

Introduction

- StudentU works with Durham Public School (DPS) students who will be first-generation college graduates and/or students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- 99% of students at StudentU identify as Black/African American and/or Latinx.
- Career exploration is built into the year-round program only once a calendar year, with a Career Day during Summer Academy.
- The Future Career Program (FCP) will be implemented in the first half of the DPS academic calendar year and it will be accessible to all StudentU students enrolled in high school programming.

Methods

Community Partner Outreach

- Based on the Summer Academy U-Prep survey, the Program Team Intern and one of the high school coordinators reached out to a variety of people in Durham or the surrounding area that have careers that students are interested in.
- We presented the mission of StudentU, the importance of career exploration in minoritized communities, and what we are asking of them.

Frequency and Location

- Three sessions of FCP were held throughout the semester:
 - October 13th: LaTonja Fant and SSCI, a Global Cybersecurity Risk Management Firm
 - October 27th: Kit Olmsted and the Life of an NCAA D1 Athlete
 - November 10th: Steven Cannady and the BULLS Initiative at Durham Technical Community College
- Attendance for Each Session:
 - October 13th: 8 students
 - October 27th: 11 students
 - November 10th: 14 students
- All sessions were uploaded on the Meeting Owl 3, a 360-degree camera, microphone, and speaker. This allowed for sessions of FCP to be sent out in the weekly newsletter for students unable to attend due to extracurricular activities.



Results and Discussion

- Out of the 25 students who attended at least one session of FCP, 7 students completed an exit survey asking about their experiences.
- For each session hosted, every student reported learning new information about the career field at the conclusion of the event.
- When asked about interest in the specific career field from before and after the session, for every session students reported an overall positive shift in responses which means that they were more interested in the career after attending FCP.
- Students felt that all the speakers somewhat or very engagingly presented their career field.
- Suggestions for future sessions ranged from music majors to careers in sports medicine.



Literature Review

Barriers to Career Exploration in Schools¹

- Financial support in public schools
- High student-to-counselor ratio
- Lack of school-community agency collaboration beyond a parent-school interaction

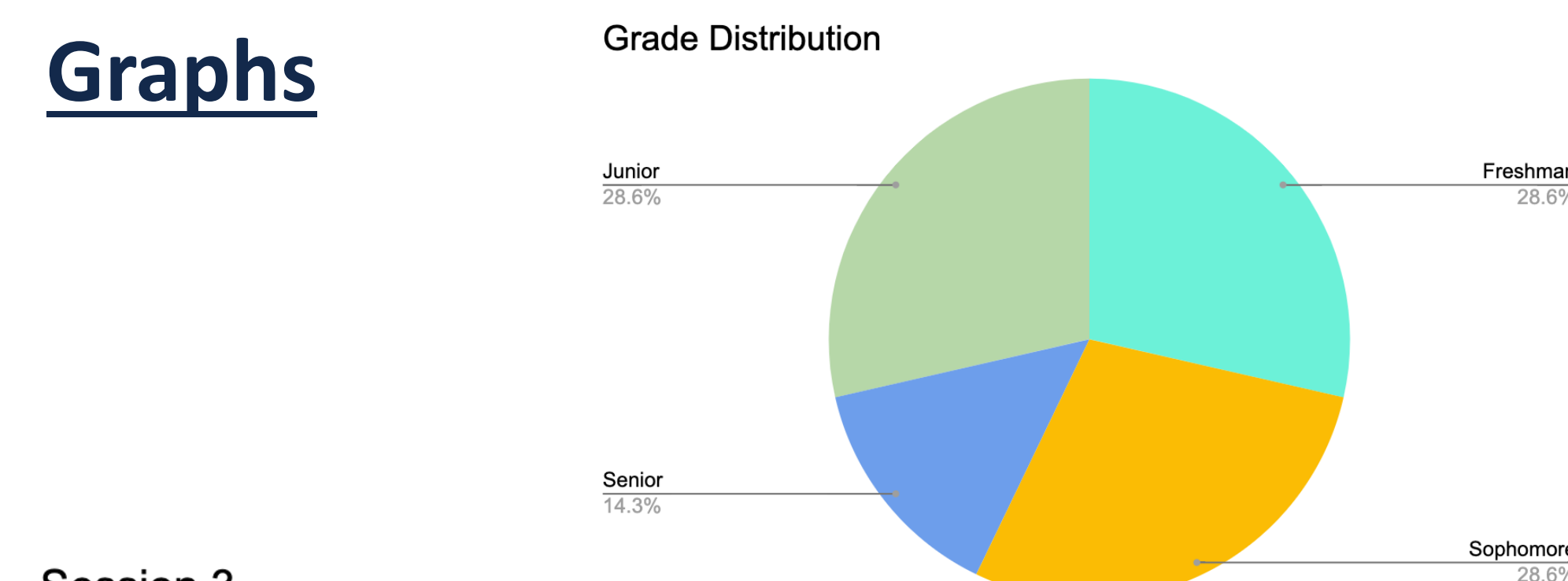
Outcomes of Career Exploration

- Some career programs can increase self-efficacy in the classroom, particularly in STEM courses²
- Increase in personal agency within the classroom when engaging in career exploration and planning³

Characteristics of Effective Career Exploration Programs

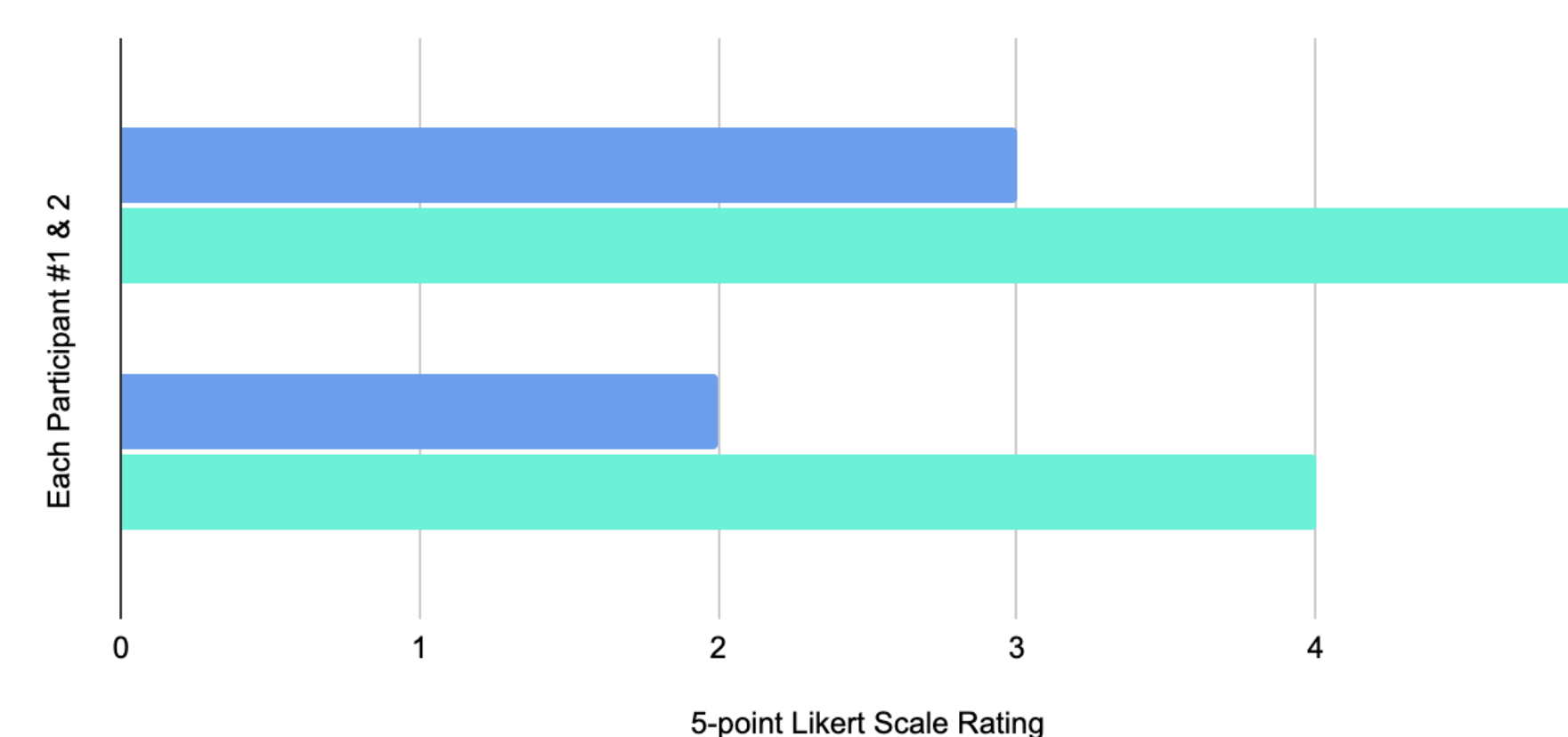
- Monitor academic deficits and sustain tutoring⁴
- Orient students on the benefits of community college⁴
- Factor timing practices of the population⁴
- Share a racial or ethnic identity with the student population⁵⁻⁷

Graphs



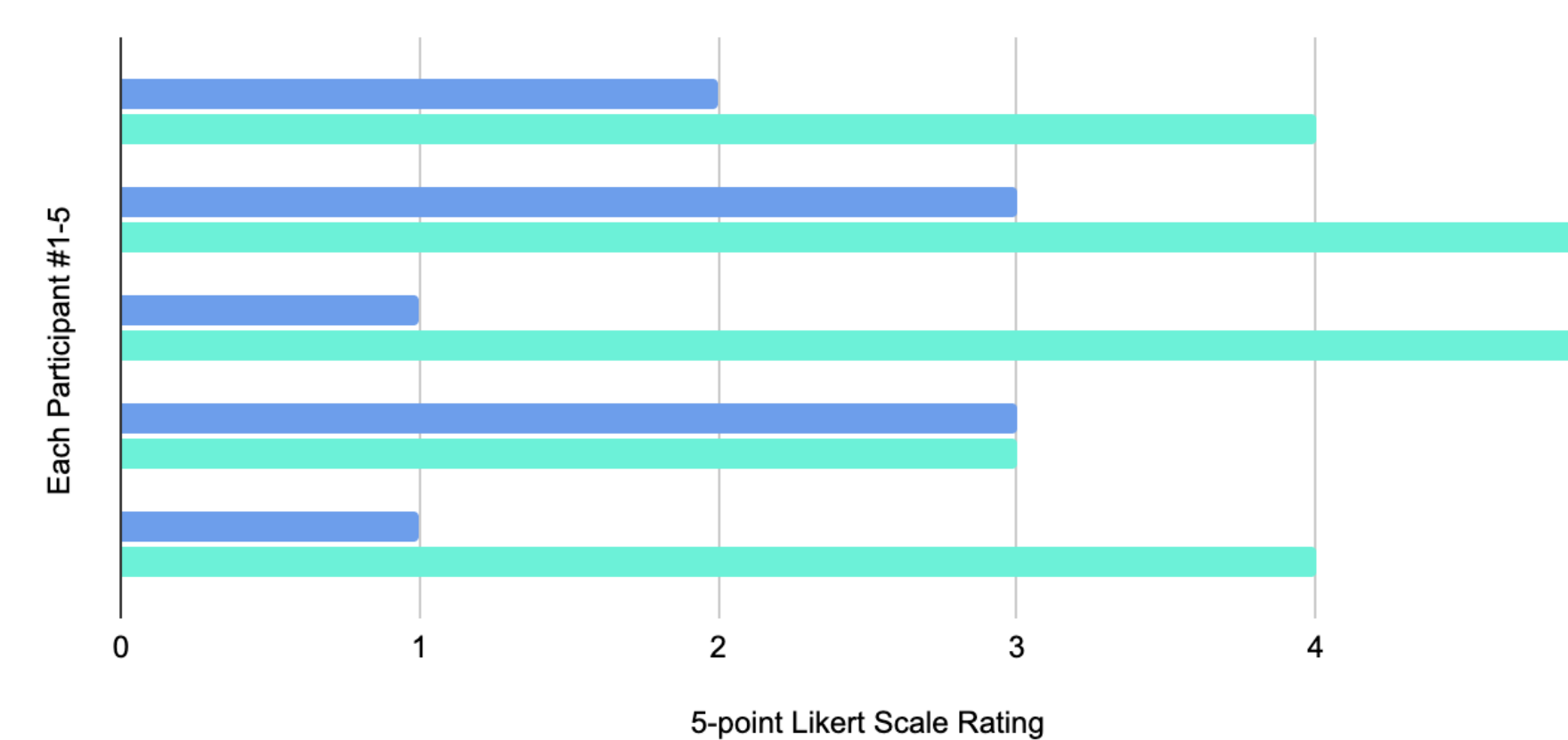
Session 3

- I previously knew information about this career field.
- I learned new information about this career field.



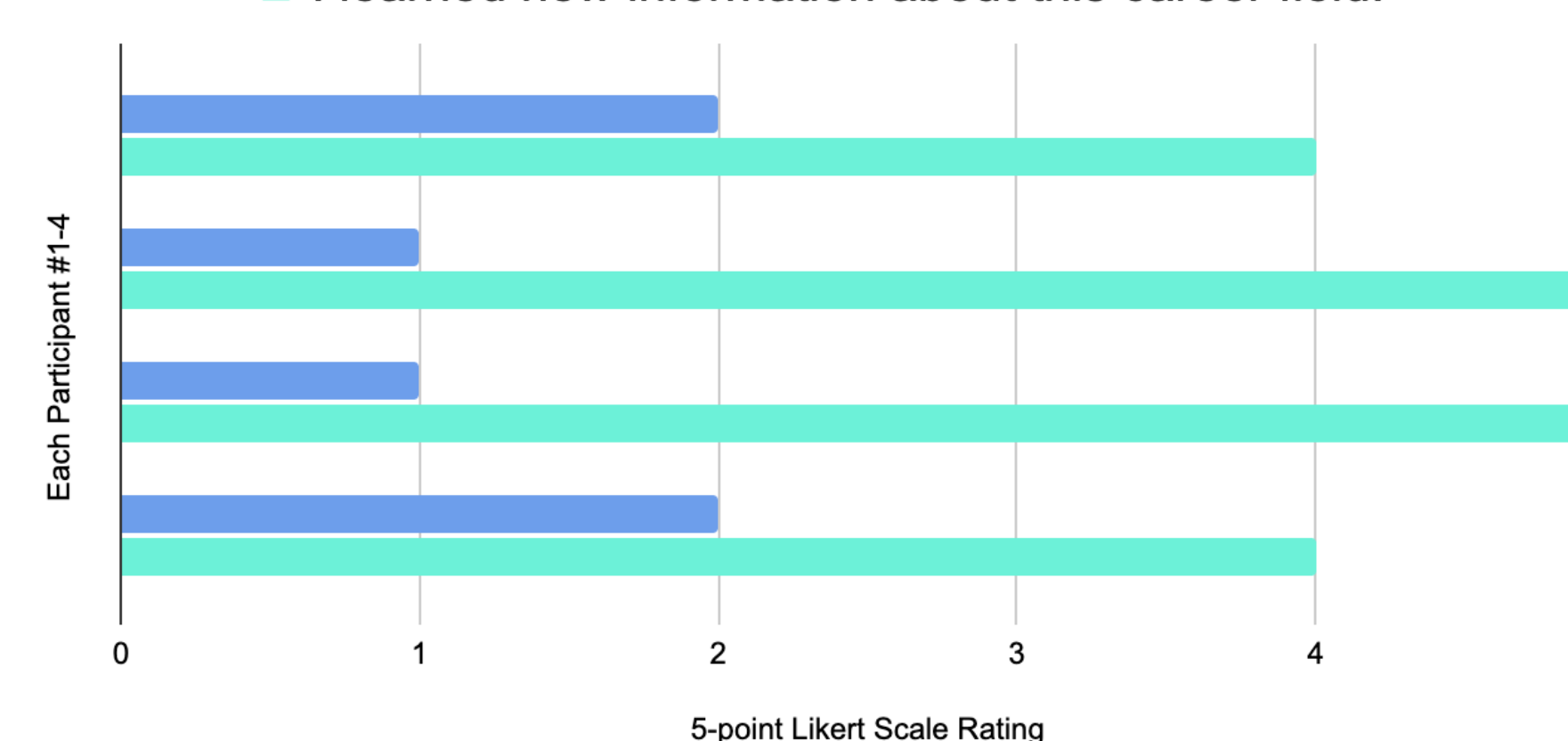
Session 2

- I previously knew information about this career field.
- I learned new information about this career field.



Session 3

- I previously knew information about this career field.
- I learned new information about this career field.



Conclusions

- The results of this semester-long project suggest that students gained new information about potential pathways for their future.
- Strengths of FCP include recruiting engaging community members, increasing awareness of uncommon careers, and enthusiastic engagement of the in-person students.
- Areas of growth are mostly related to increasing participation in the program and individualized career planning.
- Suggestions include:
 - Earlier promotion in the weekly newsletter
 - Interesting and relatable speakers
 - Strict time cutoffs to keep up student engagement
 - Better snack options
- Overall, the Future Career Program positively impacted the career exploration of the students who attended.



Citations

1. Ting, S. R., Leung, Y. F., Stewart, K., Smith, A. C., Roberts, G. L., & Dees, S. (2012). A Preliminary Study of Career Education in Middle School. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.21061/jcte.v27i2.562>
2. Blotnick, K. A., Franz-Odenaal, T., French, F., & Joy, P. (2018). A study of the correlation between STEM career knowledge, mathematics self-efficacy, career interests, and career activities on the likelihood of pursuing a STEM career among middle school students. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 5(1), 1-15.
3. Lee, B., Porfeli, E. J., & Hirschi, A. (2016). Between- and within-person level motivational precursors associated with career exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.11.009>
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5. Fletcher, E. C., Hernandez-Gantes, V. M., & Smith, C. (2019). This is my neighborhood: An exploration of culturally relevant agency to support high school Latinx students in an urban career academy. *Qualitative Report*, 24(12), 3239-3268.
6. Gushue, G. V., Clarke, C. P., Pantzer, K. M., & Scanlan, K. R. L. (2006). Self-Efficacy, Perceptions of Barriers, Vocational Identity, and the Career Exploration Behavior of Latino/Hispanic High School Students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54(4), 307-317.
7. Gushue, G. V., Scanlan, K. R., Pantzer, K. M., & Clarke, C. P. (2006). The relationship of career decision-making self-efficacy, vocational identity, and career exploration behavior in African American high school students. *Journal of Career Development*, 33(1), 19-28.