

Goldington Academy Summer School Evaluation

Weeks 1 and 2 - Y6 to Y7 transition

The programme for weeks one and two was for the students entering into year 7 in the new academic year September 2021. These students had not had an opportunity to experience the new school setting due to government advice. As such it was felt that many would need extra support to build confidence and to catch up on learning. The outcomes that this programme was based on are as follows:

Pupils feel confident and excited about their transition to Goldington Academy

Pupils develop some awareness of the school buildings and moving around the school site

Pupils connect with their peers from their primary school and build new relationships with pupils from other schools

Pupils develop knowledge and practice skills in key subjects which will help prepare them for the new school year

Pupils have a greater sense of positive mental wellbeing by taking part in educational, fun and creative activities

Academic Programme

These sessions had a focus on learning, the delivery of which, where practical involved going outside, and finding alternative ways to learn and practice. There were still some desk-based elements within the week.

English topics covered were based upon feedback from the HoD at Goldington Academy and included creative writing with a focus on planning and composing narratives and descriptions, vocabulary work and reading. There were lots of opportunities and encouragement to work as part of a group in addition to working independently. The content was designed to be accessible for all, with stretch activities built in, so that all students were able to access and make progress.

Maths topics covered were also based upon feedback from HoD at Goldington Academy. Content was designed to be accessible for all, with stretch activities built in, so that all students were able to access and make progress. Topics included place value up to a billion and to 3 decimal places including ordering and rounding. Fractions, decimals, percentage equivalence recap and finding equivalent fractions. Word based problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division including decimals in different contexts. Area and perimeter of shapes.

As requested there was one hands-on **science** lesson included within the week and there was also time allocated for a project based set of lessons called Dragons' Holiday. Taking inspiration from programmes such as The Apprentice and Dragons' Den this project cut across academic subjects and was designed to draw on the strengths of different students. It included budgeting, persuasive writing, art and presentation skills.

The week also incorporated an enrichment programme, designed to build positive and cooperative relationships within each group. There was a focus on team working and building individual confidence. This part of the programme was also intended to encourage creativity and curiosity.

Ice Breaker activities were designed to get groups talking, cooperating and having fun; taking on small and large group challenges.

Drama Games which were based on play and creativity. The young people were active and learnt how to improvise and be supportive of each other.

Art involved a screen printing project based on the premise of change.

A **Wellbeing** session about identifying personal strengths 'The Superhero Within' was included. The students designed themselves as superheroes and explored what skills their superhero might need to take the next step into Goldington Academy. This also incorporated the time to explore hopes and fears and who young people might turn to for support with an activity called 'Hand of Safety'.

The 1st **Sports** session focused on rounders, a game which everyone could take part in, regardless of skill level. Session 2 was a Mini Olympics styled session with a range of games for the young people to take part in. The games were designed to use fun competition to get them working together and were pitched to be easy for all to play and focus on fun.

The final afternoon of summer school brought the whole cohort together in a quiz show style celebration. The quiz involved general knowledge questions plus physical challenges which were pitched to be challenging and fun. Prizes were awarded and teams encouraged to get involved and have a fun end to the week.

Weeks 3 and 4 - Years 7-9 Summer Catch Up

The programme for years 7-9 was more focussed on academic learning, although very much in the spirit of having fun at the same time. The following outcomes applied to this programme:

Pupils develop knowledge and practice skills in key subjects which will help prepare them for the new school year

Pupils have a greater sense of positive mental wellbeing by taking part in educational, fun and creative activities

Pupils grow in confidence in their knowledge and skills as they apply their learning to new contexts and challenges

Pupils connect with their peers in an educational and fun setting

Pupils feel confident and prepared to return to school in September

Maths topics covered were based upon feedback from HoD at Goldington Academy and were different for each year group. They all included work based on fractions, percentages and word based problems. Years 8 & 9 also included algebra. Adaptations were made to stretch more able students and to accommodate lower attaining pupils, so that all pupils were able to make progress.

English topics included creative and analytical writing with a focus on language choices and their effects on the reader. Again, content was developed with stretch activities built in, so that everyone could feel they had made progress throughout the week.

As requested, there was one hands-on **science** lesson included within the week, and there was also time allocated for a project based set of lessons; Dragons' Holiday. As with weeks 1 & 2 this project took inspiration from programmes such as The Apprentice and Dragons' Den and allowed groups to apply their learning, knowledge and team work skills to complete a business challenge. They learnt how to apply basic marketing skills to develop a new travel company brand. They created a holiday package and conducted research on their planned destination and itinerary. They practiced and used presentation skills to pitch their ideas to their peers, tutors and members of Goldington Academy's SLT.

In addition to academic catchup there was also an enrichment programme designed to build positive and cooperative relationships within the groups. This was particularly useful as it quickly became apparent that few of the participants were working within their usual friendship groups and so had the added advantage of expanding their social contacts within school.

A **Team Challenge** activity focused on communication, problem solving and principles around planning whilst the **School Community** project allowed students to remember and explore how they felt when joining the school in Y7 and then writing letters to their former selves. These letters of advice and encouragement will be used with the new cohort of Y7s as part of their settling-in activities within school.

There was a focus on fun and letting off steam within the **Sports** sessions. They involved team skills and some light competition. The Y7s in particular were keen to beat the records set by the Y6 students during the mini Olympics in weeks 1 & 2.

A **Drama Project** saw pupils learn about Verbatim Theatre and apply the technique within their group to create their own new writing and performance. This fitted in well with creative writing in English and involved learning about the style of theatre and its uses. The young people interviewed each other and created pieces and then went on to rehearse and perform their work. The sessions were designed around the assumption that not everyone would be confident to perform and a wide range of skills needed to be employed so that everyone was able to get involved.

As with weeks 1 and 2 the programme was finished off with an afternoon of celebration, in the form of a quiz show style quiz.

Feedback

Feedback from the students was gathered via evaluation forms completed at the end of each week. Unsolicited feedback was also received from a number of parents who wanted to pass on their thanks to the school.

Common themes within the feedback were apparent. Within the **transition** cohort the biggest benefit was the chance the summer school gave for the young people to make new friends. This was mentioned many times, as were the ice breaker games which helped facilitate these new friendships. Almost all students also felt they benefited from getting to know the school grounds, environment and some of the routines used within Goldington Academy before starting school in September. Other popular aspects of the summer school were the sport/PE sessions, the Maths lessons, the Dragons' Holiday project and how the teachers were approachable and kind.

In terms of what could have been done differently to make the week better, it was clear that the students would have liked the opportunity to move around the school more and to have been shown their form rooms ready for September. Due to building works the summer school was deliberately based within specific areas of the school. If the transition summer school were to be repeated then it is likely that there would once again be improvements being made to the fabric of the school. Therefore we suggest building in a guided tour of the school, to allow the young people to see where they would be going at the start of term and possibly meeting some of their teachers at some point within the week.

See appendix 1 for week 1 & 2 evaluation questions and responses.

There were also many themes within the **Catchup** feedback gathered. All the enrichment elements of the programme were consistently rated highly. Students particularly liked the opportunity to work on the Dragons' Holiday extended project, in order to use different skills and draw on each other's strengths. The debating and teamworking sessions were also rated consistently high. Many commented on how the lessons were fun and that they enjoyed getting outside of the classroom and learning in a very practical way. Again, the approachability of the teachers was commented upon a number of times as was the chance the summer school gave students to make new friends and to build confidence ready for the new school year.

Feedback from summer school staff on the drama sessions was particularly interesting. The drama sessions gave the students the opportunity to explore their feelings about their hopes and fears for the future. The drama practitioner, plus the group leaders who helped facilitate the sessions, were impressed by the level of thought the young people put into the project and their honesty when speaking about vulnerabilities and feelings.

See appendix 2 for week 3 & 4 evaluation questions and responses.

Staff observations for weeks 1 & 2 were mainly regarding what a joy the students were to be around. There was so much enthusiasm surrounding all the participants. A couple of students were clearly very nervous when starting the week, but without exception everyone made progress in terms of overcoming some of their fears and starting to form friendships with new people. It was particularly pleasing to see the students present their holidays at the end of the Dragons' Holiday project. Everyone got up on stage and participated in some way, contributing to their team goals.

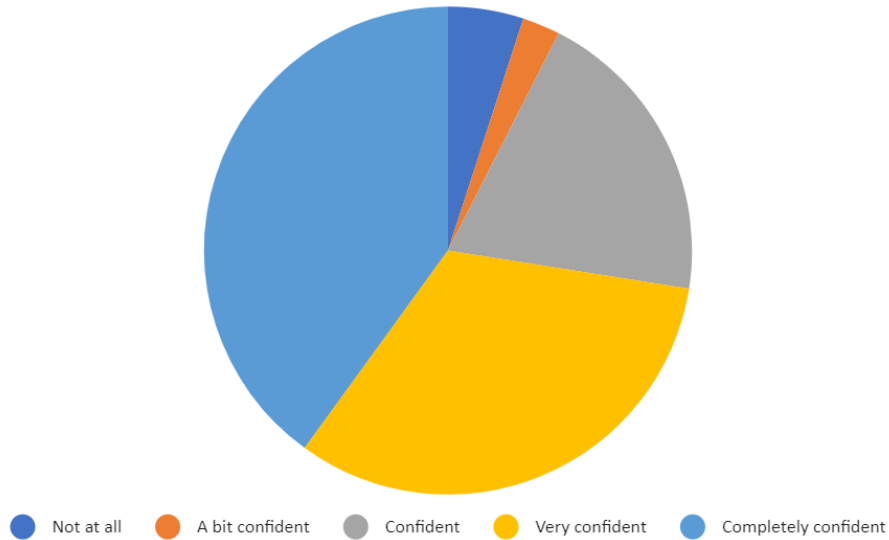
Staff observations for weeks 3 & 4 included that although at the beginning of each week several pupils said they didn't want to attend and that they had been made to by their parents, almost all the students had 100% attendance. Exceptions being for illness and pre-planned family events that couldn't be missed. Attendance for weeks 3 & 4 was lower than expected. Around 50% of students who signed up for summer school actually attended. It is possible that students were keen to attend whilst in the swing of getting up and coming into school on a regular basis, but found it less appealing when having got used to having a lie-in and doing very little during their holiday. It was mooted that if the catchup summer school were to take place again parents/carers should pay a small deposit when signing up. This would be returned in full to all attendees. This should help with parental and student buy-in as people tend to value what they have paid for more than something which they perceive to be free.

Another staff observation was that the catch-up value in Maths in particular was profound. The Maths tutors were able to stick with a particular topic until they were confident that all of the students understood and were comfortable with the concepts.

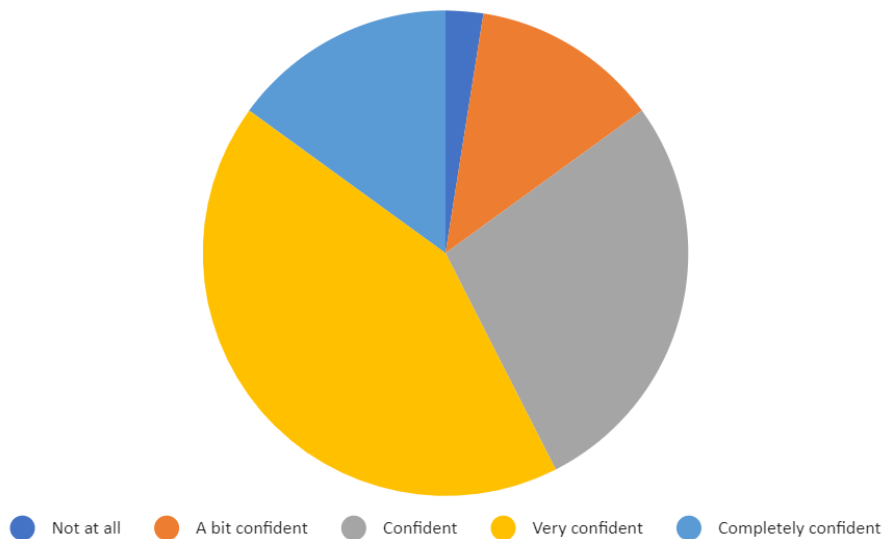
Appendix 1

Week 1

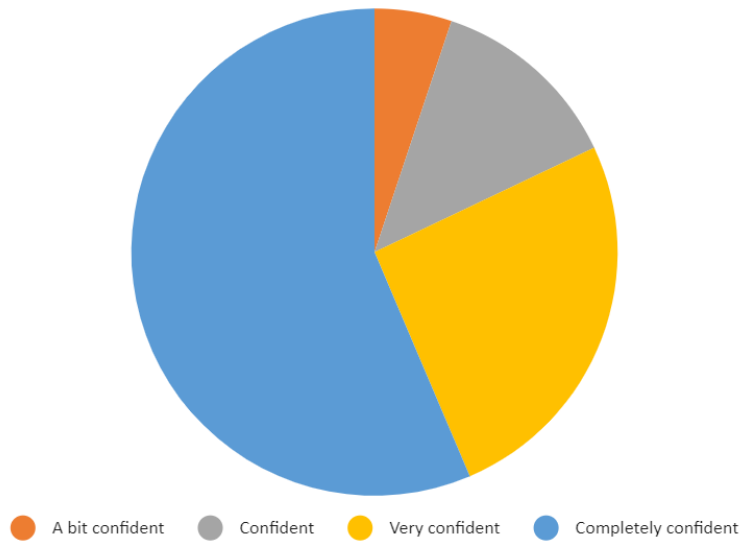
Because I attended summer school I feel more confident and excited about starting at Goldington Academy



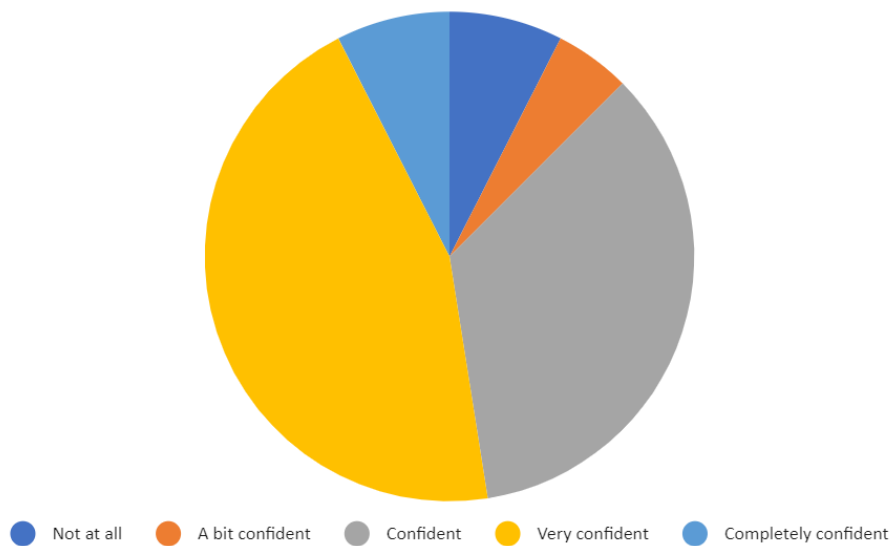
I now feel more confident about the school buildings and moving around the school



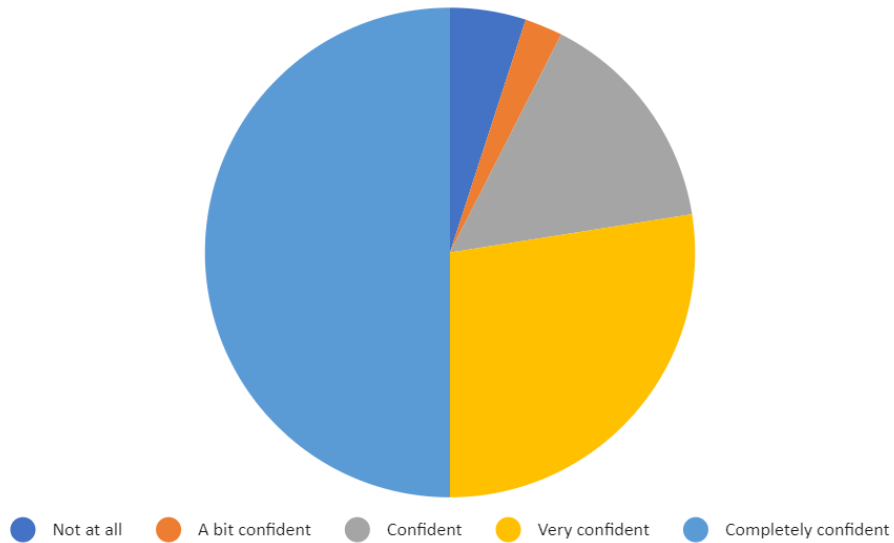
I have got to know new people from other schools



Learning new things and practising what I know in lessons has made me feel more prepared for September

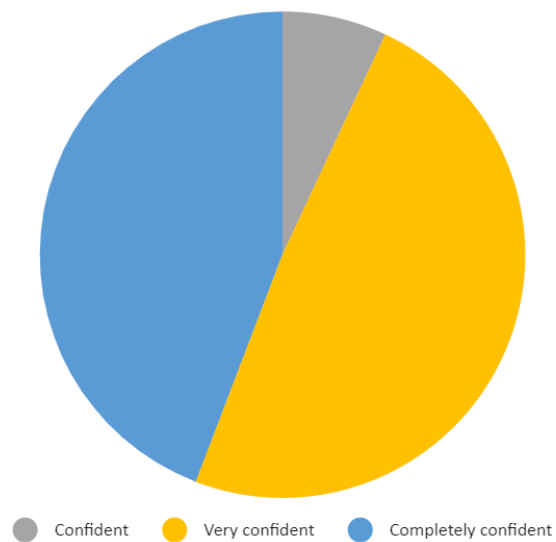


Taking part in this week has made me feel happy

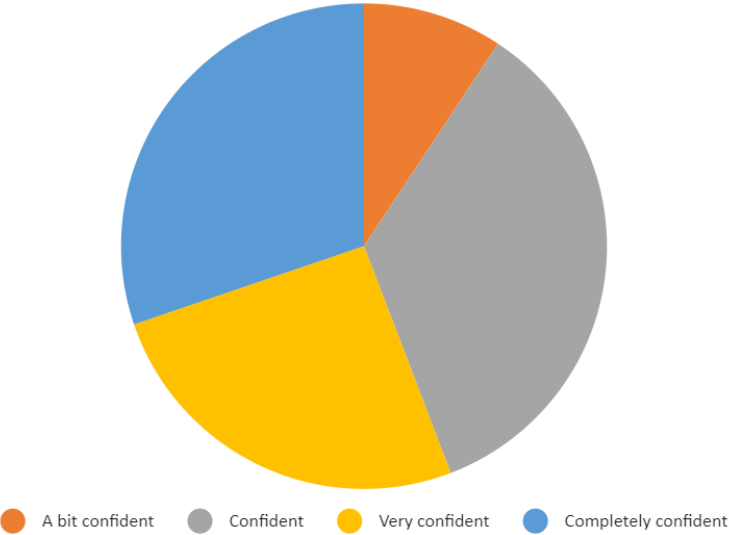


Week 2

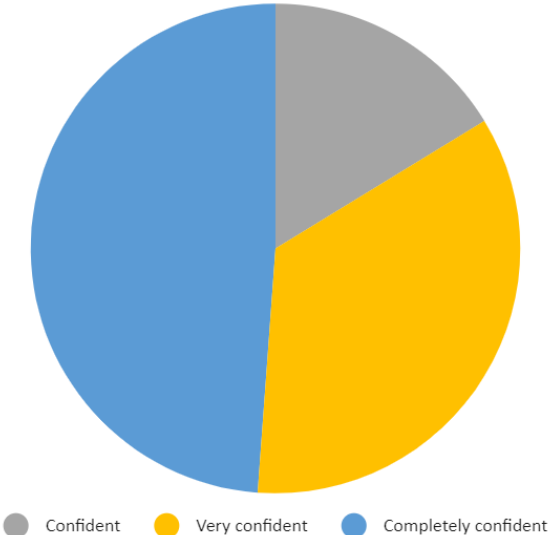
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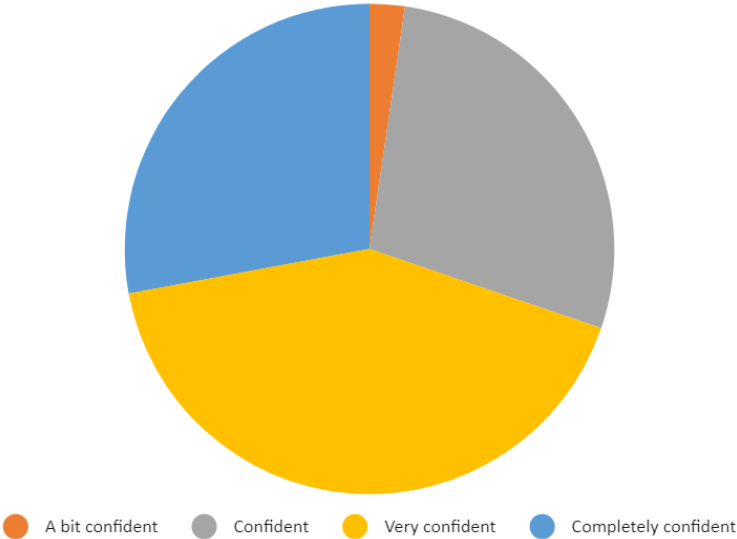
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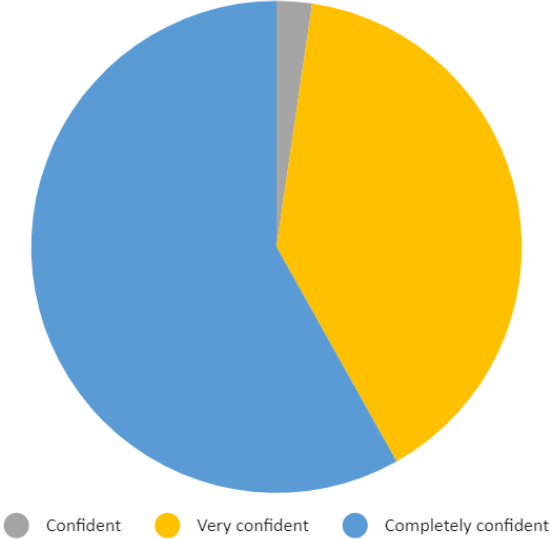
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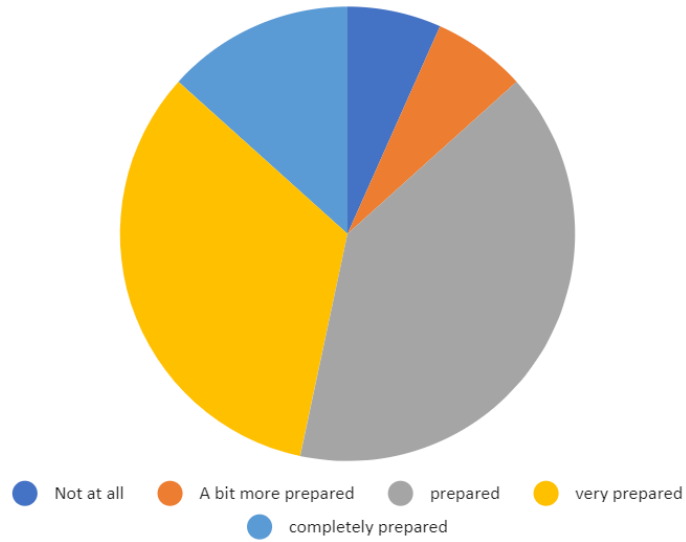


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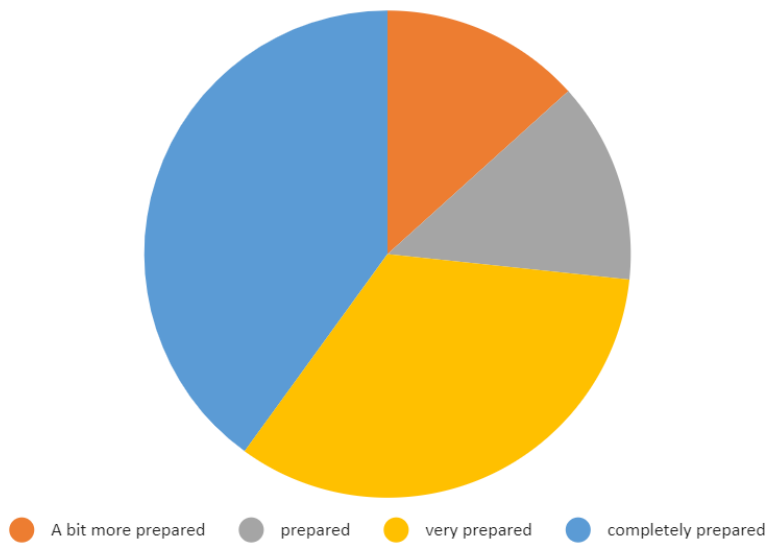


Appendix 2
Week 3

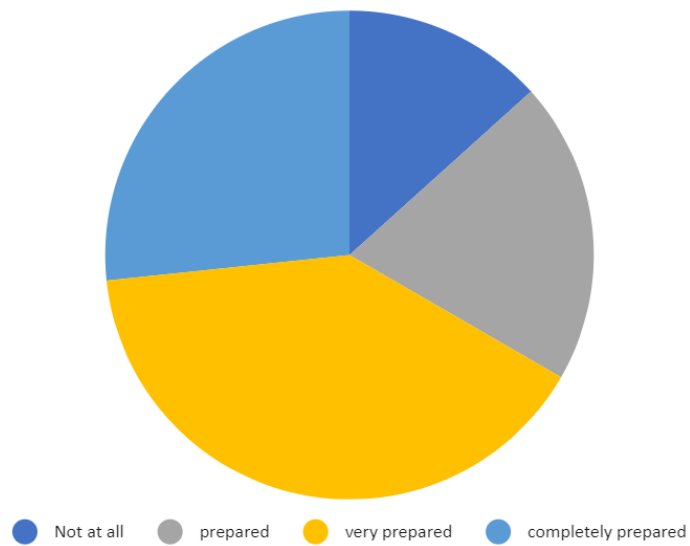
I feel more prepared for the new school year



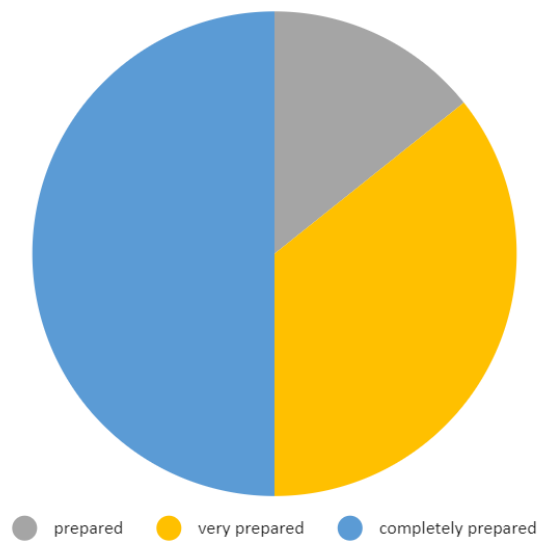
I liked taking part in a range of different lessons



I feel more confident in Maths and English as a result of taking part in this week

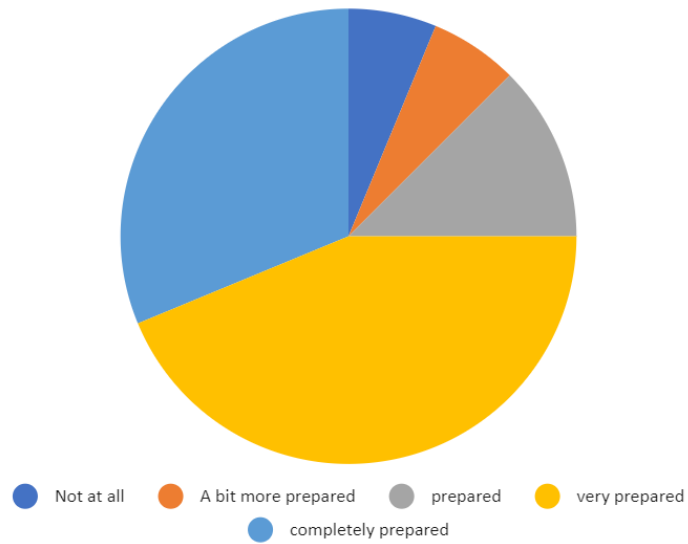


I enjoyed spending time with the other people attending summer school

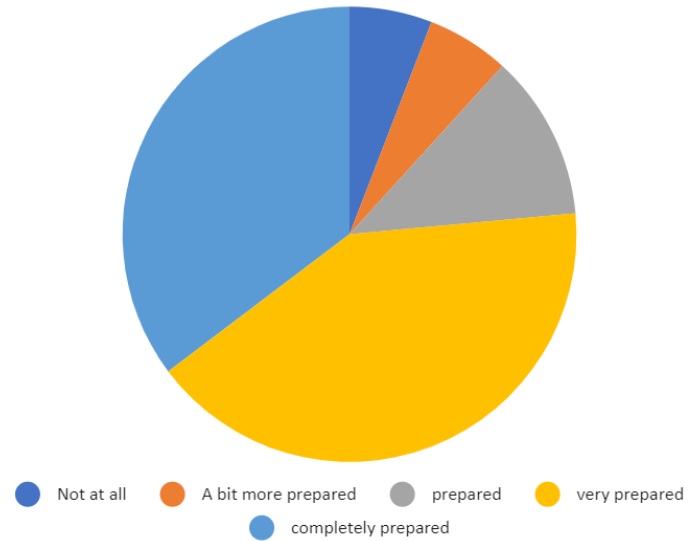


Week 4

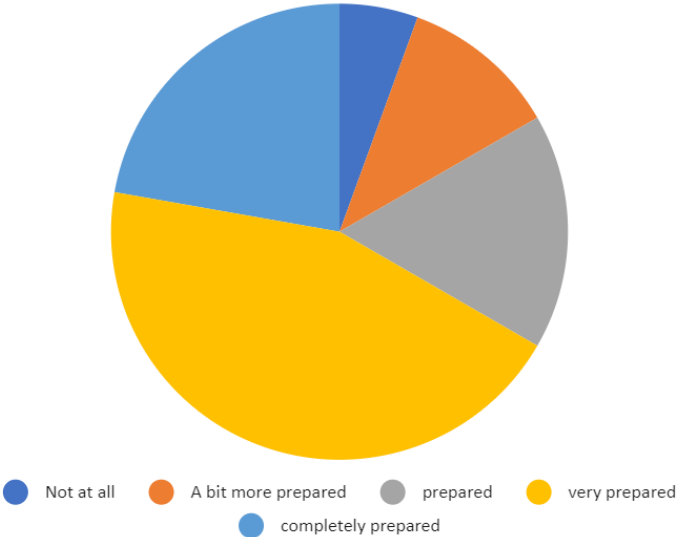
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