Using Undergraduate Insight to Make Space for Creativity in Higher Education

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The focus of this study is on how to highlight the major components that would enhance creativity and productivity in the college classroom such as student belonging, mental health, peer-to-peer communication, and the flipped classroom model. Topics cover creativity in education and creative pedagogy. This study explored what undergraduates have to say about creativity and productivity in the college classroom. Data acquired was from interviewing ten undergraduate students on a liberal arts campus about twenty miles outside of New York City about their undergraduate experiences with creativity and productivity in the classroom. The results showed that students responded more positively to discussion and interactive-based class formats as well as project-based assignments and class formats. Students' perceptions of teachers' openness to creativity and failure in the classroom also impacted how creative students felt they could be. This correlated to interactions with other students having positive learning outcomes such as learning from each other, classroom belonging, a sense of community, and enhanced creativity and productivity. The responses gathered in this study could inform educational practices that would help students move forward once out of the classroom and into the world. The significance of the study lies in the fact that creativity is a highly valued skill in today's world, yet it is not reflected in the education students are provided.

"My contention is that creativity is as important in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status" (TED, 2006). Sir Ken Robinson said this fourteen years ago at a TED Conference titled, "Do schools kill creativity?" The video has seventy-three million views, making it the most-watched TED conference video, and it does not come as a surprise. With our

rapidly changing world, creativity has become vital in keeping a productive economy and progressive world. Ritter et al. (2020) write, “Many jobs are disappearing, and new jobs are emerging, for example, due to the transformative impact of digital technologies… Creativity is not anymore, a ‘nice to have’, but has turned into a ‘must have’” (p. 2). Without an education that meets the demands of the changing world, it potentially poses difficult challenges for society to move forward as it continuously evolves, especially if there is a lack of supply with the demand that such a society needs. The value of this research lies in the insight into the under-researched population of undergraduates in the conversation of creativity and education.

History

According to Simone M. Ritter et al. (2020), solving real-world problems takes innovation and creativity since it requires people to look at problems alternatively and find new solutions. This is a vital skill that should be nurtured, especially in higher education since undergraduate students are a population in particular that would soon enter the workforce and take part in shaping the world as well as how well it manages to operate.

Ritter et al. (2020) wrote, “Whereas for decades content knowledge was a prerequisite for work, in the era of Google we need individuals who are capable to creatively *use* and *generate* knowledge. To remain competitive, nations, organizations and individuals have to be able to think differently and to make connections between seemingly unrelated things” (Ritter et al. 2020, 1). Unfortunately, this is not the case. Ritter et al. continue to write, “Interestingly, the majority of employees indicate that they wish they had more creative ability (75%), and that they lacked exposure to creative thinking during their education. Supporting these findings, recruiters

denoted that creative thinking is a skill that is hard to find in job applicants" (Ritter et al., 2020, p. 2).

While instructors and the tools they use do, to a degree, exercise some creativity and help production in the college classroom, undergraduate insight and needs should be considered and used to guide the enhancement of these highly important aspects of education because it would contribute to creating a structure of instruction that answers to the needs and insights of the students as well as provide a better way of improving these aspects in their learning process.

Upon learning in a course I took in the fall of 2021 called Structured Inquiry that studied and analyzed major aspects of American society, I learned that according to where one lived, the quality of education changed, even if the schools are all public. One could live in a low-income area and receive an education at a public school that focused on rote learning as a primary way of educating, which involves thinking in a way so that there is only one, direct answer (Ritter et al., 2020). At the same time, one could live a few miles away from low-income public schools in an area that is more affluent and receive an education that encourages critical thinking, generating new and original ideas, as well as pushing boundaries with said ideas. These students were taught to question everything, including what they were being taught. Students in low-income areas were not.

The way the affluent students were taught prepared them for jobs as surgeons, lawyers, engineers, and even more elite positions, like their parents, while many of my peers were prepared to work the same jobs as their parents in construction, retail, or as cooks because it was the level of thinking those kinds of jobs could afford. No one expected more. No one in my community knew that they could attain more for themselves. How could we know if none of us had ever been able to afford to live in a place that offered this kind of education? Who would we

hear it from if not from our neighborhoods that were living in the same situations as us? How would we know there was more an education could offer?

I began to grow upset with this realization because of how it perpetuated inequalities. With a quality education, you could receive a job that pays more for skills and knowledge, which allows the chance to come out of poverty and live a better life. Everyone has a right to quality education. The education one receives can also follow them throughout their lives because they may or may not be able to keep up with the pace of opportunities to advance their life that require the skills and knowledge of a quality education.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This research investigates what insights undergraduates offer into how to enhance creativity and production in the college classroom. The topic was of interest because of the apparent lack of creativity in the activities and interactions in the college classroom that have been observed through personal experiences as an undergraduate. In addition, through personal experiences and the experiences of fellow peers, it was observed that certain attributes contributed to better classroom performance and production.

Improving attributes such as encouragement, community, belonging, and the opportunity for students to learn from each other could be what undergraduate students need to improve their motivation to learn and participate in the college classroom. McFadden (2021) wonderfully breaks down these aspects in the journal article titled, “Through the Students' Eyes: Insights into What's Most Important: Faculty focus” in a holistic way, introducing that these multiple factors all contribute to creating a classroom environment, whether online, like McFadden did, or in a traditional format to enhance creativity and production amongst students in the college classroom.

Faculty-to-student encouragement

Teacher encouragement is a large part of how creativity and production can be enhanced in the college classroom. “Students' assessment of their teachers' encouragement in the classroom for the promotion of creativity,” Mahendar writes, “creativity involves three key tasks, such as encouraging, identifying, and fostering” (2007, 47). Encouragement is imperative in cultivating

an environment in the classroom where creativity can be implemented and allowed to flourish. Mahendar further writes, “The teacher has to encourage children to explore alternative ways of being and doing, analyzing if their courage is appropriate or to be different, giving children enough time to incubate ideas and provide an environment in which children can go beyond what is expected and are rewarded for doing so” (2007, 46).

It is clear the teacher is the key facilitator in creating an environment that allows student creativity to appear in the classroom. Without an instructor who can see and guide this process along with the learning process, it is unlikely that creativity can truly flourish in the classroom. Though this piece of literature does not have the population that is the focus of this research, it provides a critical lens into how students, even if younger than the population under study, perceive the importance of the instructor in promoting creativity to unfold in the classroom setting, which ultimately has positive effects on productivity and learning outcomes. In addition, the paper does not have the most up-to-date literature compared with other resources contributing to the literature.

Still, it provides a rich analysis, particularly using student insight in evaluating instructor influence and impact on creativity and production in the classroom, making it a unique and vital source for this research. Student insight is particularly being analyzed under the research question. In fact, Mahendar specifically points out that “Students are better judges in rating their teachers' behavior in the classroom than outside observers” (Mahendar 2007, 48). With this in mind, students offer a unique perspective on what can be done in the classroom to facilitate positive learning outcomes as they are the ones who endure the effects of these various educational practices.

It must also be taken into account how teachers both understand creativity and how those impacts heavily affect creativity and production in the classroom. In Hodges (2005) "Creativity in Education" the author writes, "If, as the report stresses, students need reading literacy in order to participate successfully in most areas of education and life beyond school, then engagement (along with access to books, motivation and cognitive support) is clearly of the utmost importance. Evidence such as this emphasizes the dangers of over-prescriptive, centralized approaches to teaching and learning, which threaten to extinguish engagement and banish creative activity." The author describes how too much of an emphasis on centralized approaches to educational practices such as meeting standardized test scores can actually decrease engagement by ridding creativity and motivation from the process and practice of learning. This is important in understanding how teaching approaches might decrease creativity and production in the classroom.

Another way to understand how there may be a decrease in creativity and production in the classroom is teachers' perceptions of creativity. Authors Kettler, Lamb, Willerson, & Mullet (2018) write in "Teachers' Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom," "Teachers, on the other hand, view creativity as a subject-specific experience or activity that requires imagination and intelligence and results in a tangible product (Mullet et al., 2016). Teachers agree that creative products require original or innovative ideas and multiple searches for solutions to a problem; however, teachers struggle to define creativity in specific terms (Mullet et al., 2016)." Teachers' perceptions of creativity in the classroom is integral here in that it indicates the degree to which creativity can show up and be facilitated in the first place.

Such an understanding helps to know the impact of teacher perception and the degree to which these perceptions factor into student learning and engagement for their highest levels of

creativity and engagement in the classroom. This understanding could also better help assess future training and classroom curriculum. In this study, the results confirmed what previous studies had. No effect on their perception of creative characteristics was based on teachers' grade level, subject, experience, and age. The study did find that teachers who were more creative found creativity a desirable trait of other students. This is important to consider in this research that where there are creative teachers, they are able to recognize and foster these traits in other students and may be able to foster them in the classroom.

Student support and belonging

How students felt about their belonging in a classroom and perceived support has a significant impact on their academic performance. According to Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley (2014), in the journal article titled, "Support, Belonging, Motivation, and Engagement in the College Classroom: a Mixed-Method study," Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley state, "Supportive classroom environment perceptions predicted students' belonging beliefs, which in turn predicted students' motivation, engagement, and achievement in the course" (2014, 661). This journal article is an essential piece of the literature, as it supports the notion that a classroom environment that facilitates the student having overall positive feelings about being present, such as belonging, can lead to more positive feelings and outcomes such as motivation and engagement, with the positive effect of making the student want to contribute to the atmosphere of the classroom environment and enhance their productivity.

This study is especially valuable and distinct in the literature because it used qualitative data with follow-up interviews from a large, Midwestern university, which creates a large set of data to indicate results that have better reliability. In addition, undergraduate insight is an integral

part of this study. The plethora of responses from the research makes the piece of literature distinct and profound. The results from this study contribute to a big idea about the relationship between student classroom belonging and academic performance.

Flipped Classroom Technology

Digital technologies have become a profound part of the classroom, especially for colleges and universities, in the 21st century, so much so that author Q. Jian of the study titled, "Effects of Digital Flipped Classroom Teaching Method Integrated Cooperative Learning Model on Learning Motivation and Outcome" argues traditional education is not meeting students where they are today in terms of addressing each student's needs and that the digital flipped classroom could provide the means to achieve that. Jian states, "Along with the time change and promotion of 12-year compulsory education, traditional didactic education can no longer satisfy all students. The reform wave in education is therefore emerged in past years, where the 'flipped classroom' model strikes a chord and becomes a trend" (p. 842).

Jian offers some profound and invaluable insights with this study, offering the perspective that there is a need to catch up with the appropriate tools to address and satisfy every student in the classroom with an education system that has evolved. Jian also brings up an important point that this point has been felt throughout the higher education center. As a result, the idea of digital flipped classrooms has become a buzzword for alternatives to enhance student motivation and improve learning outcomes going forward. However, the author points out in their own section about the study's limitations that "due to limitation and time, the author spent more time on the proposal part of strategy… so it needs to spend time in the later stage to improve this work" (p. 840). Even though the study indicated positive results on learning outcomes and motivation that

could be well used in enhancing productivity in the college classroom, there was not a great deal of time for studying and gathering the most data on the actual practice.

On the other hand, in an opposing viewpoint in the literature around digital flipped classrooms, authors Stöhr, Demazière, and Adawi (2020) state in the journal article titled "The Polarizing Effect of the Online Flipped Classroom," "Results reveal that, while there was no statistically significant difference in average performance between the campus-based and online flipped format, the online flipped format leads to a significantly larger spread - a *polarization* - in performance." This opposing piece of literature introduces the other side of flipped classrooms that is not talked about to form a cohesive picture of their role in improving student learning outcomes. For one, in this study, there is no significant difference between the traditional and online flipped classrooms, suggesting that there is no actual considerable improvement in learning outcomes for college students. Not only that, but the polarization in the data also indicates that there isn't a clear indication that the flipped classroom has a significant positive effect on academic performance.

Peer-to-peer confirmation and mental health

In the journal article titled, "The Relationship of Student-to-student Confirmation in the Classroom to College Students' Mental Health and Well-being" authors LaBelle and Johnson (2021) explore how students affirming other peers improves the overall mental health of other students. Doing so creates an environment on the campus of inclusivity, positivity, and belonging, which has positive effects on learning outcomes. The results of this study reveal that "student-to-student confirmation is related to psychological well-being as well as indicators of mental illness" (LaBelle & Johnson, 2021).

One striking thing found in this study was the number of students who reported negative impacts on academic performance. According to a statement written by LaBelle and Johnson (2021), “one out of four students reported anxiety that negatively impacted their performance in class in the past 12 months” (p. 34). That means, on average, 25 percent of the student population experiences high enough levels of stress and anxiety so that, in effect, they experience negative outcomes in academic performance. Statistically, it is a strikingly high number and a clear indicator of where in the classroom that needs to be addressed for better production in the college classroom.

This journal article is an essential piece of literature because it offers insights from undergraduates and gathers qualitative data using student surveys as the method to collect qualitative data. There is no extensive research on undergraduate mental health, particularly using this method to integrate practices to improve mental health outcomes and academic performance. Compared to other pieces of the literature, this study offers quality insight into another element that needs to be addressed to create an environment in the college classroom that enhances productivity as well as creativity.

Conclusion

Overall, the literature reveals the connections between teachers and students and how instruction is conducted in providing an overall environment and practice that can allow for creativity and productivity to be enhanced among undergraduate students. At the same time, the literature fails to show the interdependence of these factors in cultivating such an environment

and providing an overall holistic view of creating such an environment so undergraduate students can thrive in the academic setting.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction

From personal experience and observing fellow peers in undergraduate education, it is clear there is an apparent lack of creativity in the activities and interactions in the college classroom. Certain attributes contributed to better classroom performance and production. Improving attributes such as encouragement, community, belonging, and the opportunity for students to learn from each other could be just what undergraduate students need to improve their motivation to learn and participate in the college classroom. This section addresses research design and data collection techniques to address the research question "What insight are undergraduates sharing about how to enhance creativity and production in the college classroom?" Included in this section are instrumentation, sampling, method analysis used, data collection techniques, and rationale behind the procedures used.

Research Design and Methods

The research design used for this study is a qualitative one, specifically using narrative analysis. This allows for a more enhanced method of addressing the research question because data would be particularly connected using a focal point of this study: undergraduate insight. A systematic databasesearch was used in this study to find, compare and contrast sources that would be best in not only providing context for the study but its relevance and importance. Keywords and terms included, "undergraduate encouragement," "undergraduate belonging,"

“college classroom technologies,” “college students struggle,” “creativity in the college classroom,” “flipped classroom,” “peer-to-peer,” “student-student,” and “interactive classroom.”

The search terms were created from the subtopics of this study as well as using keywords that were given by the databases. The databases used were JSTOR, Education Source, Education Database (ProQuest), and AnthroSource because they came up with the most sources and a great variety in them addressing the research topic with the keywords used. The SUNY Purchase College library was used to gather all sources and to access databases. After gathering and analyzing the literature, the information was used to devise an approach to the research method.

The method of this study would involve using an interview schedule comprised of specific questions that ask undergraduates over eighteen years old, selected opportunistically on a college campus twenty-five miles outside of New York City, about their experience in the college classroom, how they feel, and if they think the way their classes are taught enhance creativity and production and where they see a lack of this. Interviews are the selected data collection technique as the study primarily uses the reflections of undergraduates to inform analysis of the problem being addressed.

Data collection would involve qualitative analysis directly from the population that is being analyzed. Specific questions posed to participants in this research study is, “At what times do you feel the most creative, engaged, and productive in the classroom? What times do you not? Why?” After these questions are posed in a semi-structured interview and participants answer them, their answers will be highlighted on a written document and it will be color-coded how many times a particular answer showed up in one response. The most frequent and relevant responses will be organized into a table under category with the number of times each type of response was recorded under that category.

For example, a category may be “I feel like I am just passing through,” if this showed up in most of the interviewees' responses a high number of times compared to other responses. This would allow for clear and tangible results to be shown and analyzed around the significance of the numbers as well as to be able to compare between the different categories. Significance will be based on how frequent answers appear because it shows prevalence and allows our conclusions to be based on consistent and therefore reliable data. Assumptions of this method would be that students questioned on the one campus attend all or most of their classes on that campus. Another assumption is that all participants are answering fully and honestly.

This method and research was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In carrying out the method, participants are selected from students in the school of humanities and the school of social sciences, particularly because on the college campus selected there are conservatories in the arts that are more hands-on, deviating away from the type of classroom setting studied in this research. The participants were upper-class students at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in the creative arts or conservatory majors.Ten students were recruited. An opportunistic sample will be obtained by first recruiting classmates, and then extending to related classes by permission of the professor. No compensation was offered. A recruitment email text was written. The interviews were on Zoom in a password-protected session. Questions were presented orally. There are 15 questions. No printed material other than the consent form were given to participants. Interviews were transcribed by live Zoom transcription transcription. Notes were not taken during the interview. No audio or video recordings were made. Participants were given instructions before the interview begins (see below). Participants were assigned a unique number and only that number, not their name, to be on the transcript. The only place the participants’ name is on the signed permission form, which

does not include the identification number. Only the faculty sponsor will see the permission forms with names. The forms were deleted at the conclusion of the project and no record of the names will be retained. Emotional discomfort was possible if the participant was reflecting on personal experiences in the classroom. However, no recordings will be made and demographic information is not being collected, the risk is considered minimal.

Responses are then highlighted for how many times they occur throughout the entire interview as well as if they show in any other participant interviews. If specific or similar answers show up, they are grouped together into one category in a table. The number of these answers is recorded and put into the table. Participant interviews would be carried out over three to four weeks, interviewing ten participants, as this would provide sufficient and consistent data in the time allotted.

Some strengths of this method are that it focuses on the population in question and collects feedback directly from the population at the focus of this study. It also organizes qualitative data in a way that can be compared. Significance in the data can be clearly shown through multiple categories informed by raw, primary data generated by interviewees' responses. Some weaknesses of this research method are that with only one person collecting the data and having to interview participants one at a time, it is time-consuming and limited the number of participants as well as data that can be collected to make for sufficient analysis. A significant challenge was finding a sufficient amount of the kind of participants in the given timeframe.

Chapter 4

Findings

After conducting interviews with all ten participants, I was able to study my findings for each question using the tables shown below. Questions can have more than ten responses because questions were open-ended and allowed participants to give answers in multiple categories.

Question 1: In general, do you feel that your academic college classes ask for student creativity, creative thinking, and individual opinions?

	Yes	No	To a degree
# Answer	3	3	6

Table 1: Distribution of answers to Question 1.

Most students answered 'to a degree,' as 6 out of 12 answers or 50% of answers. Many stated multiple reasons and insights to this answer, with the most common being that it is still desired for them to answer with constrictions or "in a box" with professors not completely open to their responses or ideas, but open to receiving them to a degree. For example, participant number 4 said, "I guess no. I feel it depends. People have that creative liberty because it's all about the 'think wide open' thing but I think in only certain departments." Responses were marked "to a

degree" if the answer was not strictly yes or no. Three participants responded yes and three participants responded no, or 25% for each category.

Question 2: What class formats do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?

2A (Least)	**Open Studio**	**Lecture**	**Project-Based**
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Table 2: Distribution of answers to Question 2

2B (Most)	Open Studio	Lecture	Project-Based
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Table 3: Distribution of answers to Question 2.

	Answers
P1	
P2	
P3	
P4	
P5	
P6	
P7	
P8	
P9	
P10	

Table 4: Distribution of answers to Question 2 for Lecture as least creative class format.

Participants answered with ‘lecture’ as the least creative class format, with 9 out of 10 participants voting for lecture and no other class formats offered as least creative. There were no votes for some categories, as the question was open-ended and participants were asked to suggest which formats were the most or least creative, if they considered any to be. Participants were also able to give multiple answers for both least and most creative class formats and could list any format. It can also be inferred that these are the class formats that participants have experienced in the classes they have taken. Project-based class format received the most votes for ‘most creative’, with 7 out of 10 participants voting for project-based and 2 out of 10 voting for open studio.

Question 3: How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?

	Often	**Not often**	**Not at all**
# Answer	2	5	3

Table 5: Distribution of answers to Question 3

Most participants answered not often, which received 5/10 votes, not at all received 3/10 votes, and often received only 2/10 votes. The answer “not often” accounted for 50% of votes, “not at all” with 30% of votes, and “often” only 20% of votes. Most participants stated in their interviews that most of their classes are lectures or going over lecture material. This indicates most participants in the study experienced classes where most of the time they do not do interactive activities during the entire class time with lecture material presented before class.

Question 4: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?

	Yes	**No**	**Depends on classmates/topic**
# Answer	5	1	4

Table 6: Distribution of answers to Question 4

The most voted answer was “yes” with 5/10 votes. The second most voted was “depends on classmates/topic,” with 4/10 votes and the least was, “no” with 1/10 votes. This indicates 50% of participants felt all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats. Many participants offered insights that stated it depended on their classmates and the topic of discussion. Many cited that sometimes there was a lack of discourse and engagement from their classmates or professors themselves did not know how to facilitate discussions to keep up classroom engagement and learning as a part of the discussion. The participant who answered no also experienced mostly flipped classrooms in their classes and felt that because students were still processing fresh material, it didn’t allow for as much discourse.

Question 5: What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?

5A (Most)	Project-Based	Open Book Exams	English Literature Essays	Readings and responses	Essays/ Research Papers
P1					
P2					
P3					
P4					
P5					
P6					
P7					
8					
9					
10					

Table 7: Distribution of answers to Question 5

5A (Least)	Project-Based	Open Book	English Literature Essays	Readings	Essays/Research Papers
Participant 1					
P2					
P3					
P4					
P5					
P6					
P7					
8					
9					
10					

Table 8: Distribution of answers to Question 5

Findings for Question 5 can be further reflected in the following tables:

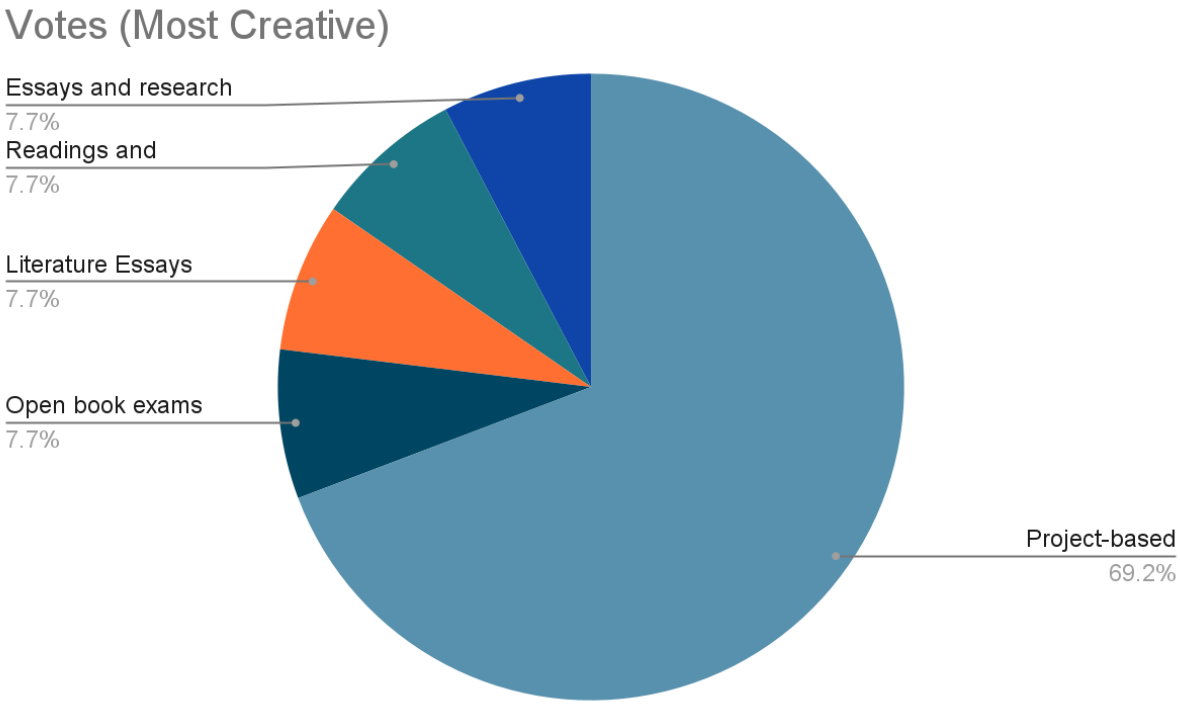

Fig 1. Distribution of results from Question 5A: most creative **assignment** formats.

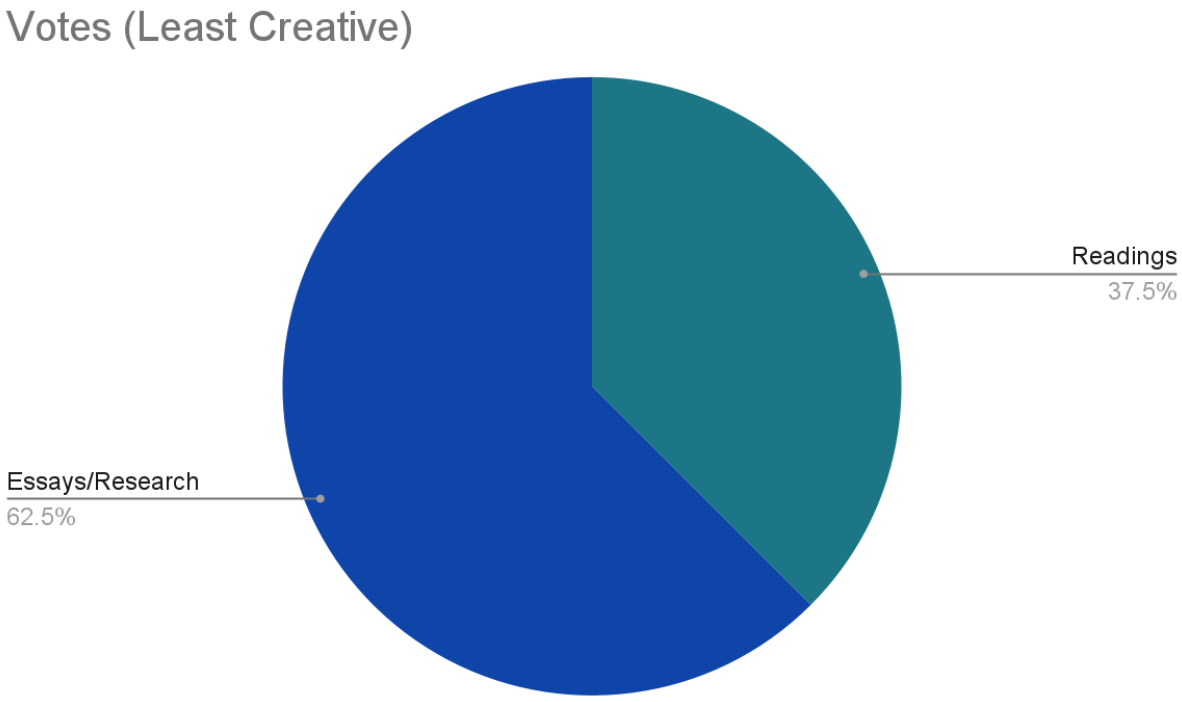

Fig 1. Distribution of results from Question 5B: least creative **assignment** formats.

Project-based assignments received an overwhelming number of votes, with 9/13 votes or 69.2%% of votes. Nine out of ten participants voted for project-based assignments as most creative. Open book exams received 1/13 votes, English literature essays 1/13 votes, readings and responses 1/13 votes, and essays and research papers 1/13 votes totaling to 13 votes from participants. English literature essays were cast as their own category as one participant distinguished English literature essays as being a creative format different from research-based essays and papers that did not allow as many creative opinions and insights and were almost entirely fact-based. This participant was also an art history major and wanted to clearly make this distinction, as it is reflected in these charts. The least creative assignments were essays and

research papers as well as readings, with essays and research papers totaling 5/8 votes and readings totaling 3/8 votes. Some participants did not offer an assignment as least creative, therefore there are less than 10 votes for least creative assignments.

Question 6: Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?

	Yes	No	To a degree
# Answer	7	2	1

Table 9: Distribution of answers to Question 6

Most participants answered yes, with 7/10 answering yes, 2/10 answering no, and 1/10 answering to a degree. This indicates that 70% of participants felt more productive on assignments when asked for their creative thinking and opinions, 20% did not, and 10% did to a degree. Many who answered yes cited that it makes them more engaged, energized, and want to participate more. Those who answered no stated they don't think they do feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and opinions or that they do not receive creative assignments in class. The participant who answered to a degree stated that there are restrictions in their answers by their professor when asked for creative thinking and opinions.

Question 7: How do you feel after doing creative assignments?

7A Negative feelings

P1: Drained

P2:

P3:

P4: Insecure

P5:

P6:

P7:

P8: Drained

P9:

10:

7B Positive feelings

P1:

P2: creative

P3: proud, free, relaxed, expressive

P4 proud, accomplished

P5 motivated, energized, fun, valuable

P6 accomplished, fulfilled

P7 creative

P8 joy

P9 joy/good

P10 joy/happy

Results for 7A (Negative): 2/10 drained, 1/10 insecure

Total: 3 votes from 10 people.

Results for 7B (Positive): 2/17 creative, 3/17 joy, 2/17 proud, 2/17 accomplished, 1/17 free, 1/17 relaxed, 1/17 expressive, 1/17 motivated, 1/17 energized, 1/17 fun, 1/17 valuable, 1/17 fulfilled

Total: 17 votes from 10 people.

Most participants had positive responses, with each feeling or word description given their own color code to show which answers were recurring, as multiple participants gave multiple answers. Participants could also mention both positive and negative feelings to this open-ended question, which was accounted for in the response format displayed. For example, Participant 4 responded they were both insecure as a negative feeling and proud and accomplished as a positive feeling. Three participants responded with negative feelings. Negative feelings were deemed as those responses that did not have an uplifting or beneficial aspect as determined by the participant. A feeling deemed positive to one participant could be negative to another. The most recurring positive feeling was joy or some variation of it. Some participants gave multiple, specific positive feelings like both motivated and energized. Some participants did not answer negative or positive feelings and it was left blank.

Question 8: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?

	Yes	**No**	**Depends on racial makeup/sensitivity**
# Answer	8	1	1

Table 10: Distribution of answers to Question 8

Most participants answered yes, with an overwhelming 8/10, 1/10 answered no, and 1/10 answered it depended on racial makeup and sensitivity of students and professors in the classroom. This indicates that 80% of participants felt that class discussions increased their feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms, with only 10% answering no and 10% answering it depends. The participant who said it depends on the racial makeup and sensitivity identified as a person of color who experienced classrooms with a mostly white makeup which impacted the degree they felt comfortable sharing in discussions but still thought that discussions could increase feelings of belonging and engagement in the classroom.

Question 9: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?

	Yes	**No**	**Depends for variety of reasons**
# Answer	4	2	5

Table 11: Distribution of answers to Question 9

Most answered it depends for a variety of reasons with 5/11 votes. There were 4/11 votes for those who answered yes and 2/11 votes for those who answered no. This indicates 45% of participants thought teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely depended on a variety of factors. Many participants who answered 'it depends' mentioned that they felt there were still restrictions in how they could answer. Participant 6 stated that they felt the racial and ethnic makeup of faculty and students impacted how openly they could answer.

Participants who answered yes stated that professors are very open to hearing their answers. Participant 9 offered that their professor tried to have no wrong answers. Participants who answered 'no' said that it was more black and white for them, as they are a legal studies major. The other participant who answered no said that encouragement to answer openly and freely was more outside of the classroom than inside the classroom, especially since many of their classes are in lecture format. Participants were able to and did give more than one answer to amount to more than ten votes.

Question 10: Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?

	Yes	**No**	**Depends on class/field of study**
Answer #	1	7	2

Table 12: Distribution of answers to Question 10

Most participants answered ‘no’ with 7/10 votes. Only one participant answered ‘yes’ for 1/10 votes and 2/10 participants answered that it ‘depended on the field of study.’ Most participants answered no for reasons such as there was more of an emphasis on understanding the material and mending the problem in understanding course material rather than an open dialogue about failure itself. Some stated that resilience may be mentioned or discussed but not failure as a part of the learning process. Multiple participants stated this is due to the structure of undergraduate courses and that it could be very black and white, with multiple participants iterating “you get it or you don’t.”

Some participants stated professors didn’t reach out to students when they were failing their courses and the professor did not create an open dialogue to explore options around course failure. Participants 1 and 9answered that it depended on the class or field of study, clarifying that classes in the Humanities and Social Sciences had material that was graded on interpretation and effort in thought and offered more flexibility. Participant 7 answered ‘yes’ and said there was an open dialogue because professors’ policies reflected flexibility and understanding, such as dropping the lowest grade.

Question 11. Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?

	A lot	**Not much**	**To a degree**
Answer #	7	2	1

Table 13: Distribution of answers to Question 11

Most participants answered a lot with 7/10 votes, citing instances where it improved their classroom engagement and understanding of the material. This indicates that 70% of participants learn from other students in the classroom. One participant, who identifies as autistic, stated it is one of the only ways they learn. Two participants said not often because other students are not willing to speak. The one participant who answered to a degree stated that it depended on the class. They said, “Sometimes I learn more from the students, way more than the professor.” This indicates that only 20% of participants feel that they ‘do not learn much’ from other students in the classroom and for 10% it is ‘to a degree.’

Question 12. How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?

	A lot	**Depends on the class**
Answer #	**6**	**5**

Table 14: Distribution of answers to Question 12

Most participants voted ‘a lot’ with 6/11 votes and a close second voted that ‘it depends’ on the class with 5/11 votes. Participants who voted ‘it depends’ mostly stated there was sometimes nervousness and awkwardness from other students or that it could depend on the setting. One participant who voted ‘it depends on the class’ stated they didn’t interact with other students in the class at all. Participant 3 stated they think other students are nervous to say the wrong thing and it holds people back from engaging. Participant 5, who voted ‘a lot,’ said that he receives plenty of support as the president of a club specific to his major and therefore receives attention

from peers but does not know if his peers feel the same about him. Most participants who voted 'a lot' stated that students usually try to help each other in their classes.

Question 13: How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?

P1: engaging (w/ students)

P2: community

P3: connection, understanding, energizing

P4: engaging (w/ students)

P5: engaging (w/ professor)

P6: community,engaging (w/ students)

P7: community, engaging w/ students, supportive

P8: community

P9: community

P10: community

Results: 6/15 community, 4/15 engaging with students, 1/15 connection, 1/15 understanding, 1/15 energizing, 1/15 supportive

Total: 15 votes from 10 people.

The most popular answer was 'community,' with 6/15 votes. 'Community' was defined in this question as 'students supporting each other, exchanging ideas and creating a cohesive, engaging environment.' The next highest occurring answer was 'engaging with students,' which was 4/15 votes. Each remaining answer received 1/15 votes such as 'connection,'

‘understanding,’ ‘energizing,’ and ‘supportive.’ Most participants answered that the sense of community in classrooms ‘increased their sense of community and belonging,’ with a close second that it ‘increased engagement with other students.’ Participants said it ‘increased their feelings of connection, understanding, and that they were supported and energized.’ Many who voted for ‘community’ stated the sense of community in classrooms helped if they were struggling with projects and assignments. Participant 6 stated they learned more taking a class a second time after transferring schools because there was more of a sense of community and engagement in the classroom, even for a topic that wasn't their favorite.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The research findings revealed interesting information and patterns. The patterns supported the research findings of previously published research in many ways. These findings support theory and practice and can be taken into account when adopting classroom models and modes of instruction in undergraduate courses to improve classroom creativity and productivity.

The research findings revealed that although lectures were voted as the least creative class format with 9/10 votes under Question 2, "What class formats (lecture, open studio, project-based etc.) do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?," most participants had classes in lecture format. These findings are shown in Table 3 and Table 4. The most creative class format was project-based, with 9/10 votes, and 2/10 votes for open-studio as most creative. Most participants voted in Question 3, " How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?" not often or not at all, with 5/10 or 50% answering not often and 3/10 or 30% answering not at all.

Furthermore, when asked in Question 4, "Question 4: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?" 5/10 or 50% voted yes and 4/10 voted it depends, with only one participant voting no. Those who voted it depends stated that sometimes there was a lack of discourse and engagement or professors themselves did not know how to facilitate discussions to keep up classroom engagement and learning as a part of the discussion. From these findings, it can be inferred that the more students interact with each

other as part of classroom time, the more likely it is that they are more creative, engaged, and productive.

To further support this, one could look at the results of Question 8, “Question 8: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?” The majority of participants answered yes, with 8/10 votes. Only 1/10 answered no, and 1/10 answered it depended on the racial makeup and sensitivity of students and professors in the classroom. This indicates that 80% of participants felt that class discussions increased their feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms. This means that most participants experience classes a majority of the time that they deem the least creative and do not participate in classroom formats that could enhance productivity, creativity, and engagement most of the time.

These discussion and interactive-based formats are positively attributed again in Question 11 “Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?” where 7/10 or 70% of participants answered a lot, 2/10 answered not much, and 1/10 answered to a degree. Most participants in the study thought they learned a lot from other students. One participant, who identifies as autistic, stated it is one of the only ways they learn. One participant even stated, “Sometimes I learn more from the students way more than the professor.” This supports the literature in the study by Q. Jian titled, “Effects of Digital Flipped Classroom Teaching Method Integrated Cooperative Learning Model on Learning Motivation and Outcome” which argues traditional education is not meeting and addressing each student’s needs and that the digital flipped classroom could provide the means to achieve that (citation). Jian states, “Along with the time change and promotion of 12-year compulsory education, traditional didactic education can no longer satisfy all students.

The reform wave in education is therefore emerged in past years, where the ‘flipped classroom’ model strikes a chord and becomes a trend” (full citation p. 842).

In addition, looking at Question 12 “How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?” 6/11 participants voted a lot, with 5/11 voting it depends on the class, with most reasons for this answer being nervousness and awkwardness from other students. A majority of the time, participants receive help from other students and try to help one another in their classes. This supports the literature from the study in the journal article titled, “The Relationship of Student-to-student Confirmation in the Classroom to College Students’ Mental Health and Well-being” where authors LaBelle and Johnson (2021) explore how students affirming other peers improves the overall mental health of other students. Doing so creates an environment on the campus of inclusivity, positivity, and belonging, which has positive effects on learning outcomes.

In accordance with the literature and with votes from participants, we can see that the anxiety or “nervousness” multiple participants reported that it is seen in their classes when students may feel less inclusivity, positivity, and belonging in the classroom, also noting that it affects their mental state and interactions with other students. Lastly, looking at Question 13, “How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?,” the most recurring answer was community (it increased their sense of community), with the second answer being engaging with students (it increases their engagement with other students).

According to Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley (2014), in the journal article titled, “Support, Belonging, Motivation, and Engagement in the College Classroom: a Mixed-Method study,” Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley state, “Supportive classroom environment

perceptions predicted students' belonging beliefs, which in turn predicted students' motivation, engagement, and achievement in the course" (2014, 661). From the data, it can be inferred that the more students interact with each other in classrooms with discussion-based formats, the more feelings they have of belonging and community within the classroom from the increased support, helping to foster an environment that can enhance student productivity and engagement. Students also learn from each other in the classroom when they do get to interact with each other in these classroom formats and can even help facilitate learning even more when it is from other students.

There were certain class assignments that participants also voted more or less creative that might contribute to how creative and productive participants were in the classroom. In Question 5: "What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?," participants voted 'project-based assignments' as the most creative and 'essays/research papers' as least creative. These findings can be reflected in the Figures 1 and 2. 'Project-based assignments' received an overwhelming number of votes, with 9/10 participant votes. The least creative assignments were 'essays' and 'research papers' as well as 'readings,' with essays and research papers 5/8 votes and readings as 3/8 votes.

There is also the evidence of Question 6: "Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?" to recite as evidence of how creative thinking on assignments might point to more creativity and productivity. Most participants answered yes, with 7/10 answering yes, 2/10 answering no, and 1/10 answering to a degree. This indicates that 70% of participants felt more productive on assignments when asked for their creative thinking and opinions on assignments. Many participants that voted yes stated they were more engaged, energized, and makes them want to participate more.

One could look further at the evidence from Question 7: “How do you feel after doing creative assignments?” 2/17 creative, 3/17 joy, 2/17 proud, 2/17 accomplished, 1/17 free, 1/17 relaxed, 1/17 expressive, 1/17 motivated, 1/17 energized, 1/17 fun, 1/17 valuable, and 1/17 fulfilled compared to only three votes for negative feelings, with 2/17 drained and 1/17 insecure. The data shows that interactive-based and hands-on activities are seen by participants as the most creative compared to all other formats listed. Not only that, but when utilizing these types of assignments, most participants feel more productive when asked for their creative thinking doing project-based assignments and mostly have positive feelings after doing such assignments.

Lastly, teacher encouragement and engagement had an impact on how well participants felt they could be creative. In “Question 9: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?” Most answered it depends for a variety of reasons with 5/11 votes. There were 4/11 votes for those who answered yes and 2/11 votes for those who answered no. This indicates that 45% of participants thought teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely depended on a variety of factors. Many participants who answered it depends mentioned that they felt there were still restrictions in how they could answer, such as racial and ethnic makeup of faculty and students in the classroom affecting how openly they feel could answer or if it would be received well.

Participants who answered yes stated that professors are very open to hearing their answers. offering that their professor tried to have no wrong answers. Participants who answered no said that it was more black and white for them, as they are a legal studies major. The other participant who answered no said that encouragement to answer openly and freely was more outside of the classroom than inside the classroom, especially since many of their classes are in

lecture format. These answers were not surprising, as every teacher is different and no teacher is the same.

What was interesting were the factors that did make participants answer that it depends, such as ethnic and racial makeup, as well as the understanding and awareness that participants had creative freedom but only to a certain extent, as they could understand that professors still sought specific answers and not ones too outside of the box. Another question to consider when considering the impact of faculty-to-student encouragement is Question 10: "Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?" Most participants answered no with 7/10 votes. Only one participant answered yes for 1/10 votes and 2/10 participants answered that it depended on the field of study.

Most participants answered no for reasons such as there was more of an emphasis on understanding the material and mending the problem in understanding course material rather than an open dialogue about failure itself. Some stated that resilience may be mentioned or discussed but not failure as apart of the learning process. Multiple participants stated this is due to the structure of undergraduate courses and that it could be very black and white, with multiple participants iterating "you get it or you don't." Some participants stated professors didn't reach out to students when they were failing their courses and the professor did not create an open dialogue to explore options around course failure.

Participants 1and 9 answered that it depended on the class or field of study, clarifying that classes in the humanities and social sciences had material that was graded on interpretation and effort in thought and offered more flexibility. Participant number seven answered yes and said there was an open dialogue because their policies reflected the flexibility and understanding, such as dropping the lowest grade. This supports the literature of Mahendar (2007), "Students'

assessment of their teachers' encouragement in the classroom for the promotion of creativity," where Mahendar writes, "creativity involves three key tasks, such as encouraging, identifying, and fostering" (2007, 47). "The teacher has to encourage children to explore alternative ways of being and doing, analyzing if their courage is appropriate or to be different, giving children enough time to incubate ideas and provide an environment in which children can go beyond what is expected and are rewarded for doing so" (Mahendar 2007, 46). Participants who felt they couldn't be the most creative because the tasks, or needs of creativity, according to Mahendar, of encouraging, identifying, and fostering, were met to various degrees dependent on the teacher. Many participants stated they felt it was due to the learning structure of undergraduate classrooms.

To conclude, it appears that the more students can interact with each other in an environment fostered by a sense of community, belonging, and support for each other in project-based class formats or with project-based assignments allows creativity and productivity to be enhanced. It could be proposed that when students do project-based assignments they are able to experience such an environment because they are able to interact with other students rather than only listening to a professor go over lecture material the entire classtime. It appears students are able to learn more from each other in discussion-based and interactive-based formats, where they are able to learn from each other with the exchange of ideas and support each other.

Another key element in assessing how creativity and production can be enhanced is how professors foster creativity in students. This can involve being more open in the way creativity shows up or creating more space for creativity with classroom assignments and discussions.

Classroom formats can make a large difference in how creativity and community can be fostered, with professors as facilitators, in enhancing students' creativity and productivity. Due to limited resources, there was a small number of participants that was used as a sample pool for this research.

Further research is needed to assess and understand these patterns and findings. Preferably, a much larger sample size would be used. Limited research was done assessing particularly the role of mental health in assessing student belonging and achievement in the classroom as it related to creativity and production. Further research is needed investigating all aspects of the research such as the role of professors in fostering a creative environment, student belonging, assignments and assessments that foster creativity, as well as peer-to-peer mental health.

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Appendix A

Participant 1 Interview

Interviewer: In general, do you feel that your academic college classes ask for student creativity, creative thinking, and individual opinions?

Participant #1

If the numbers go from one through ten I would say like, three, four at best. Not really much. It's like, really, we'll get a case and it would be like okay, in what ways can we sue this person? Or, like, what ways can we defend that person second? So, it’s really not creative.

Interviewer: What class formats (lecture, open studio, project-based etc.) do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #1

Like I said, the mock trial class at Purchase was pretty cool. The least is probably lecture.

Interviewer: How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?

Participant #1

I think I want to say 2, 3, Max

Interviewer: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?

Participant #1

I also took this history class it was like a seminar that was like more opinion based and asked for our opinions and I would say that was very creative with thought analysis, so yes.

Interviewer: What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #1

When I was asked to like, make legal documents was creative but I think that's really it. Like, it's not much creativity in the law. Like there's very, very little you can. Like, you can already guess you can argue. You get creative with the argument, but that's about it. You can't really go beyond that. Like, I took a mock trial class at Purchase. It was really cool. And our final was a big mock trial. And we had to get creative with the arguments that was really fun. I love law.

Interviewer: Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?

Participant #1 4:09

That's interesting. I don't necessarily think it does. I just feel like you know, in an assignment, I needed it to be done for a good grade. So it doesn't. It's more forced. But like it, I think it depends. I had this one good criminology class in community college and we got to write about any serial killer we wanted. We actually like to use criminological theories. I got to choose Jeffrey Dahmer. So, and I actually liked it because I got to choose like they got like a selection doesn't necessarily like produce more productivity or engagement honestly.

Interviewer: How do you feel after doing creative assignments?

Participant #1 8:31

I mean, I feel like it makes me a little bit mentally drained. Okay, there's a lot of analysis that goes into the law as well. I have to always look at a case, every single side there is. Like, for example, I had this client who was a minor, and they got their leg cut off due to an event. And there were just so many different legal aspects of the case. It was like oh, the premises and then the auto and then the medical malpractice. So, it's like you had to get creative with different cases. There were always different perspectives. So just absolutely looking at all those perspectives and you just say like mentally like, draining.

Interviewer: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?

Participant #1 14:39

I feel like but I wouldn't say belonging necessarily. I mean, like I feel like is like for lack of a better term, I would say it's like I'm more incentivized because like, when I started college and I went into like, straight into law major in like in WCC, like I wasn't sure about it, but then like when I took classes like criminal law, and like when I got to like take my like elective wall classes that it became more incentive. I guess you could say belonging afterward. I'm kind of lying. Because it does. I feel like you know, because I tried it out and I really liked this I felt a sense of belonging in the field. I feel like yeah, you could say been longing actually. Yeah.

Interviewer: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?

Participant #1

I feel like it's more black and white than anything, right? You only get so creative honestly, it just depends. The law is very black-and-white field. Because mine varies just like on a book type of major. You know, I'm saying, right?

10. Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?

Participant #1

I feel like it depends on the class because I took financial accounting one time, and I hated that class, but math is math. I think it's if it's more set, it's harder to not fail at it. But if it's like history or the law, it's easier because there's different ways to perceive things in those different fields. I think it depends on the field. If you compare the humanities to the natural sciences, you only get so much leeway with natural sciences. Humanities is like, I see it this way, I can see you that way. But in science is like no quadratic formula. It's a quadratic formula. You know, I'm saying, right. Yes. So I think it's just based on like, set versus onset things. That's the way I see it.

Interviewer: Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?

Participant #1

Sometimes I learn more from the students way more than the professor. Depends on the class I mean I can't. I don't remember like specific classes. That were like that, as you know, can chemistry? No, definitely. Oh, yeah. The the professor was hearing this, and the students helped each other a lot. So we were all like teaching each other. It was interesting, and my math class. They were like that was really bad, too. I want to say like any STEM class. So it's about like 3 to 4 classes. I want to say. Yeah about. So where I feel like I would. But I feel like I learned more from the soon as I did the actual professor. Yeah, I mean like cause. I went to community college before perjury. So I didn't take any STEM classes that purchase so I don't know how purchase is with STEM, but at least the calls I went to. Oh, I just got really bad, like science and math teachers, and I ended up just learning more from the students, and I did from the professors, because the professors were like non helpful.
And they were really bad. 2 over them.

Interviewer: How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?

Participant #1 15:47
It really depends on the class and how interactive it is. Sometimes I don’t interact with other students at all.

Interviewer: How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?

Participant #1 15:50

I guess just being involved and engaged in discussions helps me feel belonging.

Participant #2 Interview

Interviewer 1. In general, do you feel that your academic college classes ask for student creativity, creative thinking, and individual opinions?

Participant #2 12:41

So far, yes. Everybody wants your opinion based on what we're learning. Yeah. We're still in that box. And of course, we're taking a specific class. So they weren't keen on that subject. They do and they don't want your opinion, but also they kind of want to see it kind of, like, wrong or right. They want your opinion based on the topic that we're learning in class. Let's say sociology. It's more like, well, ideal from which one is right. Which one is right for our society? Which one is better for us and which one should be like, abolished or taken away?

Interviewer: What class formats (lecture, open studio, project-based etc.) do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #2

A lot of my classes have lecture but when they have projects they are the most creative I've experienced. Probably the least creative is lectures.

Interviewer: How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?

Participant #2 20:20

Honestly, I think 90% of my classes are like that. They'll give you all my classes or you're gonna watch videos, you're gonna read some articles about what we're going to discuss and they'll go through a quick PowerPoint, and then it'll be kind of more just discussion. So a lot of my classes have actually been like that.

Interviewer: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?

Participant #2 22:10

When you're learning in a specific class, you're doing something for the first time is really fresh, and you're just kind of trying to take everything in and even remember, the first couple of things. That the teacher just said. So it's like, we don't really have much to say, you know, we're just learning this. We don't, unless it's something simple. You know, we barely have our own opinions on it. So it's not as I would say talkative or there's not much of a discourse in the class because of it.

Interviewer: What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #2 4:42

Going back to the water class, I chose to do photography and wanted more of like, black and white photography gallery type. And what I did was to show basically the spoiled waters. We had to find somewhere in close to us that we wanted to show. I did littering because I'm close to a small little beach. So, what I love is black on photography. So, what I did was take pictures of the beach. It really looked like somebody had a party on it the night before. What I did was blow

it up and then I hot glued buffaloes, my own little garbage to kind of make it 3D. So, we did that. And I wrote an essay about it. And I think that was like the most creative that I was able to get.

Interviewer: Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?

Participant #2 11:13

Kind of because like, once again, our teachers are looking for specific answers. A lot of them are open, like give me an answer. That's a little more creative than what they're thinking.

Interviewer: How do you feel after doing creative assignments?

Participant #2 6:25

I love photography, so it was good to get back outside. This is the first semester that I actually have to go to campus. So having something like that, especially during, online classes. It was really annoying at first. It's like dang, I have to go outside. But once I was able to it was something to get me outside my comfort zone. There's even like photography. I don't really I don't like people watching me do it and it really got me outside and kind of getting my creative juices flowing. Just trying to figure out, alright, “How can I combine what I'm near and what I'm close to, to what my teacher is trying to teach us in the class overall?” It was very informative. You know, we don't really realize how bad you know, the water crisis is and I didn't even know that. There was one activist and that was kind of inspiring to know that there’s more forms of art out there.

Interviewer: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?

Participant #2 11:53

Yes, especially if we get to show the class like what we did with our assignments. We get to collectively look at everybody's assignments, see how everybody sees the world. And it was really fun, like we get to see what creative projects they come up with. And we're like, oh, that's actually a really good idea. And then we can use it and just admire each other as a whole.

Interviewer: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?

Participant #2 9:16

So, yes, I will say it is because some of my teachers are looking for something specific. It's kinda like even though you have to think outside of the box there's still a box, right? So, like, there's still not rules but like um, like when they give you an assignment and say, ‘Alright, this is what you need to do.’ This is how you need to do it. But you still have that freedom. So yeah, some of my classes, yes, but not all of them.

Interviewer: Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?

Participant #2 14:47

Personally, I haven't seen for myself or my classmates see a teacher, like, harshly disagree. It's more open dialogue between the class. Like my team, my classmates saying like disagreeing

with each other, right. Failure was, it's not really spoken about, you know, like, it's college. So they expect you to do right, right. Because either you do it well, or you don't. So, yeah, it's not an open dialogue. I don't like to be wrong personally. I feel like it's more like it's open, but at the same time, they're looking for the right answer. You know, like, it's okay to say how you feel but when a teacher really wants to progress in the class, they want people to understand it and to get it right the first time, or at least the first couple of times.

Interviewer: Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?

Participant #2 14:07

I would say it's not as often. You know, even when we do have discussions not everybody speaks, but like you have those 2 classrooms that do speak but not in my classes. I like that though the one, like a percentage.

Interviewer: How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?

Participant #2 17:01

It depends on the class. it's not that it's wrong. So actually, now that I have class on campus, I'm on zoom. I'll find more people I know. Kind of agreeing with me or, like, just saying, like, Hey, I like that. But not so much when I'm like in my actual classroom on campus. iIt's kind of fun is more of my teachers, you know, agreeing with us like Yeah, and I like that and students are the

aren't as expressive. But like I say, it's more in the chat. So it's, um, I will say, sometimes in chat, but then people will add on to like you're saying, like, hey, you know, like Danny said this than the third or even in the chat still, you know, agree and say, or add on to what you're saying. Like, you know, you have a question or if you're confused about something you know, you'll have students and classmates that will answer it and just like say, Hey, check this out, or, Hey, I like what you said or kind of like that guess girl like that thing. So that's kind of like as far as it will go.

Interviewer: How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?

Participant #2 12:00

And it was really fun, like we get to see what creative projects they come up with. And we're like, oh, that's actually a really good idea. And then we can use it and just admire each other as a whole.

Participant #3 Interview

Interviewer 1. In general, do you feel that your academic college classes ask for student creativity, creative thinking, and individual opinions?

Participant #3

Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: What class formats (lecture, open studio, project-based etc.) do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #3 1:36

I think the least is lecture. It's really just like facts and a teacher talking.

Interviewer: How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?

Participant #3 19:26

I don't know a lot of my classes are lecture. I mean, I don't feel like I do a lot. I mean, like, there's group work sometimes, but it's like a group discussion.

Interviewer: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?

Participant #3 22:11

Yes and no.I think there are some teachers that don't have a good grip on organizing a conversation. And it's hard for some people. I think there's some kids that have this very overwhelming presence in the class and it's hard sometimes for other people to come out and say things because either that person seems a little agitated or the teacher might not know how to bounce back from it. So you don't really want to like, I don't know, it's just hard being around so many different minds and perspectives. Like, it's awesome. But you have to think about what you're gonna say, a lot of the time. Make sure what you're saying is like it's not offending

somebody else up a little. I just always kind of find it stressful because I want to say something but then I'm like, I don't want to say it the wrong way, you know?

Interviewer: What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #3 6:40

I think essays and projects offer the most creativity. I think the least is probably research papers.

Interviewer: Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?

Participant #3 11:39

Definitely. I mean, yeah I guess I feel very engaged in like, in my philosophy class because it's one of those classes where it's just fully engaged because it's a philosophy of the way someone thinks of our existence so it's kind of this deep. I have to be online. But he does a good job of like making sure that everybody's most of the time like paying attention and tries to. Most of my professors try to divide the questioning of other people when they see if somebody is mostly asking questions.

Interviewer: How do you feel after doing creative assignments?

Participant #3 6:20

More like, relaxed and I feel like kind of proud of what I've done and more of like, I'm expressing myself. More like, I guess when I write an essay and like my other classes, it's like,

I'm proud of myself because I know what I'm talking about. And I've done the work. It's like a different self pride when you're expressing yourself through it. So I definitely feel like freer, more expressed and just more relaxed.

Interviewer: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?

Participant #3 12:35

So yes not only because I feel like you know if you feel free to express yourself, or you feel that you have that option of opening to express yourself, it's just being human. If you're not able to express yourself, you're not going to feel comfortable.

Interviewer: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?

Participant #3 7:56

Well, teachers don't necessarily like make me feel like I can't ask a question. I mean, there is like a certain teacher that I feel like if I ask a question, he's kind of just gonna give me a very, like, vague response. Yeah, but I don't think I have any teachers that like, just like, directly, like, don't at least try to make everybody understands. Right.

Interviewer: Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?

Participant #3 10:13

I think like… I don't know. I don't think we ever talked too much about that kind of stuff in any of my classes. I don't remember talking about that. I mean, most of my teachers are very much like, I mean, one of my teachers to kind of put me off like he wrote, we were talking about one of the essays we had to write and he was kind of explaining it after like not being super clear. He was like, this is easy, guys. Like this is easy. And I'm like, like who says that? Like I just so it's like, in that sense, it was kind of like it might not be easy for other people. So maybe we should talk more about why that is right. I don't think I have that much freedom and yet nothing's wrong. Only because like, I feel like with college. Like that's kind of what it is (the structure of college). School doesn't really give much room for people to not understand.

Interviewer: Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?

Participant #3 17:00

I would say not much. Like I said, not everyone is willing to talk.

Interviewer: How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?

Participant #3 15:40

I think I do acknowledge each other but I think like for me and like maybe like a couple of my other classes, like the person specifically I don't see like a lot of people like willing to like say something or like engage with another that much and like, I feel like a sense of like, I feel like it's like a nervousness of like other people. I mean, and like say the wrong thing or like not the acknowledged fully. Yeah, I don't I mean, I know there are some people in the classes that

obviously are like very talkative, like really engaged in liking getting last other people and stuff like that, but I don't see it too much in my like, face to face classes.

Interviewer: How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?

Participant #3 16:47

I think it's just like when I find when I actually get somebody talking to me or like, I want to respond to somebody. It just kind of jumps it's it does like that, that energy of like your classmates and you talking to each other other than just like your teacher asking more questions. It jumps this whole other energy in the conversation where you're like, you feel like more connected like I don't know, like, specifically I was talking to I was talking to my philosophy class. And something came up where I had mentioned like the the month free way of like teaching your children and stuff like that. And my teacher was like, whatever he said, and then one of the students she was like, oh, like what is that and it just felt nice that someone else was listening or I can connect and like someone on my level can we can both have that same view of the world, that same perception and it just felt connecting. It felt more like a discussion with everybody and like, that energy that I get, just like when I'm talking to multiple people, like an active conversation is very like energizing. Just like, connecting with other people just engages me, because it's like a physical light. It's like an external simulation of like, making your mind move and like just human they have like wanting to communicate with each other, wanting to be like understood by each other.

Interview Questions with Correlating Participant Responses

Interviewer 1. In general, do you feel that your academic college classes ask for student creativity, creative thinking, and individual opinions?

Participant #1 12:26

If the numbers go from one through ten I would say like, three, four at best. Not really much. It's like, really, we'll get a case and it would be like okay, in what ways can we sue this person? Or, like, what ways can we defend that person second? So, it’s really not creative.

Participant #2 12:41

So far, yes. Everybody wants your opinion based on what we're learning. Yeah. We're still in that box. And of course, we're taking a specific class. So they weren't keen on that subject. They do and they don’t want your opinion, but also they kind of want to see it kind of, like, wrong or right. They want your opinion based on the topic that we're learning in class. Let's say sociology. It's more like, well, ideal from which one is right. Which one is right for our society? Which one is better for us and which one should be like, abolished or taken away?

Participant #3

Yes, I think so.

Participant #4 21:46

I guess no. I think I feel like it depends. So there's someone right now right, who's doing their senior project on like, black curation in museums. Lately in our class, this is my anthropological literature class or our senior seminar. We have been trying to like gear them more towards the idea of like, Hey, you're talking about what if we made museums black, right? But ignore the inherently white colonial museums. And so we've been trying to challenge this person to kind of in their project, and this might show, right, and it might change a little bit what their project might look like. Yeah, for sure. Right, and someone else is working on nationalism tied to like sports culture, right. You can't talk about that, while ignoring race, gender, like those who think of when you're talking about sports. And so, it's like the word coming from these people it seems to feel like they want to ignore those things. In like the classes. Hey, can we talk about these issues? So it's, like, okay, like, it's kind of a thing of like, there's a certain narrative that all of us have that we're like, Hey, let's go this way, you know, but I feel like people feel like that's constricting. If Does that make sense? So does it writing a piece about sports and you just want to focus on white cis het men? That's what you're doing. You know what I mean? Yeah, I don't know. I also don't feel like that's restrictive. I feel like that's opening people's minds and their world. Point of like, hey, let's look at the bigger picture. But I think the way that they react to it is like, oh, like, but I don't want to. When you get to see on your I feel like people do have that creative liberty because it's all about like, the whole thinking wide open thing. But I think in only certain departments, people are actually pushed to think wide open. Like in the Anthro. Department, you're not going to get into any class without a professor telling you. You need to consider the multiple dimensions of what you're talking about.

Participant #5 12:02

I was gonna I should I should stay on topic, but I was gonna be funny and say like, my imagination allows for creative thought, not like the in class. I would say the department is not like, it's not like we're trying to be boring or anything. I think that like, the good thing about like politics and whatnot, is that it allows us to like, at least from my view is that when professors like take the time to like, explain their actual, like, ideas and their personal opinions, like they want us to like reimagine and imagine different kinds of worlds so like, from their perspective, there is something valuable to like, being in the space but in terms of like, using the space creatively. I don't particularly see that that is the reason that we're there. We're kind of there to understand how the space is used, and has been used if that makes any sense.

Participant #6 11:30

That's a good question. Not always. I feel like sometimes like when I'm in the classroom, like, I have, like my marketing classes here. Like the assignments that I have to do, like Yeah, involves like creativity and stuff. But when I'm in the classroom, like I'm just like, this stuff could have been on Zoom, or like, this could have been like an asynchronous. I don't, I don't feel in any way like, I'm being like, mentally stimulated or that I have to like use like any of those skills. Like I just sit there. There are a couple of classes that are like that. And it's more just like the assignments when I use my creativity more but in the classroom. I feel like there's a lack of that, and I don't know if that's just me. Personally, like in specifically after the pandemic, transitioning from having classes online and I'm the type of person who learns by doing things. And so I guess like I do prefer being in person, but I think I just got so used to not being in person. So when

things like don't, like I don't have to like shoot something or whatever. I'm just like, this could have been online, you know, whatever. But that could also just be me.

Participant #7 9:04

No, not all of the time. Sometimes I feel like my professors just want the correct answer. Sometimes I feel like they are looking for something creative and something that they haven't heard before. But most of the time I feel like they're looking for the correct answer. But I would also argue that sometimes it's just part of whatever reading or whatever assignment that we were given. Sometimes it's not about what we think and it's just about what the text says.

Participant #8 0:03

I was saying I think that I wouldn't say creativity is limited or prohibited but in the field they wanted to deliver. So they only allow creativity to a certain point and some people don't really do it in certain ways. So it's very much like creativity that is acceptable for them to handle type of thing. They don't really branch out.

Participant #9 1:04

Um, I do actually, that was something that I was worried about with my media studies classes and things like that. But um, I feel like they're trying more to gear classes towards like allowing students to actually show creativity even in like, typically non creative fields.

Participant #10 12:23

Like, do. I think that they've been well. Yeah, I, think, yeah, I think overall that it it's been really effective. With my creativity. I feel like I've been given very clear instructions. And they've allowed me like with like different Types of projects to really develop what I wanted to create instead of pulling me back there have been some instances where I wasn't allowed to do that but overall I think most of the conceptions. I was able to really create stuff that I wanna make.

Interviewer: What class formats (lecture, open studio, project-based etc.) do you feel ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #1

Like I said, the mock trial class at Purchase was pretty cool. The least is probably lecture.

Participant #2

A lot of my classes have lecture but when they have projects they are the most creative I've experienced. Probably the least creative is lectures.

Participant #3 1:36

I think the least is lecture. It's really just like facts and a teacher talking.

Participant #4 1:20

I would say the most creative type of classes I've experienced would be project-based classes like my Global Black Freedom Struggle class and the least would probably be lectures.

Participant #5 5:33

Most of my classes are lectures and just taking in the material. Not much is asked of us there so There's not a lot of like creativity in that. An immigration class I took that incorporated a lot of projects like a digital wiki was probably the most.

Participant #6 1:10

My video classes and television classes ask for a lot of creativity and those are project-based. if I have to create like a like a campaign, like a social media campaign design that that is a takes a lot of creativity. And for the least I would say lectures because we're just sitting there and they're not asking us to do anything. It's just taking in material. Just facts.

Participant #7 17:14

Project-based classes are more creative, even if I don't have many. My most creative was my Harlem Renaissance class and that was an English class that still had lectures but we had projects too. The least would be my art history lectures.

Participant #8 0:55

Best format I'd say is probably like a kind of studio space as a doesn't have to directly the studio or even like the lecture hall, but where people are closer together. So like a regular backroom for lectures is like you know, usually the same type of classroom but oftentimes they'll have like, a music class, so I told him to, so it's okay. It's cool because like many that kind of sitting, huddle can be every activity or producer then when you're there for a while and you get to do it there. So

it's also like you're kind of being pushed away the focus, but also kind of around other people and just doing the creative without a direct time frame.

Participant #9 1:36

Um, I would say the least is probably classes like lecture classes, not just assigned readings. Yeah. A lot of readings when it's just like reading and writing and responding. But then some classes, workshop classes, like, class, like that, um, obviously offers more creativity.

Participant #10 12:24

I think the most creative aspect of like my projects, would be like my phone projects. I feel like that allows love creativity, because it's like you're the one creating this phone. So ultimately, you're gonna decide which you wanna make like what camera, end, will you want to use the type of lighting like, it's all up to you, and how the Editing Is going to go in premier. I think the least would probably be lectures.

Interviewer: How often do you take classes where the entire in-class time is interactive activities and all lecture material is presented before class time?

Participant #1 13:07

I think I want to say 2, 3, Max.

Participant #2 20:20

Honestly, I think 90% of my classes are like that. They'll give you all my classes or you're gonna watch videos, you're gonna read some articles about what we're going to discuss and they'll go through a quick PowerPoint, and then it'll be kind of more just discussion. So a lot of my classes have actually been like that.

Participant #3 19:26

I don't know a lot of my classes are lecture. I mean, I don't feel like I do a lot. I mean, like, there's group work sometimes, but it's like a group discussion.

Participant #4 29:57

For literally all of my classes. But for each and every one of my classes there is at least like one kind of rigging or one kind of pre destined situation and we just like go in and engage.

Participant #5 18:23

Not very often. You're given a reading before class and you're expected to do it and like some courses you'll have like notes or prepared kind of things, but like a lot of courses you're just expected to like, come in with like, what the syllabi tells you to have like by that. I will say on a more personal level I don't know, unless it was required of me of that day or in that class. If I've like looked at stuff beforehand. Before the class we're given an activity in class to do then I'll be ready to do that activity based on what I'm supposed to have come in prepared but if given

material beforehand. Like given notes beforehand, I'll probably like glance at it but not like engage and like write stuff down. Coming with questions. Yeah, because I think that like being able to like know like, what the topics of discussion are gonna be, allows you to like be able to like, know where the conversation is going and like what points you can make, elaborate on or get more understanding of. So, free creativity. I don't I don't know about creativity, but I think it allows you to be more prepared for like, actually like discussing.

Participant #6 24:43

I prefer that more usually, even though again, like this is on me. Review the lectures or not argue about it. Yeah, but sometimes I feel like well, I think one example is like the class we took together. Sometimes she would like do like recorded lectures and like for arts management was arts management funding one and then when we did the project for the Multicultural Center, and like we focus on doing that in class rather than that I prefer that way. I loved doing our project like I so because I felt like oh, like I'm actually like, thinking of ways Yeah, exactly. Because like it know when you get out of here in the future, you're going to be put in situations like that where you're going to, like have to think of strategic like ideas and how to do this. And rather than me just like listening to her talking about ways to do it. Yes, she would like here. Here's a real-life thing that is affecting you and will affect the students after you. Like think of some ideas and we'll talk about how to do it like, you know, on the computer by yourself, you know what I mean? Like, I prefer that because it's like it sticks with me, way more. And then just like, you know, sitting there and watching the lecture where I'm like, I could have you could have put this online. Yeah, I feel Yeah, way more engaged. Way more productive for sure.

Participant #7 17:14

Um, not many, I guess with art history, you know, it all kind of connects. And one artists somehow always manages to lead back to another. But in terms of like new materials, for the most part, it's lectures very rarely do we watch videos. One professor assigns us a different reading every week, and that's kind of our entire glass. So then other than that class, I would say that, like rarely, usually it's mostly just lectures and things.I did feel more productive and engaged because it was nice to step away from whatever we were doing and say, Hey, I know we're doing this but I want to show you guys this cool video. I think it just it makes learning less stagnant. And I feel like it makes students excited versus when professors are like forcing students to do it's like the same old dog and pony show. So I think it's very helpful. It's very engaging when the style of learning is switched up.

Participant #8 2:13

Like, not very much.

Participant #9 2:42

Um don't think I've ever taken a class where they ldesignate the entire time. Some sort of like, in class thing. I think imost of them spend a good amount of time going over lecture material.

Participant #10 12:27:

So I wouldn't really say that they do any like sort of like instruction, with videos, or anything like that. It's mostly like my teacher, just talking.

Interviewer: Do you feel that all-discussion class time allows for more creativity in the classroom than other formats?

Participant #1 5:25

I also took this history class it was like a seminar that was like more opinion based and asked for our opinions and I would say that was very creative with thought analysis, so yes.

Participant #2 22:10

When you're learning in a specific class, you're doing something for the first time is really fresh, and you're just kind of trying to take everything in and even remember, the first couple of things. That the teacher just said. So it's like, we don't really have much to say, you know, we're just learning this. We don't, unless it's something simple. You know, we barely have our own opinions on it. So it's not as I would say talkative or there's not much of a discourse in the class because of it.

Participant #3 22:11

Yes and no.I think there are some teachers that don't have a good grip on organizing a conversation. And it's hard for some people. I think there's some kids that have this very overwhelming presence in the class and it's hard sometimes for other people to come out and say

things because either that person seems a little agitated or the teacher might not know how to bounce back from it. So you don't really want to like, I don't know, it's just hard being around so many different minds and perspectives. Like, it's awesome. But you have to think about what you're gonna say, a lot of the time. Make sure what you're saying is like it's not offending somebody else up a little. I just always kind of find it stressful because I want to say something but then I'm like, I don't want to say it the wrong way, you know?

Participant #4 2:00

Definitely. I feel when I'm exchanging ideas with people that's when I get to know more ideas and incorporate them. So I feel like it definitely does.

Participant #5 19:00

Yeah, because I think that being able to like know like, what the topics of discussion are gonna be, allows you to like be able to like, know where the conversation is going and like what points you can make, elaborate on or get more understanding of. So, free creativity.

Participant #6 3:40

I think in some ways it does but it can really depend on the classmates and the professors. Like how much they're really guiding the conversation or if it's something we're excited about. And then other times sometimes the students aren't really that engaged so, I guess you could say it depends.

Participant #7 2:00

I think it definitely does but can depend on the classmates and topic of discussion.

Participant #8 2:30

With discussions I think it depends on the roster as well, because some people don't want to interact more. But also I think it's just like it can be very fun if people are athletes, but also if people are reading the material rather than consuming the report the gauge when people don't get better, don't give a kind of outlet to do something with it or enjoy it or do more than sit there and read. And usually what students don't want to read it. They're just like, oh, I can read whatever. Because realistically, you can read it from anytime, but it's also different than that the creative aspect is what would help drive that. Over usually like people don't usually always enjoy the way that presented already. when you bring something you'd like to remind you of this or that like even having questions. Because you're just talking about material with no like outside insight, or my ability to connect pretending it isn't interesting. The lectures aren't really discussions like it's really the teacher talking. So I've been rolling in questions thrown in activities to do it regardless of what it is like.

Participant #9 3:56

Yes. Discussions, like when it's like open ended and like, you can talk to other people about things. Yes, that's what I mean. Yeah, that usually helps. Felt like broadens my understanding and then helps me like if we have to write about the topic or something that I yeah, it allows me to, like, kind of bounce my ideas off other people or I like that.

Participant #10 12:28

Yeah I have in my podcasting class, we usually, like, listen to each other's work, and then we discuss about what we heard and I feel, like, that's really helpful, because they tell us, like, what was working and what wasn't, working so you can go back and maybe add, those things in and I think. that's really helpful, because it really, helps you improve cause like when you're hearing for the first time you're getting that first impression from other people.

Interviewer: What kinds of assignments/tests do you think ask for the most creativity and which the least?

Participant #1 6:43

When I was asked to like, make legal documents was creative but I think that's really it. Like, it's not much creativity in the law. Like there's very, very little you can. Like, you can already guess you can argue. You get creative with the argument, but that's about it. You can't really go beyond that. Like, I took a mock trial class at Purchase. It was really cool. And our final was a big mock trial. And we had to get creative with the arguments that was really fun. I love law.

Participant #2 4:42

Going back to the water class, I chose to do photography and wanted more of like, black and white photography gallery type. And what I did was to show basically the spoiled waters. We had to find somewhere in close to us that we wanted to show. I did littering because I'm close to a small little beach. So, what I love is black on photography. So, what I did was take pictures of the beach. It really looked like somebody had a party on it the night before. What I did was blow it up and then I hot glued buffaloes, my own little garbage to kind of make it 3D. So, we did that. And I wrote an essay about it. And I think that was like the most creative that I was able to get.

Participant #3 6:40

I think essays and projects offer the most creativity. I think the least is probably research papers.

Participant #4 3:11

Ah, interesting. I feel like this semester in my Global Black Freedom Struggle. I'm taking a class history, all From Haiti to Ferguson with things called history and actions where essentially the professor asks us to make small little projects about what freedom looks like to us or how it is that we exercise freedom every day. Really cool community. Very proud of me just like existing and being throwing myself on my bed like taking walks outside lollygagging out and about. And I like that class a lot because of that. I'm also working on my senior project. I'm going to Honduras this week. And I want to make a video for that class. So I want to make kind of like a little documentary style situation. Because I'm going to be conducting some interviews. So I'm excited. It was like a little cap video of me like around campus and it was just it was fun to make and present. Another history and action we did was talk about two photographs and how and what they represent about us. Though, one of the pictures was of my little sister and the other one

was with me. My little sister was me talking to me about how I was like, very disapproving of my mom deciding what to do with that pregnancy because I was like girl like, I'm about to go to college. You're almost done. And like, why are you having another? Throughout the pregnancy, my relationship with my mom and the whole family, like my sisters, as with each other and as with our mom, we all got really, really close. Oh, even then, by the time of course that Spencer came around I'm the one who named her and that's funny because I was the one who super dense. I was like listen, fetus, the fetus lady. What is going on? She is literally like my best friend like she's with me on campus a lot. like, People know, like Oh My God, is that Spencer? And it's just really interesting. And then the other picture it was of me. My freshman year, I think it was second semester. And it was a picture my friends are sick of me. And it was the first time I ever looked at myself and felt like it's the first time I looked at myself and saw that I was attracted through other people's eyes because I always like Oh, I'm not photogenic and blah, blah, blah. But then, like she did that little photo shoot. And I was like, what am I talking about? Um, and that felt good, because I was always just really insecure. But it's also like these annoying beauty standards that we like grew up with. But I'm glad that I had that, you know. It was good.

Participant #5 5:33

I think my professor is finding ways to do things like a digital wiki and like being able to incorporate multimedia kind of things. But like when you have classes that are just like, reading, like and being able to understand theory, but also just being able to understand different concepts and whatnot. There's not a lot of like creativity that can come from that unless you like to do it that way. I guess like I'll just so like, in turn, research papers in general, don't give you a lot. Either just like do the paper the right way and like, cite the evidence and paragraph structure,

right? Or you like, you know, if you do something personal like ethnography, something that's not asked of you within the paper. So you're kind of just writing the paper the way it should be. And then other assignments, I guess, like, when we do get Simon's like creating a digital wiki or bring in some kind of like multimedia way of explaining something. That was the first time we were able to experience doing that in like a class that I had about immigration. She had us do like additional wiki kind of thing. And there are ways to bring in like multimedia kind of stuff. But like when you're just reading, there's not a lot of like space.

Participant #6 4:10

So assignments, like, for example, I have to create, like a script, and a shot list. And that stuff for like if I took the video classes, or television classes, if I have to create like a like a campaign, like a social media campaign design that that is a takes a lot of creativity. And then the least would be like, for example, just doing some sort of like analysis on like, oh, like an article or something like that. For like, calm research that I'm taking now. I'm trying to think of another Yeah, honestly, like fortunately, since I've been here. I haven't like I wrote my first paper and like a very long time, like, this semester,everything I do is like project based. So it is like, mostly creative. So yeah.

Participant #7 3:43

I would definitely say my English literature essays have asked for the most amount of creativity just in how the prompts are worded and just didn't some of the the themes and things that my professor wants us to cover how what characters she thinks it'd be best that we explore and give our own interpretation. And I think art history essays, ask for the least amount of creativity, just

because they're so most of them are pretty straightforward, and ask you to do exactly what is written down on the paper. You can take some liberties in terms of writing Art History papers, but you can't take too many liberties or you might lose a couple of points or you could just fail the essay in general.

Participant #8 5:46

Projects are the most. It’s limited, there's not much things to leave to collect certain things to make this project. It goes on over a longer time. But also still with projects you have to build the integration was also something to do back then it was a lot harder to have the sides like kind of connected to the material and then go in. And, like, open those tests because it shows that you really need to like no discussion. Because then we go in the notes. It's like okay, they're ready.

Participant #9 4:30

Um, I would say the assignments like in my media studies, we've done a few assignments that actually had a lot of creativity, where we were given freedom to use whatever medium we'd liked, like create the project in any medium like visually do a video or we could write a paper or do a presentation and I think that allows us the most grades. But the least would just be I guess, like basic responses, like readings that we have to do. But even then, with my class Sensing and Knowing is really interesting because they allow free writes as answers to the readings and the free writes give me a lot more creativity to actually discuss what I'm thinking rather than just answer a bunch of questions.

Participant #10 12:30

I would say podcasting offers more creativity, because for the Essay it's like you have to read like specific text based work and then write about that and a lot of that stuff I'm not really interested in so I don't. It doesn't really allow me to be create to like have creativity.

I'm just really trying to understand what I've just read and hopefully formally it into a good response. But with podcasting, I feel like I can, just I can make whatever I want like she, my teacher, and professor. She, like allowed us to like base, our Project around anything that we wanted. So that was a lot of creating right there, because we were allowed to make a lot of projects in there. It was like a real studio, in fact, to work with all like the equipment in there so I was that was a really good time to really like make something that you really enjoyed.

Interviewer: Do you feel more productive on assignments when asked for creative thinking and your opinions?

Participant #1 4:09

That's interesting. I don't necessarily think it does. I just feel like you know, in an assignment, I needed it to be done for a good grade. So it doesn't. It's more forced. But like it, I think it depends. I had this one good criminology class in community college and we got to write about

any serial killer we wanted. We actually like to use criminological theories. I got to choose Jeffrey Dahmer. So, and I actually liked it because I got to choose like they got like a selection doesn't necessarily like produce more productivity or engagement honestly.

Participant #2 11:13

Kind of because like, once again, our teachers are looking for specific answers. A lot of them are open, like give me an answer. That's a little more creative than what they're thinking.

Participant #3 11:39

Definitely. I mean, yeah I guess I feel very engaged in like, in my philosophy class because it's one of those classes where it's just fully engaged because it's a philosophy of the way someone thinks of our existence so it's kind of this deep. I have to be online. But he does a good job of like making sure that everybody's most of the time like paying attention and tries to. Most of my professors try to divide the questioning of other people when they see if somebody is mostly asking questions.

Participant #4 20:39

We haven't done like creative things in classes ever. It's just individual.

Participant #5

I think that like when you're just like monotonously doing like homework that is just read, and that's a sign you're not, especially as a senior like I'm not engaged to do the work that I need to

be doing. So when I'm in that history class and I do a presentation on it, I can incorporate different things from different classes that allows me to actually be more like motivated to want to do stuff because I have to like be in front and present and show that I know we're talking about so, yeah.

Participant #6 13:02

Yeah, definitely. If I have to, like, answer questions and stuff like that, it definitely makes me feel like I'm more engaged and involved because it forces me to have to. Um, but yeah, but then also like, I hate being like, hold on, like a spot. Yeah, yeah. I will professor who warns you so she'll be like, yeah, so I'm just gonna let you know Julianne, I'm gonna call on you. In three minutes. Like, I'm gonna say. Like, I don't know if that's better or worse, cuz it's like, yeah, it's like I'm getting a warning, but I'm like, not a warning enough to like, make me googling what the answer is.

Participant #7 10:04

I do. I personally, I kind of get this burst of energy and it makes me want to work harder, and it makes me want to raise my hand and participate more.

Participant #8 6:45

Yes. I think I feel more like inclined to do them because then I suddenly can do it and not just have to like sit down and like talk myself into it. Oh, you have to do this mindset and more like all of a sudden I can enjoy. Also having them not go away type of thing because sometimes I

don't want to do this on my end and I go into forgetting that for them. I felt like they do. So big breaths.

Participant #9 6:40

Yes, I do.

Participant #10 12:31

I would say, yes, I feel like I'm more creative when I'm given the chance. Because I feel like I create my best work. When I'm allowed to be creative instead of being confined to like a specific set of rules.

Interviewer: How do you feel after doing creative assignments?

Participant #1 8:31

I mean, I feel like it makes me a little bit mentally drained. Okay, there's a lot of analysis that goes into the law as well. I have to always look at a case, every single side there is. Like, for example, I had this client who was a minor, and they got their leg cut off due to an event. And there were just so many different legal aspects of the case. It was like oh, the premises and then the auto and then the medical malpractice. So, it's like you had to get creative with different cases. There were always different perspectives. So just absolutely looking at all those perspectives and you just say like mentally like, draining.

Participant #2 6:25

I love photography, so it was good to get back outside. This is the first semester that I actually have to go to campus. So having something like that, especially during, online classes. It was really annoying at first. It's like dang, I have to go outside. But once I was able to it was something to get me outside my comfort zone. There's even like photography. I don't really I don't like people watching me do it and it really got me outside and kind of getting my creative juices flowing. Just trying to figure out, alright, “How can I combine what I'm near and what I'm close to, to what my teacher is trying to teach us in the class overall?” It was very informative. You know, we don't really realize how bad you know, the water crisis is and I didn't even know that. There was one activist and that was kind of inspiring to know that there’s more forms of art out there.

Participant #3 6:20

More like, relaxed and I feel like kind of proud of what I've done and more of like, I'm expressing myself. More like, I guess when I write an essay and like my other classes, it's like, I'm proud of myself because I know what I'm talking about. And I've done the work. It's like a different self pride when you're expressing yourself through it. So I definitely feel like freer, more expressed and just more relaxed.

Participant #4 12:31

I feel accomplished. Really? Yes. You did it. I feel good. I feel good. Sometimes I feel insecure. I don't like when I'm contemplating like, Am I proud of this? Do I want to submit this? But nine times out of 10 I'd be like yep, I did that. Like proud.

Participant #5 7:48

I think more energized in like the regular assignments because like, everything's work, but I think that when you're motivated to like create something and whatnot that makes you feel like that is going to be more fun, and valuable. Like, even like when I'm thinking about it, like even having to create like a presentation like one of those smaller things that becomes valuable because you actually have to demonstrate, you know, something rather than like, you know, just reading to answer questions and be lectured at and whatnot.

Participant #6 5:38

I feel so like, fulfilled because in high school and in my first two years of college, I was a psych major and I went to another school. And I'm also I also have ADHD, and I'm doing things that I just felt like and sometimes I could still I mean, it doesn't really let me do this anymore. But like, if you're just in taking like you're just taking tests or like writing research papers, like for me, I could easily just memorize the information and then completely forget it. Like that is like what? Like I would describe my high school experience as so. Now that I can't just like memorize something or go on Quizlet I have to like, think of a plan, create it and then if I actually follow through with the plans and everything goes like and I complete it, I just feel so accomplished and I feel like I actually gained some sort of experience in what I would want to do, rather than just like taking a test or doing a paper.

Participant #7 4:58

I feel a burst of creative energy myself. It makes me want to continue writing and or continue on with whatever project or personal whatever that I was working on. I get all sorts of ideas and things and I just start writing stuff. Down. Sometimes they're coherent, and sometimes they're not. But most of the stuff I write is usually for me, and it's not for anybody else. So it really doesn't matter.

Participant #8 5:46

Projects are the most because you have to put effort in. It’s limited, there's not much things to leave to collect certain things to make this project. It goes on over a longer time. But also still with projects you have to build the integration and is also something to do. It’s a lot harder and then have to connect it to the material. And, like, open those tests because it shows that you really need to like know with no discussion. Because then we go in the notes.

Participant #9 6:42

Um, I usually feel pretty good. Because I think that that really shows more of me and more of like, what I'm capable of and what I'd like to do. So I usually feel good because I like to, like, go back and look at it or like, read it. And I enjoy that.

Participant #10 12:32

I feel I really happy after doing because I made something that I wanted to make instead of being forced to make something, and it's nice to show people what I made. And it really reflects like, I feel like it turns out better when it's something that I wanted to make.

Interviewer: Do you feel that class discussions increase your feelings of belonging and engagement in classrooms?

Participant #1 14:39

I feel like but I wouldn't say belonging necessarily. I mean, like I feel like is like for lack of a better term, I would say it's like I'm more incentivized because like, when I started college and I went into like, straight into law major in like in WCC, like I wasn't sure about it, but then like when I took classes like criminal law, and like when I got to like take my like elective wall classes that it became more incentive. I guess you could say belonging afterward. I'm kind of lying. Because it does. I feel like you know, because I tried it out and I really liked this I felt a sense of belonging in the field. I feel like yeah, you could say been longing actually. Yeah.

Participant #2 11:53

Yes, especially if we get to show the class like what we did with our assignments. We get to collectively look at everybody's assignments, see how everybody sees the world. And it was

really fun, like we get to see what creative projects they come up with. And we're like, oh, that's actually a really good idea. And then we can use it and just admire each other as a whole.

Participant #3 12:35

So yes not only because I feel like you know if you feel free to express yourself, or you feel that you have that option of opening to express yourself, it's just being human. If you're not able to express yourself, you're not going to feel comfortable.

Participant #4 28:40

Yes, for sure. When people engage with my work I receive feedback and I think that exchange or those exchanges, like, really foster a sense of belonging for me.

Participant #5 13:28

Yes, because it creates a community of actual learning community. And so you have to actually like when they when you're asked to like teach other people that actually makes not only the stakes a little higher, but like is on you to make sure you understand the material yourself.

Participant #6 14:03

Yeah, I definitely yeah, I believe that for sure. Okay, yeah. When I'm like involved in like the actual discussions in class and stuff like that. It definitely. I feel more like I belong Yeah.

Participant #7 10:31

I think they do. Not only are you getting to, I say understand your professor, but you're also getting to know other students in the class that you might not have talked to before. You could be having like a super fun but like heated discussion about something in class and next thing you know, you tour or hanging out so that happened to you. When I was at BMCC. I was talking to like, students, and then I would run into people in the hallways, and then we would chat.

Participant #8 8:08

Sometimes I speak in classes with a bunch of white men looking at me, so it's not the best thing but I think discussions actively are good. Sometimes you make a point and it bounces off and then people are still gawking and it's like, dang what I said felt wrong so what am I supposed to do. I think having an actual conversation and building off of it, like people asking questions directly and kind of having that conversation rather than just being like, oh, no, I think he was wrong. And here's why. Rather than like talk through it and gather people's point of view is good. So I like that. You know, after doing creative things, I do feel I don't have to do all just directly academic stuff because that's what high school is for.

Participant #9 7:14

Oh, yeah, I do. I'm actually because then when the discussions like open and allows the students to kind of talk to each other as well as just the professor, that really helps, especially, in media studies, I didn't know a lot of people so when we discuss things in class, I got to know a little bit more about how other people are taking the topics and like how other people are thinking about it, and that like helps me a lot. Cool.

Participant #10 12:32

I would say that it doesn't, mostly because sometimes critique stresses me out because I'm I consider myself a perfectionist.So all it really makes me feels like I really have to fix that like, I wanted to look better than what it is.

Interviewer: Overall, do you feel you receive teacher encouragement to answer openly and freely when forming and giving your own opinions and conclusions?

Participant #1 13:26

I feel like it's more black and white than anything, right? You only get so creative honestly, it just depends. The law is very black-and-white field. Because mine varies just like on a book type of major. You know, I'm saying, right?

Participant #2 9:16

So, yes, I will say it is because some of my teachers are looking for something specific. It's kinda like even though you have to think outside of the box there's still a box, right? So, like, there's still not rules but like um, like when they give you an assignment and say, ‘Alright, this is what

you need to do.' This is how you need to do it. But you still have that freedom. So yeah, some of my classes, yes, but not all of them.

Participant #3 7:56

Well, teachers don't necessarily like make me feel like I can't ask a question. I mean, there is like a certain teacher that I feel like if I ask a question, he's kind of just gonna give me a very, like, vague response. Yeah, but I don't think I have any teachers that like, just like, directly, like, don't at least try to make everybody understands. Right.

Participant #4 13:27

Oh, yeah. 100%. Also just, like, hyperactivity. I literally just I get really bored if I'm not interested. And it's just it's, I need to say something. You know what I mean? Like, I don't know, I had when I transferred to Hunter College for like, a semester. Oh, I did. I did not like the environment because I was like, I can't just talk in class like I could at Purchase. Like it wasn't the same. Like, over here, like if you go off topic the professor will entertain you.

Participant #5 9:40

I think that's something that happens more outside of class. Like I don't think that if you were, especially in like, the department like ours (political science), where like, it's a lot of like lectures and like, depending on how the classes are run, it's not like you can just like raise your hand and be like, I don't think the class is going great. I think we need to have like something else like there's space for that a little bit outside. But there's not like space within like the actual like class

to be like, we need to like shift. But like, it's getting better, I would say like that space is being created by I think, from my experience like it's getting better now. Rather than like, from before.

Participant #6 7:09

Yeah, like it depends like in some classes, I feel more inclined. Like, I feel like I have the space and the opportunity and I feel comfortable to like express any opinions that I might have. But I have had professors that just clearly like don't really like care about you too much like they just wants you to hand in this like the stuff and that's fine. But like, there's absolutely no connection for it to be like you feel open and I think also there's just a huge lack of diversity within professors here at Purchase. I was talking to someone and I realized I've only had one professor of color my whole time here and that was the class I was in with you. She was the only one, looking back. I'm like, everyone was white. And everyone else in my classes are usually white. And it's like it certain topics and certain things sometimes you just don't feel like comfortable. I don't know.

Participant #7 5:44

I do. I think that both my literature class and my art history class, have fantastic professors who they want you to speak and they want to hear your ideas, even if what is being spoken about. Even if the students interpretation sorry for my rambling, even if the students interpretation isn't entirely correct, they still want to hear your ideas. And I think that's great because it makes a student feel like they're contributing something.

Participant #8 9:13

I think they tell me to and I have to because I want that grade. But it's also like, I do think that a lot of teachers can make that environment for me. But it's also like, because sometimes they'll be like, oh, like you know, whatever. So sometimes it's the thing where nobody else was talking and they told me not to. So, then I don't know what to do. But also encouragement in some settings. Yes. Mostly. So it really depends on the professor and maybe I don't feel like that, hopefully.

Participant #9 7:57

Um, I do think so very much. Yeah, they really try the professors really try to like have really no wrong answers. Like, we just want to hear your thoughts. And we can use them to like further discuss things.

Participant #10 12:33

Yeah, I would say that I'm allowed to voice my own opinions, that I've never been really like been forced not to speak up. Like to give like my plans in class, yeah, I would say, that I am. I guess I would say, I was encouraged.

Interviewer: Is there an open dialogue about failure and resilience or seeing failure as part of a productive process in your classes?

Participant #1 16:37

I feel like it depends on the class because I took financial accounting one time, and I hated that class, but math is math. I think it's if it's more set, it's harder to not fail at it. But if it's like history

or the law, it's easier because there's different ways to perceive things in those different fields. I think it depends on the field. If you compare the humanities to the natural sciences, you only get so much leeway with natural sciences. Humanities is like, I see it this way, I can see you that way. But in science is like no quadratic formula. It's a quadratic formula. You know, I'm saying, right. Yes. So I think it's just based on like, set versus onset things. That's the way I see it.

Participant #2 14:47

Personally, I haven't seen for myself or my classmates see a teacher, like, harshly disagree. It's more open dialogue between the class. Like my team, my classmates saying like disagreeing with each other, right. Failure was, it's not really spoken about, you know, like, it's college. So they expect you to do right, right. Because either you do it well, or you don't. So, yeah, it's not an open dialogue. I don't like to be wrong personally. I feel like it's more like it's open, but at the same time, they're looking for the right answer. You know, like, it's okay to say how you feel but when a teacher really wants to progress in the class, they want people to understand it and to get it right the first time, or at least the first couple of times.

Participant #3 10:13

I think like… I don't know. I don't think we ever talked too much about that kind of stuff in any of my classes. I don't remember talking about that. I mean, most of my teachers are very much like, I mean, one of my teachers to kind of put me off like he wrote, we were talking about one of the essays we had to write and he was kind of explaining it after like not being super clear. He was like, this is easy, guys. Like this is easy. And I'm like, like who says that? Like I just so it's like, in that sense, it was kind of like it might not be easy for other people. So maybe we should

talk more about why that is right. I don't think I have that much freedom and yet nothing's wrong. Only because like, I feel like with college. Like that's kind of what it is (the structure of college). School doesn't really give much room for people to not understand.

Participant #4 19:30

Okay. Oh, wait. So it was just over email. Sorry. So email me and was like, hey, like, this was not as great as I would have liked it to be. But you've been spectacular in the class and I know you're working on your senior. Like, I'm gonna give you an A overall. And I was like, ours, You're the best. Okay. I feel like it's, I have a lot of freedom here to get things and I'm, like, super shut down by anyone. And it's just like, you either know or you don't you know?

Participant #5 10:55

I would say like maybe not an open dialogue, but it's like an open kind of like, you're not like getting the concept and we had to like kind of like, you know, like, go back and like make sure we understand this. And, yeah, I wouldn't call it a dialogue. I would call it more of like, you know, having to rehash and make sure that students actually understand like what what is happening within the class.Like rehashing and making sure that students like understand what's happening within the class, not like an open dialogue. But I would say there there is some level of freedom there that allows you to like, you know, be able to like, be in on any conversation but like, it's mostly based on what are we getting from this reading? Not what are your personal ideas and imaginations.

Participant #6 9:02

Yeah, yeah. I've experienced both. Were like last semester, I had a professor that like, I was going through a lot like personal like issues like mental health and like family stuff. Yeah. And I'm missing a few assignments, but I didn't think it was like, like, I didn't even I thought I had like a B in the class still, like, I think I had like a C or B. And then, like, I got a notice saying like, Oh, like you might fail the course. And it was like towards the end of the semester. And I was like, what, like there was no open dialogue. About like, hey, like I just want to reach out to you like you've been missing this many assignments. Like, this is like, this is your grade now. Like, you know, like, can you get your shit together? Or like, what are you gonna do? Like, there was never that conversation. I mean, I ended up passing the class, but it took a lot had to do like, an incomplete, but like, yeah, annoying. It was so annoying. And I was just like, I was really freaking out like the whole like, that class is crazy because it was just I enjoyed the class, but the professor was like, so not understanding like, ever. And he was like, what's expected of you is like ridiculous. Like, if you handed I wasn't gonna syllabus if you hand in everything, and like everything completed like you get to see in that class. Like in order to get more than a C you have to do extra and I'm like, That doesn't even make it to me. Like that doesn't make any sense. So when he told me that I was or what I got the notice from starfish or I don't know what that thing is. So yeah, anything I was just kind of like Damn man like you couldn't just like email me right like on zoom the class like you could have emailed me reached out to me and given me a warning, or something. So yeah, so I've had professors that are like that, but I've also had professors that were like, Hey, I just want to let you know, are you okay? Like, I luckily, I've actually had a professor this semester. Like I was missing one assignment. They're like, are you okay? I just wanted to let you know, you know, and if there was more concern, and it made me more like motivated to like, finish.

Participant #7 6:47

I say there is an open dialogue. I haven't really spoken to my advisor much but between my professors and other students, I think there is an open dialogue about failure, my professors. I have one professor who I didn't get a very good grade on an assignment. And the final assignment he has a policy in which you will drop the lowest grade, and he'll add I guess some extra points to the final assignment to boost your grade. And then my literature professor gives students the opportunities to the opportunity to take her comments on their papers into consideration and edit them and resubmit them for either a better grade or extra credit points. More so in my art history classes. I got an assignment back and I got a good grade I passed it, but she wrote a comment and I didn't entirely understand what she meant. So I went and I spoke to her and I was like, oh, okay, and I walked away. Thinking about how I can take her critiques into consideration and how I can do better.

Participant #8 10:31

I think they kind of make it seem like the end of the word a little. Some teachers will encourage you to just not but will also let you fail. Realistically, it's usually because the professor didn't care. Sometimes I think it’s also awkward when people like tried to work it out and then the teacher didn't give them the benefit of the doubt. Feeling like failing is really seen as like, then you messed up so you're gonna have to go back, you know do it again.

Participant #9 8:29

Um, sometimes not so much with like academic papers, because, you know, if you mess up you might not have as many chances to fix it. But there are a lot of instances where they do

encourage you just to do what you can do, and that whatever you present as long as you're giving them something that shows that you were like, thoughtful, and engaging them there, then they allow for like, if you right answer, they don't really mark you down for that.

Participant #10 12:34

Well, I don't think it's really talked about failure.It's more like how I guess, I would say as more resilience instead of talking about failure, because it's like if you have a problem you're just supposed to like figure out a solution to that to create your work towards the end so I guess I wouldn't really call it failure. More just like oh, okay, so this is your roadblock, and we have to find a way to help you overcome that roadblock so you can finish your project on time in class.

Interviewer: Thinking about the full range of academic courses you have taken in college, how much do you learn from other students in the classroom?

Participant #1 13:08:49

Sometimes I learn more from the students way more than the professor. Depends on the class I mean I can't. I don't remember like specific classes. That were like that, as you know, can chemistry? No, definitely. Oh, yeah. The the professor was hearing this, and the students helped each other a lot. So we were all like teaching each other. It was interesting, and my math class. They were like that was really bad, too. I want to say like any STEM class. So it's about like 3 to 4 classes. I want to say. Yeah about. So where I feel like I would. But I feel like I learned more

from the soon as I did the actual professor. Yeah, I mean like cause. I went to community college before perjury. So I didn't take any STEM classes that purchase so I don't know how purchase is with STEM, but at least the calls I went to. Oh, I just got really bad, like science and math teachers, and I ended up just learning more from the students, and I did from the professors, because the professors were like non helpful.

And they were really bad. 2 over them.

Participant #2 14:07

I would say it's not as often. You know, even when we do have discussions not everybody speaks, but like you have those 2 classrooms that do speak but not in my classes. I like that though the one, like a percentage.

Participant #3 17:00

I would say not much. Like I said, not everyone is willing to talk.

Participant #4 27:00

Pretty often. Today, we were like having like a lot of political science discussion. We're having a moment in classes. Just talking about like, laws and like the setup of the Capitol and all of this stuff. I was actually gonna go into political science, but I didn't tell him that. But it was just like, we were talking about a lot of stuff, the quarry builders of the world and stuff like that. It was a really good conversation.

Participant #5 13:35

I would say often. And so you have to actually like when they when you're asked to like teach other people that actually makes not only the stakes a little higher, but like is on you to make sure you understand the material yourself.

Participant #6 21:06

I would say often. I think like, another form is just like when someone is asking me like, they'll find me on Instagram or something and they're in my class and be like, oh, like about the homework isn't that and I know that sounds like oh, this person is just trying to figure out the homework but like, even then I feel like that is a sense of support and like community and stuff like that. But I think it is a whole different story than when it's like online asynchronous. Like there's no like, I feel like I'm alone like I'm literally like, going, Yeah, you're like, completely alone. Like you don't really know what's going on what other people are thinking if other people think it's like reset assignment is ridiculous. Or if they think because on Zoom like you still can have like a conversation with the professor. But on that way, it's like you literally you don't know like you can't gauge what people are saying because support can also be like, it doesn't have to be verbal. Like it's like if a professor says something crazy, and they're like, what's going on? Or like they just nod their head like little things like that. Also, you can tell when someone is on the same page as you and trying to support you.

Participant #7 11:39

I actually learned a lot from other students. Because I could say one thing, and the professor will be like, Okay, does anybody else have anything to say. And then a student will raise their hand and they'll point out something or they'll come up with an answer that I hadn't even thought of.

And it's like, wow, this person is super insightful. And I didn't know that I'm gonna write that down so that I keep it with me for whatever paper or so that I'm just more knowledgeable about the topic.

Participant #8 11:42

That's one of the only ways I learn. Some professors, the way they speak is just not autism friendly. So it's like they'll be speaking, and they'll pick it up as not understanding. But for us, it's like, I have auditory processing issues. It's like oh my God I wasn't listening and they're like be like that's you and I'll be like, Okay? And sometimes they can make you take physical notes, but like, sometimes my hand physicality is not good. So I can't really do that. And then also, like, people are really pressuring about, like, going to the offices of disabilities. But some teachers it's like Oh, well, you can't take notes, then fail. It's like, well, I can't take them all the time. Because I might not be built for it. I mean, I think like being able to listen and being able to see stuff is way easier, like when someone is talking in front of me. I feel like we're just talking. I don't feel a need to receive that information in that way because I have to remember every part of it. Because it'll feel like tension on me.

Participant #9 9:24

And other students? Yeah, a lot. Usually, a lot. I really liked my media studies class. In a research methods. That one I really benefited from the other people in the class because they had a lot of useful things to say. And maybe if I didn't understand something, and one of them didn't understand something we helped each other understand or if they understood it, and they can

help me or just hearing their opinions and like, what they were doing with their projects was always helpful. Right like that.

Participant #10 12:35

I would say, I learn a lot they help me think about my own projects, and how I can improve and what I could do differently, and I feel like it helps impact my own. Works. I'm like, Hmm maybe I can incorporate what they did in their own project. Obviously that is very helpful.

Interviewer: How much acknowledgement and attention do you receive from other students?

Participant #1 15:47

It really depends on the class and how interactive it is. Sometimes I don’t interact with other students at all.

Participant #2 17:01

It depends on the class. it's not that it's wrong. So actually, now that I have class on campus, I'm on zoom. I'll find more people I know. Kind of agreeing with me or, like, just saying, like, Hey, I like that. But not so much when I'm like in my actual classroom on campus. iIt's kind of fun is more of my teachers, you know, agreeing with us like Yeah, and I like that and students are the aren't as expressive. But like I say, it's more in the chat. So it's, um, I will say, sometimes in chat, but then people will add on to like you're saying, like, hey, you know, like Danny said this than the third or even in the chat still, you know, agree and say, or add on to what you're saying. Like,

you know, you have a question or if you're confused about something you know, you'll have students and classmates that will answer it and just like say, Hey, check this out, or, Hey, I like what you said or kind of like that guess girl like that thing. So that's kind of like as far as it will go.

Participant #3 15:40

I think I do acknowledge each other but I think like for me and like maybe like a couple of my other classes, like the person specifically I don't see like a lot of people like willing to like say something or like engage with another that much and like, I feel like a sense of like, I feel like it's like a nervousness of like other people. I mean, and like say the wrong thing or like not the acknowledged fully. Yeah, I don't I mean, I know there are some people in the classes that obviously are like very talkative, like really engaged in liking getting last other people and stuff like that, but I don't see it too much in my like, face to face classes.

Participant #4 27:32

People like to just engage with my work and my words a lot which I love. That makes me really happy. Like when I'm in class and interested.

Participant #5 16:11

Well, I think I would say, and I guess this is more personal like, in terms of, my own self, I run a club that's about our major. So I received a good amount of attention from my peers that are interested in that and are serious about the work and whatnot. So I would say I receive a good amount of attention. But in my opinion, I don't know if my other peers feel the same like people

who might come through and take a political science class versus or people who are like, just like, getting through the classes in the major just because like, I don't know, how much and if they are receiving enough attention to be like, able to like you know, really feel like they're they get it or like they're they're doing well or they can just gauge how they're doing.

Participant #6 19:40

Honestly, I feel like at least this semester and like in the past I do feel like when I like there's critiques and stuff like that. There is a pretty good support, like people are pretty like, like, you know, Oh, I like this, or, you know, this could have been done better, but it's still a form of support, even if it's not like, I love this. I think it's so important to be like Oh, I think this could have been improved in this way. And so I do feel like from other students, I do feel like, you know, but it also depends on the class, but at least now I feel like there is some degree of support and I think, in general if we are in a class where the professor is like bugging and doing the most thing we have in vain. And even that, in itself, is support because you're not in alone. And like feeling crazy, you know?

Participant #7 11:39

I actually learned a lot from other students. Because I could say one thing, and the professor will be like, Okay, does anybody else have anything to say, sorry. And then a student will raise their hand and they'll point out something or they'll come up with an answer that I hadn't even thought of. And it's like, wow, this person is super insightful. And I didn't know that I'm gonna write that down so that I keep it with me for whatever paper or so that I'm just more knowledgeable about the topic.

Participant #8 13:13

I think it depends, but sometimes they'll interact with me in some settings. In person, it's a little more awkward that people don't really want participate.

Participant #9 10:36

Like I feel like they are very attentive to when other students talk and they try to be respectful and they always help was they can usually starts like a dialogue that allows for like some sort of communication. So I'd say that it's it's nice to like discuss in class with other students. They usually like they usually help a lot. And even if you don't understand something, they don't take that as like a wrong thing. They just try and help you understand.

Participant #10 12:36

Oh! I guess I I receive a little bit like when it's time to present my work, then everyone's attention is on my own stuff, and vice versa if you look in at a class setting we're not really focused on other people. Yeah, so in my classes, we usually try to help each other out. You can give suggestions on our projects, and I really like a good creative space, cause like I do like those discussions. It's really helpful. I was like, oh, maybe you could try doing this instead of that.

Interviewer: How does interaction with other students in class increase your sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom?

Participant #1 15:50

I guess just being involved and engaged in discussions helps me feel belonging.

Participant #2 12:00

And it was really fun, like we get to see what creative projects they come up with. And we're like, oh, that's actually a really good idea. And then we can use it and just admire each other as a whole. (creates community)

Participant #3 16:47

I think it's just like when I find when I actually get somebody talking to me or like, I want to respond to somebody. It just kind of jumps it's it does like that, that energy of like your classmates and you talking to each other other than just like your teacher asking more questions. It jumps this whole other energy in the conversation where you're like, you feel like more connected like I don't know, like, specifically I was talking to I was talking to my philosophy class. And something came up where I had mentioned like the the month free way of like teaching your children and stuff like that. And my teacher was like, whatever he said, and then

one of the students she was like, oh, like what is that and it just felt nice that someone else was listening or I can connect and like someone on my level can we can both have that same view of the world, that same perception and it just felt connecting. It felt more like a discussion with everybody and like, that energy that I get, just like when I'm talking to multiple people, like an active conversation is very like energizing. Just like, connecting with other people just engages me, because it's like a physical light. It's like an external simulation of like, making your mind move and like just human they have like wanting to communicate with each other, wanting to be like understood by each other.

Participant #4 28:50

I definitely engage more for sure.

Participant #5 17:15

I will say it looks like a check in it looks like an email like, stuff like that. It looks like the professor actually like engaging with you and being like, I have like work for you or I have like different ideas that I want to implement. It looks like that I would say like and I think most college classes are like that where like, if you don't make yourself known, the professor's not gonna go look for you. So the fact that like, I have on my end made Myself known and open contributes to like a professor being like, you know, everything good. whatnot kind of thing.

Participant #6 22:34

I think it really has an effect on me personally, because I am a like, I'm someone who really like bounces off other people's energy and stuff like that and it's the class is really like like, we're, you

know, we're all in this together. Even if it's a subject that I don't love, it really does help me because I enjoy just going to the class because of the people as well. And I think that's really the best because like, yeah, you could have like, a bad professor, but sometimes like if you guys get together and like are like, we're going to talk to them and like hopefully they can understand that this assignment is crazy or this and that, that can really help things. And I this was an app purchase by my old school. I remember I failed a class I was that's when I was a psych student. Because I got like COVID like during the finals and the person was like, Oh, I don't care like whatever. So I automatically failed because of it. And I had to and I during that class, I never engaged this is on Zoom. I was never engaged at all. Like everybody was like silent. No one spoke. It was just that. So I had to retake the same one. And I've literally learned so much more the second time and not because information was being repeated to me, but because the whole class had more of a sense of community. And the whole class was like really supportive of each other. And I feel like that really makes a difference. So it made me way more engaged and productive. Even though the topic wasn't like my favorite. It did make me like more engaged.

Participant #7 11:00

And then there's one girl in my Harlem Renaissance. Class, like, we just started talking about something and now every time I see her, it's like, Hey, how are you? And she gives me a hug and we'll walk out together and stuff like that. So yeah, it does.

Participant #8 13:20

So just like trying to bounce off what I say now, a lot of direct acknowledgment and some forces but and others I find that, you know, it's kind of like everybody helping each other out and

because professor is really not doing what they're supposed to do. So I think it's like everybody was like genuinely struggling together kind of because it was just we were like, Okay, well, no, we can too share. Study overpowers. University professor was just, it wasn't working out.

Participant #9 11:43

Yeah, like I said, If I don't understand something, I might feel a loss. But if they're talking about it, and then they talk to me about it. And we sort of have that dialogue between each other. That just helps my understanding of the material. If we're doing a project I can hear what their ideas are, and that might help me with my idea, or like, I'm like, bounce my ideas off of them, and then we all just help each other.

Participant #10 12:37:25

I would like say like it increases my creativity, a lot, especially when we ask for until there's help on our project cause a lot of us, like to help each other out if we're struggling with something, so I think it does create a good sense of belonging, because it feels like you're not by yourself doing this. Right. It's like oh, you have this whole like community behind you, helping you