

STUDENT PROFESSOR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

Audrey DiBartolomeo, Caitlin Bobis, Emma Warhol, Joy Kim, Matt Juvelier, Veronica Perez

ABSTRACT

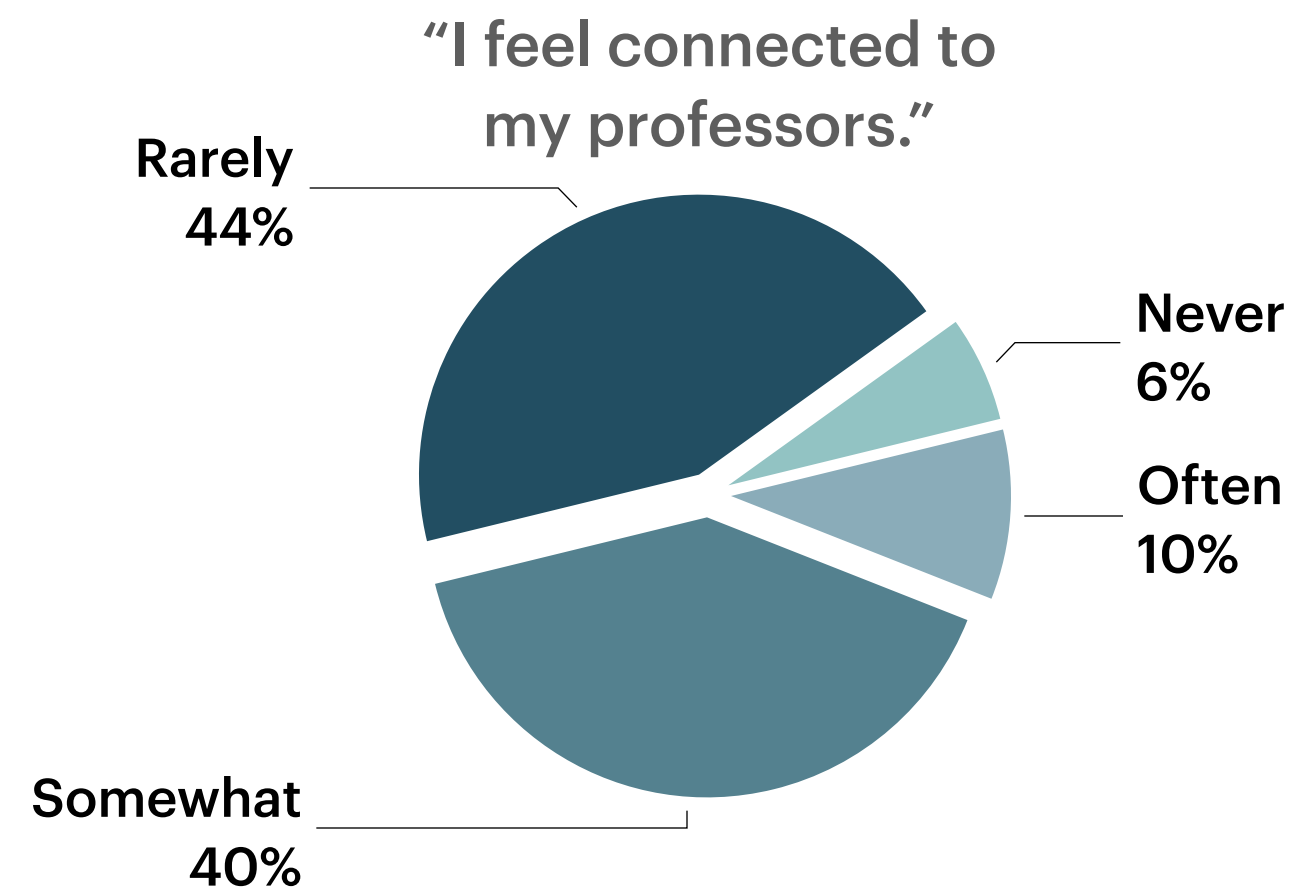
Due to the transition to online learning, we wanted to investigate how this new format impacted student-professor connectedness. We defined the level of connectedness by whether or not students have established some kind of relationship with their professors both in and out of the class setting. The degree to which barriers (i.e., interfering obstacles) of online learning were perceived to be related to comfort and the levels of connectedness within a professor and student relationship.



BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, as a result of the current pandemic, schools across the nation were forced to shut down and quickly transition into an online format. At the University of Delaware specifically, online classes were divided into asynchronous and synchronous formats, with very few classes being taught in person. As a result, teachers and students alike have been struggling to adjust and maintain the relationships that once came easily in a classroom setting.

Research Question: Has online learning created experienced barriers for UD student-professor relationships?



METHODS

Data Collection: This research analyzes data from an online survey using Google Forms. The data consists of 82 responses from a demographically representative college class.

Analysis: The data was analyzed using a coding system consisting of parent and child codes. The parent codes included: less connected, more connected, and no difference in connection with professors. The child codes included: more comfortable/less comfortable with participation, minimized interaction/enhanced interaction/no change in interaction, and more challenging/less challenging.

RESULTS

- Technology has become a barrier for online learning. **62.2%** would rather participate in person and **36.3%** would prefer utilizing zoom to participate.
- Our statistics show that **98.8%** of students find their professors to be friendly. However, **50%** of students do not feel connected to their professors.
- **90 percent** of students say that having a strong relationship with their professor leads to greater academic success. However, **50%** of students do not feel connected.

CONCLUSION

Most students felt that online learning has created barriers such as minimized interaction, more discomfort participating over Zoom, and more challenges in getting to know the professor which ultimately resulted in a feeling of disconnect between students and professors. Students who feel more connected to their professors face less barriers in online learning and are more likely to participate more in class. Our results also show that gaining a strong knit relationship with a professor leads to academic success and motivation. Lastly, friendliness does not lead to a higher level of connectedness.