

Polishing the mirror: Developing a reflection tool for learning advisors

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Background • Context

- Self-Access Learning Center (SALC)
- **1,000** users per day
- **12** full-time learning advisors (LAs) who regularly conduct one-to-one advising sessions with learners about language learning
- Advising offered in **6** different languages



Aim

Collect insights from SALC advisors to improve the effectiveness of the emotional labor reflection tool

Research Questions (RQs)

1. What aspects of the tool do advisors perceive as beneficial?
2. In what way do advisors perceive the tool should be modified?

Methods

- **8** volunteer LAs
- Participants involvement:
 - Try out the **emotional labor tool**
 - Provide feedback via an **online feedback form**

Design Process

Step 1: Getting started

- Brainstorming and categorizing emotions that authors experience in their duties as LAs
- Sharing narratives about personal experiences to identify factors that affect emotions (Marzin, Pemberton, & Takada, 2022)

Step 2: Going deeper

- Identifying lack of tools on LAs' emotions
- Developing a tool that aids LAs' self reflection on emotional labor
- Piloting the tool and getting feedback from LAs
- Redesigning the tool based on the provided feedback (incl. Gibbs' cycle, 1988; MoodMeter - Brackett et al., 2019)

Initial design

1 Think of a moment during an advising session that brought up your negative emotions.

Description of the moment:

What was the student doing or saying that you found emotionally challenging as an advisor?

2

Your emotion(s):

How did you feel in the moment? Why?

Your displayed emotion(s):

What emotion(s) did you display, how and why?

Congruence:

How big was the gap between the emotion you felt and the emotion you displayed?

3

Evaluation of your displayed emotion(s):

What was good or bad about your response?

Analysis:

What can you learn about yourself through this experience, if anything?

Alternatives:

How could you have displayed your emotions differently? What do you think the outcome would have been?

4

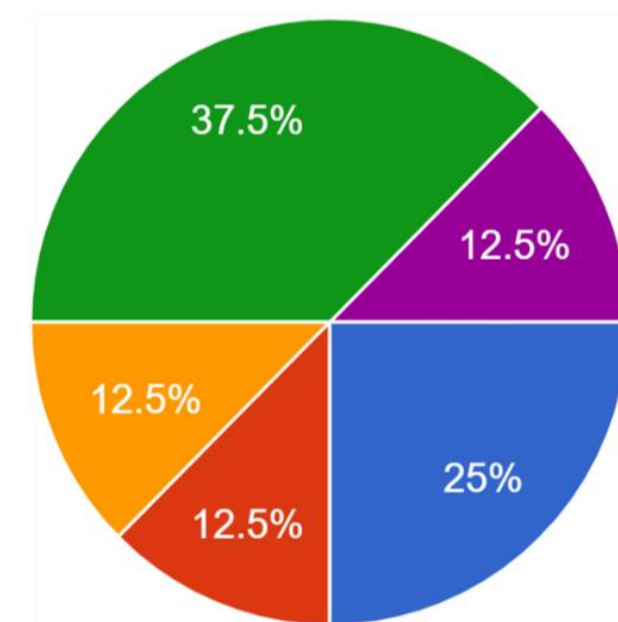
Action plan:

If this challenge arises again, what will you do?

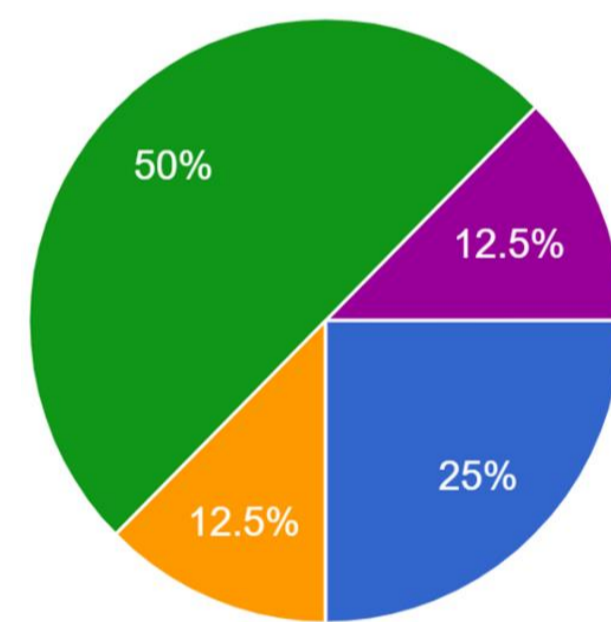
Results - Feedback form

● Strongly disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral ● Agree ● Strongly Agree

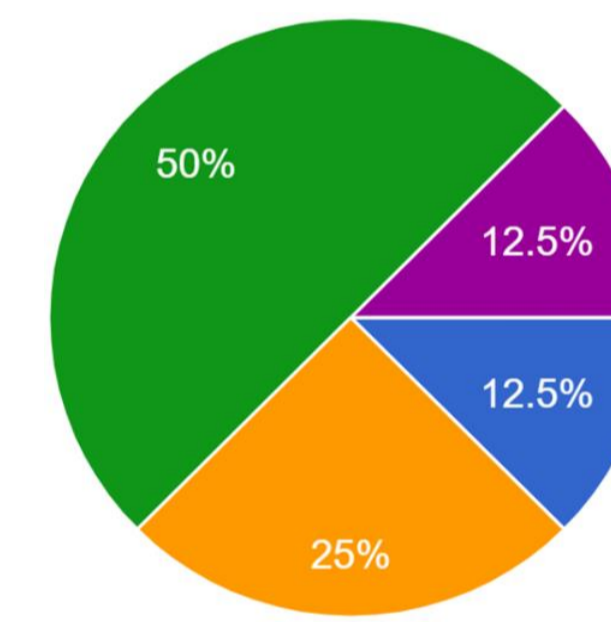
I would like to use this tool to reflect on my emotional labor as a LA:



This tool helped me to consider how I want to display my emotions in future sessions:



This tool helped me to understand my experience of emotional labor in an advising session:



Excerpts:



"I am not sure how many advisors experience emotional labor (perhaps, they all do but I don't know), but I thought having the positive version would be good too." **1**

I think *evaluation of your displayed emotion(s)* is hard to answer. Why should there be good or bad about the response? Or maybe because I didn't really experience any emotional labor. That's why it was difficult for me to answer. **1** **3**

"It would be more helpful if you included some kind of visual aids?" **2**

"It could be helpful if there is a question where I could categorize where my negative feelings were coming from. Is it coming from anger, anxiety, sadness, or, a mixture of everything?" **2**

"The last question, If this challenge arises again, *what will you do?* was quite powerful." **4**

Final design

1 *Removed mention of 'emotional labor' or 'negative emotion'

Description of the moment:

What happened during the advising session? Include as much detail as you think is relevant (For example: Who was there? When did it happen? How long did it last? What were you and the advisee doing and saying?)

2

Your emotion(s):

Use the mood meter to identify all the emotions you felt during the session and write them below.

3

Evaluation of the session:

What do you think went well in the session?

What do you think did not go well in the session?

Analysis:

Look back at the emotions you selected in Step 2.

Why do you think these emotions came up for you during the session?

What impact, if any, did your feelings have on the advisee and/or the advising dialogue? What can you learn about yourself through this experience, if anything?

Conclusions/Alternatives:

What are some other ways that you could have handled this session, if any?

4

Action plan:

If you had a similar session again, what would you do?

MOOD METER

How are you feeling?



Brackett, 2023

Discussion/Conclusion

RQ1 - What aspects of the tool do advisors perceive as beneficial?

- Helped to understand experience of emotional labor in an advising session
- Helped to consider how to display emotions in future advising sessions
- Instructions for using the tool were clear

RQ2 - In what way do advisors perceive the tool should be modified?

- Better to reflect on emotions in general than emotional labor
- Took longer than expected to complete the tool
- Better to have a visual element to aid reflection

Next Steps

1. Share feedback with colleagues (meeting) and community (article)
2. Adapt the tool into an app
3. Test out the app with novice advisors and gather feedback
4. Make suggested changes to the tool/app