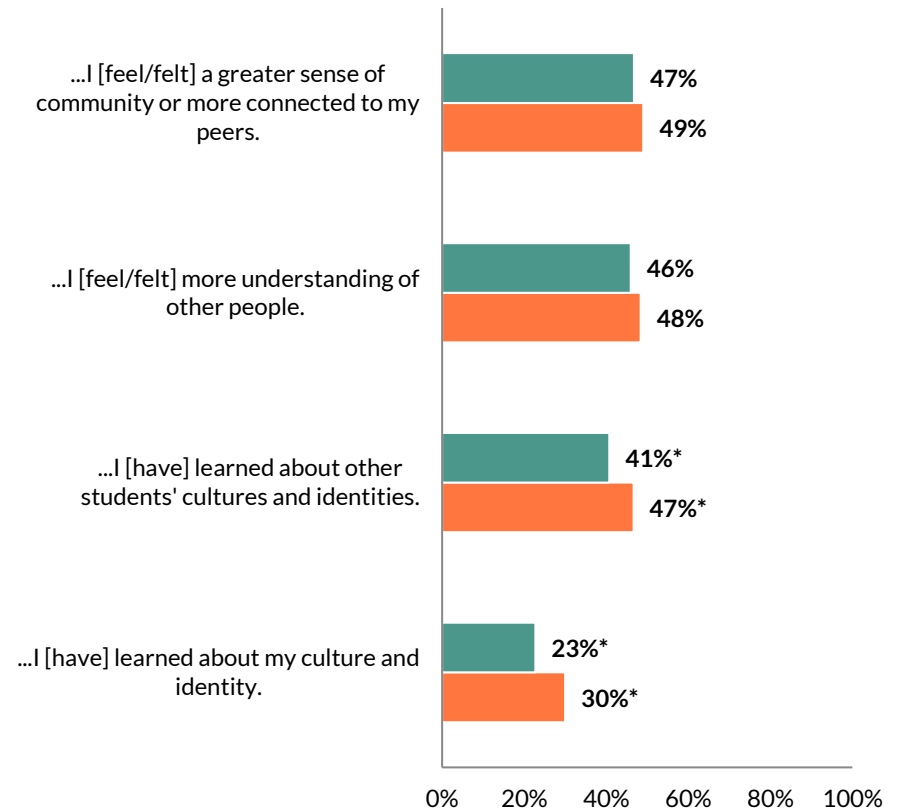
■ Grade 9 (n=837-848) ■ Grade 10 (n=481-486)



Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of the [current/Grade 9] English course. Because of this course...

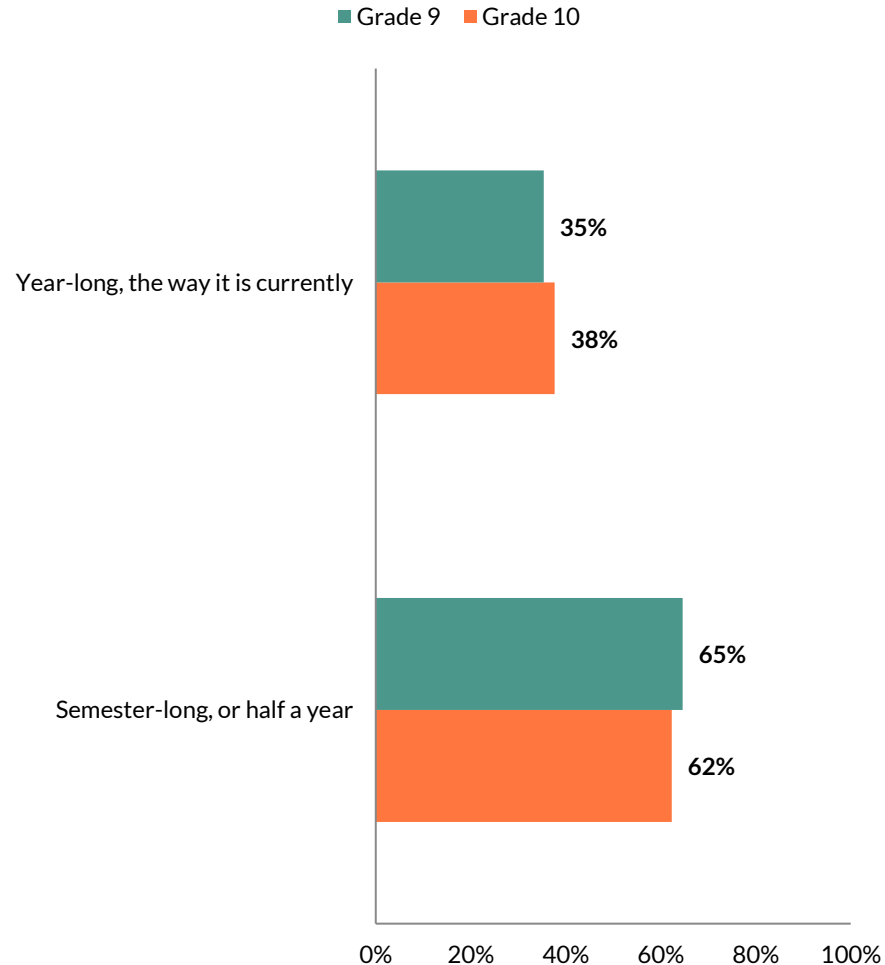
% Somewhat Agree + % Completely Agree

■ Grade 9 (n=792-803) ■ Grade 10 (n=460-469)



COURSE LENGTH

Based on your experience, how long do you feel is best for the Ethnic Studies course? (n=1342)



RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Student Grade (n=1,378)	
Grade 9	63%
Grade 10	37%

Current School (n=1,378)	
Los Altos High School	64%
Mountain View High School	36%

Special Program Participation (n=1,306)	
English Language Learner (ELL)	2%
Special Education	4%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL)	5%
504 Plan	11%
AVID	12%
None of the above	71%

Gender (n=1,306)	
Female	47%
Male	47%
Non-binary/Gender non-conforming	1%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	1%
Prefer not to respond	4%

Race/Ethnicity (n=1,378)	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	40%
Black or African American	3%
Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x)	23%
Middle Eastern or North African	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%
White	42%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	4%
Prefer not to respond	5%



Thank you.

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