Lights, Camera, Growth!

Highlights from the 2024–2025 Evaluation of Film Prize Junior New Mexico

MC2Education

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Images throughout this report are stock images, and do not depict any actual study participants.

Introduction

Since its launch in 2021, Film Prize Junior New Mexico (FPJR) has engaged middle and high school students across the state in meaningful, hands-on learning through the art of creating films. From developing a concept and writing a script to producing and editing a film, students participate in a creative journey that culminates in a statewide competition and screening of their films at the annual FPJR Film Festival.

FPJR is rooted in the growing momentum of New Mexico's film industry and seeks to expand access to film education, particularly for underserved students, by opening doors to new career pathways and building transferable skills. The experience is designed to foster teamwork, communication, and creativity, all of which are transferable to current daily activities and future educational pursuits and careers. Ultimately, the program isn't only about the film, but also about the skills acquired along the way that set students up for future success in multiple domains and careers.

In fall 2023, FPJR contracted with MC² Education, LLC (MC² Education) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program's implementation and its impact. The evaluation continued for a second year in the 2024–2025 school year.

This report presents highlights from MC² Education's 2024–2025 school year evaluation.

Key Findings Overview

1 FPJR Improves Student Self-Reported Skills—but Self-Perception Lags

- Students report meaningful growth in filmmaking skills and a variety of soft skills because of FPJR.
- Similarly to in 2023–2024, teacher producers consistently perceive more student growth than students report for themselves.
- Read more here.

2 Motivated Students Experience the Biggest Gains

- Student motivation to finish their film was the most powerful predictor of positive outcomes—much stronger than whether they completed a film or attended the festival.
- Motivated students reported better outcomes in their sense of agency, film skills, connection to teacher, problem solving skills, and more.
- Read more here.

3 Administrative Support for Teachers is Correlated with Student Outcomes

- When teachers reported having administrative support for the program, their students reported better outcomes across multiple domains.
- Read more here.

4 Social-Emotional Gains Are Strongest in Teamwork and Perseverance

- Students reported strong growth in collaboration, listening, and perseverance.
- Teacher producers overwhelmingly affirmed these gains and observed even more growth than students reported.
- Students identified support from their peers as key to success.
- Read more here.

5 Teacher Producers Report High Professional Impact

- FPJR re-engages teachers: most said it increased their enthusiasm for teaching, strengthened student relationships, and gave them a stronger sense of their impact.
- This is especially relevant in New Mexico, where teacher burnout and attrition are especially significant challenges.
- Read more here.

6 Native Students Sometimes Report Even Greater Gains

- Native respondents reported higher self-reported growth across multiple domains—technical, social-emotional, and soft skills—compared to their non-Native peers.
- This finding may represent existing historical inequities which mean that more growth is possible for Native students based on differences in starting points for these skills.
- Read more here.

7 The Role of the Teacher Producer Is Central

- Students' connection to their teacher producer was the outcome most impacted by program implementation factors.
- Student outcomes were best when teacher involvement struck the right balance —especially during scripting and production (collaborative support without taking over).
- Read more here.

8 Completing a Film Is Not the Main Indicator of Success

- Students who didn't finish a film often reported outcomes at least as good as those who did (although differences were probably not practically significant).
- This reinforces the idea that process matters more than product in achieving FPJR's goals.
- Read more here. ■

Methods

To understand how FPJR supports students, teachers, and schools across New Mexico, MC² Education used a mixed-methods approach, bringing together both numbers and stories to build a fuller picture of the program's impact. Our goal was to explore not only how the program is being implemented, but how it's being experienced by the people most directly involved.

Below is a high level synopsis of our methods. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to us directly at office@mc2educationllc.com.

This evaluation focused on four central questions:

1. *In what ways does participating in FPJR appear to influence students' outcomes?*
2. *What is the perceived effectiveness of FPJR from the perspective of teacher producers and student filmmakers?*
3. *What characteristics of program implementation appear to be associated with success?*
4. *What are some of the unique elements of Native student participants' experiences in FPJR? What insights do those experiences offer for program implementation?*

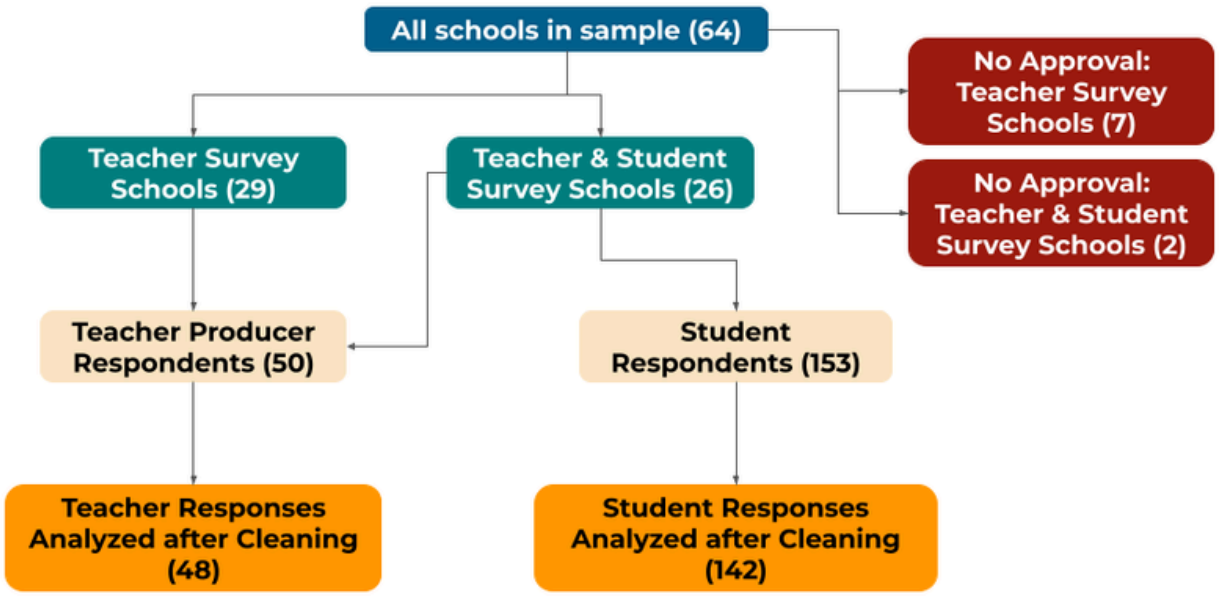
To address these questions, we gathered data[1] from two sources over the 2024–2025 school year:

- **Student Surveys:** Student filmmakers completed surveys about their experiences in the program, including what they learned, their level of engagement, and how the experience impacted their confidence and goals.
- **Teacher Surveys:** Teacher producers shared their experiences in the program, how taking part in the program impacted them, and how they thought their students had changed during the program.

[1] If you would like to see our survey questions, please reach out to us directly.

For both surveys, we contacted a randomly selected sample of 64 schools across 28 districts participating in FPJR to gain research approvals for the surveys. We aimed to field the teacher survey at all 64 schools, and the student survey at a subset of 35 schools. We received approval to send the teacher survey to 55 schools, or 86% of our intended sample. We received approval to send the student survey to 26 schools, or 72% of our intended sample.

Exhibit 1: Survey Sampling & Response Rates



Source: MC² Education 2024–2025 Evaluation

Read as: Of the 64 schools in the randomly selected sample, 29 granted approval for administering the teacher survey, and 26 granted approval for administering both teacher and student surveys.

In the end, we received 50 responses from teacher producers at 44 schools (80% of our approved sample), and 153 responses from student filmmakers at 21 schools (81% of our approved sample). After data cleaning, we were able to analyze 48 teacher responses and 142 student responses.

Respondents

Exhibit 2: Demographics of Student Respondents

		Percent of Students			Percent of Students
Parent Education	No college	15%	**Race/ Ethnicity**	Asian	2%
	College	58%		Black or African American	5%
	Not sure	27%		Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Chicano, or Mexican	39%
Grade	6	6%		Middle Eastern or North African	1%
	7	11%		Native American or Indigenous	32%
	8	24%		Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
	9	4%		White	37%
	10	16%		Prefer not to answer	7%
	11	23%		I don't know	4%
	12	16%	**Done FPJR Previously**	No	72%
Gender	Male	47%		Yes	26%
	Female	44%		Not sure	2%
	Prefer not to answer	9%			

Read as: Fifteen percent of the 142 student respondents have parents who did not attend college.

n=142 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys*

The student respondents were approximately evenly split by gender, with the highest proportion of responses from 8th and 11th graders. Almost three-quarters

(72%) of students had not previously taken part in FPJR. Students could self-identify as one or more races, and 39% reported being Hispanic/Latino, 32% reported being Native American or Indigenous, and 37% reported being White (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 3: Demographics of Teacher Producer Respondents

		Percent of Teacher Producers			Percent of Teacher Producers
Years as a Teacher	Not a teacher	10%	Race/ Ethnicity	Asian	3%
	1–4	15%		Black or African American	0%
	5–9	23%		Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Chicano, or Mexican	26%
	10+	51%		Middle Eastern or North African	0%
Years of Filmmaking Experience	0	21%		Native American or Indigenous	8%
	1–4	38%		Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%
	5–9	13%		White	67%
	10+	28%		Prefer not to answer	3%
Gender	Male	46%	Years in FPJR	1	18%
	Female	49%		2	44%
	Nonbinary	3%		3	26%
	Prefer not to answer	3%		4	13%

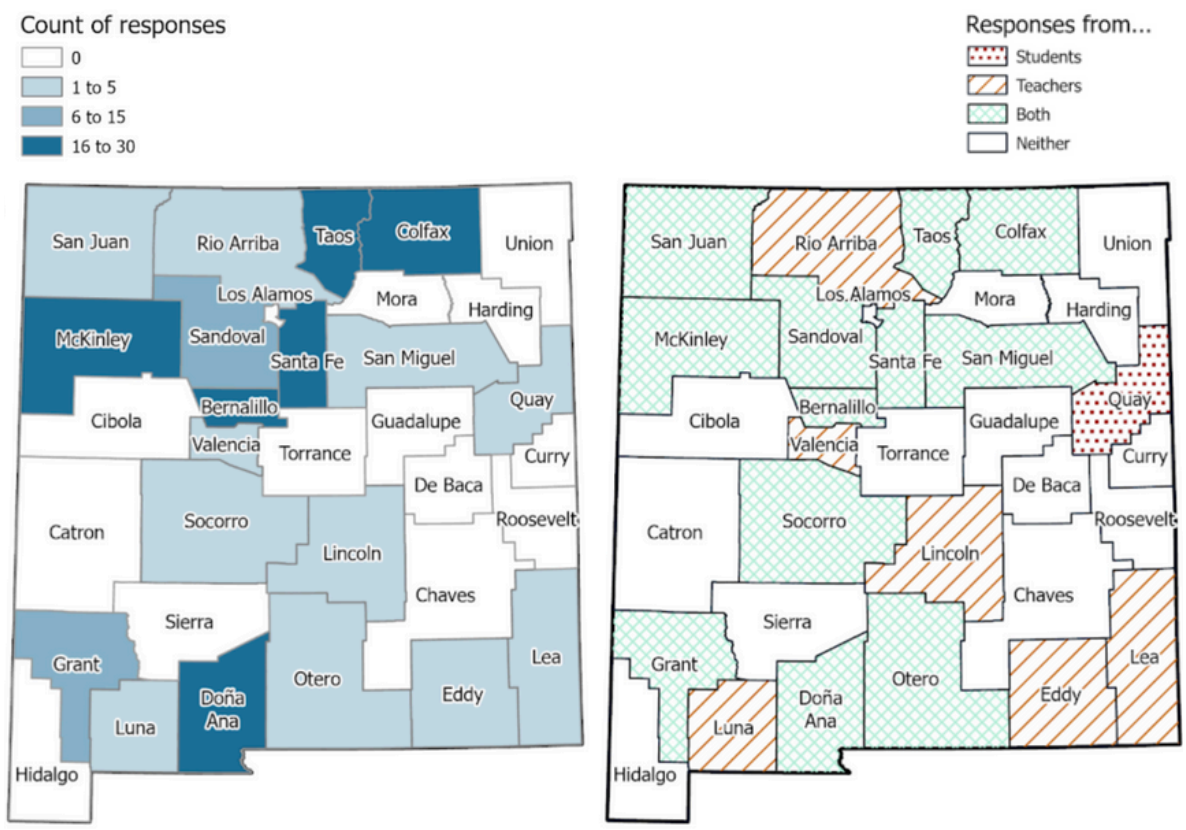
Read as: Ten percent of the 48 teacher producer respondents are not traditional school-based teachers.

n=48 *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys*

The teacher producer respondents were largely white (67%), and 82% of them were returning teacher producers in the FPJR program. This means that the respondent sample was slightly more experienced in FPJR than teacher producers as a whole, as 73% of teacher producers in FPJR this year were returning teachers compared to 82% in our respondent sample. They were approximately evenly split by gender and had a wide range of filmmaking experience (although 21% had zero years of filmmaking experience). Approximately half had been teachers for more than 10 years (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 4 shows the geographic distribution of these responses across New Mexico. In most counties, we received responses from both students and teachers. The counties with the highest count of responses were Taos, Colfax, McKinley, Santa Fe, Bernalillo, and Doña Ana.

Exhibit 4: Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

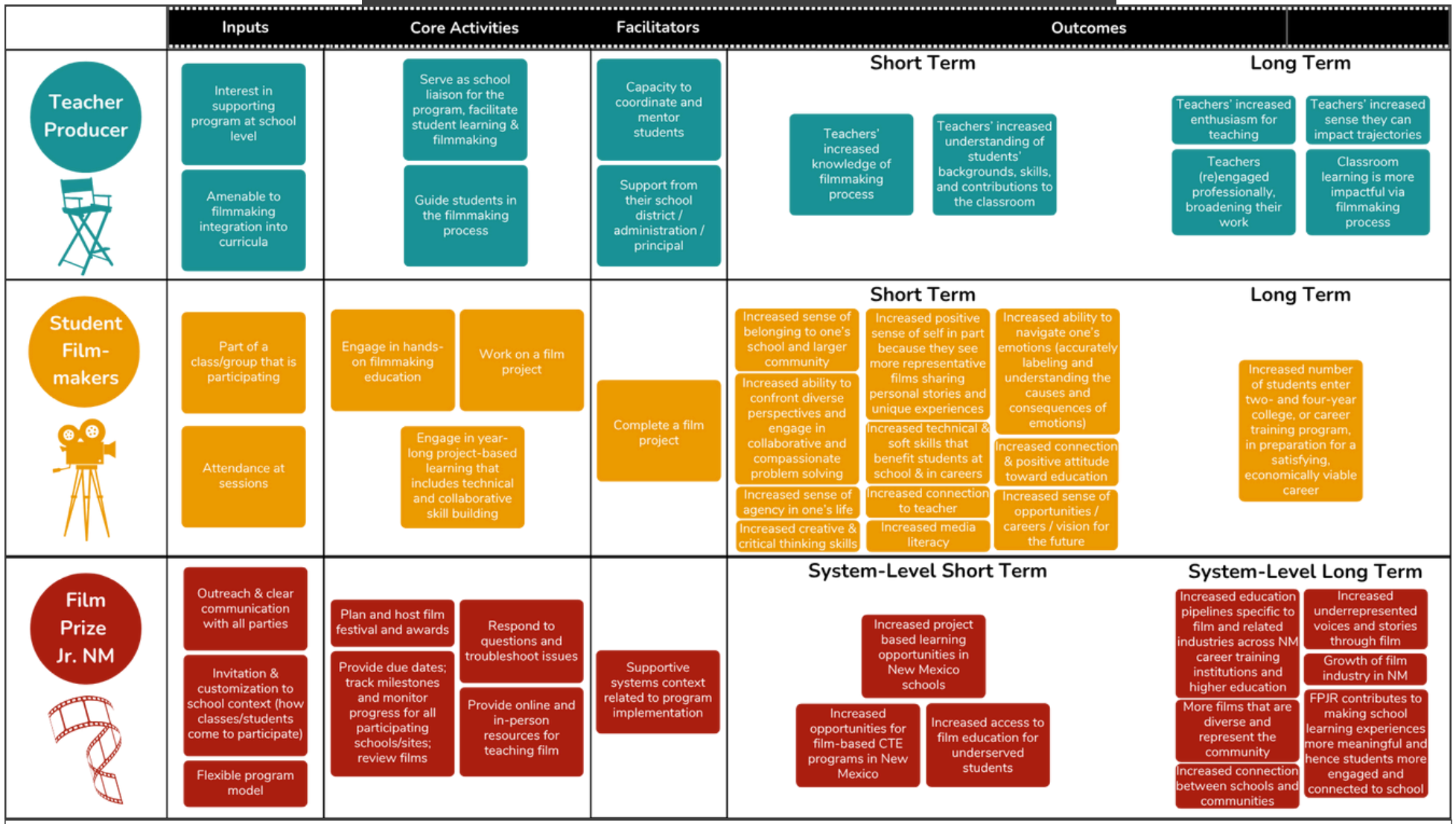


Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: There were between 1 and 5 respondents (across both teachers and students) from San Juan County. The 1 to 5 respondents in Rio Arriba County were all teachers.

We analyzed the data using the program's logic model (Exhibit 5), which helped us organize what we learned within the broader goals of FPJR —from early skill development to long-term career interest and school engagement.
Throughout our work, we stayed grounded in the values that guide both FPJR and MC² Education: centering student voices, honoring educators, and working in partnership to better serve New Mexico's students and schools. ■

Exhibit 5: Film Prize Junior New Mexico's Program Logic Model



Source: Film Prize Junior New Mexico

Read as: One of the expected inputs for teacher producers is interest in supporting the FPJR program at the school level.

Student Outcomes

Three Key Notes About Our Sample

#1 Findings across years should not be compared.

To measure student outcomes, we asked both teachers and students about students' skills and changes due to participation in FPJR. Through these surveys, we were able to gauge self-reported growth in skills that FPJR aimed to influence. Although we sought survey responses from the same group of schools as in our 2023–2024 evaluation, our respondents this year are quite different from last year. As such, direct comparisons should not be made between our two reports. Instead, view these findings as snapshots in time.

#2 One school experienced challenges, but its data do not skew overall findings.

This year, we received responses from students at 21 different schools, and FPJR was active in about 80 schools in New Mexico. Of the 142 student responses that we analyzed, 25 responses were from a single school (18% of our student sample). Upon examination, these students appeared to have had a largely negative experience during FPJR, largely due to a negative relationship with their teacher producer (more on this later).

Our team considered various ways to present the data to allow the students from this school to be heard, but to prevent their responses from overpowering those of students from other schools with fewer respondents. We performed tests in which we averaged student responses within schools, so that each school had an average response per question.

That created a data set for analysis with 21 units (schools) rather than our original 142 units (students). However, when we compared the responses by student to the responses by school, we did not find that the difference in results warranted re-analyzing our findings by school.[2]

Based on this process, we present outcome data at the student level throughout the report, as we did in our 2023–2024 report. All student responses are included throughout.

#3 **Teacher and student respondents do not represent a perfect overlap.**

Our teacher and student respondents did not have a perfect overlap, in part by design. We offered the teacher survey at more schools (including those where we were not able to survey students) than we offered the student survey. Ultimately, 99% of our student respondents worked with teacher producers who also completed the surveys (only one student respondent did not have a matching teacher response from their school). More than half (54%) of our teacher respondents did not have any students from their school respond. As such, when we directly compare student responses to teacher responses (Exhibit 15, for example), we only show responses from the 20 schools where both teachers and students responded.

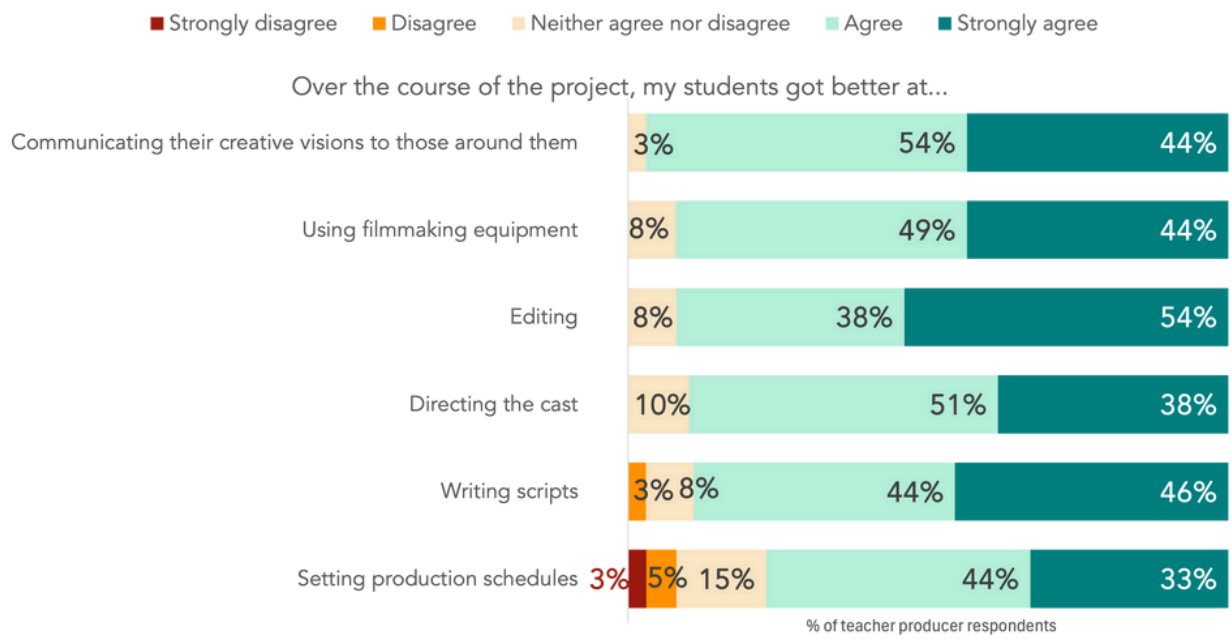
Film Skills

As a program focused on filmmaking, it is a reasonable assumption that students will improve in filmmaking skills. Indeed, between 77% and 99% of teachers (Exhibit 6) and 74% and 89% of students (Exhibit 7) who completed the survey reported that students improved in film skills such as using film equipment and directing the cast, as well as in skills like writing, editing, and communicating their creative visions to those around them because of FPJR.

For one skill, setting production schedules, 8% of teachers reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that students had improved over the course of the project. This echoes findings across the evaluation from both students and teachers who reported that scheduling was a struggle during filmmaking. It's also possible that scheduling fell to teachers more often than students, decreasing students' opportunities to practice and improve this skill.

[2] Please reach out to us directly at office@mc2educationllc.com if you are interested in seeing more details and the results of our test weighting analyses.

Exhibit 6: Teacher Report of Student Film Skills Improvement



n=39

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Forty-four percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents strongly agree that their students got better at communicating their creative visions to those around them over the course of the project.

Through open-ended responses, teacher producers reported that time-related issues were the biggest challenge that prevented their students from completing their films in time for the festival. They noted that their students faced challenges with schedule coordination outside of class time. Additionally, teachers reported on how they and their students struggled to manage competing priorities:

"Many of our students are also in sports and have to travel a long distance in order to compete in many sports events."

- Teacher producer

While time management is a challenging skill to acquire, many students attributed their success to effective time and project management skills. They found it helpful when they had deadlines, reminders, and were provided with what they felt was enough time.

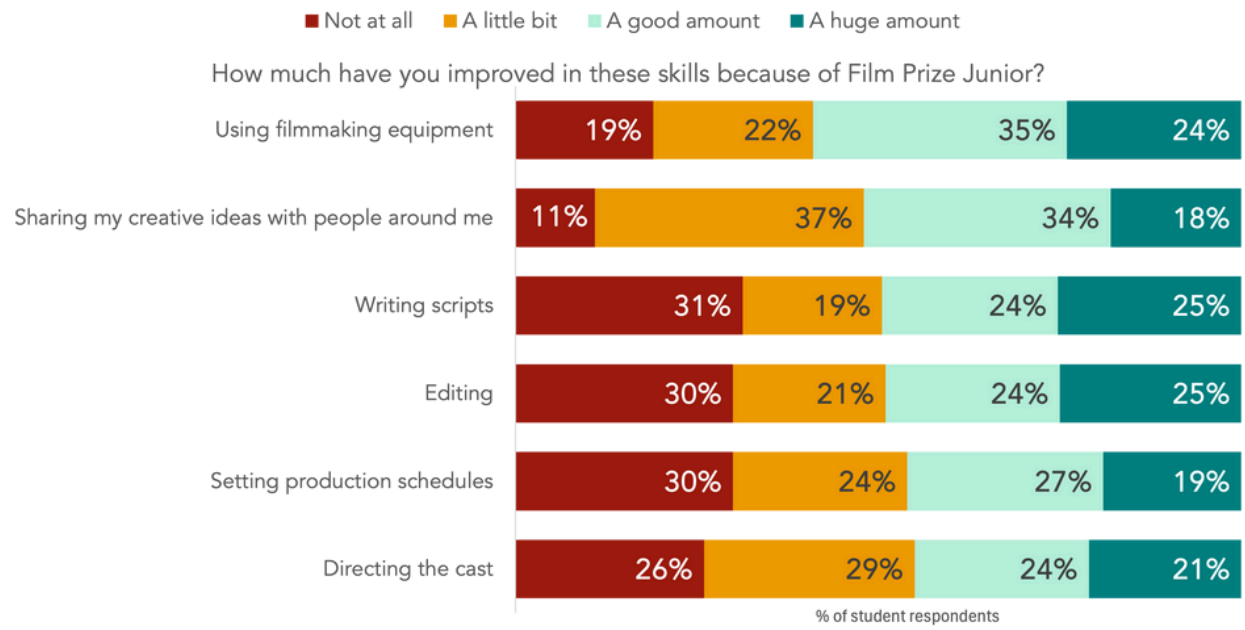
"I made a calendar and scheduled the days I would work on my film. I also organized all my files to make working on the project easier."

- Student filmmaker

"The effort, time management, and hard work I put into this project as my first year doing this project was the reason why I turned it in on time. I wanted to make sure that I did more than what I was supposed to do because I figured maybe if I did, I would've at least maybe had recognition for how much dedication I put towards it."

- Student filmmaker

Exhibit 7: Student Report of Film Skills Improvement



n=108 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys*

Read as: Twenty-four percent of the 108 student respondents say that their skills in using filmmaking equipment improved a huge amount because of Film Prize Junior.

Similar to last year, across almost every item on the surveys, students were harsher on themselves than the teacher producers were on their students, and reported less positive outcomes than teachers observed in their students.

This pattern holds across the film-specific skills, in which 45% to 59% of students reported improving a good amount or a huge amount. When students who reported

a little bit of improvement are taken into account, we find that between 68% and 89% of students reported improving at least a little in these skills. Even so, teachers were still more positive, with between 77% and 97% of teacher respondents reporting that their students grew in these skills.

Media Literacy

In today's media landscape, it is crucially important for people of all ages to be able to engage with, create, disseminate, and receive information via the media in considered and critical ways. A high school senior in 2025 is likely to have never lived in a world without the iPhone, personal social media platforms, and news, facts, opinions, and theories crisscrossing the internet unchecked.

As such, we asked the student filmmakers (all of whom are in middle and high school) about their capacities in media literacy. These results present data on how students view their abilities at the time they completed the surveys (just after the FPJR program wrapped up in spring of 2025). It's important to note that we do not know how these students would have judged their skills prior to the program, nor did we ask specifically how their skills improved *because* of FPJR. Therefore, these survey results cannot be attributed to the impact of the program. However, we do have anecdotal data from open-ended teacher producer responses that indicate the impact the program has on students' media skill development:

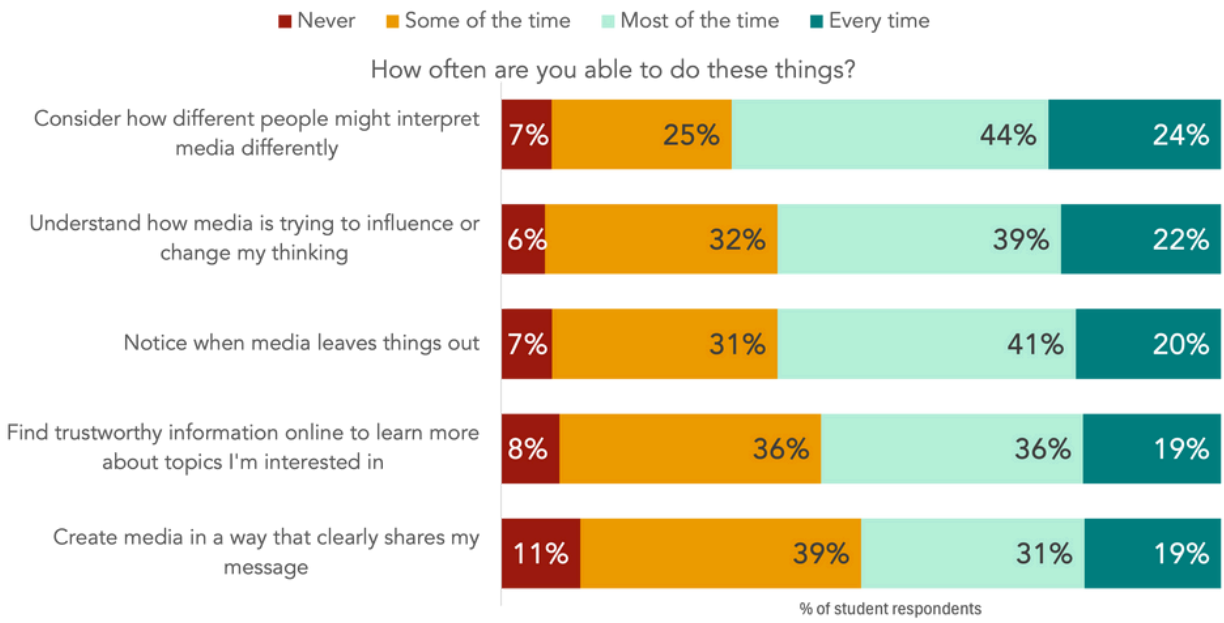
> *"It was amazing to see our high school students, who were mostly freshmen, open up and become more knowledgeable with media skills and even consider pursuing filmmaking as a career in the future."*
>
> *- Teacher producer*

More than half of the students (50% to 68%) reported that at least most of the time, they are able to "create media in a way that clearly shares their message," "find trustworthy information online," "notice when media leaves things out," "understand how media is trying to influence their thinking," and "consider how different people might interpret media differently" (Exhibit 8).

Overall, the skill in which students were most confident, "considering how different people might interpret media differently," suggests a knack for perspective taking and lateral thinking among these students. It is interesting, given that students answered these questions just after completing a film project in which they created

media themselves, that the skill they were least confident in was "creating media in a way that clearly shares their message." Perhaps, after taking part in a project in which they tried to use this skill, the students realize how hard creating media to share a message is, and realize how much more they have to learn.

Exhibit 8: Students' Self-Reported Media Skills



n=108 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys*

Read as: Twenty-four percent of the 108 student respondents say that they are able to consider how different people might interpret media differently every time.

Social-Emotional Learning

Overview

We now describe the impact of participation in FPJR on the development of students' social and emotional skills and their well-being. We examine indicators of well-being and social and emotional skills development relative to participation in FPJR. Two sources of data inform the findings: student surveys and teacher producer surveys about the students.

In questions not directly related to their experiences in FPJR, about half of the students reported experiences at school that are correlated with social and emotional well-being. They generally feel that they belong at their schools and in their communities, have supportive relationships with adults at school, and have a positive attitude towards school, themselves, and the future. These experiences are

key interrelated components of youth well-being.

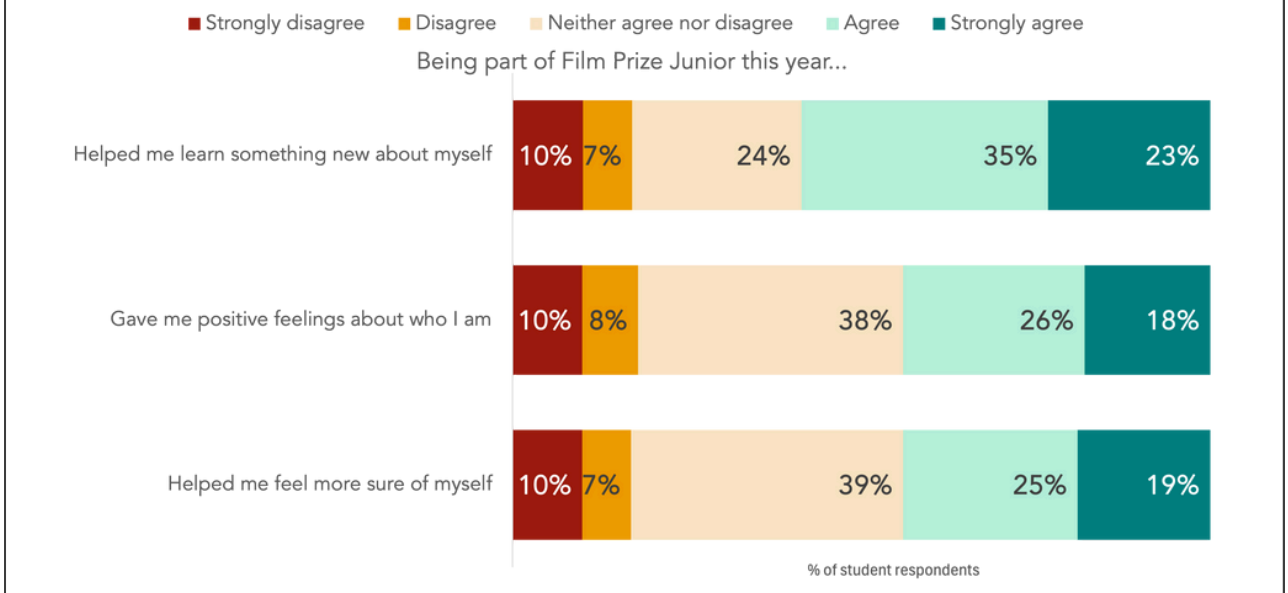
When we focus on the impact of the FPJR program specifically on student social and emotional skills, the story is mostly positive. However, as we noted above, students continued to be harsher in their self-reported outcomes than the teacher producers were.

Impact of FPJR on Social Emotional Health

These findings are based on a) retrospective questions we asked the students themselves, "Thinking back to last school year...," b) questions we asked the students directly about the impact of participation in FPJR, "Being part of FPJR helped me...," and c) teachers' perceptions of students as a result of participation, "How much did the students you supervised/sponsored improve in these skills in the past year."[3]

Over half (58%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that participating in FPJR "helped them learn something new about themselves" (Exhibit 9). Slightly less than half (44%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that being part of FPJR helped

Exhibit 9: Student Sense of Self



n=108

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Twenty-three percent of the 108 student respondents strongly agree that being part of FPJR this year helped them learn something new about themselves.

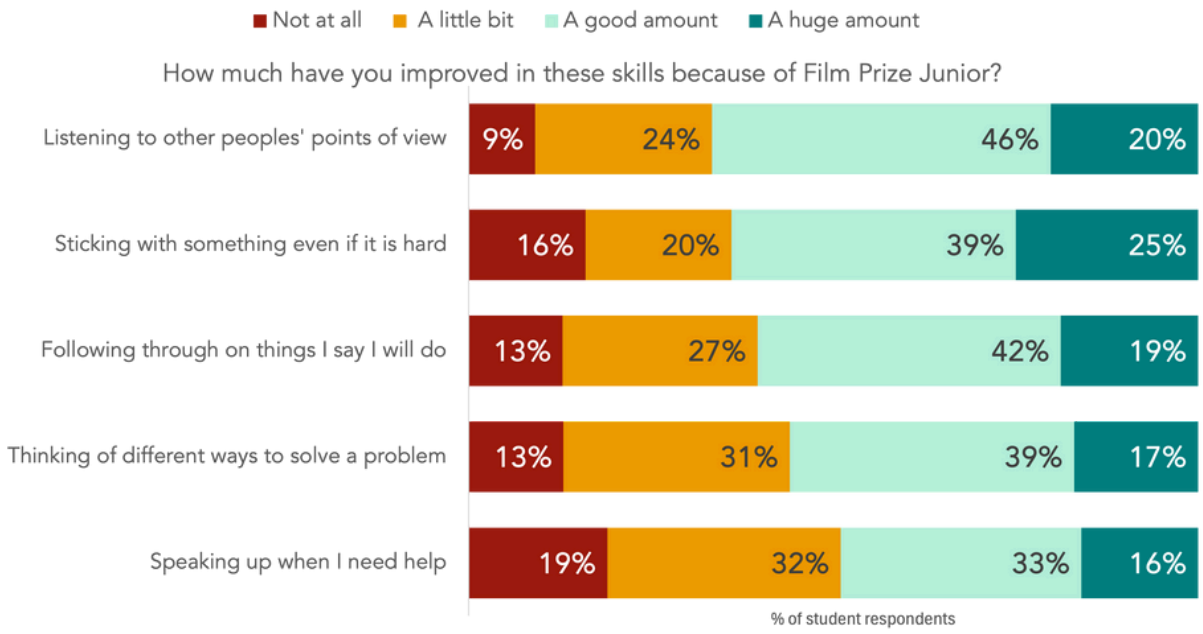
[3] Teacher producers who responded to the survey were not exactly matched with the student respondents, meaning teacher producers reported on the outcomes of all of their FPJR students, who did not necessarily all respond to the survey.

them "feel more sure of themselves" and "gave them positive feelings about who they are." There was a very consistent 10% of students who reported negative outcomes across all three questions related to their self-awareness. Two-thirds of those students were from the school mentioned above, where students seem to have had a negative experience in the program. The other third are the same few students throughout, from four different schools.

Roughly a third of student respondents reported feeling indifferent to the idea that being part of FPJR helped them feel more sure of themselves or gave them positive feelings about who they were (39% and 38% respectively).

When looking across all three of these responses from students, we see that FPJR does not appear to have a negative impact on students' sense of self, and the positive impact is substantial. However, many students are uncertain about how their experience has impacted them.

Exhibit 10: Student Soft Skills



n=108 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys*

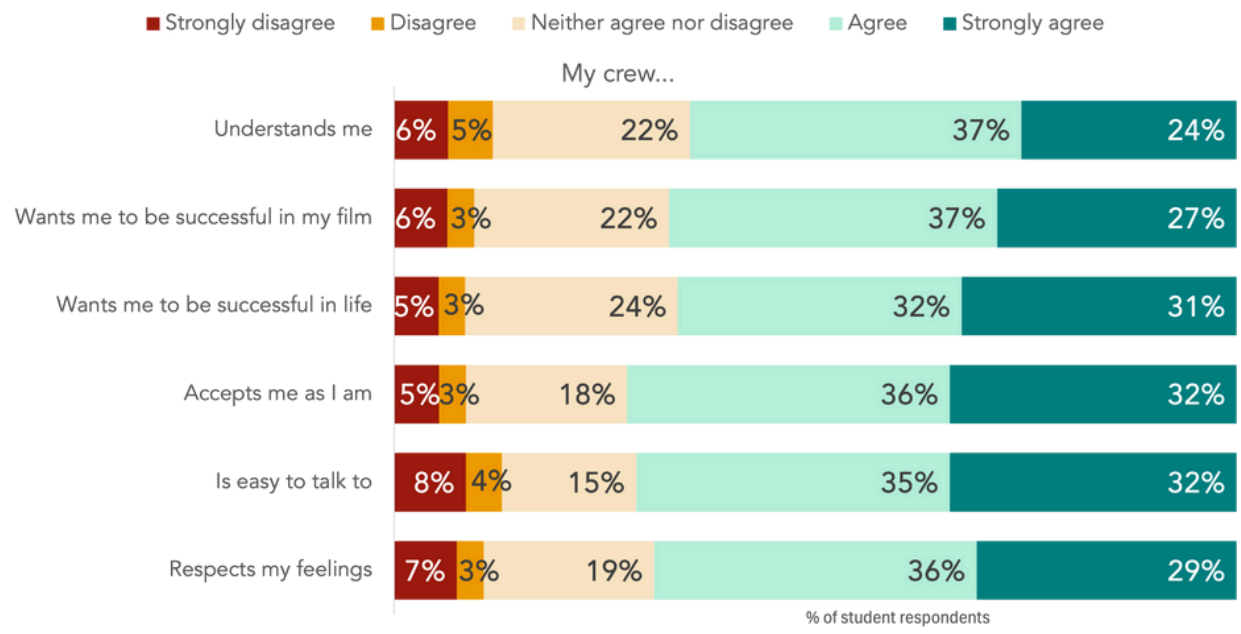
Read as: Twenty percent of the 108 student respondents say that they have improved a huge amount at listening to other people's points of view because of FPJR.

A series of survey questions asked students to reflect on how much they had improved on key life skills as a result of participating in FPJR. Exhibit 10 shows that the responses demonstrate positive growth across the board. We see the most

growth in "listening to other people's points of view," for which two-thirds (66%) of students reported they improved a good amount or a huge amount. "Speaking up when I need help" showed positive improvement, but to a lesser degree; just under half (49%) reported high levels of improvement. About one-fifth of students reported they improved 'not at all' in this skill, the highest percentage across the five questions.

According to these students' experiences, making a film appears to have had a strong impact on their ability to persevere, problem solve, and advocate for themselves. Overall, a vast majority of students reported some level of improvement in these five skills, with most reporting significant levels of improvement.

Exhibit 11: Relationship with Film Crew



n=119

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Twenty-four percent of the 119 student respondents strongly agree that their crew understands them.

Students were asked a series of questions about their relationship with their film crew, and approximately two-thirds of students reported strong relationships. Exhibit 11 shows that just under a quarter of respondents were unsure of how they felt about their relationship with their crew, and roughly 10% of students reported a challenging relationship with their crew.

Through open-ended responses on the survey, we gained another view into the important role the crew plays in supporting student filmmakers. When students were asked what helped them complete their film in time for the festival, a majority (57%) described teamwork as key to their success. This finding demonstrates growth in a valuable life skill – being able to work well on a team is a large determining factor of success in the workplace. Furthermore, half of those who mentioned teamwork specifically called out support from peers, friends, their crew, and their teachers:

"The collaboration of the cast was crucial, even though all of us had rehearsals at the time and two of us had performances, finding the right times to film were crucial. But the cast of [film name] being some of my closest friends helped us set up times and come to agreements easier. Having such an amazing and supportive teacher… was amazing. And we couldn't have achieved anything near what we did without [them]. And there is no way we could have finished our film in time without the editing and sound of [names], they put in so much work and were absolutely fantastic."

- Student filmmaker

When asked what they valued most about their FPJR experience, many students wrote that the relationships with their peers and crew were the most important. Student respondents shared the value of "working with some of my friends on a goal."

"The thing that I most valued was the people I came on the trip with. We wouldn't have made it, if it wasn't for them that helped me make this Film Prize Junior experience happen. With the individual work between us that we each did, I'm sure that with it, we are able to get somewhere with each of our talents that we newly discovered."

- Student filmmaker

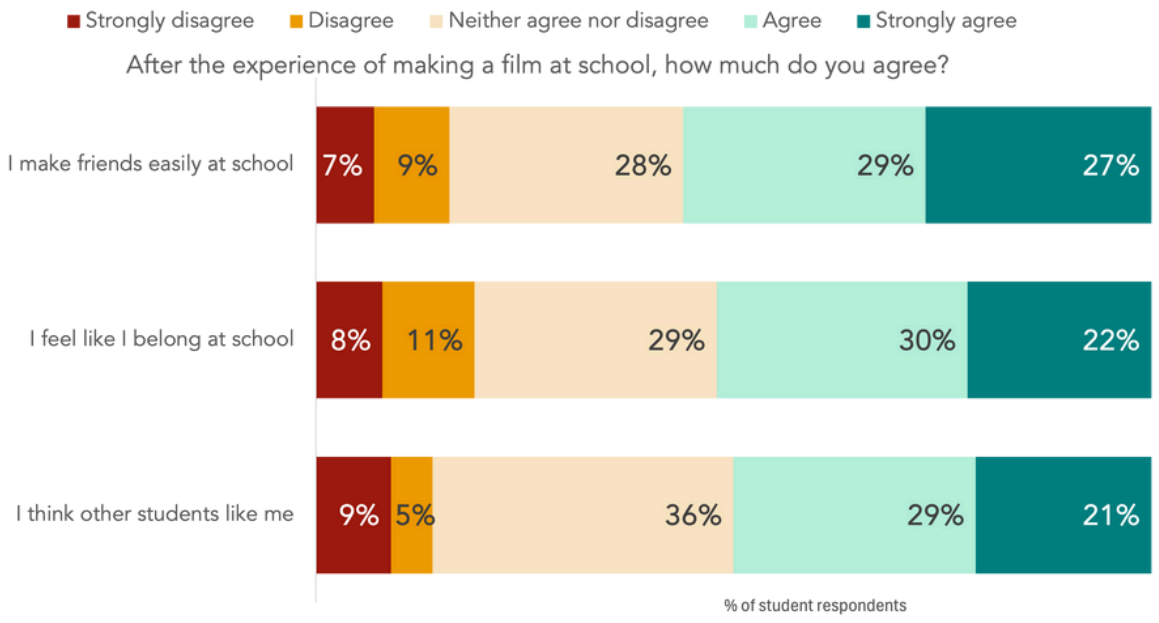
One teacher producer remarked on how the filmmaking experience impacted their students' sense of confidence, writing, "I saw the student who directed [Film Name] become more confident and brave about trusting her vision and being able to direct others."

Respondents are identifying a key takeaway of the FPJR experience in this data: that the filmmaking experience is an opportunity to not only be creative but to feel supported in their endeavor along the way. One can hypothesize that providing

students an opportunity to feel supported may bolster their confidence and drive to pursue hard things in the future.

Finally, a series of retrospective questions explored students' feelings about peers and belonging at school before and after they had experienced making a film. From the students' reflections, there doesn't appear to be a meaningful difference[4] between what they reported feeling before and after their filming experience. However, we can still learn from what they reported feeling after their FPJR experience.

Exhibit 12: Sense of Belonging at School (I)



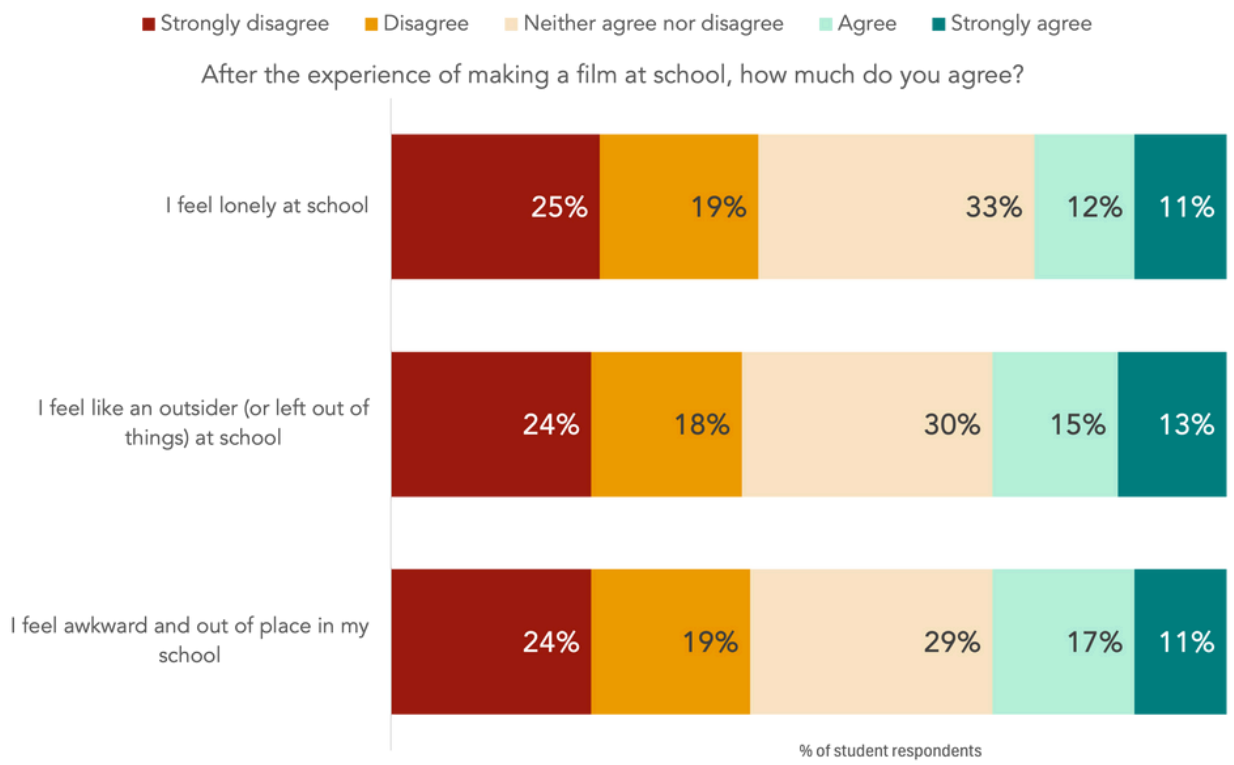
n=100 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys*

Read as: Twenty-seven percent of the 100 student respondents strongly agree that they make friends easily at school after the experience of making a film.

When asked how they felt after participating in the program, just over half (52%) reported they felt they belonged at their school, over half (56%) reported making friends easily at school, and 50% reported that they think other students like them (Exhibit 12). Roughly a third of students were indifferent to all three questions related to their sense of belonging in school. In comparison, a national survey of over 1000 high school students[5] found that 51% of high schoolers feel like they belong at their school, comparable to our respondent group.

[4] For the purposes of our descriptive analysis, such as in this section, we consider "meaningful" differences to be those with 10 or more percentage point differences between groups.
[5] https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/student-belonging/

Exhibit 13: Sense of Belonging at School (II)



n=100

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Eleven percent of the 100 student respondents strongly agree that they feel lonely at school after the experience of making a film.

While roughly half of students reported a positive sense of belonging and perception of their relationships with peers at school after taking part in FPJR (Exhibit 12), many still reported feeling lonely, like an outsider, and awkward in their schools (Exhibit 13). Less than half (44%) of students reported that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel lonely at my school." A similar proportion of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements "I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school" and "I feel awkward and out of place in my school" (42% and 43% respectively). About a quarter of student respondents reported they do feel lonely, like an outsider, and awkward at school. And, roughly a third of students reported they neither agreed nor disagreed with the three statements.

Although we did not see any meaningful differences between the responses from students when asked to think back to last year, and then to think about their

feelings after FPJR, this is a challenging time for youth in general. As evaluators, we believe that it would be difficult for FPJR to impact these deeper measures of social-emotional well-being in the school setting in the short term.

When we investigated these questions about feeling lonely, awkward, or like an outsider at school based on whether the students were Native or not, we found that Native students had a generally equivalent experience to non-Native students[6]. The only large difference between groups was for the question “I feel awkward and out of place in my school," with which 42% of Native students agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 31% of non-Native students.

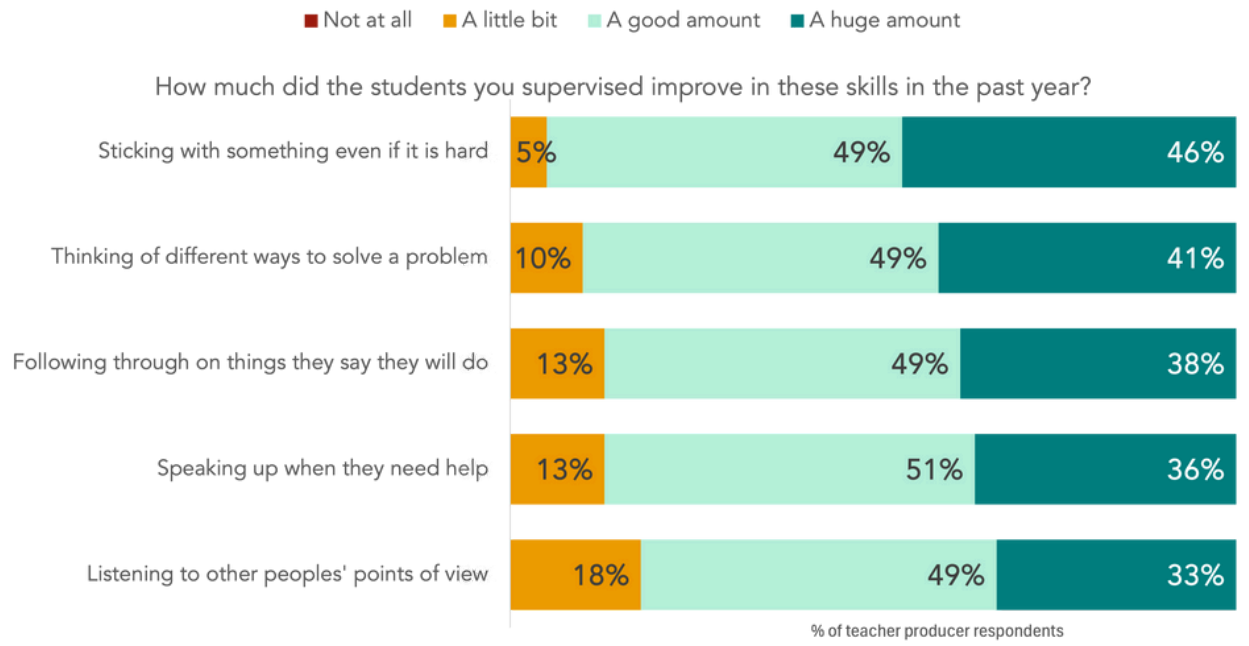
When we combine these self-reported outcomes on students’ sense of belonging at school with those from earlier, it appears that student respondents are reporting high levels of growth in their social and emotional skills, but still struggle to feel comfortable in their schools. This raises the question: How can the FPJR experience bolster student filmmakers' sense of belonging in their schools? One could also hypothesize that by providing students with the opportunity to develop and strengthen their social and emotional skills, FPJR is creating a solid foundation, and positive outcomes, such as a sense of belonging, are simply delayed.

[6] Please reach out directly if you are interested in seeing additional tables and crosstabulations.

Students' self-reflections on change in their own capacities in perseverance, active listening, problem solving, and self-advocacy were mirrored by the educators' observations about the students they sponsored. In Exhibit 14, we observe that teachers generally reported notably higher levels of growth in these areas when compared to student respondents' self-reports.

All of the teachers reported their students improved at least 'a little bit' across all skills. About half of the teachers reported 'a good amount' of improvement for each skill, and many teachers reported 'a huge amount' of improvement.

Exhibit 14: Teacher Perspective on Soft Skills



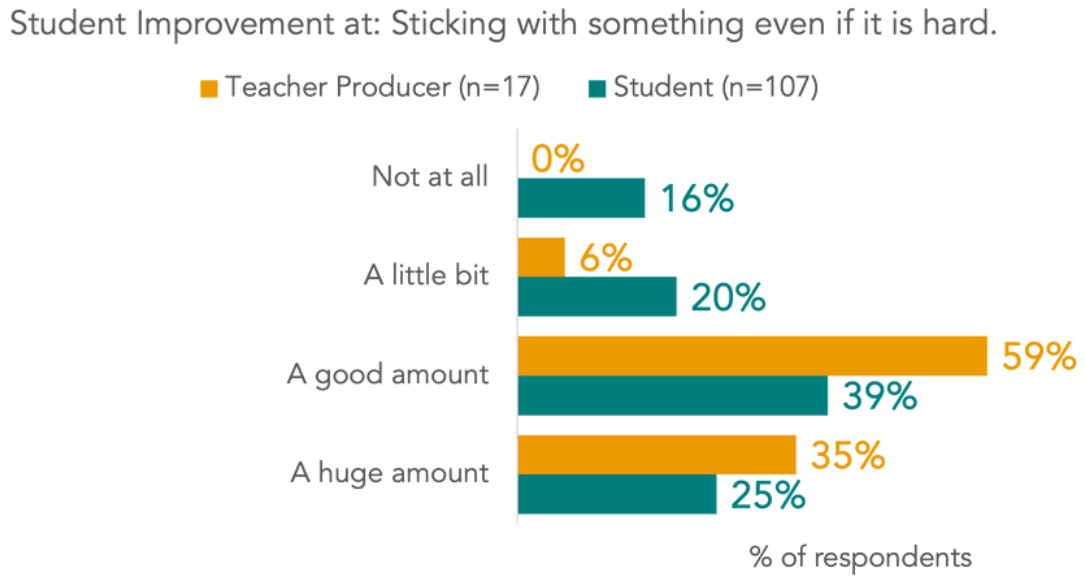
n=39

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Forty-six percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents say that their students improved a huge amount at sticking with something even if it is hard.

Note: These findings are from all teacher respondents, and as we noted earlier, more than half (54%) of our teacher respondents did not have any students respond from their school. This means that Exhibit 14 is a report of both how the student respondents' teachers perceived their improvement and of how some teacher producers perceived improvement for students we did not hear from at all.

Exhibit 15: Perseverance According to Teachers and Students



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Thirty-five percent of the 17 teacher producer respondents and 25% of the 107 student respondents think that their students/they improved a huge amount in sticking with something even if it is hard.

Exhibit 15 above compares teacher and student responses to questions about student skill in "sticking with something even if it's hard." In this case, we are only showing responses from schools where both teachers and students responded.

A vast majority of teachers (94%) reported their students improved *'a good amount'* or *'a huge amount'* in this skill. Students, meanwhile, self-reported this as the second most improved skill, with 64% of students reporting they improved *'a good amount'* or *'a huge amount.'* In other words, while fewer students reported they feel they are more able to persevere, their teachers hold a more positive view of their abilities.

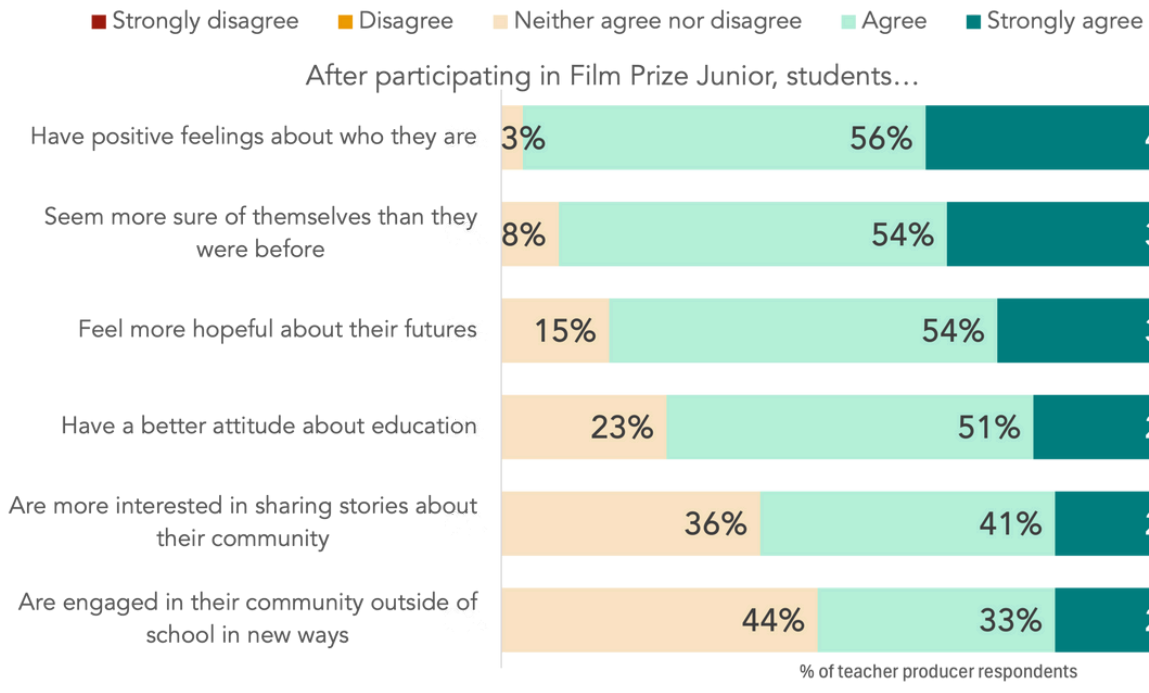
Through open-ended questions, some students remarked on the value of hard work and pushing through in order to complete their film in time for the festival. Students wrote that they "filmed almost all day," and "just had to always keep working," in order to meet their deadlines. One student credited their own "diligent spirit and willing actors as well as support from my film teacher" as key to their success.

And, a teacher producer shared how much her students had been able to plan ahead and persevere through their filmmaking processes.

"I really appreciated how they advocate for themselves, they scheduled, and they did the work. I could step back and let them run with it. I couldn't be prouder of them as filmmakers and humans."

- Teacher producer

Exhibit 16: Teacher Perspective on Student Experience and Outcomes



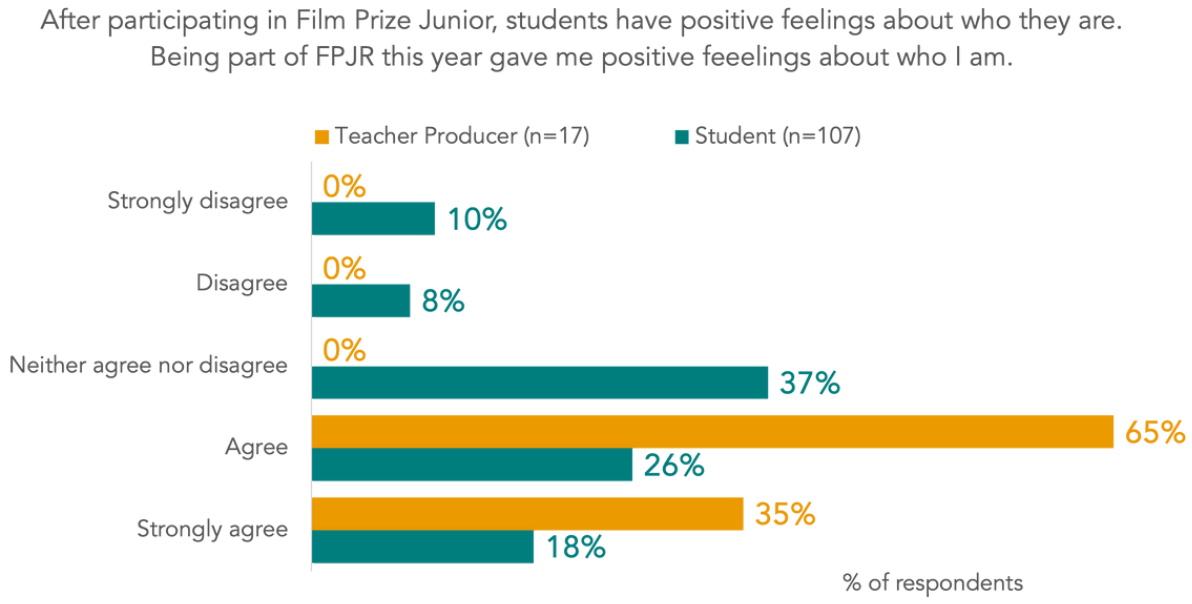
n=39

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Forty-one percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents strongly agree that, after participating in FPJR, their students have positive feelings about who they are.

Teacher producer reports showed less clarity surrounding questions about the program's impact on their students' experiences and feelings about their communities (Exhibit 16). Just under half (44%) of teachers were unsure whether or not, after participating in FPJR, their students were "engaged in their community outside of school in new ways." Just over a third were unsure if their students were "more interested in sharing stories about their communities." Despite these neutral responses, none of the teachers outright disagreed that their students had gained in the following areas: engagement in their communities, interest in sharing stories about their community, attitude towards education, hope for the future, self-assurance, and positive feelings towards themselves.

Exhibit 17: Sense of Self According to Teachers and Students



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Thirty-five percent of the 17 teacher producer respondents and 18% of the 107 student respondents strongly agree that their students/they have positive feelings about who they are after participating in FPJR this year.

In Exhibit 17, we compare how teachers and their students (in the schools where their responses overlapped) view the program's impact on students' sense of self. As we saw earlier, the teachers reported a much higher positive impact on their students when compared to students' self-reported outcomes. Eighteen percent of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "being part of Film Prize Junior this year gave me positive feelings about who I am," and just under half (44%) of student respondents reported that they agreed with the statement. However, 100% of their teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the students had more positive feelings about who they are after FPJR.

Student SEL Outcomes: Summary

Looking across all social and emotional skills developed, approximately half of the students self-reported very positive outcomes after their FPJR experience. About one-third of respondents were unsure of the impact of FPJR, and about 15% to 20% disagreed that FPJR impacted their outcomes. Teacher producer reports show more certainty of growth (except when asked about the students' relationship with their community) and more positivity. ■

Experience of Native Students

Contextualizing the Native Experience in Film Prize Junior NM

New Mexico is home to 23 federally recognized tribes, pueblos, and nations. This makes Native communities central to the state's cultural, historical, and educational identity.

In 2018, the landmark Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico decision found that the state had failed to provide a sufficient and equitable education to all students—particularly Native American students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and those from low-income families. The ruling underscored the state's constitutional obligation to ensure that all students have access to a culturally and linguistically responsive education that prepares them for college, career, and civic life.

Given FPJR's focus on Native students, the evaluation team believes the findings must be interpreted through the lens of the Yazzie/Martinez ruling, which calls for relevance, inclusion, and self-determination in education. As a creative, student-centered initiative, FPJR sits at the intersection of education, expression, and equity. It offers Native youth a unique opportunity to share their stories, explore their identities, and engage in meaningful learning that reflects their lived experiences.

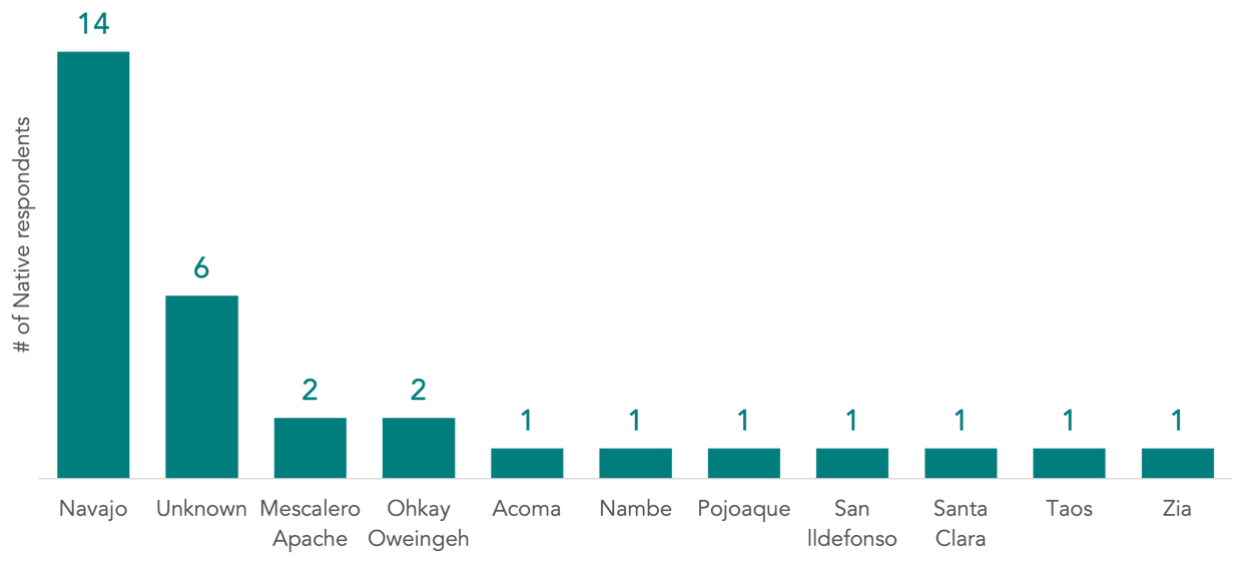
By exploring the unique elements of Native student experiences in FPJR, we seek to evaluate how the program aligns with the broader goals of educational equity in New Mexico and how it can strengthen its impact in the future. It is also important to learn about the priorities of these Native communities and what they are looking for from the FPJR program in order to meet their needs.

To answer this research question, we drew from survey responses from Native student participants. The survey responses were analyzed to identify common themes in how Native students interact with the program, what they value about their participation, and what barriers or gaps they encounter. In future years, we hope to facilitate focus groups with Native students in FPJR using a protocol developed during the 2024-2025 evaluation.

Native Student Sample Size

A total of 31 students who responded to the survey self-identified as Native. The sample reflected a range of tribal affiliations (Exhibit 18), including Navajo (14 students), Mescalero Apache (2), Ohkay Pueblo (2), Acoma Pueblo (1), Nambe Pueblo (1), Pojoaque Pueblo (1), San Ildefonso Pueblo (1), Santa Clara Pueblo (1), Taos Pueblo (1), and Zia Pueblo (1). Six students did not specify their tribal affiliation. This representation across multiple tribes emphasizes the need for culturally grounded approaches that recognize and honor the distinct identities and experiences of Native students - and the dramatic diversity within this population who come from different areas of the state, have different heritage languages and cultures, and otherwise vary deeply as members of different tribal nations. We include them as a single group given the goal of understanding Native students' experiences, but acknowledge the diversity within this group and hope in the future to have larger numbers of students from each tribe to allow disaggregation of findings.

Exhibit 18: Native Student Respondents by Tribal Affiliation



n=31

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

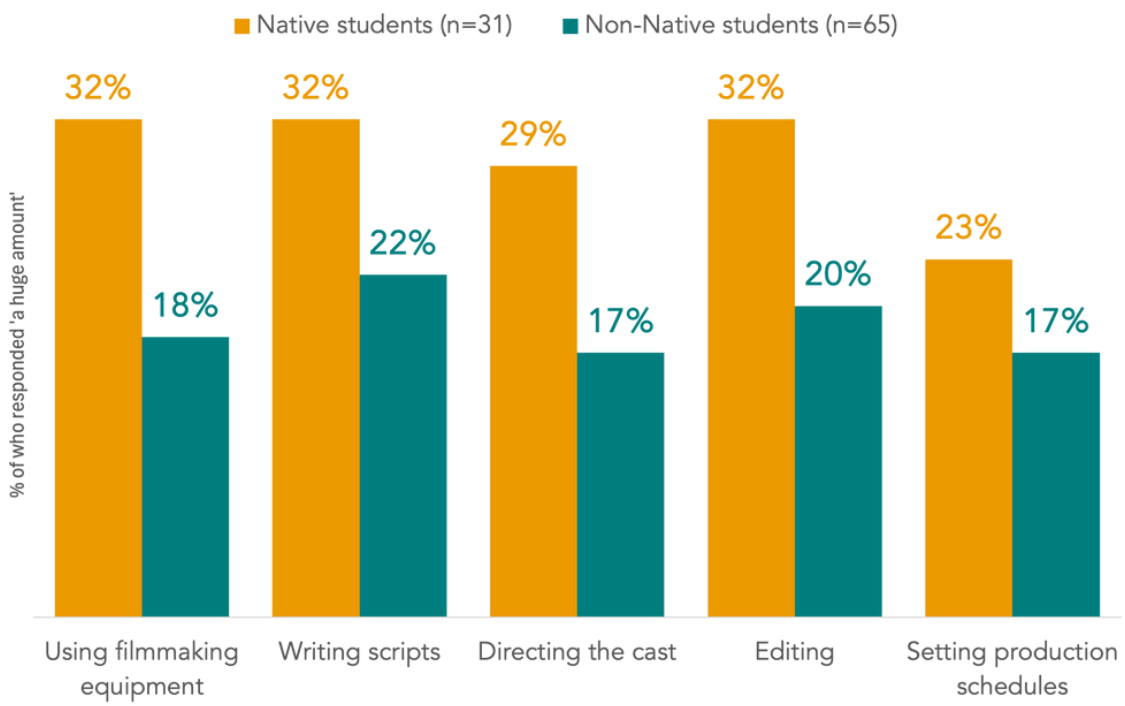
Read as: Fourteen of the 31 student respondents who self-identified as Native are affiliated with Navajo Nation.

Differences in Student Outcomes

When compared with non-Native students (n=65), quantitative survey data from Native student participants (n=31) offer compelling insights into the strengths and growth areas observed through the FPJR experience.

Across nearly every skill domain, from creative filmmaking capacities like directing and script writing to executive functioning skills like scheduling and task management, Native students consistently reported slightly higher rates of perceived growth than their non-Native peers.

Exhibit 19: Technical Skill Growth for Native Students



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Thirty-two percent of the 31 student respondents who self-identified as Native reported improving a huge amount at using filmmaking equipment compared to 18% of the 65 non-Native students.

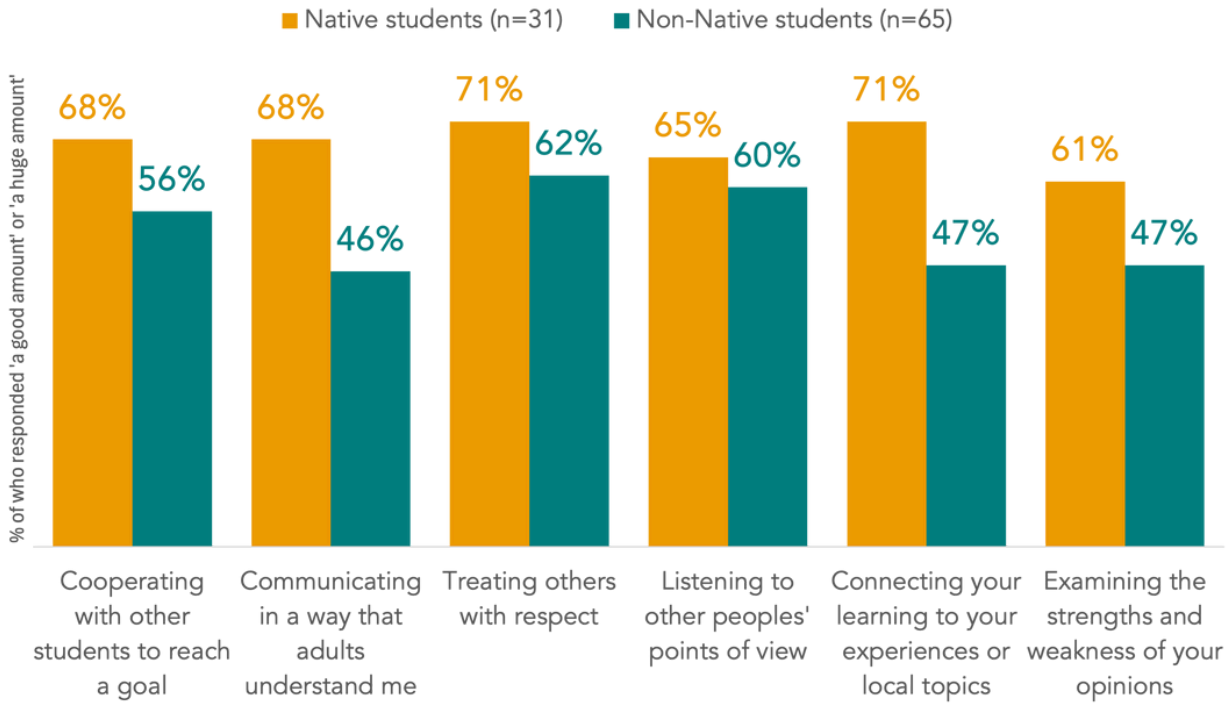
For example (Exhibit 19):

- 32% of Native students reported improving 'a huge amount' in using filmmaking equipment compared to 18% of non-Native students.
- 32% of Native students said they improved 'a huge amount' in script writing

compared to 22% of their non-Native peers.

- Editing and directing followed similar patterns, with Native students again more likely to rate their growth in the top category ('a huge amount').

Exhibit 20: Social & Emotional Learning and Soft Skills for Native Students



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Sixty-eight percent of the 31 student respondents who self-identified as Native reported improving a good or huge amount at cooperating with other students to reach a goal compared to 56% of the 65 non-Native students.

This pattern extended beyond technical skills to soft skills (Exhibit 20):

- 68% of Native students said they improved 'a good' or 'a huge' amount at communicating in a way that adults understand them, compared to 46% of non-Native students.
- 61% of Native students said they improved 'a good' or 'a huge' amount at examining the strengths and weaknesses of their opinions compared to 47% of non-Native students.
- 71% of Native students said they improved 'a good' or 'a huge' amount at connecting their learning to their experiences or local topics compared to 47% of non-Native students.

These patterns suggest that when provided with hands-on and creative learning opportunities like FPJR, Native students engage and learn new transferable skills. These findings might also stem, at least in part, from existing inequities—it is quite plausible, for example, that Native students have far less access to film resources and therefore more room for growth compared to non-Native students. ■

Program Factors that Facilitate Success

Defining and Measuring Success[7]

In addressing this question, we defined "success" to mean students achieving outcomes as set out in the logic model, including students feeling better about school and themselves, getting closer to their teacher producer, becoming more connected to their community, and improving in industry-specific and transferable soft skills because of FPJR. Notably, we do not include submitting a film to the festival as a measure of success. As depicted in the logic model (Exhibit 5), completing a film in time for the festival was a facilitator, not an outcome. Therefore, completing a film was evaluated as a factor that may or may not facilitate success, not as a measure of success itself.

Multiple Factors Supported Success

Exhibit 21: Factors that Supported Success, Ranked by Level of Effect

	Factors that Supported Success
Most practically significant Least/not practically significant	• Student motivation • Teacher having support from their district/administration/principal • Teacher having capacity to coordinate and mentor students • Students having enough time to work on the film • Teacher being new to FPJR • Primarily working on the film outside of school time • Attending the culminating film festival • Completing a film

Read as: Student motivation was the most practically significant factor that supported success in the FPJR program.

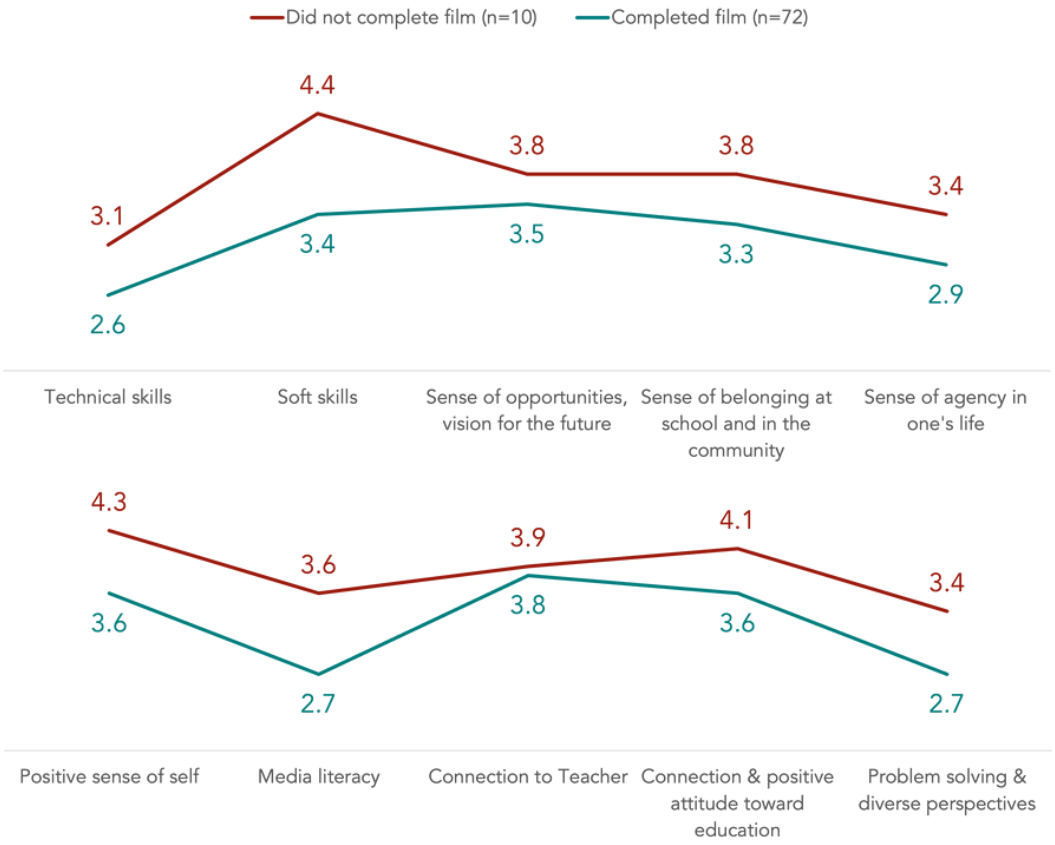
Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

[7] Please reach out directly if you are interested in seeing additional statistical methods and tables specific to our analysis of facilitating factors.

Completing A Film

One of the factors that we tested did not seem to have an impact on self-reported student outcomes. When we split the students into groups based on whether they reported completing their film project, there were no practically significant differences between the 10 students (from 7 schools) who did not complete their films and the 72 students (from 20 schools) who did complete them. In fact, the pattern that emerged, though not marked by any practically significant differences,[8] showed that students who did not complete their films reported slightly better average outcomes (Exhibit 22). In all the following charts, an asterisk (*) denotes practically significant differences.

Exhibit 22: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Film Completion



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: The 10 students who did not complete a film reported an average score of 3.1 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.6 for the 72 students who did complete a film.

[8] Practical significance means a result is big enough to represent noticeable differences in students' ability, understanding, or disposition. Practical significance and statistical significance can co-exist for any difference but when the sample size is small, practically significant differences (even if large) might not be statistically significant.

These findings suggest that not being able to complete your film does not diminish the positive impact of the program on students.

Attending the Film Festival

When we examined the facilitating impact of attending the culminating FPJR Film Festival on student outcomes, we found a consistent pattern: students who attended the festival (n=43) reported higher average outcomes than those who didn't attend (n=76) (Exhibit 23). However, these differences were not practically significant for any outcome groups.

Exhibit 23: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Attending the Festival

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: The 76 students who did not attend the film festival reported an average score of 2.0 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.9 for the 43 students who did attend the festival.

"Families were amazed of how big the event was, as they thought it was a small one"

- Teacher producer

There may be additional benefits to attending the festival for rural students in particular. When we investigated only those students from rural locations (as determined by the National Center for Education Statistics), we found that the rural students who attended the festival generally reported higher average outcomes than rural students who did not.[9]

"It was a good experience overall, and the festival definitely motivated the students to know that their films would be screened for a large audience."

- Teacher producer

FPJR Project Worktime

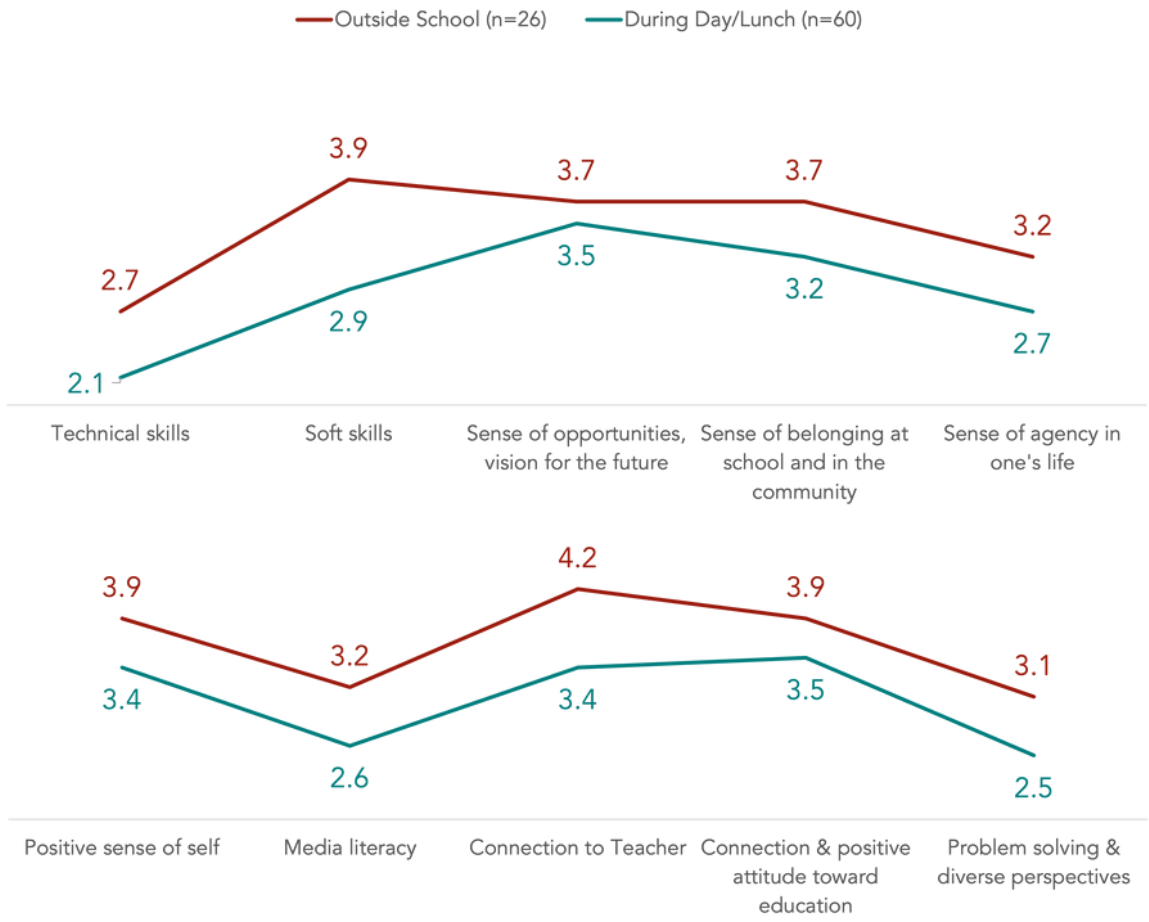
Next, we investigated the impact of working on FPJR projects at different times in the day. For this comparison, we used teacher responses about when the majority of FPJR work time took place, and then split student outcomes responses based on whether the majority of work time was during the regular school day or lunch time, compared to any other times (before school, after school, on weekends). Note that the question asked about when most of the work time took place, even though most groups worked on their projects both in and out of school.

[9] Please reach out directly if you are interested in seeing additional tables and crosstabulations.

We found that students whose teachers indicated they usually worked outside of school (n=26) reported higher average outcomes (Exhibit 24) than those whose teachers indicated they usually worked in school (n=60). The difference between the groups was not practically significant for any outcome categories.

One possible explanation for this pattern of differences in outcomes may be related to how students enter the FPJR program. Students who do FPJR during the school day may be more likely to be participating as part of a regular class, and therefore less likely to have opted into the program. Meanwhile, students who do FPJR outside of school (say, in a club, or as a unique group) may be more likely to have opted into the program.

Exhibit 24: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Project Worktime

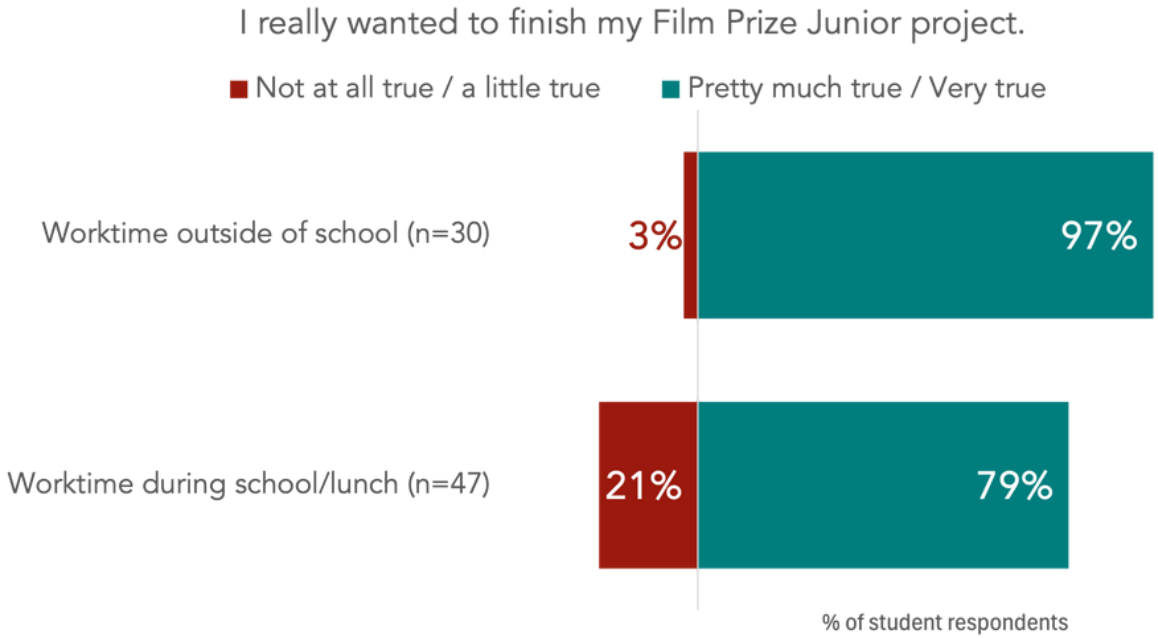


Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: The 26 students who usually worked on their films outside of school reported an average score of 2.7 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.1 for the 60 students who usually worked on their films during the day or during lunch.3 students who did attend the festival.

This theory is borne out when we investigate the relationship between when teachers report students are working on FPJR, and students' level of agreement with the statement, "I really wanted to finish my Film Prize Junior project." Almost all of the 30 students whose teachers say they generally work on their projects outside of school reported that it was pretty much true or very much true that they 'really wanted to finish their Film Prize Junior project.' Only 79% of the 47 students whose teachers said they generally worked on their projects during school reported the same (Exhibit 25).

Exhibit 25: Student Motivation by General Project Worktime



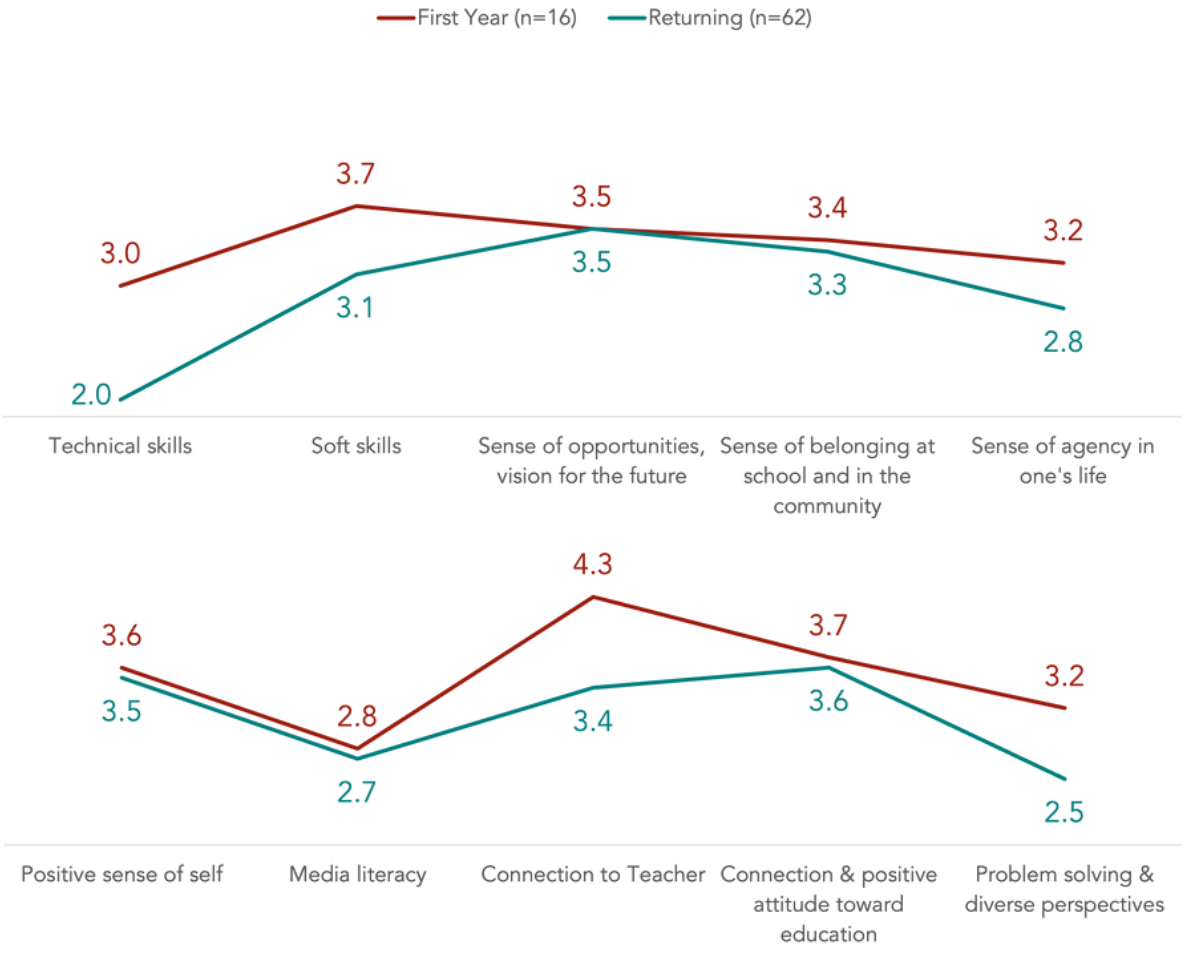
Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Ninety-seven percent of the 30 students who usually worked on their projects outside of school said it was pretty much or very true that they really wanted to finish their FPJR project.

Teacher Experience in FPJR

Another factor that may be expected to affect success in the program is the teacher producer's level of experience in the program (and assumed comfort and knowledge of the program structure). We split student-reported outcome scores based on whether their teacher producer was a returning FPJR teacher producer or taking part in the program for the first time. In general, students working with first-time teacher producers (n=16) reported slightly higher average outcomes (Exhibit 26) across all domains than those working with returning teachers (n=62). However, these differences were not practically significant for any outcome categories.

Exhibit 26: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Teacher Experience in FPJR



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

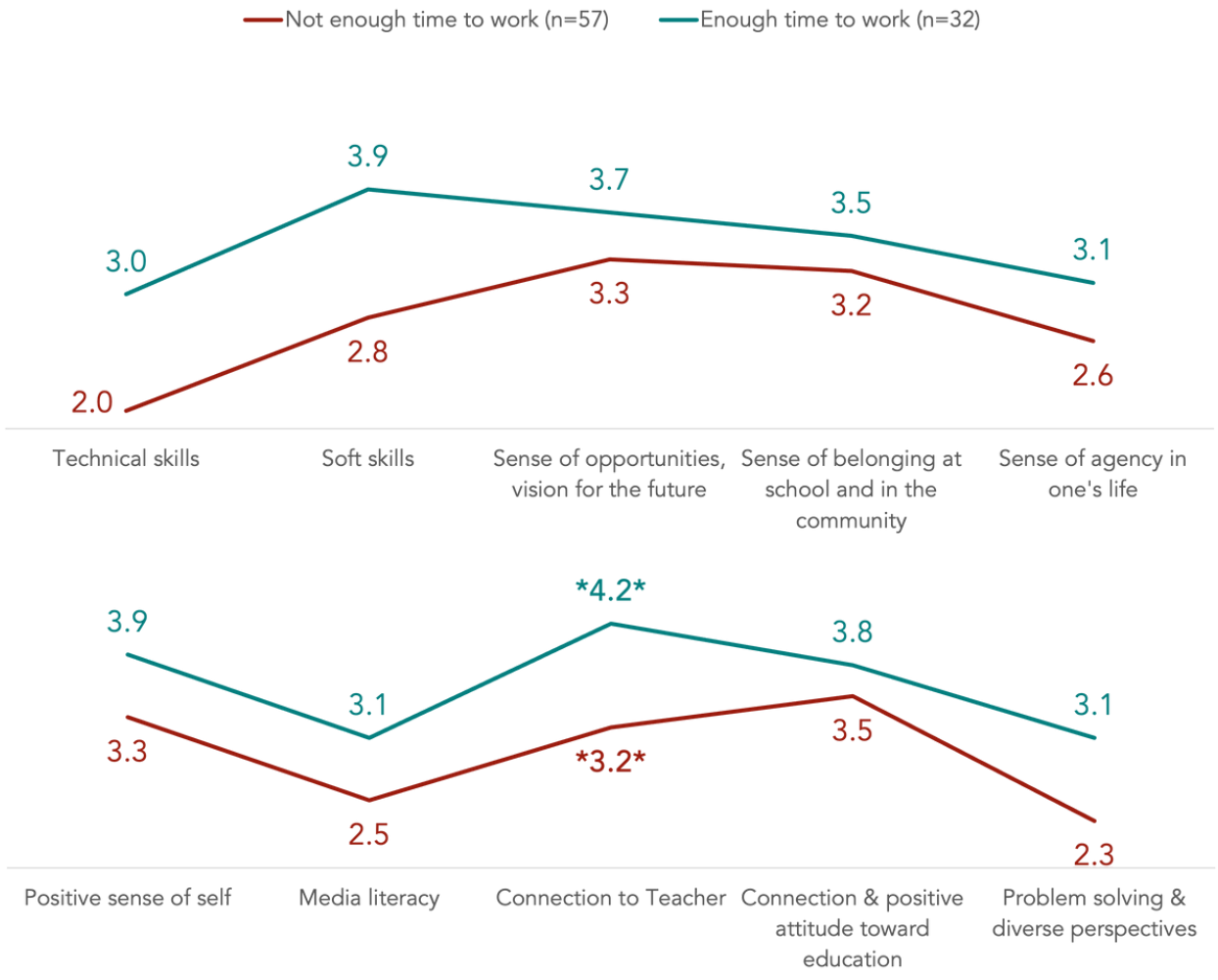
Read as: The 16 students who had teacher producers for whom it was their first year in the program reported an average score of 3.0 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.0 for the 62 students who had teacher producers who were returning to the program.

We take this to mean that while students with first-year teacher producers might report slightly better outcomes, the teacher's level of experience with FPJR is not a major facilitator or inhibitor of program success. In addition, these findings suggest that FPJR is preparing new teacher producers well in their ability to support their students.

Time to Work and Prepare

Across schooling and extracurricular efforts, time is a consistent struggle. Sometimes, there is just not enough of it to get things done. In the case of FPJR, we split the student-reported outcome scores based on the degree to which students agreed that they "had enough time at school" to work on their FPJR projects. Generally, students who thought they had enough time (n=32) reported slightly higher average outcomes (Exhibit 27) across all domains than those who did not (n=57).

Exhibit 27: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Student Time to Work



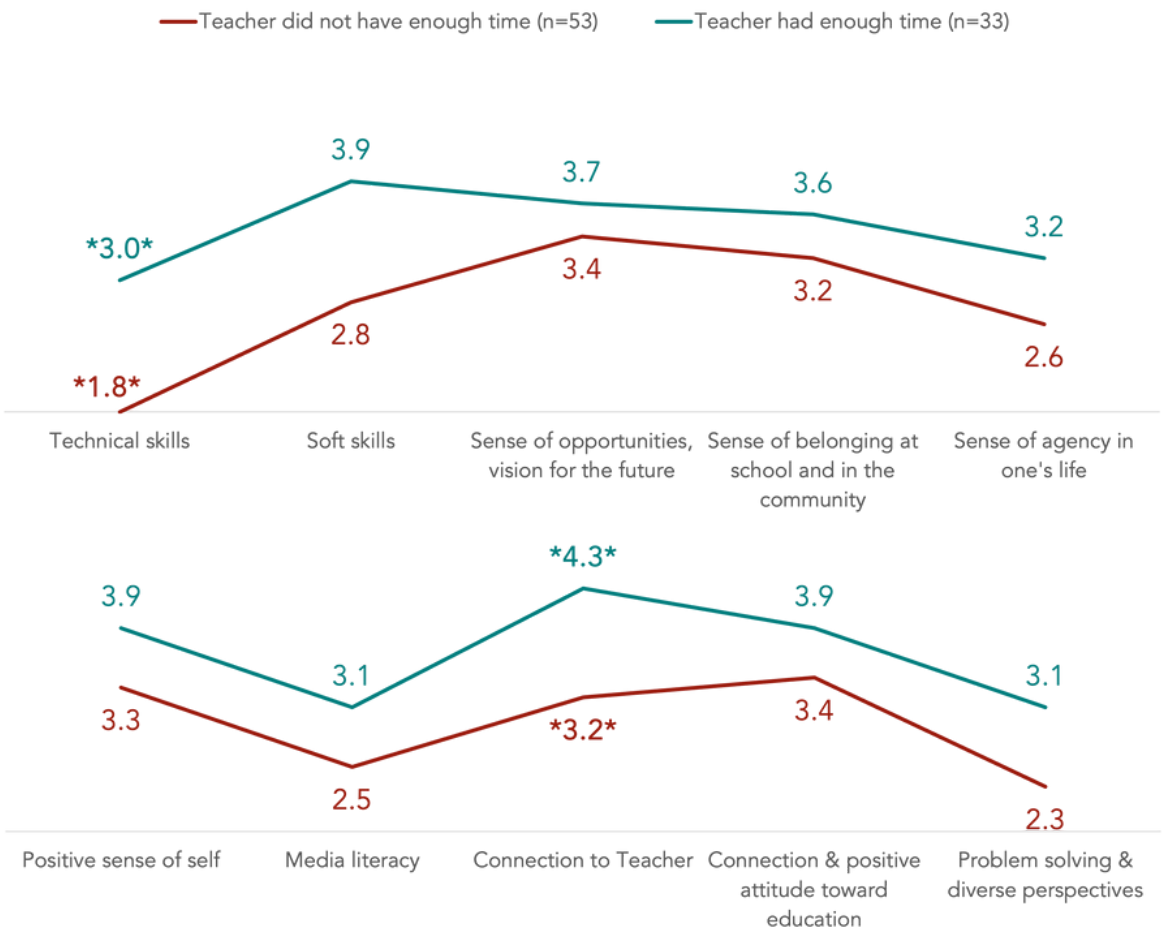
Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: The 57 students who said they did not have enough time to work on their projects at school reported an average score of 3.0 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.0 for the 32 students who reported having enough time to work.

These differences were only practically significant when related to increased connection to the FPJR teacher producer. In other words, students who agreed they had enough time at school to work on their FPJR projects also reported better outcomes related to their connection with their teacher producers than those who did not have enough time.

The FPJR logic model also anticipated that teachers' capacity to coordinate and mentor students might facilitate more positive outcomes. To test this factor, we split student-reported outcome scores based on the extent to which their teacher agreed that they "had enough time during my work week to coordinate and prepare for FPJR work time." Students whose teachers had enough time to prepare (n=33) reported higher average outcomes across all domains (Exhibit 28) than those whose teachers did not have enough time (n=53). The difference between the averages was practically significant when related to connection to the FPJR teacher producer and to technical film skills.

Exhibit 28: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Teacher Capacity to Coordinate and Mentor



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: The 53 students whose teachers reported not having enough time to plan and execute FPJR work time reported an average score of 1.8 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 3.0 for the 33 students whose teachers reported having enough time to prepare.

District or Administrative Support

Whether FPJR is being integrated into classes, inspiring new film-based classes, or being offered formally or informally after school, support for the program from districts, administrators, and principals is likely to be a key factor. We split the student-reported outcomes based on the degree to which teachers agreed that they "had support from school or district leadership for implementing the FPJR program." Indeed, students whose teachers reported administrative support (n=43) reported higher average outcomes across all domains (Exhibit 29) than students whose teachers did not report administrative support (n=43).

Exhibit 29: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Teacher Perception of Administrative Support

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student and Teacher Producer Surveys

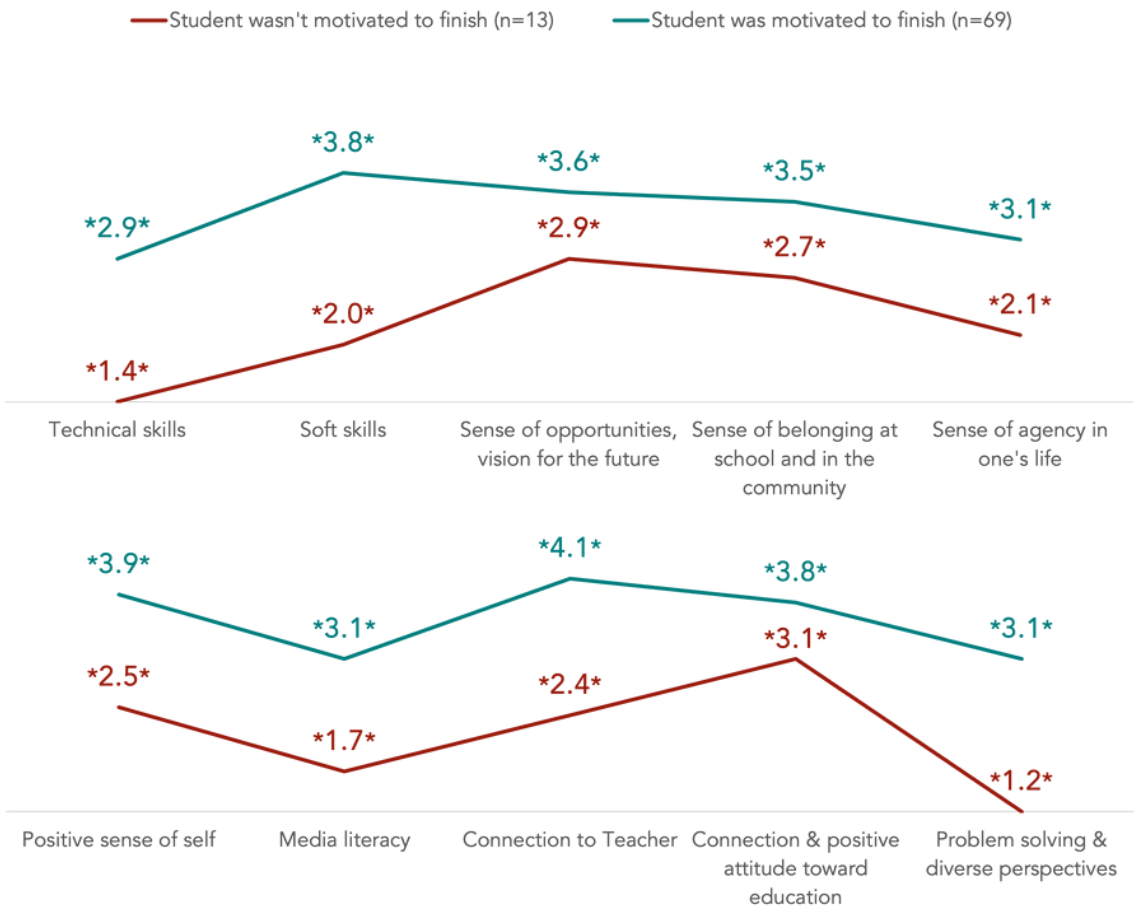
Read as: The 43 students whose teachers reported not having support from their school leadership or admin reported an average score of 1.8 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.7 for the 43 students whose teachers reported having support.

These differences were practically significant for many different outcome categories, including the students' attitude and connection toward education, connection to their FPJR teacher producer, media literacy skills, positive sense of self, sense of agency, and soft skills. These findings suggest that when teacher producers feel supported by their administration in implementing FPJR, students report better outcomes across a variety of domains.

Student Motivation

One factor was by far the most associated with student outcomes: student motivation. To test this facilitator, we split student-reported outcomes responses based on the extent to which students agreed that they "really wanted to finish" their FPJR project. Students who said that statement was pretty much or very much true (n=69) reported higher average outcomes across all domains than those who said it was not true at all or a little true (n=13). These differences were practically significant for all ten outcome domains (Exhibit 30). In other words, students who were motivated to finish their film projects reported practically significant better outcomes across all domains than students who were not motivated.

Exhibit 30: Comparison of Average Self-Reported Outcomes by Student Motivation



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: The 13 students who weren't motivated to finish their films reported an average score of 1.4 (on a scale from 1-5) for improvement in technical skills, compared to the reported average score of 2.9 for the 69 students who were motivated to finish.

"This student is very self sufficient and accomplished everything almost entirely on their own."

- Teacher producer

"Sometimes it's hard whenever you're on your own. ... It was just a lot of this stuff that made me realize I've gotta keep going on [the film] and I'm glad I did"

- Student filmmaker

The Role of Teacher Involvement

In this evaluation, we used correlational analyses to investigate how students' perceptions of their teachers' involvement in the filmmaking process—specifically scripting, planning, production, and editing—related to a broad range of student outcomes. We also explored the trend (linearity[10]) of the relationships to examine whether there were levels of teacher involvement that were particularly helpful to students.

The 31 outcomes explored included indicators of soft skills, agency, belonging, and filmmaking skills. The analysis focused only on student-reported outcomes, rather than teacher-reported student outcomes. While a full sample of 142 students participated, missing data—largely due to students choosing not to rate their teacher's involvement at each step of the process—reduced the number of valid responses for the correlation analyses to between 47 and 54.

Exhibit 31: Student Response Options to Rate Teacher Involvement

They weren't involved at all
They weren't around but checked in with us sometimes
They were with us but not working with us
They were with us and supporting us
They were with us and doing some of the work
I don't want to answer
Read as: Students could respond that 'They weren't involved at all' when asked about their teacher producer's involvement in scripting, planning, production, or editing.

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Tests of the trend involved comparing the average student outcome ratings across all five degrees of teacher involvement (Exhibit 31). While many of the averages compared were based on 15-20 student responses, some were based on a small number of student responses (e.g., as few as five), so the corresponding results for

[10] Linearity means something forms a straight line when you graph it, or that things change at the same rate. When something is linear, it's predictable and follows a straight-line pattern. When it's not linear, the relationship might curve up, curve down, or zigzag instead of making a straight line.

linearity/trend should be considered exploratory[11]. Although the weighted average of reported teacher involvement was similar between middle school and high school students, there were some differences in the distribution of involvement across the four stages (scripting, planning, production, and editing).[12]

Teacher involvement in scripting emerged as having the most consistent positive correlation with student outcomes. Students who rated their teachers as involved in scripting—especially in collaborative roles where the teacher was "with us and doing some of the work"— tended to report better learning outcomes, including those involving problem-solving, communication, cooperation, and creativity. Some of the correlations were statistically significant despite the small sample size. The relationship between teacher involvement in scripting was generally positive (linear) for most outcomes, but for outcomes related to students' connection to school and self, student ratings peaked at the extremes. This means that when teachers checked in briefly (the low extreme of the teacher involvement scale) or collaborated meaningfully (the high extreme), students reported better outcomes related to connection to school and self than when teachers were more intermediately involved.

Although weaker than for scripting, the correlations between student outcomes and teachers' involvement in production were also generally positive. However, the relationship here was a more nuanced, non-linear pattern. Students who reported minimal teacher involvement—such as teachers who checked in occasionally—often rated their outcomes lower than peers who reported no teacher involvement at all. However, when teachers were more consistently present and supportive—though not necessarily doing the work themselves—students' ratings improved. This suggests that the nature of the involvement may matter as much or more than its mere presence. Too little support or overly passive presence might be interpreted negatively, while authentic collaboration, without teachers dominating the production process, might better support student learning.

In contrast, increased teacher involvement in planning and editing appeared less beneficial, and in many cases, was negatively correlated with student outcomes, including soft skills such as communication and cooperation. Further, students who perceived their teachers as present but not working with them during these phases (e.g., "they were with us but not working with us") often reported minimum outcome levels.

[11] Please reach out directly if you are interested in learning more about the correlation and trend methodology we used in this analysis.
[12] Please reach out directly if you are interested in seeing additional tables and crosstabulations.

While teacher involvement in editing consistently showed a general negative relationship with student outcomes (in other words, student outcomes declined as teacher involvement increased), a few cases emerged where direct collaboration (doing some of the work) led to slight rebounds in reported student outcomes.

In sum, the findings from this analysis suggest that teacher involvement in the filmmaking process is not uniformly positive or negative. Rather, the form and phase of involvement matter. Teacher involvement in scripting stands out as particularly beneficial across a range of outcomes, while greater teacher involvement in the planning and editing phases was consistently negatively associated with student outcomes. Some student outcomes seemed to be negatively impacted when teacher involvement felt disengaged (e.g., teachers were present but not active) or when teacher involvement potentially undermined students' opportunities to learn.

Exhibit 32 shows the correlation coefficients and p-values[13] between each stage of teacher involvement and each outcome variable.

[13] A p-value is a number that helps researchers decide if something they discovered is real or if it might have just happened by accident. It's a measurement that represents the likelihood that the difference between two numbers is due to random chance. A lower p value represents a lower likelihood that the difference can be explained by random chance, and therefore a higher likelihood that the difference is 'real.'

Exhibit 32: Correlations Between Teacher Involvement and Student Outcomes

KEY: **Bold, Underline** = p < 0.01	**Bold** = p < 0.05		Underline = p < 0.10	
	Scripting Involvement	**Planning Involvement**	**Production Involvement**	**Editing Involvement**
Thinking of different ways to solve a problem	**0.411**	-0.087	0.152	-0.198
Listening to other people's points of view	0.165	-0.075	0.291	-0.117
Being part of FPJR this year made me feel better about school.	0.044	-0.107	0.039	-0.09
Being part of FPJR this year made me feel close to the teacher from my school who helped with the program.	0.095	-0.082	0.174	-0.057
Being part of FPJR this year helped me learn something new about myself.	0.179	-0.202	0.023	0.066
Being part of FPJR this year gave me positive feelings about who I am.	0.125	-0.186	0.155	0.025
Being part of FPJR this year helped me feel more sure of myself.	0.097	-0.106	0.181	-0.016
Following through on things I say I will do	**0.33**	-0.081	0.034	-0.125
Sticking with something even if it is hard	**0.514**	-0.156	0.066	-0.077
Speaking up when I need help	0.182	-0.153	0.177	-0.149
Being part of FPJR this year helped me feel more hopeful about my future.	0.058	-0.127	0.078	0.031
Sharing my creative ideas with people around me	0.203	0.032	-0.055	-0.174
Keeping track of tasks so that work is completed on time	0.255	-0.114	-0.028	0.081
Cooperating with other students to reach a goal	**0.381**	-0.106	0.082	-0.178
Communicating in a way that adults understand me	**0.315**	-0.039	0.062	-0.234

Cont. on next page ↵

KEY: **Bold, Underline** = p < 0.01	Bold = p < 0.05		Underline = p < 0.10	
	Scripting Involvement	**Planning Involvement**	**Production Involvement**	**Editing Involvement**
Thinking hard about ideas before having an opinion	**0.346**	-0.171	0.264	-0.217
Treating others with respect	0.143	-0.281	0.197	-0.02
Connecting your learning to your experiences or local topics	0.141	-0.14	**0.404**	-0.24
Examining the strengths and weaknesses of your opinions	0.13	-0.21	0.251	-0.178
Using filmmaking equipment (cameras, lights, editing software, etc.)	**0.325**	-0.262	0.209	-0.051
Writing scripts	0.209	-0.224	0.117	-0.064
Directing the cast	**0.492**	**-0.312**	-0.106	-0.041
Editing	**0.343**	-0.2	0.134	0.039
Setting production schedules	**0.377**	-0.162	0.033	-0.239
Using creativity to come up with something new	**0.313**	-0.145	0.099	-0.164
Storytelling interests me as a way to help my community.	0.23	-0.152	0.074	-0.228
I do things in my community outside of school.	-0.004	-0.026	0.171	-0.177
I am interested in sharing stories about my community.	0.147	0.056	0.123	-0.15
I have at least one trusted adult I can always go to at my school.	0.251	-0.298	0.172	0.005
I like my school.	-0.091	-0.154	0.102	0.128
I feel comfortable being myself at this school.	-0.094	-0.18	0.192	-0.065

Read as: Teacher producer involvement in scripting and student outcomes for thinking of different ways to solve a problem were positively correlated with a correlation coefficient of 0.411, which was significant at the p<0.01 level.

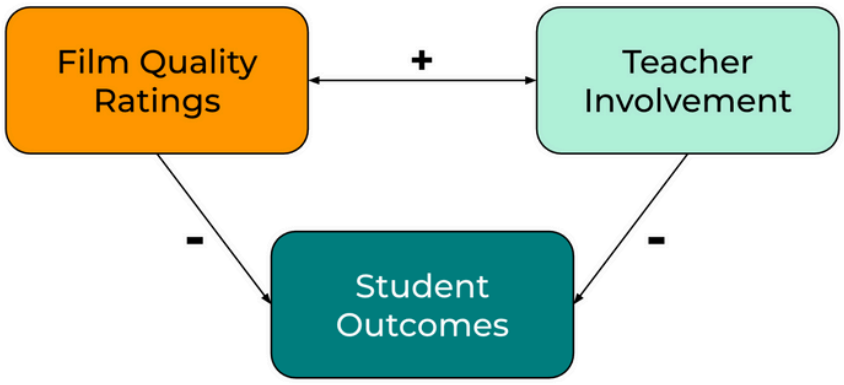
Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Film Quality, Teacher Involvement, and Student Outcomes

Films that are submitted to the culminating film festival receive a rating on a scale from 1 to 5 from a panel of judges organized by the FPJR organization. Our study team used these ratings as a measure of film quality in order to investigate whether any clear relationships exist between film quality, teacher involvement, and student outcomes.

Using the film quality ratings, student ratings of teacher involvement in those films, and student outcomes (specifically, film skills and soft skills), we found the following (Exhibit 33). Film quality and teacher involvement were positively correlated—when teachers were more involved, films got higher ratings. However, teacher involvement and student outcomes were generally negatively correlated overall—when teachers were more involved, students reported less positive growth across a variety of skills. Lastly, film quality and student outcomes were negatively correlated—students who worked on films with higher quality ratings reported less positive growth across a variety of skills, and those who reported more positive growth across a variety of skills worked on films with lower quality ratings.

Exhibit 33: Relationships between Film Quality, Teacher Involvement, and Student Outcomes



Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Film quality ratings and teacher involvement are positively correlated, while film quality ratings and student outcomes are negatively correlated.

We have explored teacher involvement in detail above and found that involvement was less beneficial at certain stages (planning and editing) and more beneficial at others (scripting and production). In exploring this connection further with film

quality, we believe that when teachers are more involved overall, it's likely that the films are "better." However, teachers' increased involvement could lead to fewer positive benefits for the students. Think, for example, of a situation where a teacher had a heavy hand in editing a film. The film might be 'better' in the eyes of adult film professional judges, but the students will have missed out on valuable experience learning how to edit a film and persevere and problem solve through the tricky elements of the process.

Below, we elaborate on one of the key themes of this year's evaluation — that the role that teacher producers play or don't play in FPJR is instrumental to the success of the program.

The Importance of Teacher Producers

Our investigation of facilitating factors and our correlation analyses on the effect of teacher involvement seem to demonstrate that the teacher producer has a very important role to play in FPJR. We already know that the level of involvement of the teacher producer seems to require a balancing act to optimize student outcomes. In addition, across four of eight facilitators (Exhibit 21), there was a practically significant difference between groups for outcomes about the student's connection to their teacher producer. In other words, out of all of the outcomes tested, the students' connection to the teacher producer was most often impacted by the facilitating factors.

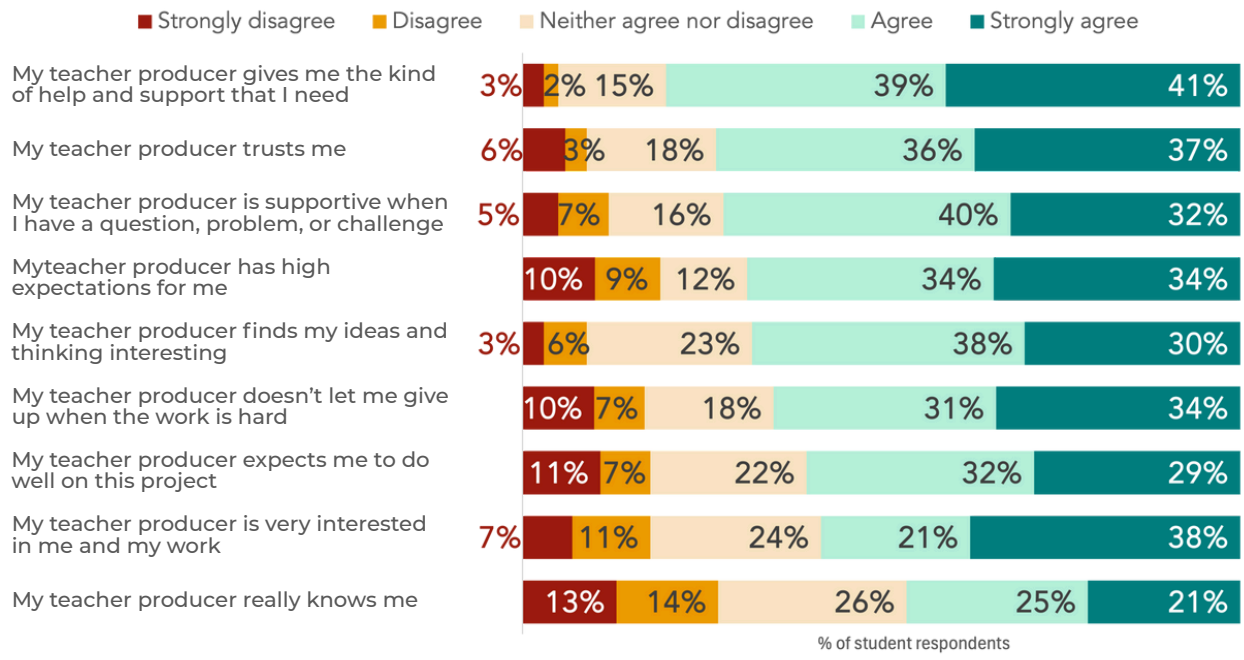
"As the teacher sponsor I tried to implement a more structured approach with job assignments and responsibilities (closely tied to the areas of interests for each student). Unfortunately this caused some students to feel a lack of support from other students because it wasn't their responsibility/job description. It seems that films where a cohesive team do much better even if every student figures out what needs to get done rather than having an assigned role. It was hard to balance autonomy while also trying to get all students to help in important ways."

- Teacher producer

In the case of the 25 students who responded from one school, their lack of connection with their teacher was the make-or-break component of the program. In open-ended survey questions, these students reported a negative, and almost combative, relationship with their teacher that soured their experience in the program as a whole.

Some of the questions about connection to the teacher producer can illuminate experiences across all of the student respondents. Between 61% and 80% of students agreed or strongly agreed with positively framed statements about their connection to their teacher producer (Exhibit 34). Most highly rated was "my teacher producer gives me the kind of help and support that I need," which suggests that teacher producers are effectively extending their teaching and support role from regular instruction to the FPJR context. Two of the lower-rated statements were about resilience and expectations, with 65% and 61%, respectively, of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements "my teacher producer doesn't let me give up when the work is hard," and "my teacher producer expects me to do well on this project."

Exhibit 34: Student Connection to Teacher Producer



n=119

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Student Surveys

Read as: Forty-one percent of the 119 student respondents strongly agree that their teacher producer gives them the kind of help and support that they need.

Two of the statements of this question were framed negatively on the student survey: "my teacher producer does not really know me", and "my teacher producer is not very interested in me and my work." These questions have been flipped on the chart above, so that strongly agree continues to be the 'positive' side of the scale. Even when considered in this flipped manner, these two statements received the

lowest ratings from the students, with 46% of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their teacher producer doesn't really know them, and 59% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their teacher producer isn't very interested in them or their work.

> *The main thing is teacher support, both with the process and with managing deadlines and planning logistics."*
>
> *- Teacher producer*

When teachers were asked which factors helped students complete their films in time for the festival, they echoed the students' view that support from others was key to their success. Teachers shared the role they played in providing support after school, creating deadlines and reminders, motivating students, and setting expectations.

It appears, based on data from across our evaluation, that the teacher producer has a fine line to walk in terms of their involvement, and that when the relationship between the teacher producer and the students is negative, it has a disproportionately negative effect on student outcomes. These findings suggest that if teachers receive clear guidance and support throughout the program to maintain positive relationships and engage appropriately in the students' work, outcomes may be improved. ■

Perceived Effectiveness of Film Prize Junior

When we think about the perceived effectiveness of FPJR, we first look to the logic model (Exhibit 4). The logic model outlines the intended outcomes for three distinct groups: teacher producers, student filmmakers, and FPJR. The outcomes outlined for FPJR itself are at the system level; they identify potential shifts in New Mexico's education and film industries. We then ask ourselves, did this year's FPJR program achieve those intended outcomes? In the sections above, we have detailed the positive outcomes for students; here, we will look at the outcomes of the program for teacher producers and at the systemic level.

Teacher Producer Outcomes

Our inquiry into teacher producer outcomes is based on their survey results. As noted in the methods section, we sought research approvals at a randomly selected sample of schools participating in FPJR and received survey responses from 50 teacher producers at 44 different schools.

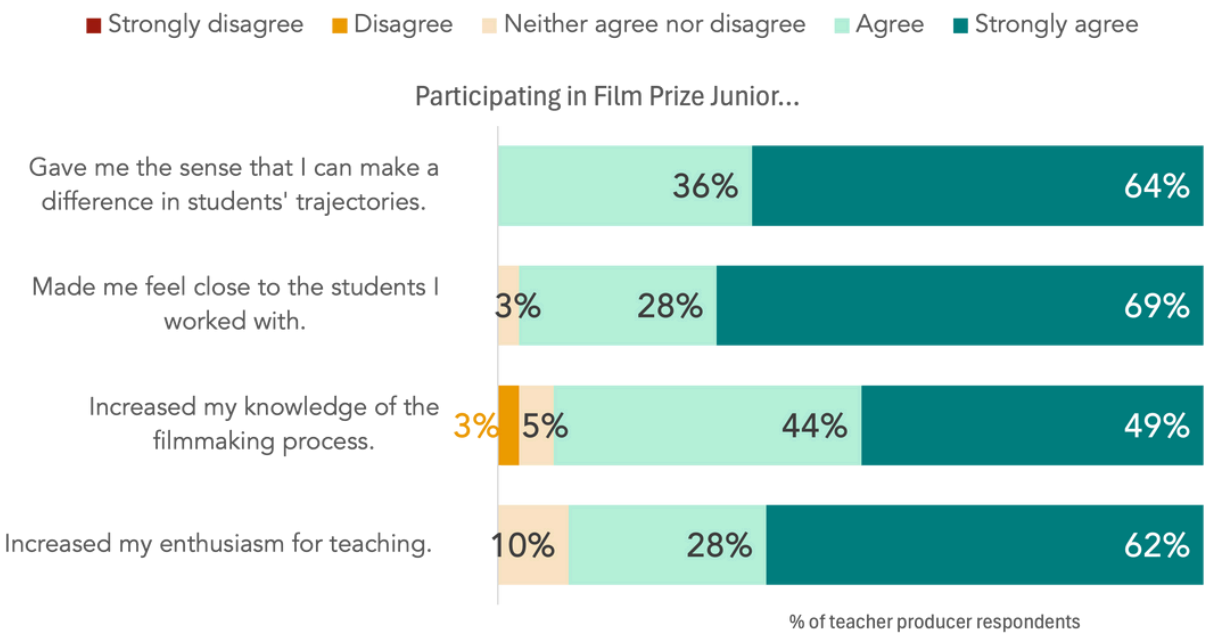
On one section of the survey, teacher producers were asked how their participation in FPJR impacted them in four distinct ways:

- Increased my knowledge of the filmmaking process.
- Made me feel close to the students I worked with.
- Increased my enthusiasm for teaching.
- Gave me the sense that I can make a difference in students' trajectories.

Across all four questions, teacher producers largely reported positive outcomes, with a very minimal negative response and a low rate of neutral responses. This represents a strong positive finding for the program across the logic model since the first two questions above are linked to short-term outcomes, and the last two questions are linked to long-term outcomes.

Nearly all teacher producers (93%) reported they agree or strongly agree that taking part in FPJR increased their knowledge of the filmmaking process; only two (5%) out of the 39 respondents reported they were neutral, and one (3%) reported that they disagreed with the statement (Exhibit 35). Out of all four questions, this is the only one with a negative response, and even then, it is one out of the 39 respondents.

Exhibit 35: Impact on Teachers



n=39

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Sixty-four percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents strongly agree that participating in Film Prize Junior gave them the sense they can make a difference in students' trajectories.

When asked if participation in the program helped them feel close to the students they worked with, teacher producers again expressed strong positivity, with 69% strongly agreeing with the statement and 28% agreeing (totaling 97% in agreement). Only 1 out of the 39 respondents was neutral.

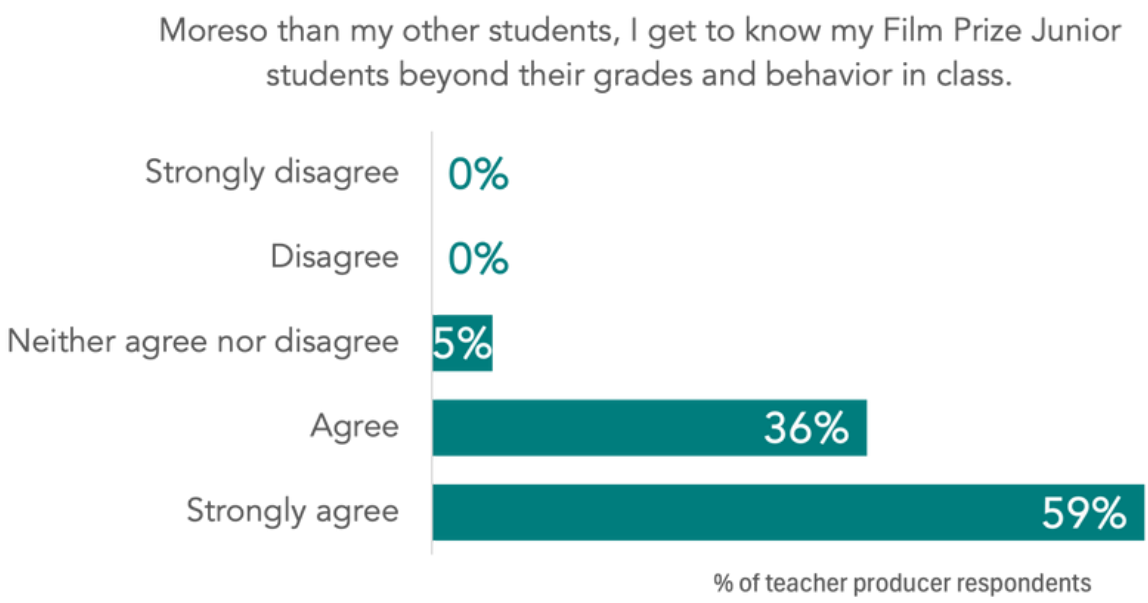
Turning to the long-term outcomes, teacher producers were asked if their experience in the program increased their enthusiasm for teaching. Well over half of the respondents (62%) strongly agreed with the statement, 28% agreed, and 10% were neutral. This is the largest report of uncertainty across the four questions, with 4 out of the 39 respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement.

The most positive response from teacher producers came from their report on student trajectories. When asked if their experience as a FPJR teacher producer gave them an increased sense that they could make a difference in their students' trajectories, the response was 100% positive, with 64% reporting that they strongly agreed and 36% reporting that they agreed with the statement.

Throughout the survey, teachers continued to report high levels of increased understanding and connection with their students, another hoped-for short-term outcome. When asked, "moreso than my other students, I get to know my Film Prize Junior students beyond their grades and behavior in class," 59% of respondents reported they strongly agreed, 36% reported they agreed with the statement, and only two out of the 39 (or 5%) of respondents were neutral (Exhibit 36).

One of the intended outcomes of the program is to engage, or in some cases, re-engage teachers professionally and broaden their work. Survey respondents indicate that the program is having a positive impact in this area. A vast majority of respondents to the survey (90%) reported they agree or strongly agree with the statement that "in part because of Film Prize Jr., I have opportunities for professional growth that are meaningful to me."

Exhibit 36: Impact on Teacher-Student Relationship



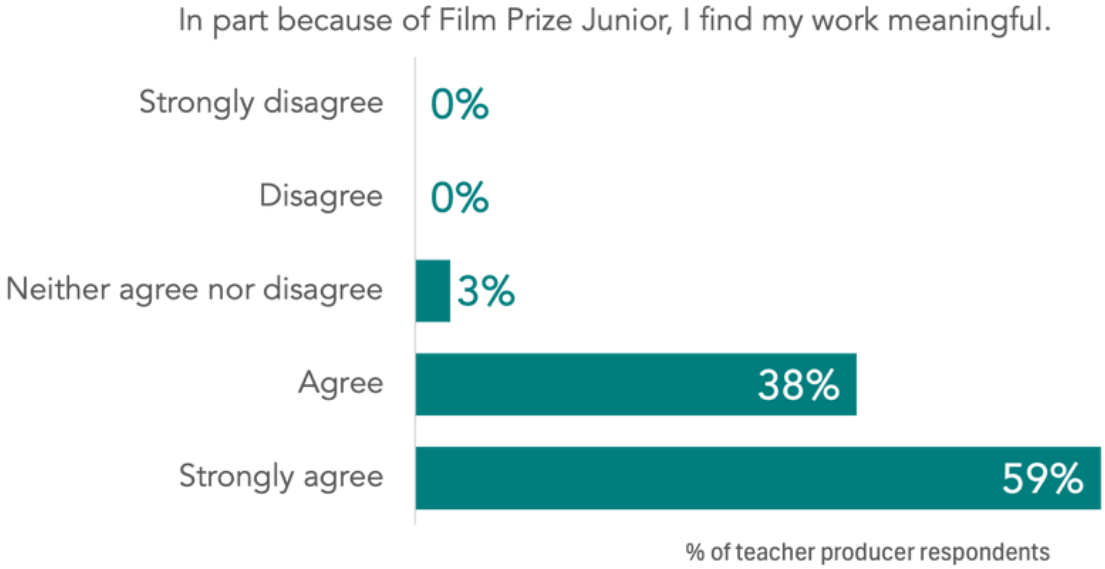
n=39

Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys

Read as: Fifty-nine percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents strongly agree that, moreso than their other students, they get to know their Film Prize Junior students beyond their grades and behavior in class.

When asked more directly if they find their work more meaningful because of their experience in FPJR, 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (Exhibit 37).

Exhibit 37: Impact on Meaningfulness of Work



n=39 | *Source: MC² Education-Administered 2025 Teacher Producer Surveys*

Read as: Fifty-nine percent of the 39 teacher producer respondents strongly agree that, in part because of Film Prize Junior, they find their work meaningful.

Taking the above set of questions on teacher producer outcomes together, we see an overwhelmingly positive impact of their participation in FPJR. A majority of teacher producers reported that the program has impacted their relationship with their students: they reported feeling closer to their students and having an increased understanding of their students' backgrounds. Teacher producers also reported an increased sense of their own ability to impact their students' trajectories. Respondents reported high levels of increased enthusiasm for teaching and a greater sense of finding their work meaningful. Many reported an increase in their knowledge of the filmmaking process.

Why These Findings Matter in New Mexico

New Mexico faces serious challenges in the areas of teacher retention, morale, and professional engagement. Our findings on the teacher impact of FPJR show encouraging signals of how innovative, arts-based programs might help counteract these statewide trends.

New Mexico has one of the highest teacher turnover rates in the country, particularly in the rural and high-poverty districts that make up much of the state. In 2024, there were 737 teacher vacancies across the state, down only slightly from previous years.[14] It's likely that in New Mexico, like elsewhere in the country, these shortages and high turnover are driven by burnout and limited career satisfaction.[15] Our FPJR teacher respondents, however, reported renewed enthusiasm for teaching, stronger student relationships, and a clearer sense of their impact, all of which align with factors known to increase teacher retention.

Teacher-student relationships are a huge driver of teacher engagement and retention as well as of student success.[16] The fact that FPJR teachers overwhelmingly felt they knew their students "beyond their grades and behavior" demonstrates how programs like FPJR can strengthen the classroom connections that matter most. In addition, New Mexico's equity efforts in education focus on elements of student life beyond academic scores, including student trajectories and empowerment.[17] FPJR teachers' strong belief that they can positively impact students' trajectories aligns with this vision and contributes to teachers' sense of purpose and self-efficacy. ■

[14] https://alliance.nmsu.edu/publications/2024-New-Mexico-Educator-Vacancy-Report.pdf
[15] https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-1.html
[16] https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA1100/RRA1108-8/RAND_RRA1108-8.pdf?
[17] https://web.ped.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ELEVATE-CLR-Analysis-Domain-2.pdf

A Word of Thanks

The MC² team is grateful for the collaborative, warm, and truly enjoyable and gratifying relationship we have developed with the FPJR team over the past two years of evaluation. We appreciate the deep conversations, the openness to hard feedback, and especially the unwavering and passionate commitment of Film Prize Junior's staff to developing an effective model for New Mexico's students. We look forward to working together to deepen the evaluation as we embark on a third year and to continuing the iterative process of integrating evaluation results to test and ultimately improve the program. ■

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