

ELPNO

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Evaluation of the Executive Leadership Program for Nonprofit Organizations (ELPNO) 2022

Executive Summary

June 2022

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The Executive Leadership Program for Nonprofit Organizations (ELPNO) is a professional development program for current and emerging executives and other leaders working in the nonprofit sector. Piloted in 2007, the program offers an engaging format that provides opportunities for peers to translate theory into strategies that are relevant, immediately practical, and usable in their work.

What We Measured

The ELPNO 2022 Planning Committee asked the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia to assess participants' perceptions of and satisfaction with the week-long program. The evaluation measures participants' on-site response to individual sessions and to the overall program. A pre-post leadership skill/knowledge assessment is also included to identify the change in skills/knowledge associated with nonprofit leadership.

How We Measured

Evaluation forms designed for both individual sessions and the overall program measured participant responses. The surveys included Likert-type scales and open-ended questions for additional feedback. The evaluation report presents responses in various models such as tables reflecting mean scores, charts displaying distribution of responses, and categorized comments to synthesize the information while still maintaining individuality.

Organization of the Report

This report begins with an overview of the ELPNO 2022 program. Next, a brief overview of the evaluation process is provided. Findings are then detailed, including ratings and comments from ELPNO 2022 participants.

Overview of ELPNO

The Executive Leadership Program for Nonprofit Organizations (ELPNO) is a professional development program for upcoming executives and leaders in the nonprofit sector. Piloted in 2007, the program offers an engaging format that provides opportunities for participants to translate theory into practice and concepts into strategies that are relevant, immediately practical, and usable in their work.

ELPNO 2022 is a partnership between the Nonprofit Studies Program in the Andrew Young School for Policy Studies at Georgia State University and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia. This collaboration provides cutting-edge content to leaders as they explore proactive methods for improving the effectiveness of their organizations while increasing their own skills.

ELPNO 2022 was conducted at the Fanning Institute in Athens, Georgia from Sunday, March 13 through Friday, March 18, 2022. Nineteen (19) participants attended and most resided at the conference hotel throughout the week.

ELPNO Faculty

For ELPNO 2022, the Planning Committee selected a mix of skilled faculty, industry leaders, and subject matter experts from the University of Georgia, American University, Kennesaw State University, the University of Texas at Dallas, the Mandel School at Case Western Reserve University, and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. It also includes leading practitioners heading national and local nonprofits such as the United Way of Metro Atlanta (see Appendix A for a list of program agenda with presenters).

2022 ELPNO Participating Organizations

The 2022 ELPNO class was comprised of 19 individuals representing 16 organizations from 11 cities across the state of Georgia. 6 were CEO's/Executive Directors and 13 were key management staff. Organizational budgets ranged from \$150,000 - \$8,000,000 and organizations employed over 230 total employees and are supported by – and support – over 18,000 volunteers.

Organization**Location**

3D Girls Incorporated	Atlanta, GA
Books for Keeps	Athens, GA
Center for the Visually Impaired	Atlanta, GA
Cherokee Office of Economic Development	Woodstock, GA
Colquitt County Educational Foundation	Moultrie, GA
Construction Ready	Atlanta, GA
Georgia CASA	Atlanta, GA
Georgia Charter Schools Association	Atlanta, GA
Georgia Food Bank Association	Atlanta, GA
Georgia Mountain Food Bank, Inc.	Gainesville, GA
Habitat for Humanity of Georgia, Inc.	Columbus, GA
Junior Achievement of Georgia	Atlanta, GA
Prevent Child Abuse Habersham, Inc.	Clarkesville, GA
Savannah-Chatham County CASA	Savannah, GA
The Warrior Alliance	Alpharetta, GA
The Yellow Elephant Ministries, Inc.	Meigs, GA

ELPNO 2022 Evaluation

The ELPNO 2022 Planning Committee worked with faculty from the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia to assess participants' perceptions of and satisfaction with the week-long program. The evaluation was designed to measure 1) participants' on-site response to individual sessions, 2) response to the overall program, and 3) increase in knowledge and skill.

To that end, participants received and responded to an electronically delivered pre-survey, including both a pre-skill/knowledge assessment and a series of open-ended questions to collect their expectations for the program. Hard copies of session evaluation forms were distributed to each participant immediately following each session. Participants were asked to complete each form immediately, though some participants returned the completed forms at the end of the same day or the next morning. The overall program evaluation, including the post-assessment of leadership skills/knowledge, was conducted after the final session on the final day of programming. Participants were assured that their ratings and comments were anonymous, and that open, honest, and constructive feedback was welcome.

The ELPNO 2022 evaluation forms reflected the interests of the program sponsors, who sought specific feedback regarding the following:

Overall program:

- Extent to which participants gained nonprofit leadership knowledge and/or skills
- Extent to which the program was congruent with goals and objectives
- Extent to which the program met learners' expectations
- Perceptions of and suggestions for program processes and future content

Individual sessions:

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Usefulness
- Applicability to the participant and their organization

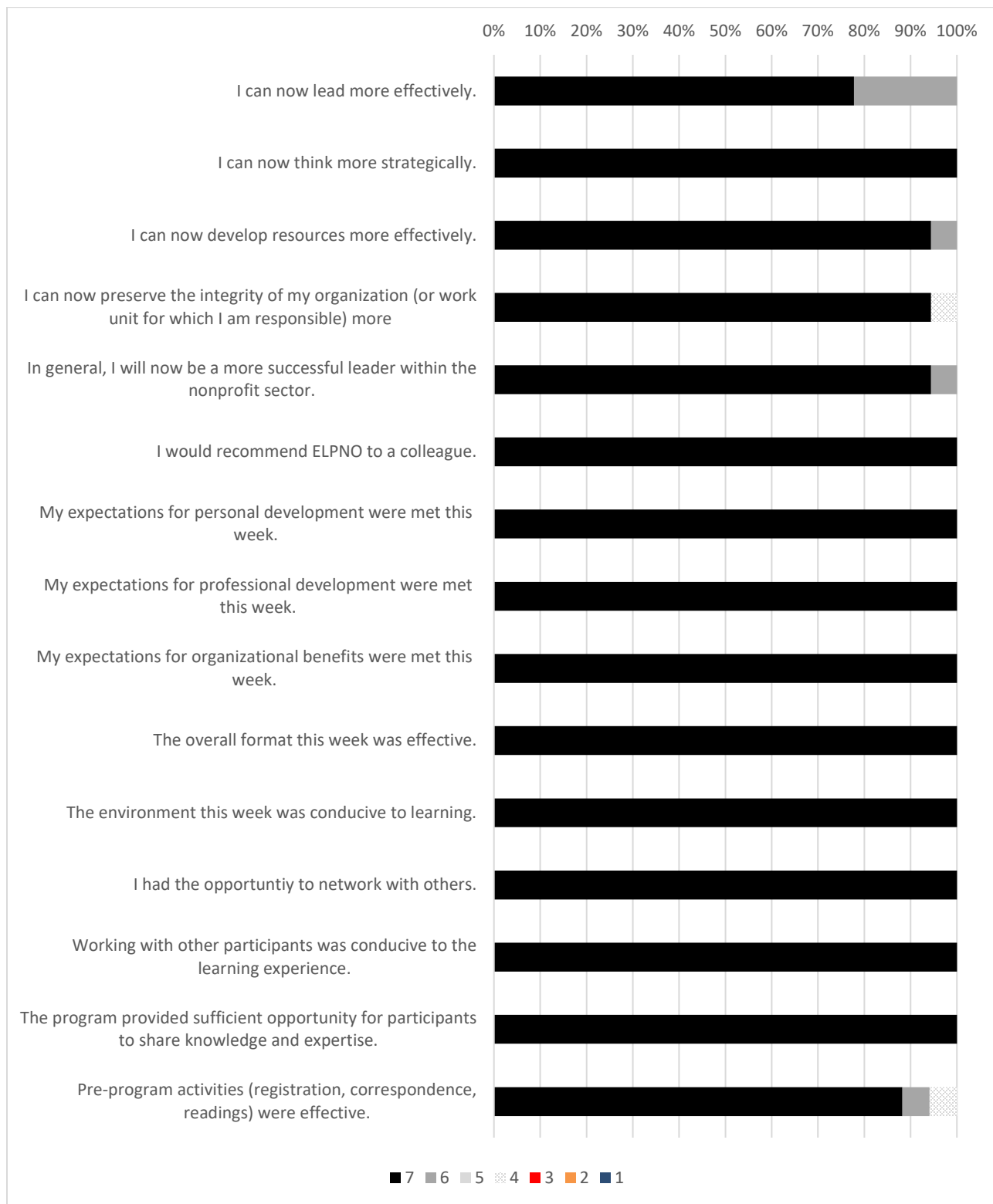
The evaluation forms are included as Appendix B. Likert-type rating scales were used for most items, in which participants were asked to choose "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree" in response to a series of statements relevant to the session's content, delivery, relevancy, and effectiveness. Both session and program evaluation forms include open-ended questions for participants to provide additional feedback on various aspects of the ELPNO program.

Findings – Overall Program

Table 1: Mean Scores by Survey Item for Overall Program (Scale of 1-7)

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1. I can now lead more effectively.	6.76	0.44	19
2. I can now think more strategically.	7.00	0.00	19
3. I can now develop resources more effectively.	6.94	0.24	19
4. I can now preserve the integrity of my organization (or work unit for which I am responsible) more effectively.	6.82	0.73	19
5. In general, I will now be a more successful leader within the nonprofit sector.	6.94	0.24	19
6. I would recommend ELPNO to a colleague.	7.00	0.00	19
7. My expectations for personal development were met this week (what I wanted to achieve relative to my personal leadership skills and abilities).	7.00	0.00	19
8. My expectations for professional development were met this week (what I wanted to achieve relative to my career goals).	7.00	0.00	19
9. My expectations for organizational benefit were met this week (what I and my employer wanted to achieve relative to business goals).	7.00	0.00	19
10. The overall format this week was effective.	7.00	0.00	18
11. The environment this week was conducive to learning.	7.00	0.00	18
12. I had the opportunity to network with others.	7.00	0.00	18
13. Working with other participants was conducive to the learning experience.	7.00	0.00	18
14. The program provided sufficient opportunity for participants to share knowledge and experience.	7.00	0.00	17
15. Pre-program activities (registration, correspondence, readings) were effective.	6.75	0.77	18

Figure 1: Distribution of Responses by Survey Item for Overall Program



On a 7 point scale, where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 7 means “Strongly Agree” or where 1 means “Did Not Meet Expectations” and 7 means “Exceeded Expectations”

Participant Comments on the Overall Program

Five open-ended questions were included on the Overall Program Evaluation form:

1. How did your ELPNO experience this week impact you?
2. What else could we have done to maximize your ELPNO experience?
3. What suggestions do you have for improving participant interaction/collaboration?
4. What suggestions do you have for our future marketing of the program?
5. What other comments or suggestions do you have?
6. What three actions will you take as a result of your time at ELPNO?
7. Would you be interested in reconvening with your ELPNO classmates in Atlanta or Athens in six months? If yes, what would you like to spend your time doing?
8. What learning topics would you like to explore during an alumni event for the ELPNO 2022 class?

All participant responses to these open-ended questions are provided in this section. Comments are listed in random order. Comments are shown as written by the participants with minor editing for spelling and punctuation. Respondents' emphasis has been preserved.

Question 1: How did your ELPNO experience this week impact you?

- Exceeded expectations!
- Life changing. Career changing. Growth
- It was not only informative but also uplifting and enabling. The class experiences and networking [will] yield a better version of me. This changed my life, honestly. This week gave me strength and I feel more confident about my own skills and knowledge.
- Building community with like-minded leaders. Huge.
- I have gained the confidence to effect change in my organization. Emotionally I feel empowered.
- I have learned so much about nonprofit organizations.
- I came into ELPNO a blank slate. Now I'm leaving a whole book of knowledge inscribed onto that slate that I can use as a personal foundation.
- This has the best leadership track ever. I learned so much.
- It challenged me to have faith in myself as a leader. Too much to write. One word: growth.
- Very deeply. I feel energized and excited to take what I have learned back with me.
- Emotionally, personally, professionally.
- It has impacted me both professionally and personally. I've learned things I can apply to my organization and myself.

Question 2: What else could we have done to maximize your ELPNO experience?

- I would need to think about it but the dinners were awesome opportunities to network and build relationships.
- You nailed everything.
- Not one thing! Honestly.
- I'm honestly not sure. It was incredible.
- Longer.
- Made evening programming more meaningful like the panel on Wednesday night.

- Nothing! Everything was wonderful.
- You all did an awesome job.
- I can't think of anything.
- Honestly, I cannot think of anything.
- Everything was wonderful.
- It was incredible.

Question 3: What suggestions do you have for improving participant interaction/collaboration?

- I think I was pretty even and well managed.
- Keep the reflection and group discussion pieces going!
- Not one thing. All good.
- Creating a group-wide communication system ahead of time.
- I don't have anything at this time.
- It was all very thought out. The interaction was great.
- Longer networking or games in the evening.
- Follow-up.
- I genuinely do not know.
- More group work--that was so helpful.

Question 4: What suggestions do you have for our future marketing of the program?

- Nothing comes to mind. Maybe share some notable graduates?
- More testimonials! More social media in real-time and year-round.
- Sorry, I have none. You got it!
- Newsletter. Referral process.
- More presence on social media.
- Maybe host more than one cohort per year.
- Social media a possibility.
- Call me if needed.
- Push out to alumni.
- Social media, Georgia center for nonprofits, UGA sporting events.
- More quotes from prior students.

Question 5: What other comments or suggestions do you have?

- Thank you!
- This program was simply the best. Thank you for the opportunity!
- I loved every minute. Thank you!
- Thank you so much for this experience.
- Thank you for this opportunity, it was so meaningful.
- This is a wonderful program and I fully recommend it!

Question 6: What three actions will you take as a result of your time at ELPNO?

(A)

- Financial health.
- Implement new financial diversity strategy.
- More time for reflection and growth.
- I will make the changes I know are right for the org that I've been struggling with executing out of fear.
- Leadership/team development activities in meetings.
- Re-evaluate the board.
- Talk to my boss about what we can do better.
- Financials.
- Networking.
- Not being afraid to speak up, trust my gut.
- Networking.
- Work on board governance.
- Investing in self.
- Encourage my network to attend ELPNO.
- Staying connected.
- More actively engage my board.

(B)

- Understanding my leadership style and approach.
- Create more opportunities for relationship and team building.
- More staff development for team.
- I will trust myself, my leadership, and what got me here.
- Analyzing finances/diversifying funding sources.
- Find funding.
- Continue to focus on professional development.
- Board.
- Board governance.
- Being and putting into actions on how to be a leader.
- Collaboration with my team.
- Use the strategic planning methods.
- Reflection.
- Adopt some internal metrics to grow the organization.
- Implement strategies.
- Have very scratchy conversations.

(C)

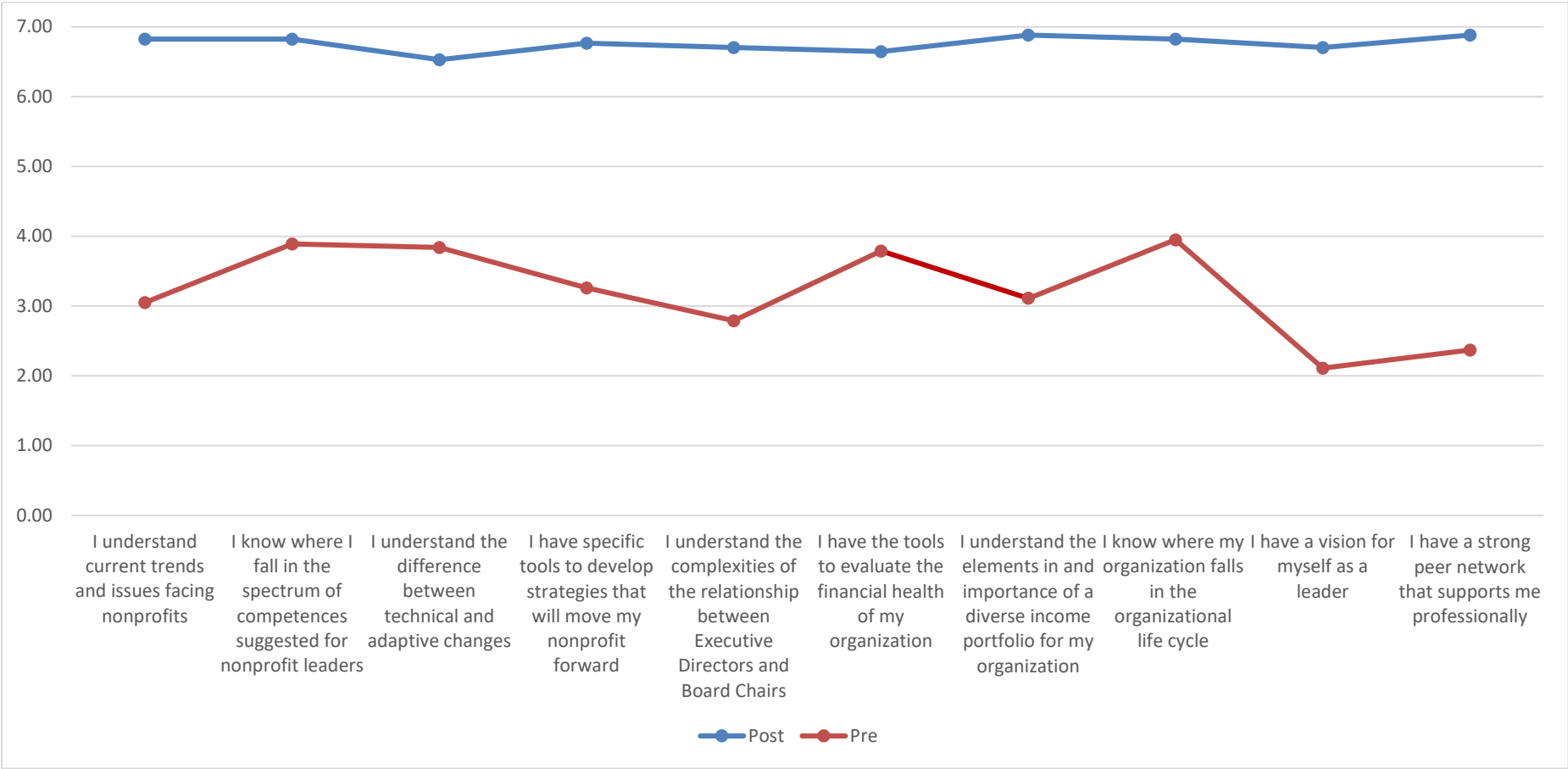
- Diversifying fundraising.
- Schedule an expert to do a divergent thinking problem solving with the team.
- Continue to grow and develop.
- I will lay a strong foundation for my board to lead our org but I won't do it alone.
- Strategic planning.
- Keep going.
- Keep in touch with the class.
- Fundraising.
- Fundraising.
- Networking, being uncomfortable.
- Speaking up and out.
- Courage.
- Invest in my professional network.
- Listen to self.
- Practice assertiveness.

Findings – Pre- and Post-Assessment

Table 2: Mean Scores by Survey Item for Pre-Survey and Post-Assessment of Nonprofit Leadership Skills/Knowledge (Scale of 1-7)

Items	Pre-Survey Mean	Pre-Survey SD	Pre-Survey N	Post-Survey Mean	Post-Survey SD	Post-Survey N	Percentage INCREASE from Pre-Post
1. I understand current trends and issues facing nonprofits.	3.05	1.15	19	6.82	0.39	18	123.60
2. I know where I fall in the spectrum of competencies suggested for nonprofit leaders.	3.89	1.48	19	6.82	0.39	18	75.32
3. I understand the difference between technical and adaptive changes.	3.84	1.69	19	6.53	0.72	18	70.05
4. I have specific tools to develop strategies that will move my nonprofit forward.	3.26	1.16	19	6.76	0.44	18	107.36
5. I understand the complexities of the relationship between Executive Directors and Board Chairs.	2.79	1.73	19	6.71	0.47	18	140.50
6. I have the tools to evaluate the financial health of my organization.	3.79	1.67	19	6.65	0.61	18	75.46
7. I understand the elements in, and importance of, a diverse income portfolio for my organization.	3.11	1.86	19	6.88	0.33	18	121.22
8. I know where my organization falls in the organizational life cycle and understand strategies to move it to the next stage.	3.95	1.43	19	6.82	0.39	18	72.65
9. I have a vision for myself as a leader.	2.11	0.72	19	6.71	0.47	18	218.00
11. I have a strong peer network that supports me professionally.	2.37	1.13	19	6.88	0.33	18	190.29

Figure 2: Change in Mean Scores by Survey Item for Pre- and Post-Assessment (Scale of 1-7)

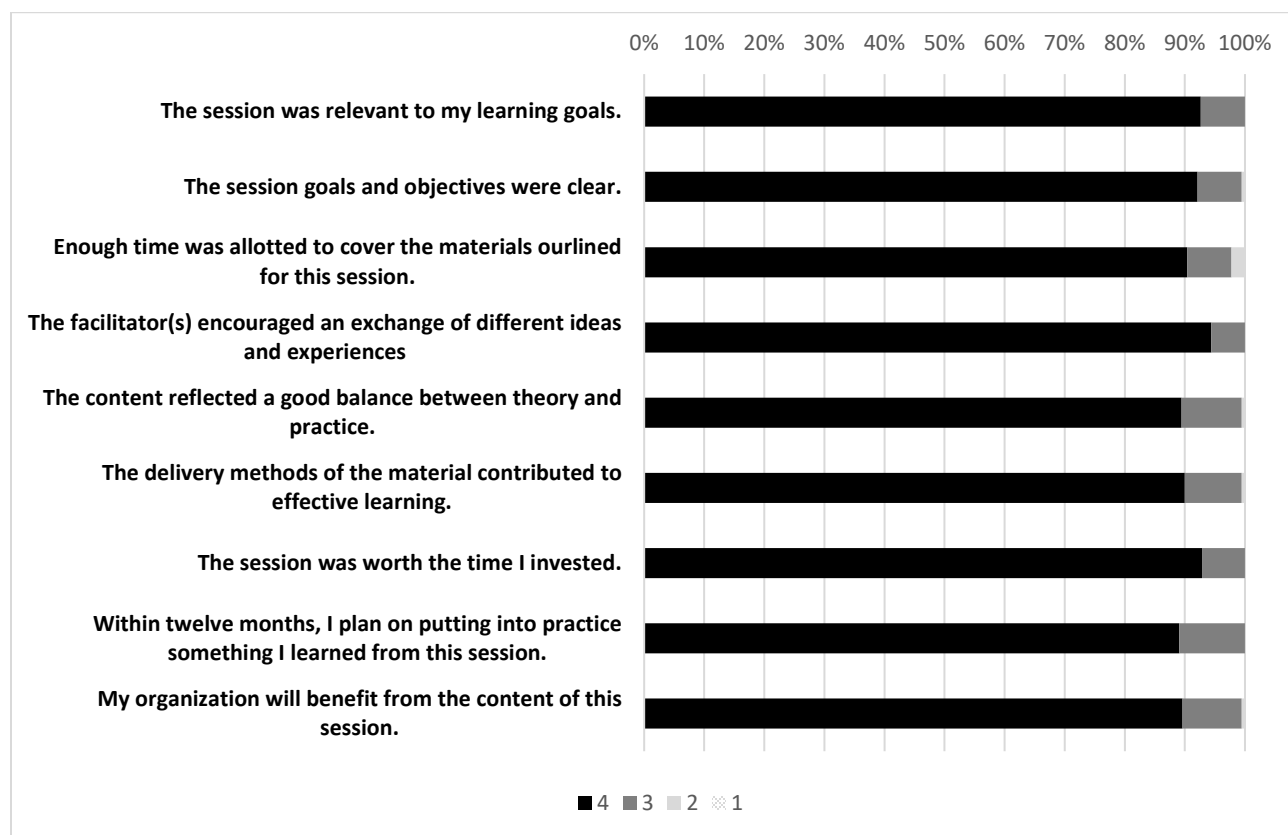


Findings – All Sessions Combined

Table 3: Mean Scores by Survey Item for Individual Sessions, Combined (Scale of 1-4)

Items	Mean	N
1. The session was relevant to my learning goals.	3.92	175
2. The session goals and objectives were clear.	3.91	175
3. Enough time was allotted to cover the materials outlined for this session.	3.88	174
4. The facilitator(s) encouraged an exchange of different ideas and experiences.	3.94	175
5. The content reflected a good balance between theory and practice.	3.89	174
6. The delivery methods of the material contributed to effective learning.	3.89	174
7. The session was worth the time I invested.	3.92	175
8. Within twelve months, I plan on putting into practice something I learned from this session.	3.88	175
9. My organization will benefit from the content of this session.	3.88	174

Figure 3: Distribution of Responses by Survey Item for Individual Sessions, Combined



On a 4 point scale, where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 4 means “Strongly Agree”