

Have you heard about McGill's new Policy on Assessment of Student Learning (PASL)?

PASL is a principles-based policy designed around the concept of **assessment for learning**. Coming into effect in Fall 2024 and replacing USAP, PASL is intended to guide assessment practices at McGill. Assessment is one of the areas that has the potential to most directly affect students' learning (Lynam & Cachia, 2018). It also has an impact on student well-being (Yeh & Krumboltz, 1995).

According to PASL, assessments should:



Align with healthy teaching and learning environments



Promote high academic standards and academic integrity



Be pedagogically sound



Allow for valid and reliable judgement of student learning

ASSESSMENT AND WELL-BEING

A healthy learning environment considers the well-being of students and instructors. Assessment is at the core of effective learning experiences. Well-planned means of assessment that emphasize **assessment for learning** (Carless, 2007), include **well-developed criteria** (Winkelmes et. al., 2019) and are **clearly expressed to students** (Lynam & Cachia, 2018) can help reduce student stress and anxiety, while allowing instructors to give formative feedback without being overburdened. Rust (2002) has shown that student effort and emotionality around an assessment has great impact on learning.

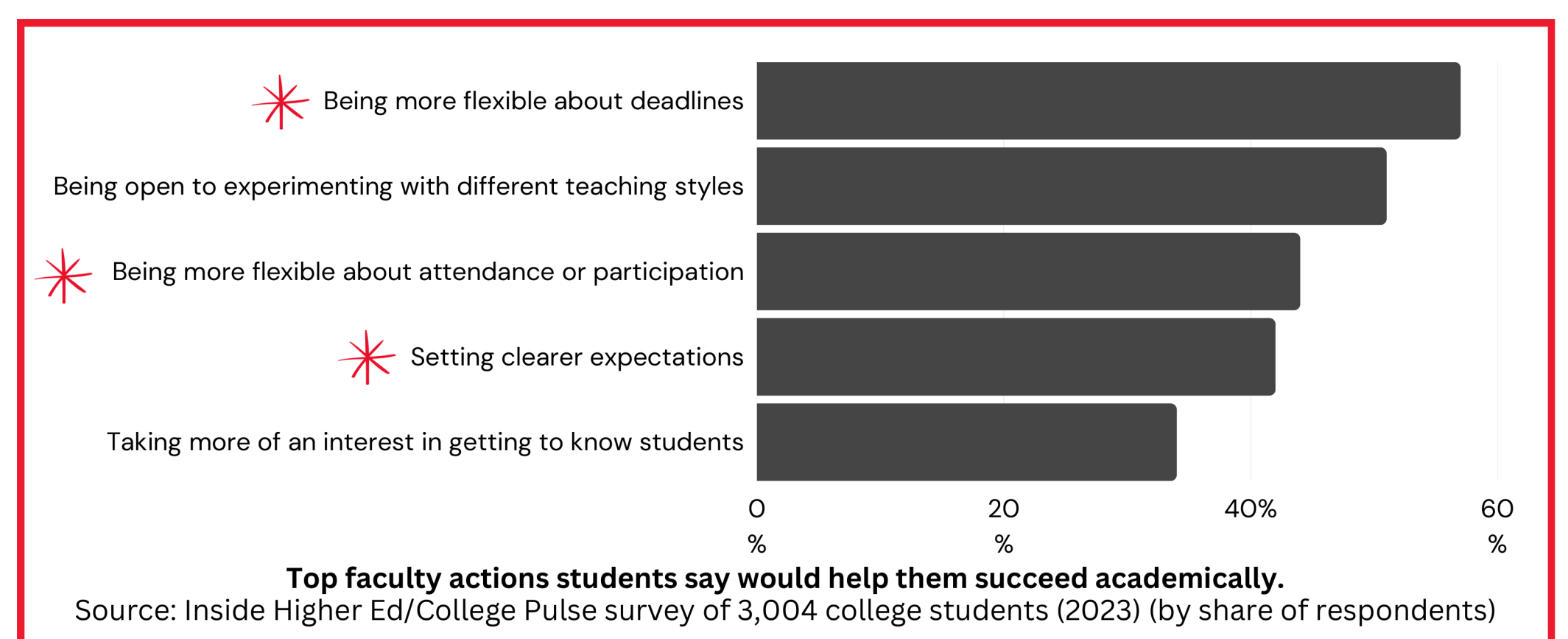
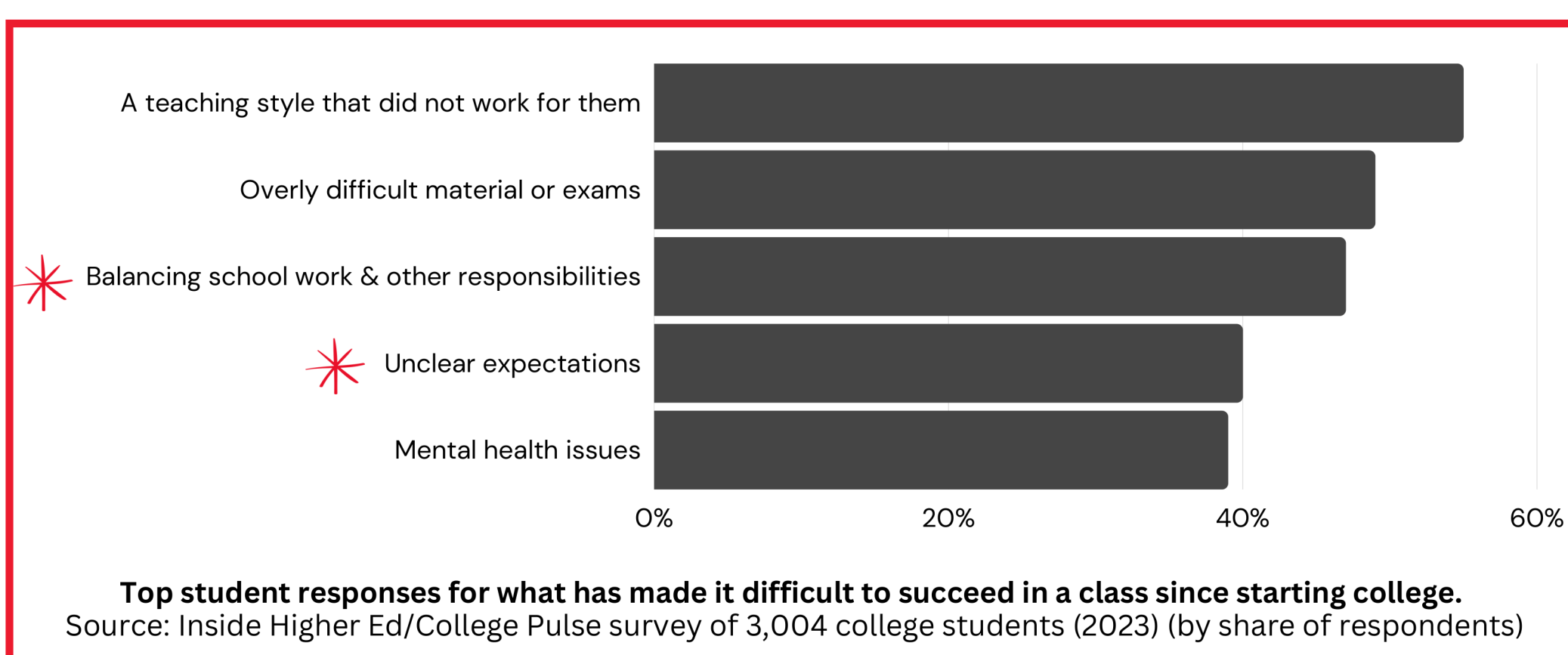
Well-being considerations under PASL:

MORE CLARITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Course outlines and assessment instructions will describe the criteria with which student work will be measured (PASL 5.5). Choice of alternative assessment tasks can be made available to students (PASL 6.1) and instructors can modify an assessment task on the course outline (PASL 6.3). Students will choose if the original or modified assessment task counts towards their final grade (PASL 6.4). PASL allows for reasonable scheduling of completion of assessment tasks and accommodation of student needs (PASL 4.1).

ATTENTION TO WORKLOADS

Students can make informed decisions about workloads with the right to receive some formative feedback on their progress before the course withdrawal without refund deadline (PASL 5.3). PASL stresses that no assessments should be carried out during fall and winter reading breaks (PASL 6.8).



TAKEAWAYS

A focus on assessment design can have a significant impact on student learning and may be the most important area of focus to help students learn (Brown, 2004-05). PASL encourages inclusive assessment strategies that support student learning and well-being while upholding academic rigor, such as setting clear expectations, detailing assessment criteria that is made available to students, and allowing some flexibility.

IDEAS TO TRY

- Set clear expectations verbally and in writing
- Define criteria for how students' work will be graded and share them with students before they submit their work
- Engage students in dialogue about assessment
- Provide a diversity of assessment tasks (exams, presentations, reports, posters, projects)
- Give early and ongoing feedback
- Learn more at mcgill.ca/pasl

Scan to explore the PASL website and watch videos of McGill students describing assignments that helped them learn.

mcgill.ca/pasl



TLS is supporting instructors with PASL implementation.

HAVE QUESTIONS? ASK US!

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