



**THE EDTECH COLLECTIVE**

Instructure Partner Ecosystem

# QUEST: A HUMAN SKILLS CURRICULUM

**Research Report: August–December, 2024**

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ProSolve

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April 30, 2025



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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ProSolve contracted with Instructure, a third-party education technology (edtech) research company, to examine implementation and outcomes for QUEST; a student-centered curriculum that addresses gaps in their human skills<sup>1</sup> development within a nurturing, low-pressure environment through game-based application and reflection.

## Study Sample and Measures

This study took place in Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District; a small, rural, public school district in Texas that serves a primarily Hispanic student population (81%) in a region where the median household income, the percentage of individuals with a bachelors' degree or higher, and the percentage of individuals in the labor force, fall below state and national averages (NCES, 2024). In 2023, less than 35% and 25% of students met grade level standard or above in STAAR reading and math assessments, respectively (TEA, 2023).

The study included 28 educators and 458 students across 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade who engaged with the QUEST curriculum between August and December 2024. The study includes survey data for a subset of participating educators who completed a beginning-of-program survey ( $n = 24$ ); mid-program survey ( $n = 17$ ); and end-of-program survey ( $n = 14$ ); capturing their perceptions of students' human skills development over time. The study also included survey data for a subset of students who completed an end-of-program survey ( $n = 308$ ) and received instruction through the QUEST curriculum.

Implementation metrics included educators' reporting of the number of QUEST activities they completed, and the type and frequency of resources they used to support implementation. Outcome metrics included their observations of student teamwork behaviors during implementation as well as changes in educator-reported student proficiency across ten human skills domains from the beginning to the end of the study period. Additionally, students completed a survey at the end of their time engaging with the QUEST curriculum to describe their progress in human skills development at the end of the study period.

## Analytic Approach

Researchers used descriptive statistics to summarize participant characteristics and QUEST curriculum implementation. Key findings from these analyses are included in the table below.

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<sup>1</sup> Human skills include communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, and character development.



## Key Findings



**While implementing QUEST**, educators observed high levels of team perseverance and problem-solving during QUEST activities for more than half to all teams:

- ✓ Teams tried more than one way to solve the challenge (94%)
- ✓ Teams kept going when the challenge got difficult (88%)
- ✓ When teams disagreed, they talked and figured things out (82%)



**After implementing QUEST**, educators reported students as more “proficient” and “highly proficient” across all assessed human skills domains:

- ✓ “Making new friends and belonging” saw the highest percentage of “proficient” and “highly proficient” responses (64%)
- ✓ “Making new friends and belonging” and “Relationship building and empathy” saw the highest gain between the beginning and end of the implementation period (+36 points)



**After participating in QUEST**, students generally reported feeling most positive across all assessed human skills domains:

- ✓ “I was curious about what would happen next in the story” and “I shared my ideas with my team” received the most positive responses (80%)

## Conclusions

This study’s results indicate, based on educator and student feedback, that QUEST supported overall improvements in students’ human skills development during the study period.



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# INTRODUCTION

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QUEST is a student-centered curriculum that addresses gaps in their human skills development within a nurturing, low-pressure environment through game-based applications and reflection. The training and program materials are intended to empower educators to facilitate immersive problem-solving experiences, actively cultivating essential student skills for lifelong learning and career readiness (more information can be found in the QUEST logic model in Appendix A).

As part of their ongoing efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of QUEST, ProSolve contracted with Instructure, a third-party education technology (edtech) research company, to examine program implementation and outcomes. The current study had the following research questions:

## Implementation

1. To what extent did educators implement the QUEST curriculum?
2. Which QUEST resources did educators use to support implementation?

## Outcomes

3. Did educators report observing positive student teamwork behaviors while implementing QUEST?
4. Did educators report observing improved student human skills proficiency after implementing QUEST?
5. How did students describe their human skills development after participating in QUEST?



# STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

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This section of the report briefly describes the study’s setting, participants, measures, and analysis methods. Additional information on the demographics of the community can be found in Appendix B).

## Setting and Participants

This study took place in Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District; a small, rural, public school district in Texas that serves a primarily Hispanic student population (around 80%) in a region where the median household income, the percentage of individuals with a bachelors’ degree or higher, and the percentage of individuals in the labor force, fall below state and national averages (NCES, 2024). In 2023, less than 35% and 25% of students met grade level standard or above in STAAR reading and math assessments, respectively (TEA, 2023).

The study included 28 educators and 458 students across 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade who engaged with the QUEST curriculum between August and December 2024. The study includes survey data for a subset of participating educators who completed a beginning-of-program survey ( $n = 24$ ); mid-program survey ( $n = 17$ ); and end-of-program survey ( $n = 14$ ); capturing their perceptions of students’ human skills development over time. The study also included survey data for a subset of students who completed an end-of-program survey ( $n = 308$ ) and received instruction through the QUEST curriculum.

## Measures

Implementation metrics included the number of QUEST activities completed and the type and frequency of resources used. Educators completed surveys at three timepoints—before, during, and after QUEST implementation—capturing their perceptions of students’ human skills proficiency over time.

Outcome metrics included educator observations of student behaviors in a team-based setting during QUEST implementation. They also included changes in educator-reported student proficiency across QUEST human skills domains from the beginning to the end of the study period. Additionally, students completed a survey at the end of their QUEST participation to describe their own human skills development.<sup>2</sup>

## Data Analysis

Researchers used descriptive statistics to summarize participant characteristics, QUEST implementation, as well as to examine survey outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> Survey items and results from exploratory factor analyses establishing the reliability and factor structure of the measures used are reported in a prior evaluation of QUEST (see Hunt & Scanlan, 2024).

# PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

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This section presents descriptive findings summarizing fall 2024 QUEST implementation in the participating school.

## 1

### To what extent did educators implement the QUEST curriculum?

#### Pre-implementation

During fall 2024, 24 educators implemented the QUEST curriculum. Each educator completed a pre-survey at the start of the study, sharing details about their role and experience with human skills development curricula. Eighty-eight percent were licensed teachers, while 12% were not. Educators brought varying levels of experience working with students. Sixty-seven percent reported having more than ten years of experience, 21% had between zero and two years, and 13% had between three and ten years.

*Training and experience.* Educators also reported on the amount of training they received in advance of the study period to support students' human skills development. Forty-two percent received more than ten hours of training, 29% received between three and ten hours, and 13% reported receiving less than two hours. Seventeen percent of educators indicated that they received no training at all.

In terms of implementation, 46% of educators said they used supplemental human skills development lessons or activities in their classroom occasionally (about three times per week). Twenty-nine percent used them rarely (one to two times per week), 8% said they used them frequently (four times per week), and 4% reported using them daily. Thirteen percent said they never used such activities.

At the beginning of the study, most educators felt at least somewhat prepared to implement the QUEST curriculum. Seventy-nine percent said they somewhat agreed that they were prepared and confident, 17% agreed and 4% disagreed.

*Students' human skills proficiency.* Educators were also asked to report on students' human skills proficiency before and after QUEST implementation across ten human skills domains. Fourteen educators submitted these ratings at both the beginning and end of the study. Analyses of changes over time in these areas are provided in the Educator Outcomes section (page six).

#### During implementation

Seventeen educators responded to a survey assessing how QUEST was being implemented during the study period. The majority (12 out of 17) reported that they implemented activities from all of six QUEST modules: teamwork, perseverance and growth mindset, communication, goal setting and strategy, effective decision-making, and solving problems

Most educators indicated that they completed three to four activities in five out of the six modules. The units with the highest number of educators completing three to four activities were perseverance and growth mindset; and solving problems.

Most educators completed 3 to 4 activities in 5 of 6 QUEST modules

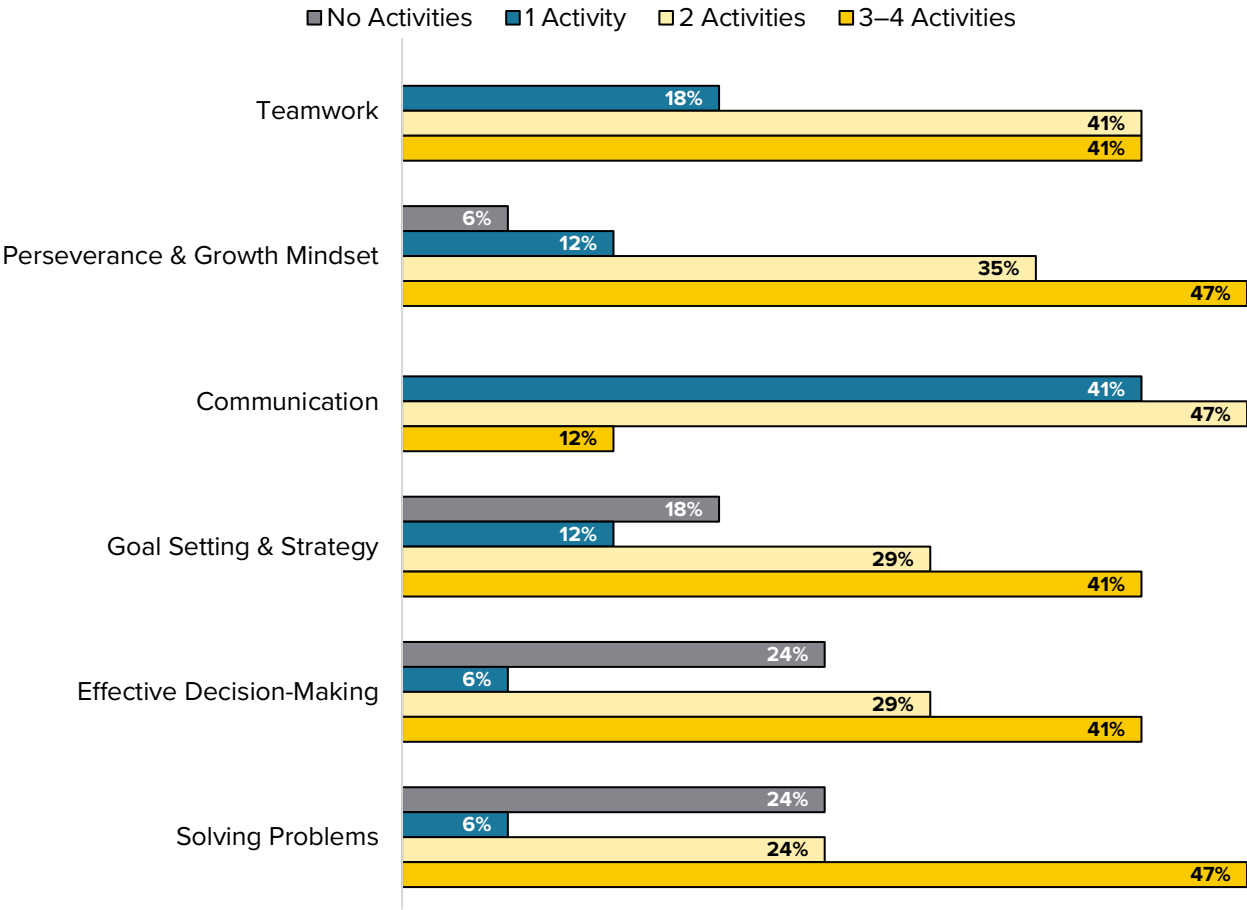


Figure 1. Educator reported number of QUEST activities completed

**Preparation time.** Educators were also asked how much time they typically spent preparing to facilitate a QUEST episode. The majority (59%) reported spending between 5 and 15 minutes. Eighteen percent said they spent between 16 and 30 minutes, and another 18% spent fewer than 5 minutes. A small portion (6%) spent between 31 and 45 minutes.

When asked specifically about preparation time for each activity, 71% of educators said they spent between 5 and 15 minutes, while 29% reported spending fewer than 5 minutes.

**Teamwork behaviors.** During QUEST implementation, educators also reported on the extent to which they observed students effectively using human skills while working with their teams to complete challenge activities using the QUEST curriculum. These findings are discussed in the Educator Outcomes section (page 6).



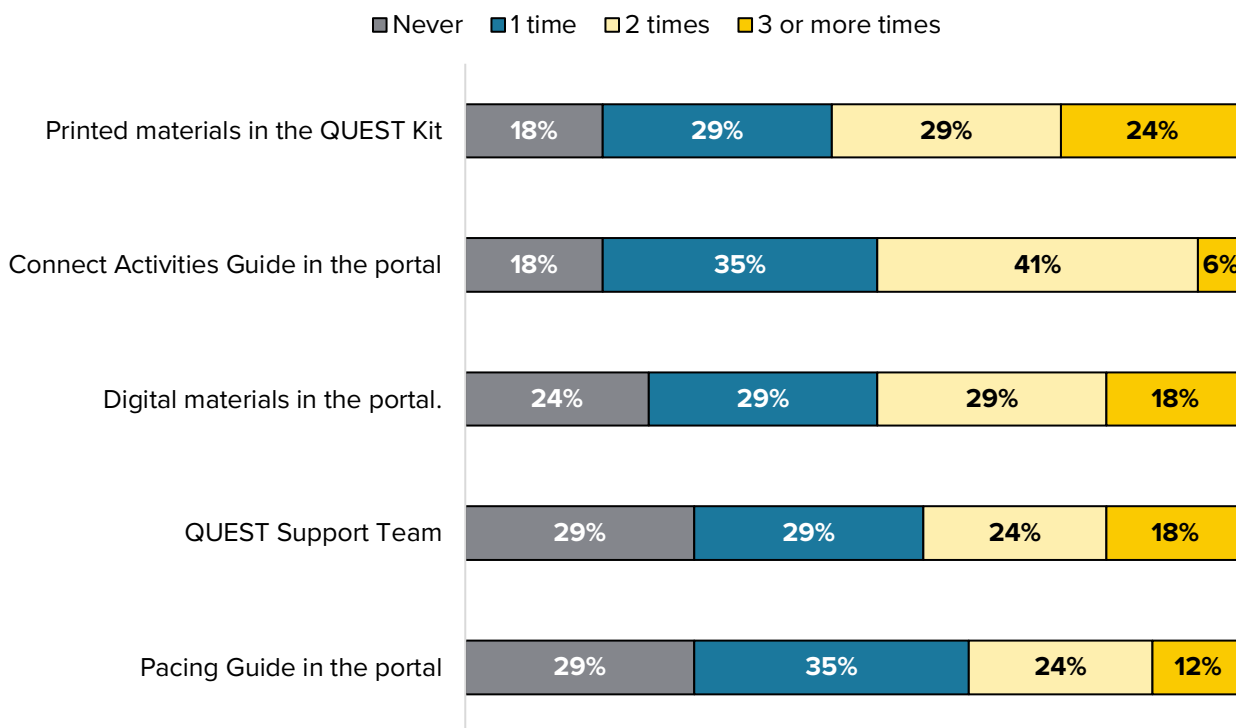
## 2

## Which QUEST resources did educators use to support implementation?

Seventeen educators reported on their use of QUEST resources during the study period. The most used resources were printed materials from the QUEST Kit and Connect Activities from the QUEST online portal; each used by 82% of educators. Printed materials from the QUEST Kit were also the resources most likely to be used more than once (according to 53% of educators) (Figure 2).

The QUEST support team and the Pacing Guide found in the portal were the least commonly utilized resources (29% of educators reported not utilizing either resource). The Pacing Guide was also the least likely resource to be used more than once (36%).

### Printed materials from the QUEST Kit and Connect Activities from the QUEST portal were the most used resources by educators



**Figure 2: Educator reported type and frequency of QUEST resources used during study period**

# EDUCATOR OUTCOMES

The following section details perceived outcomes of QUEST implementation according to participating educators.

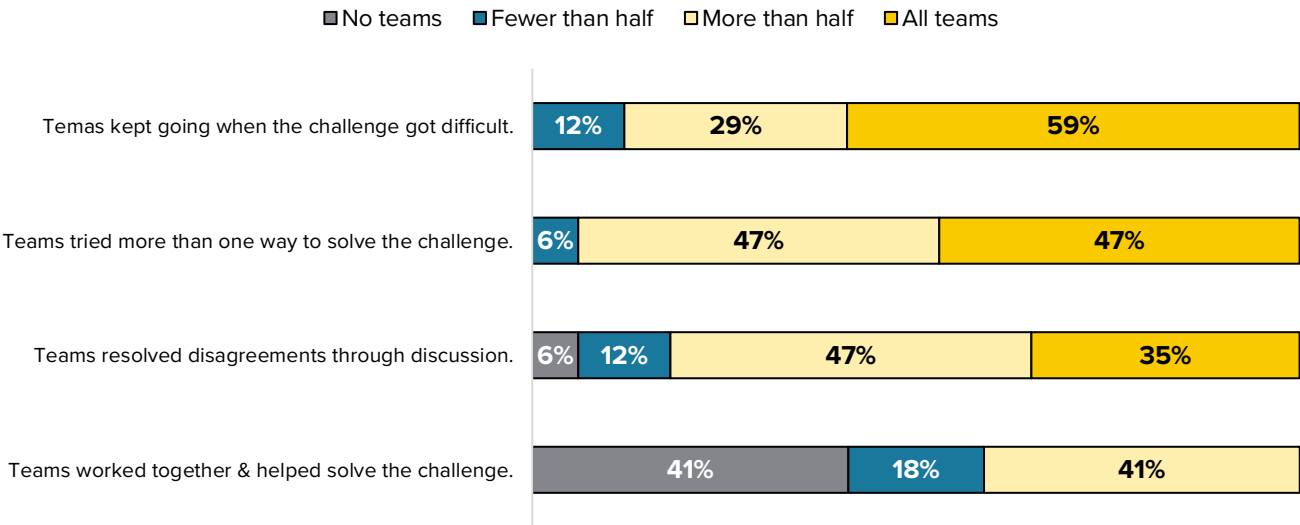
## 3

### Did educators report observing positive student teamwork behaviors while implementing QUEST?

Challenge activities are short, interactive tasks that engage students in teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. Typically lasting about 20 minutes, these activities are designed for small groups and require minimal materials. They present real-world or physical challenges—like represented simulations of real-world challenges—that prompt collaboration and strategic thinking. Each activity includes structured steps, facilitation tips, and reflection questions to reinforce key employability skills.

Seventeen educators reported on the extent to which they observed students effectively using human skills while working with their teams to complete challenge activities using the QUEST curriculum.

#### Educators observed high levels of team perseverance and problem-solving during challenge activities



**Figure 3: Educator reported student teamwork behaviors during challenge activities using the QUEST curriculum**

Educators reported a range of team behaviors during QUEST implementation. When asked whether teams kept going when the challenge got difficult, 59% of educators observed this in all teams, 29% in more than half, and 12% in fewer than half. When asked whether teams tried more than one way to solve the challenge, 47% of educators said all teams did so, 47% said more than half, and 6% said fewer than half. When asked whether, if teams disagreed, they talked and figured things out, 35% of educators said all teams demonstrated this behavior, 47% said more than half did, 12% said fewer than half, and 6% reported that no teams did. When asked whether teams worked together and helped solve the challenge, 41% of educators said more than half; 18% said fewer than half; and 41% said no teams did.



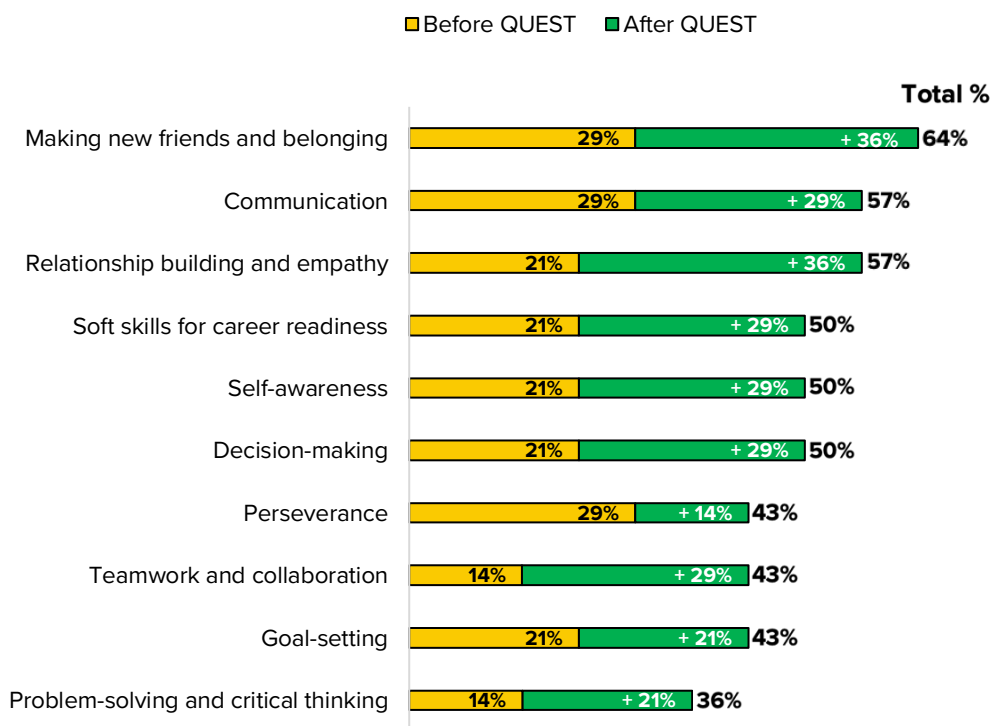
## 4

## Did educators report observing improved student human skills proficiency after implementing QUEST?

Fourteen educators reported on student human skills development proficiency before and after QUEST implementation on a scale ranging from 1 (“not proficient”) to 5 (“highly proficient”) across ten human skills domains. These included their proficiency in teamwork and collaboration; problem-solving and critical thinking; relationship building (i.e., getting on with others and having empathy); perseverance (i.e., sticking with things that might be hard); communication (i.e., sharing ideas and listening to others’ ideas); self-awareness (i.e., understanding one’s strengths and areas of growth); goal-setting (i.e., making plans and having patience for delayed gratification); decision-making (i.e., being able to negotiate and compromise); making new friends (i.e., feeling a sense of belonging); and soft skills for career readiness.

All educators reported increases in the combined number of “proficient” and “highly proficient” responses for students across all domains. “Making new friends and belonging” saw the highest overall percentage of combined “proficient” and “highly proficient” responses (64%). “Making new friends and belonging” and “relationship building and empathy” had the highest increase in combined “proficient” and highly proficient” responses between the beginning and end of QUEST implementation (+36 percentile points) (see more in Appendix C).

### “Making new friends and belonging” saw the highest overall percentage of combined “proficient” and “highly proficient” responses (64%)



Note: Total percentage values may not represent the exact sum of sub-values due to rounding.

**Figure 4: Percentage of educators who reported each student human skills category as “proficient” or “highly proficient”**

# STUDENT OUTCOMES

The following section details perceived impacts of QUEST implementation according to participating students.

## 4

### How did students describe their human skills development after participating in QUEST?

At the end of QUEST implementation, 308 students reported on their human skills development using a four-point scale: 1 (did not agree); 2 (neither agree nor did not agree); 3 (agree); and 4 (strongly agree) across 11 categories (Figure 5).

Among all categories, “I was curious about what would happen next in the story” and “I shared my ideas with my team” received the most combination of agree and strongly agree responses (80%) (see more in Appendix D).

**After participating in QUEST, 80% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were curious about what would happen next in the story and shared their ideas with their team**

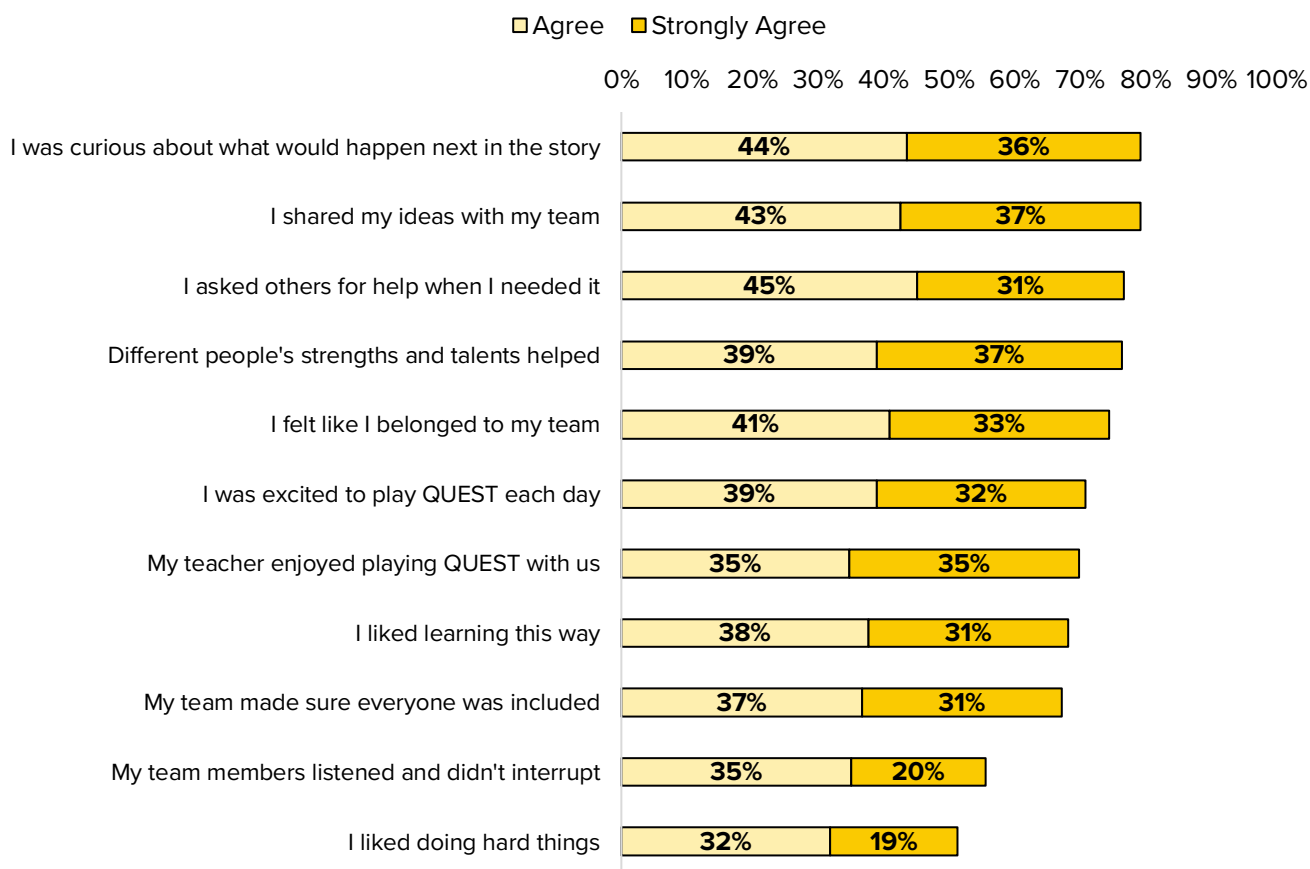


Figure 5: Percentage of students who agreed with reported skills post-QUEST implementation

# CONCLUSIONS

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While implementing QUEST, educators observed high levels of team perseverance and problem-solving during QUEST activities for more than half to all teams: teams tried more than one way to solve the challenge (94%); teams kept going when the challenge got difficult (88%); and when teams disagreed, they talked and figured things out (82%).

After implementing QUEST, educators reported students as more “proficient” and “highly proficient” across all assessed human skills domains: “making new friends and belonging” saw the highest percentage of “proficient” and “highly proficient” responses (64%). “Making new friends and belonging” and “relationship building and empathy” saw the highest gain between the beginning and end of the study period (+36 points).

After participating in QUEST, students generally reported feeling most positive across all assessed human skills domains: 80% of students agreed or disagreed with the following statements: “I was curious about what would happen next in the story” and “I shared my ideas with my team”.

Based on educator and student feedback, these findings generally suggest positive results in key human skills development domains during and following QUEST implementation.

# REFERENCES

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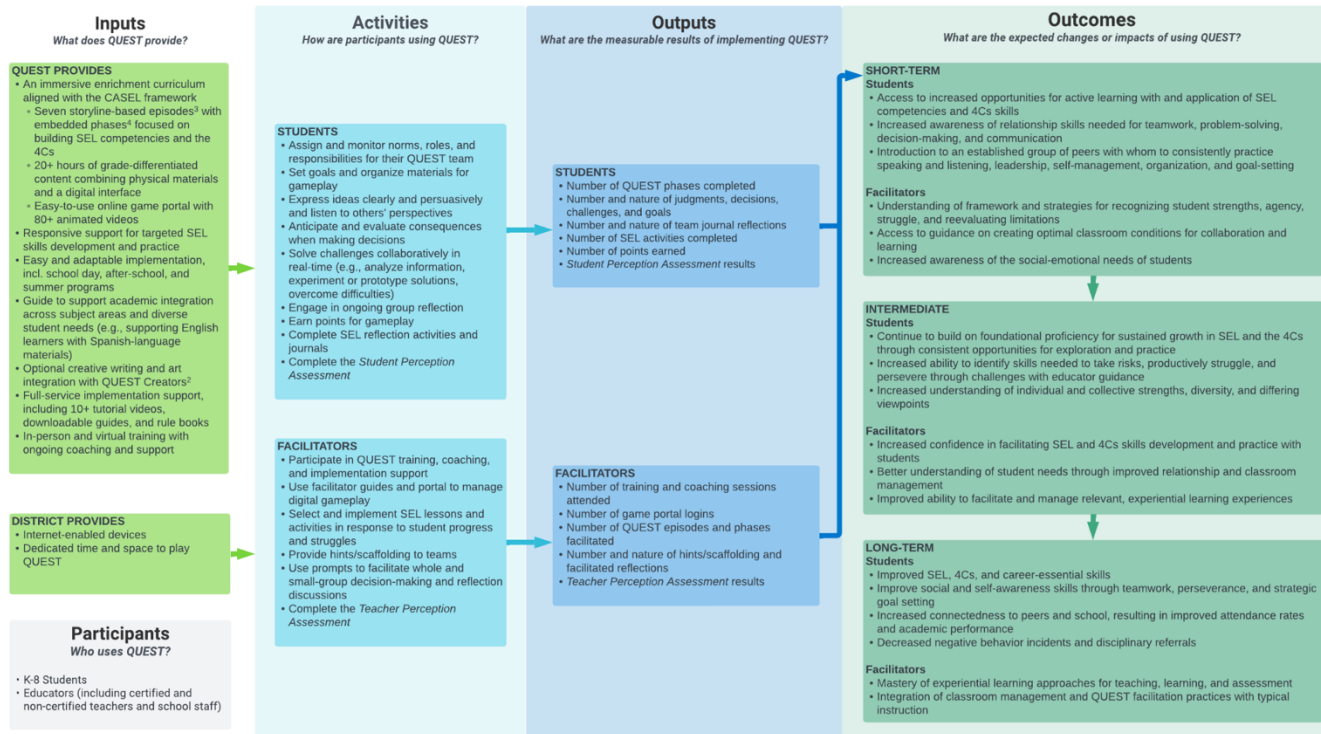
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# APPENDIX A: QUEST LOGIC MODEL



**Problem Statement:** Students must develop social-emotional learning (SEL) and 4Cs<sup>1</sup> skills for academic and workforce success. However, traditional instruction frequently falls short in providing relevant, active learning experiences. Educators also need support to facilitate students' collaborative problem-solving, reflection, and relationship skills. QUEST, a student-centered SEL curriculum, addresses this gap within a nurturing, low-pressure environment. The training and program materials empower educators to facilitate immersive problem-solving experiences, actively cultivating essential student skills for lifelong learning and career readiness.

ProSolve QUEST  
Logic Model



<sup>1</sup> The 4Cs include: Creativity, Communication, Critical Thinking, and Collaboration.

<sup>2</sup> QUEST Creators is a Creative Writing & Art program that focuses on building written and oral language skills that is available as an add-on purchase.

<sup>3</sup> Each season of QUEST immerses players in a new storyline and includes seven episodes to be played over the course of a semester.

<sup>4</sup> Five game phases are embedded into each season, designed around the 4Cs: 1) Map Exploration/Creativity; 2) Encounter Decisions/Communication; 3) Puzzles (challenges)/Critical Thinking; 4) Bartering/Collaboration; and 5) Debrief/Reflection.



# APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic categories	Percentage
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
White	16%
Black or African American	< 1%
Hispanic or Latino	81%
Asian	1%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	< 1%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	< 1%
Some other race alone	< 1%
Two or more races	1%
<b>Language spoken at home</b>	
Speaks English very well	25%
<b>Disability status</b>	
With a Disability	15%
<b>Health insurance coverage</b>	
With health Insurance	83%
<b>Poverty</b>	
Families below poverty level	31%
Families with SNAP benefits	43%

*Figure B1. Additional information on demographics of Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District population and its community (NCES, 2024)*



## APPENDIX C: EDUCATOR SURVEY ITEMS AND RESULTS

The following survey items were administered to educators at the beginning of, during, and at the end of the study period. Items do not represent all survey questions asked as some were retained for internal ProSolve use.

**Table C1: Educator survey pre-program question items and results (n = 24)**

	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>			
Are you a licensed teacher?	13%	88%			
	<b>None</b>	<b>District Created</b>	<b>Other</b>		
Which social-emotional curricula have you used?	38%	25%	54%		
	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>		
I am prepared and confident to facilitate QUEST with students.	4%	79%	17%		
	<b>None</b>	<b>0–2 years</b>	<b>3–10 years</b>	<b>More than 10 years</b>	
How many years have you been working with students? (include after school and summer programming and school day)	0%	21%	13%	67%	
	<b>None</b>	<b>0–2 hours</b>	<b>3–10 hours</b>	<b>More than 10 hours</b>	
What degree of training have you received around supporting students social-emotional development?	17%	13%	29%	42%	
	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely (1–2 times per week)</b>	<b>Occasionally (3 times per week)</b>	<b>Frequently (4 times per week)</b>	<b>Always (Daily)</b>
How often do you use social-emotional lessons or activities in your classroom or program?	13%	29%	46%	8%	4%

**Table C2: Educator survey mid-program question items and results (n = 17)**

Approximately how much time did you spend preparing to facilitate an episode of QUEST?	Fewer than 5 minutes	5–15 minutes		
	29%	71%		
Thinking about each Connect activity approximately how much time did you spend preparing to facilitate the activity?	Fewer than 5 minutes	5–15 minutes	16–30 minutes	31–45 minutes
	18%	59%	18%	6%
<p>To what extent did you observe students effectively using human skills while working with their teams to complete challenge activities using the QUEST curriculum?</p> <p>Teams worked together and everyone helped solve the challenge.</p> <p>Teams kept going even when the challenge got difficult.</p> <p>Teams tried more than one way to solve the challenge.</p> <p>If teams disagreed, they talked and figured things out.</p>	To what extent did you observe students effectively using human skills while working with their teams to complete challenge activities using the QUEST curriculum?			
	No teams	Fewer than half the teams	More than half the teams	All teams
	41%	18%	41%	0%
	0%	12%	29%	59%
	0%	6%	47%	47%
	6%	12%	47%	35%
<p>Referenced Connect Activities Guide or Connect Slides found in the portal</p> <p>Accessed printed materials found in the QUEST Kit</p> <p>Accessed digital materials found in portal</p> <p>Referenced the Pacing Guide in the portal</p> <p>Communicated with QUEST Support Team</p>	How often did you use the following resources?			
	Never	1 time	2 times	3 or more times
	18%	35%	41%	6%
	18%	29%	29%	24%
	24%	29%	29%	18%
	29%	35%	24%	12%
<p>Module 1: Teamwork</p> <p>Module 2: Perseverance &amp; growth mindset</p> <p>Module 3: Communication</p> <p>Module 4: Goal setting &amp; strategy</p> <p>Module 5: Effective decision-making</p> <p>Module 6: Solving problems</p>	How many activities did you complete in each module?			
	No Activities	1 Activity	2 Activities	3–4 Activities
	0%	18%	41%	41%
	6%	12%	35%	47%
	0%	41%	47%	12%
	18%	12%	29%	41%
	24%	6%	29%	41%
	24%	6%	24%	47%

**Table C3: Educator survey pre-program and end-of-program question items with results for those who completed both surveys (n = 14)**

	In general, rate how proficient you feel students were with the following skills BEFORE playing QUEST.				
	Not Proficient	Barely Proficient	Somewhat Proficient	Proficient	Highly Proficient
Teamwork & collaboration	7%	29%	50%	7%	7%
Problem-solving & critical thinking	7%	43%	36%	0%	14%
Relationship building: Getting along with others and having empathy	7%	29%	43%	7%	14%
Perseverance: Sticking with things that might be hard	14%	21%	36%	7%	21%
Communication: Sharing ideas & listening to others' ideas	7%	29%	36%	7%	21%
Self-awareness: Understanding one's strengths & areas of growth	7%	43%	29%	7%	14%
Goal setting: Making plans and having patience for delayed gratification	21%	21%	36%	7%	14%
Decision-making: Being able to negotiate and compromise	21%	21%	36%	7%	14%
Making new friends: Feeling a sense of belonging.	-	29%	43%	14%	14%
Soft skills for career readiness	21%	21%	36%	7%	14%

	In general, rate how proficient you feel students were with the following skills AFTER playing QUEST.				
	Not Proficient	Barely Proficient	Somewhat Proficient	Proficient	Highly Proficient
Teamwork & collaboration	14%	7%	36%	36%	7%
Problem-solving & critical thinking	7%	21%	36%	14%	21%
Relationship building: Getting along with others and having empathy	0%	14%	29%	36%	21%
Perseverance: Sticking with things that might be hard	7%	21%	29%	21%	21%
Communication: Sharing ideas & listening to others' ideas	7%	7%	29%	43%	14%
Self-awareness: Understanding one's strengths & areas of growth	7%	14%	29%	36%	14%
Goal setting: Making plans and having patience for delayed gratification	7%	21%	29%	36%	7%
Decision-making: Being able to negotiate and compromise	0%	7%	43%	36%	14%
Making new friends: Feeling a sense of belonging	0%	21%	14%	50%	14%
Soft skills for career readiness	0%	21%	29%	43%	7%

## APPENDIX D: STUDENT SURVEY ITEMS AND RESULTS

The following survey items were administered to students at the at the end of the study period. Items do not represent all survey questions asked as some were retained for internal ProSolve use.

**Table D1: Student survey end-of-program question items and results (n = 308)**

	Please rate your agreement with the following statements			
	Thumbs Down	Thumbs Side	Thumbs Up	Double Thumbs Up
I was excited to play QUEST each day.	9%	20%	39%	32%
I was curious about what would happen next in the story.	8%	12%	44%	36%
I liked doing hard things.	18%	31%	32%	19%
My team made sure everyone was included and no one was left out.	10%	22%	37%	31%
I felt like I belonged to my team.	9%	17%	41%	33%
I shared my ideas with my team.	6%	15%	43%	37%
My team members listened and didn't interrupt when I shared my ideas.	16%	28%	35%	20%
Different people's strengths and talents helped us be successful.	7%	17%	39%	37%
I liked learning this way.	12%	20%	38%	31%
I asked others for help when I needed it.	10%	13%	45%	31%
My teacher enjoyed playing QUEST with us.	16%	14%	35%	35%