Art & Design Students’ Experiences of Anxiety in the Classroom

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“...An alarming trend: college students and young adults are more anxious than ever before.”

- Scheffler, et al. 2018
Research Goal:

To better understand art & design student experiences of anxiety in classroom situations
Research Questions:

How do art & design students experience anxiety in the classroom?

◦ What do they think?
◦ What do they feel?
◦ How would they like professors to respond?
Moore College of Art & Design
## Study Population—Gender Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-binary</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other:
- Transgender
- Trans-masc.
- Gender fluid
- Pangender
- Unlabeled
- Cisgender woman
Year in School

- 45% first-years
- 16% sophomores
- 21% juniors
- 16% seniors
- 2% graduate
Accommodations Status

29% Currently

8% formerly (not current)

63% Never

HAVE YOU EVER HAD DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS AT MOORE?

- Never: 63%
- Yes, currently: 29%
- Formerly: 8%
Select the 3 classroom situations that you think make the most students feel anxious:

- Being approached by the instructor to talk
- Approaching the instructor to talk
- Timed tests/quizzes
- Getting called on
- Introducing yourself
- Lectures
- Small group work
- Critiques
- Presentations
- Class discussions

www.surveymonkey.com/r/JBLivePoll
Survey completion

46% completed
54% started but did not complete
Student Responses

Being approached: 37%
Approaching the instructor: 45%
Timed tests/quizzes: 37%
Getting called on: 57%
Introducing yourself: 55%
Lectures: 14%
Small group work: 39%
Critiques: 47%
Presentations: 81%
Class discussions: 49%
Q: What thoughts go through your mind when you feel anxious in class?
Response Categories: Thoughts

1. Self doubt
2. What others will think/feel/do
3. Flight/freeze reactions
4. Coping strategies
Q: What sensory feelings, if any, do you experience when you feel anxious in class?
Response Categories: Feelings

1. Sweating/hot
2. Shaking (body and voice)
3. Rapid heartbeat
4. Affected breathing
5. Upset stomach
Q: What do you wish the professor would do or say when you’re feeling anxious in class?
Category 1: Let me avoid it

1. Verbal participation
2. Group critiques
Response Categories: cont’d

1. Let me avoid it

2. Be patient, open-minded, and understanding

3. Let me take a break

4. Add structure to in-class activities
Suggestions for Adding Structure

• Ask guiding questions
• Sign-up list for presentations
• Provide discussion questions in advance
• Schedule frequent breaks
• Provide clear instructions & expectations
Suggestions for future research:

• Contextualize with institutional retention data

• Follow up interviews

• Examine available accommodations and their efficacy
Works Cited:


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