

# Community College Survey of Student Engagement

SOWELA Technical Community  
College

**2012 Key Findings**

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# Key Findings: A Starting Point

The Key Findings report provides an entry point for reviewing results from your administration of the 2012 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The report provides college-specific data in an easy-to-share format including benchmark comparisons between the college, top-performing colleges, and the CCSSE cohort. It also highlights aspects of highest and lowest student engagement at the college, as well as results from five of the CCSSE special-focus items on promising educational practices. Select faculty survey data are also highlighted.

## Promising Practices for Student Success

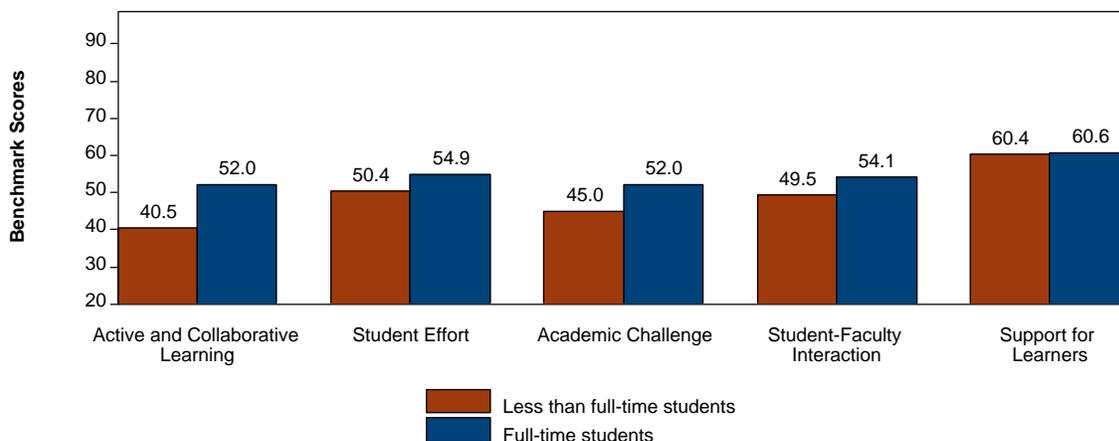
In each annual administration, CCSSE has included special-focus items to allow participating colleges and national researchers to delve more deeply into areas of student experience and institutional performance of great interest to the field. The 2012 special-focus items are part of an ongoing national research project focused on community college students' participation in a defined collection of promising practices for which there is emerging evidence of effectiveness in strengthening student learning, persistence, and attainment. This work will link data from the 2012 CCSSE special-focus items; related items on the 2012 faculty survey (CCFSSE), which explore the extent of faculty members' use of the identified promising practices in their teaching; and institutional data collected from the new Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) that address questions about how these promising practices are implemented across varied institutions. Additionally, a corresponding special-focus module will be included in the 2012 administration of the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE).

This data collection will provide empirical confirmation of promising educational practices in community colleges; quantification of the extent to which those practices are part of the current experience of our students; and information about whether participation in these types of practices varies across subgroups of students. Ongoing data analysis will provide new evidence of how student participation in these practices is related to overall student engagement, academic progress, and college completion.

## Benchmark Overview by Enrollment Status

Figure 1 below represents your institution's CCSSE benchmark scores by students' enrollment status.

Figure 1



# Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

The *CCSSE* benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement. The five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. Therefore, they provide colleges with a useful starting point for looking at institutional results and allow colleges to gauge and monitor their performance in areas that are central to their work. In addition, participating colleges have the opportunity to make appropriate and useful comparisons between their performance and that of other groups of colleges.

Performing as well as the national average or a peer-group average may be a reasonable initial aspiration, but it is important to recognize that these averages are sometimes unacceptably low. Aspiring to match and then exceed high-performance targets is the stronger strategy.

Community colleges can differ dramatically on such factors as size, location, resources, enrollment patterns, and student characteristics. It is important to take these differences into account when interpreting benchmark scores—especially when making institutional comparisons. The Center for Community College Student Engagement has adopted the policy “Responsible Uses of *CCSSE* and *SENSE* Data,” available at [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

*CCSSE* uses a three-year cohort of participating colleges in all core survey analyses. The current cohort is referred to as the 2012 *CCSSE* Cohort (2010-2012) throughout all reports.

## CCSSE Benchmarks

### ★ Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems.

### ★ Student Effort

Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals.

### ★ Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. These survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance.

### ★ Student-Faculty Interaction

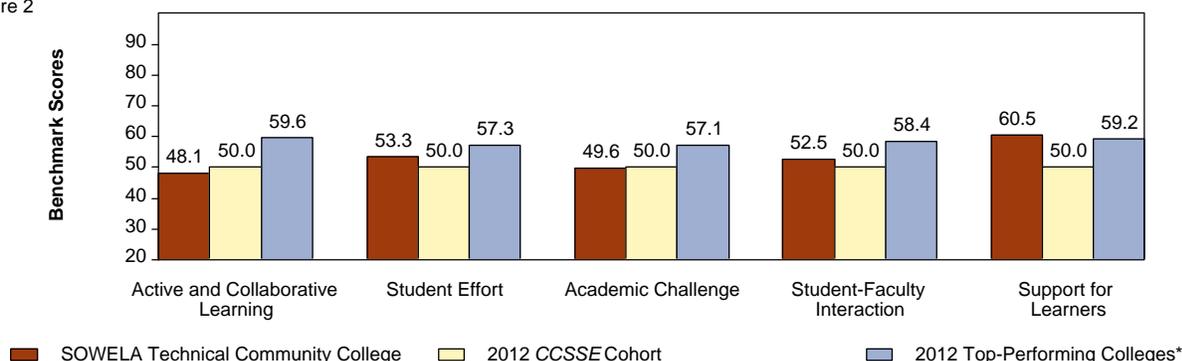
In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

### ★ Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success.

For further information about *CCSSE* benchmarks, please visit [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

Figure 2



\*Top-Performing colleges are those that scored in the top 10 percent of the cohort by benchmark.

Notes: Benchmark scores are standardized to have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 25 across all respondents. For further information about how benchmarks are computed, please visit [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org).

## Aspects of Highest Student Engagement

Benchmark scores provide a manageable starting point for reviewing and understanding *CCSSE* data. One way to dig more deeply into the benchmark scores is to analyze those items that contribute to the overall benchmark score. This section features the five items across all benchmarks (excluding those for which means are not calculated) on which the college scored highest and the five items on which the college scored lowest in comparison to the 2012 *CCSSE* Cohort.

The items highlighted on pages 4 and 5 reflect the largest differences in mean scores between the institution and the the 2012 *CCSSE* Cohort. While examining these data, keep in mind that the selected items may not be those that are most closely aligned with the college’s goals; thus, it is important to review all institutional reports on the *CCSSE* online reporting system at [www.ccse.org](http://www.ccse.org).

Figure 3 displays the aggregated frequencies for the items on which the college performed most favorably compared with the 2012 *CCSSE* Cohort. For instance, 15.3% of SOWELA Technical Community College students, compared with 9.8% of other students in the cohort, responded *often* or *very often* on item 4q.

Figure 3

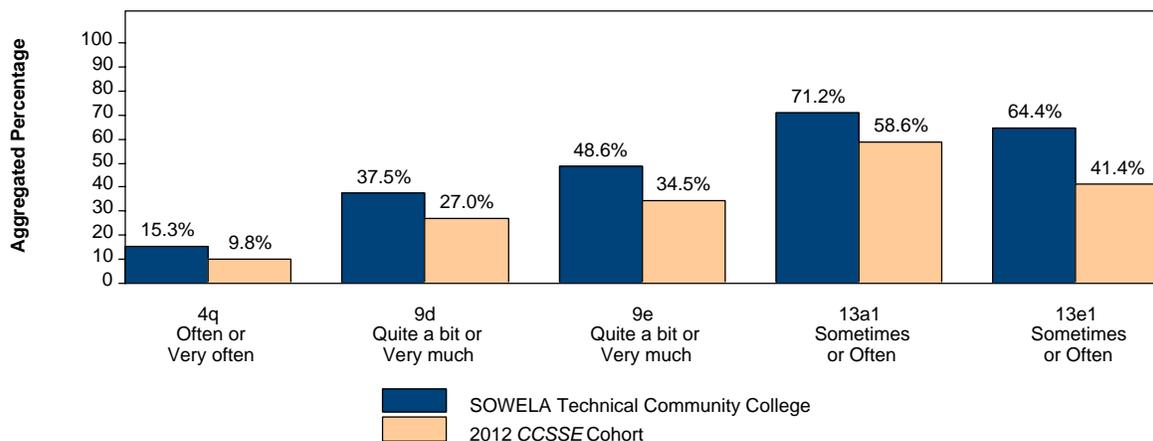


Table 1

| Benchmark                   | Item Number | Item  |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| Student-Faculty Interaction | 4q          | Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework                   |
| Support For Learners        | 9d          | Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) |
| Support For Learners        | 9e          | Providing the support you need to thrive socially                             |
| Support For Learners        | 13a1        | Frequency: Academic advising/planning   |
| Student Effort              | 13e1        | Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)                                   |

Notes:

For Item(s) 4, *often* and *very often* responses are combined.

For Item(s) 9, *quite a bit* and *very much* responses are combined.

For Item(s) 13, *sometimes* and *often* responses are combined.

## Aspects of Lowest Student Engagement

Figure 4 displays the aggregated frequencies for the items on which the college performed least favorably compared with the 2012 CCSSE Cohort. For instance, 13.8% of SOWELA Technical Community College students, compared with 30.6% of other students in the cohort, responded *often* or *very often* on item 4b.

Figure 4

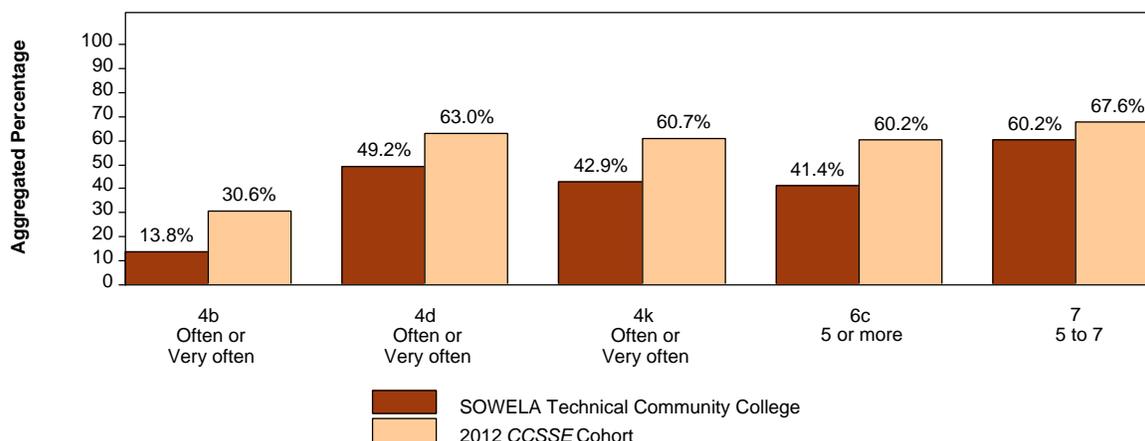


Table 2

| Benchmark                         | Item Number | Item  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Active and Collaborative Learning | 4b          | Made a class presentation   |
| Student Effort                    | 4d          | Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources  |
| Student-Faculty Interaction       | 4k          | Used email to communicate with an instructor  |
| Academic Challenge                | 6c          | Number of written papers or reports of any length   |
| Academic Challenge                | 7           | Mark the box that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college |

Notes:

- For Item(s) 4, *often* and *very often* responses are combined.
- For Item(s) 6, 5 to 10, 11 to 20, and *more than 20* responses are combined.
- For Item(s) 7, 5 to 7 responses on the 1 - 7 challenge scale are combined.

## 2012 CCSSE Special-Focus Items

The Center adds special-focus items to *CCSSE* each year to augment the core survey, helping participating colleges and the field at large to further explore fundamental areas of student engagement. The 2012 special-focus items continue to elicit new information about students' experiences associated with promising educational practices such as early registration, orientation, freshman seminars, organized learning communities, and student success courses. Frequency results from the first five promising practices items for your college and the 2012 *CCSSE* promising practices respondents are displayed across pages 6 and 7.

Figure 5: During the current term at this college, I completed registration before the first class session(s).

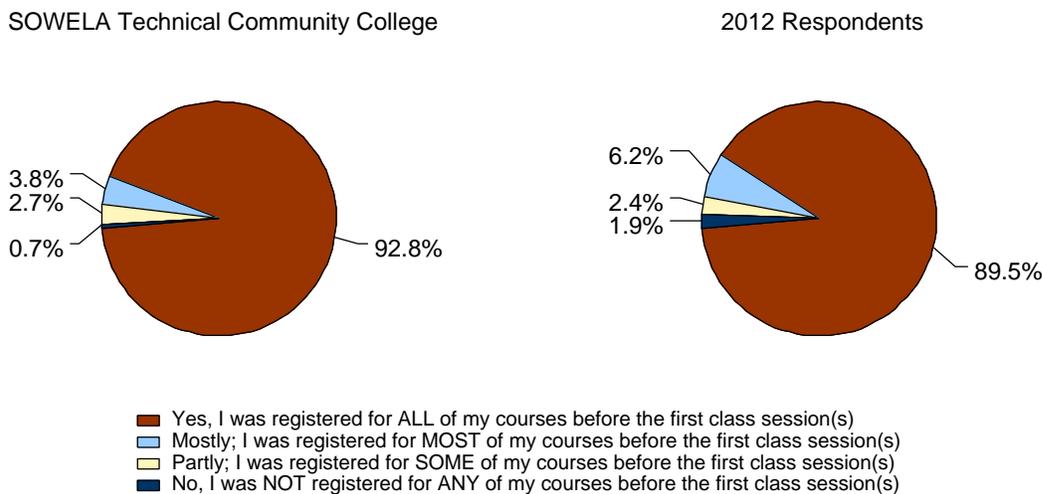


Figure 6: The ONE response that best describes my experience with orientation when I first came to this college is...

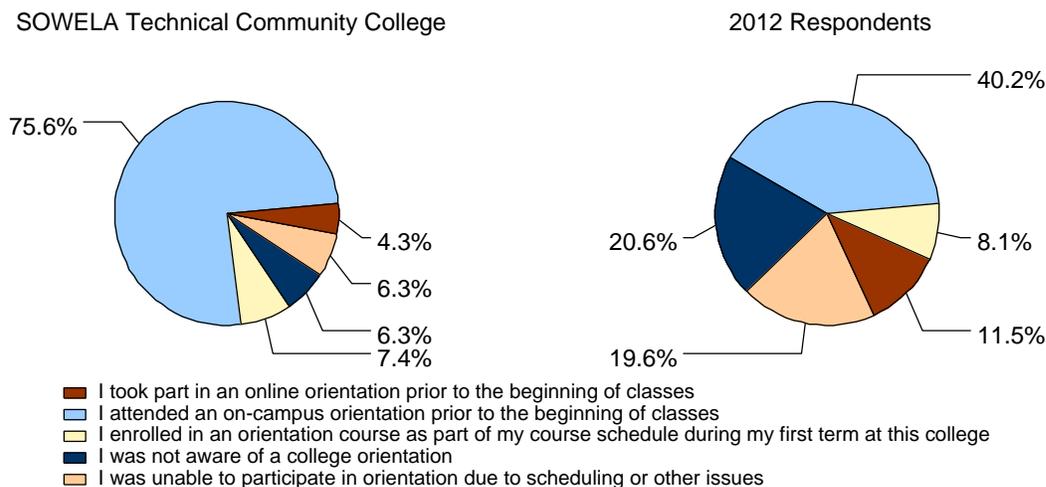


Figure 7: During my first term at this college, I participated in a structured experience for new students (sometimes called a "freshman seminar" or "first-year experience").

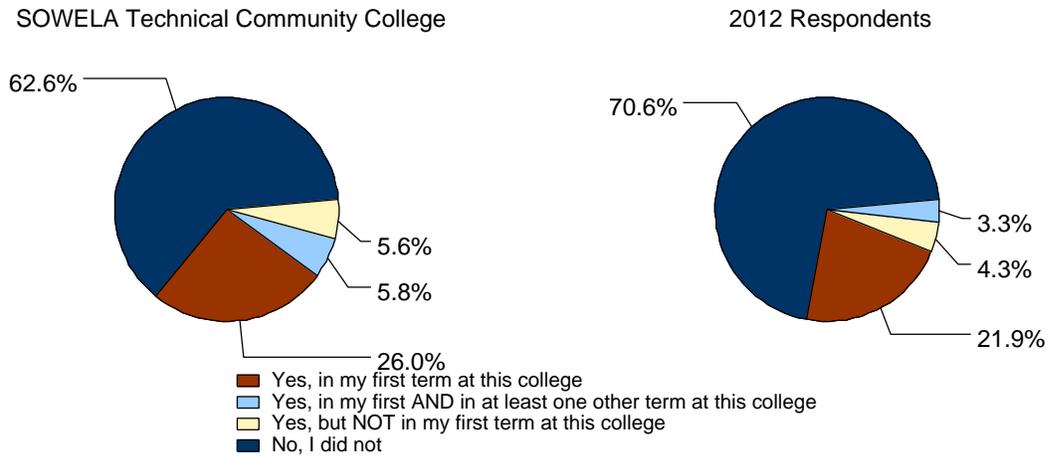


Figure 8: During my first term at this college, I enrolled in an organized "learning community" (two or more courses that a group of students take together).

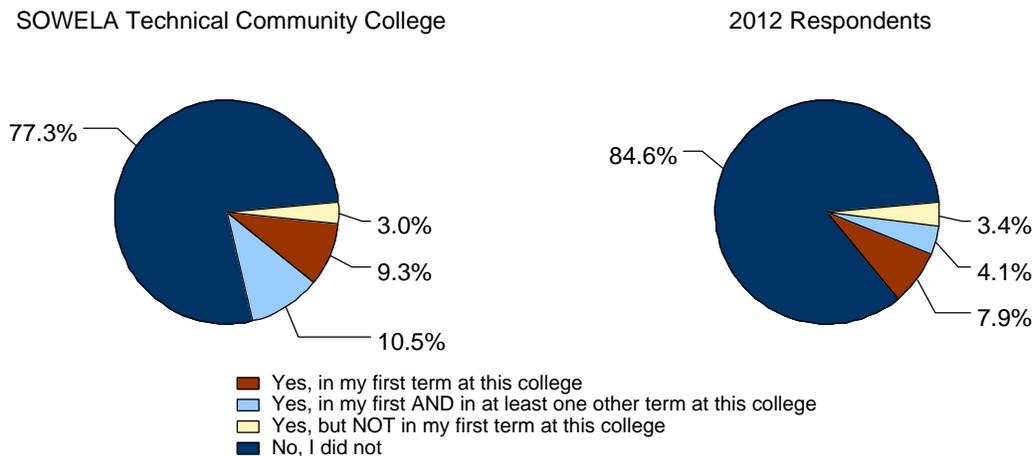
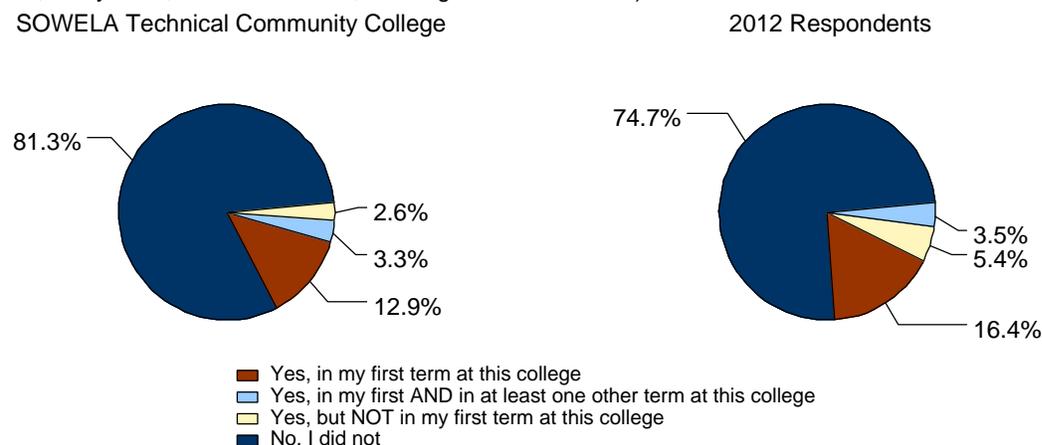


Figure 9: During my first term at this college, I enrolled in a student success course (such as a student development, extended orientation, study skills, student life skills, or college success course).



# CCFSSE

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*), designed as a companion survey to *CCSSE*, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices; the ways they spend their professional time, both in and out of class; and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences. *CCFSSE* data not only help participating colleges identify areas of strength, but also enable them to recognize challenges or gaps that may require further consideration. The *CCFSSE* promising practices results displayed below reveal how often full- and part-time faculty members at SOWELA Technical Community College assign selected group learning experiences.

Figure 10: How often during your selected course section do you ASSIGN group learning experiences that REQUIRE students to:

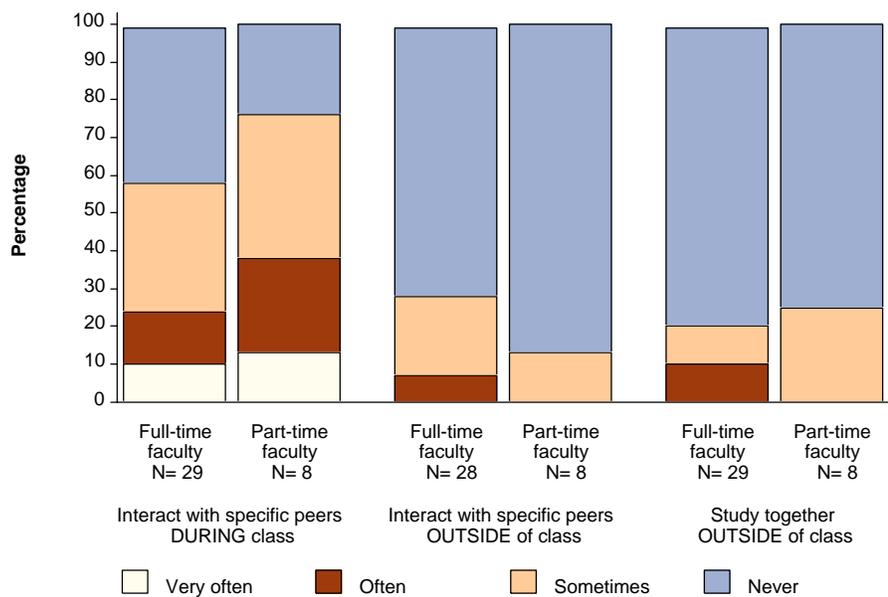


Table 3

| Response   | Interact with specific peers DURING class |           | Interact with specific peers OUTSIDE of class |           | Study together OUTSIDE of class |           |
|------------|---|-----------|---|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------|
|            | Full-time                                 | Part-time | Full-time                                     | Part-time | Full-time                       | Part-time |
| Very often | 10.3%                                     | 12.5%     | 0.0%  | 0.0%      | 0.0%                            | 0.0%      |
| Often      | 13.8%                                     | 25.0%     | 7.1%  | 0.0%      | 10.3%                           | 0.0%      |
| Sometimes  | 34.5%                                     | 37.5%     | 21.4%   | 12.5%     | 10.3%                           | 25.0%     |
| Never      | 41.4%                                     | 25.0%     | 71.4%   | 87.5%     | 79.3%                           | 75.0%     |