Improving Online Learning for Emily Carr Undergraduate Students during COVID19
Research Project - Survey Results

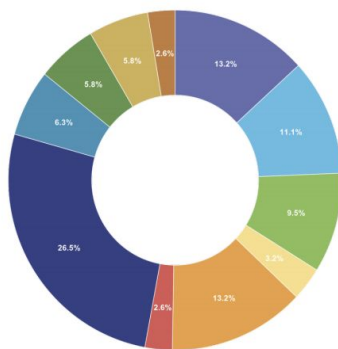Selina Huang, Catherine Koh, Francisca Kurnia

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The survey is focused on two main goals: confirming hypotheses built from secondary research as well as gathering qualitative data for next steps. 189 undergrad students across majors and years participated in our survey over the span of 3 weeks.

Our survey consisted of 25 quantitative data and qualitative data questions around student online learning experiences in the fall semester. The first section goes over basic information to ensure we are gathering data from students across the university. The second section gathers data on the students online learning experience, the third on community building and the final section on concluding thoughts.

Section I: Basic Information

Q1 - "Please select your major of study."
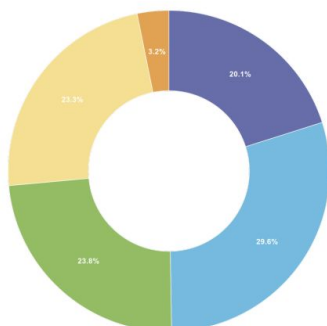

Q2 - "Please select your year of study."

Q3 - "Are you a domestic or international student?"

Q3 Are you a domestic or international student?*
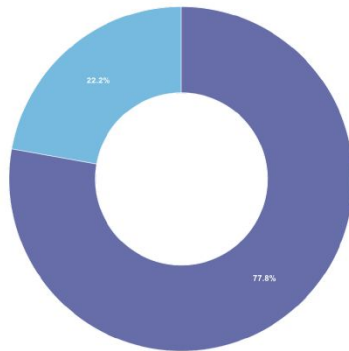
Answered: 189   Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Domestic	147
International	42

Q4 - "Are you a full time or part time student?"

Q4 Are you a full time or part time student?*
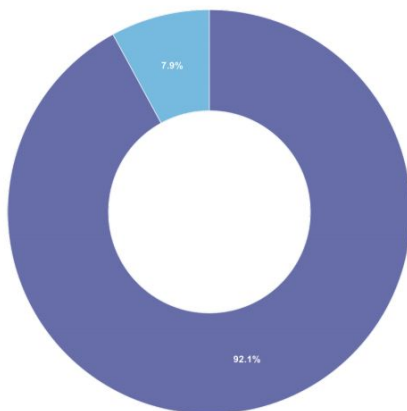
Answered: 189   Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Full time	174
Part time	15

Section II: Online Learning Experience

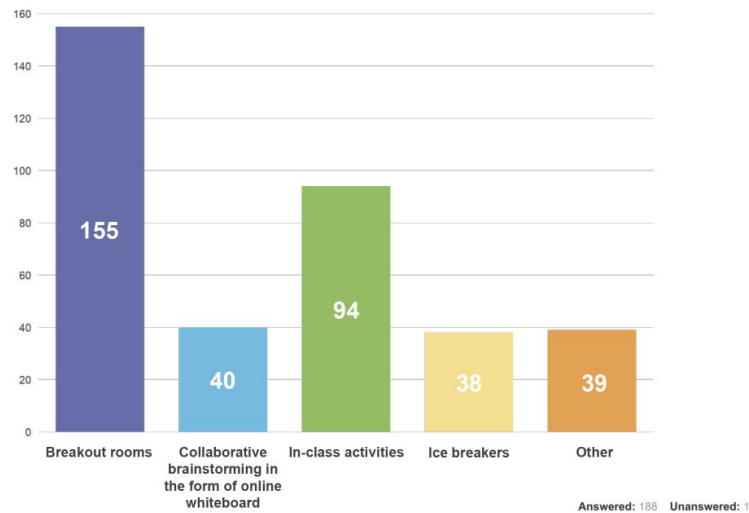**Q5 - "What kind of activities do instructors have in place that help increase your engagement level?" (Multiple Choice with a section for "Other: written")**

Q5 What kind of activities do instructors have in place that help increase your engagement level?

Key points from 'other' option :
- Some students have stated they have not experienced any of the following activities.
- Other activities mentioned included forum engagement, class guideline creation and collaborative work.

Q6 - "What kind of things induce anxiety in synchronous online classrooms? (synchronous learning meaning in real-time ie. zoom or bluejean calls)"

Q6 What kind of things induce anxiety in synchronous online classrooms? (synchronous learning meaning in real-time ie. zoom or bluejean calls)
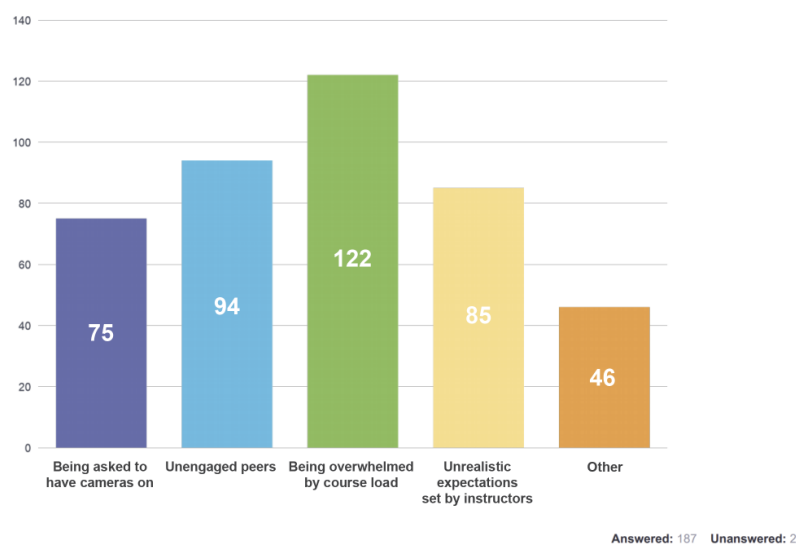
Key points from 'other' option :
- Many students find the classes to be overwhelmingly long and there is a great pressure to participate verbally, rather than in written format and hence some have been called out for not speaking.

- Many cite a lack of clarity in class schedule and having a disorganized class environment, this in turn has affected their ability to understand the material and to do assignments as given.
- Lack of communication between students and instructors makes it difficult for students to seek support or aid when needed, many have mentioned the lack in response to emails.

Q7 - "Do you prefer asynchronous or synchronous lectures?"

Do you prefer asynchronous or synchronous lectures?

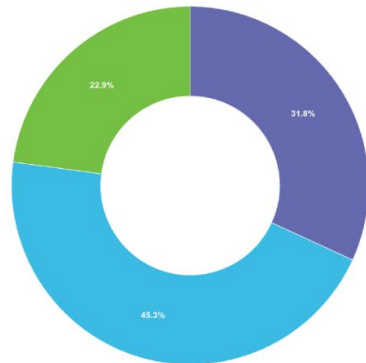|	Answered: 189 Unanswered: 0	
Choice		Total
Asynchronous lectures		59
Synchronous lectures		93
Indifferent		48
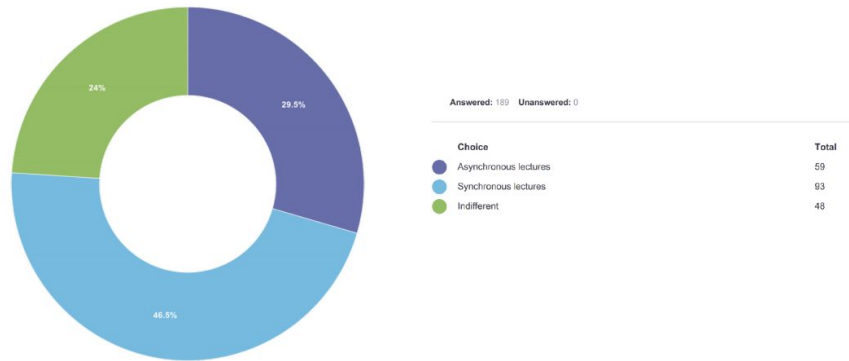
Q8 - "Please feel free to expand."

- Synchronous classes were mainly viewed positive, citing how synchronous sessions create a balanced and set schedule allowing for structure in their education.
- Asynchronous classes were viewed as being more flexible and prompted the ability to learn at different paces
- Synchronous sessions caused more stress due to lack of motivation and the inability to have a more flexible schedule outside of class.
- A concern raised about asynchronous sessions was the feeling of detachment from class, students felt isolated in their learning.
- Possible solutions mentioned were to reflect on what classes benefit from which setting, many students brought up the idea of having classes be mainly synchronous sessions intertwining with occasional weekly breaks of asynchronous sessions.

Q9 - "Do you prefer asynchronous feedback sessions (slack/moodle/other online platforms) or synchronous feedback sessions (bluejeans/zoom online meetings?)"

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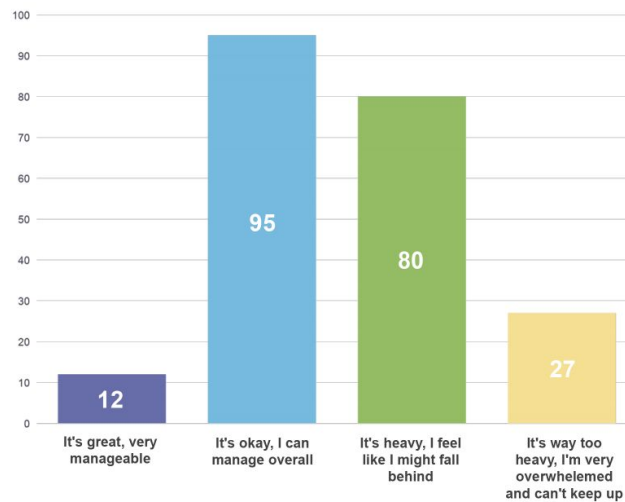
Answered: 188   Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Asynchronous sessions	64
Synchronous sessions	91
Indifferent	46

31.8%
45.3%
22.9%

Q10 - "Please feel free to expand."

- Synchronous sessions allow for immediate feedback and the ability to ask questions, it is the closest version to an in person critique.
- Asynchronous sessions provide more ability to go back and reflect on the given feedback, statements may be more reflective and there is more time to think and understand the information.
- Synchronous feedback sessions cause a lot of anxiety as many times it is mainly the instructor speaking, it is significantly harder to speak up in an online environment.
- Asynchronous feedback sessions feel a lot less personal and more distant, it may also take longer to get feedback from an instructor or peers.
- Depending on the context, many students feel that different kinds of feedback sessions may benefit certain assignments. Some suggestions are to use synchronous feedback for main projects and asynchronous for minor assignments.

Q11 - "How do you feel about your course load?"
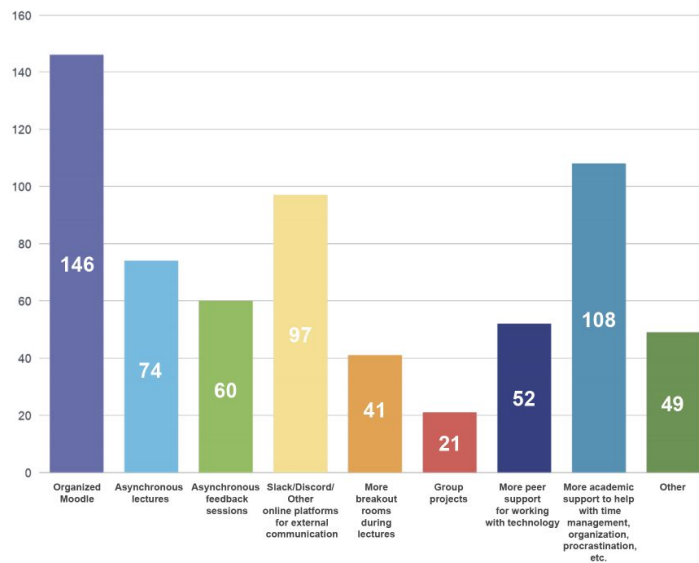
Q12 - "What do you think would help students with online learning?"
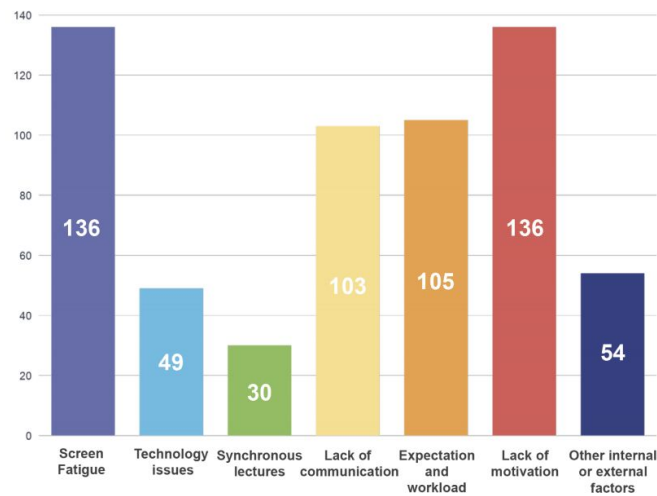
Key points from 'other' option :
- Students have expressed how they would like more demonstrations and a clear schedule and evaluation rubric, it may be also helpful to post meeting recordings for reference.
- A large number of people have stated that there have been an overwhelming amount of group work and projects, which has affected scheduling and time management, especially for those who live outside Canada.
- Focusing less on bigger projects and more on smaller projects or ideation was mentioned as a way to allow students more practice and to build more technical skills.

Q13 - "For you, what is the hardest part of online learning?"

Answered: 189   Unanswered: 0

Key points from 'other' option :
- Lack of support and communication has caused a decline in the mental health of some students.
- Being in a home environment and having to be focused and productive can be difficult and many students have expressed the lack of interest they have for studying due to their working environment. It may be also difficult for students whose work depends a lot on materials or different modes of technology other than laptops or computers.
- Many students have noted that there is an overwhelming amount of group work in their online classes and have explained how they view it as a stress factor having to navigate setting up meeting times as well as having stable communication during the pandemic.


Q14 - "How has online learning experience affected your accountability and time management?" (Written)
- A major concern cited was the impact of screen fatigue and its effect on loss of motivation and accountability, there's been an overwhelming amount of burn out from the amount of time spent on a screen.
- With the online setting, many students mentioned that due to the lack of motivation, they've seen major declines in their mental health and a build up of unhealthy habits, work has become more about getting it done rather than creativity.
- Many international students expressed the impact of the major change in their sleep schedule and cannot find a sense of balance through the exhaustion.
- The set of expectations for students' performance is seen as unrealistic and workload is considered too overwhelming for the amount needed to do independently.

Q15 - "What are some tactics instructors have in place to keep asynchronous learning engaging and helpful?"

Q15 What are some tactics instructors have in place to keep asynchronous learning engaging and helpful?

Answered: 179   Unanswered: 10
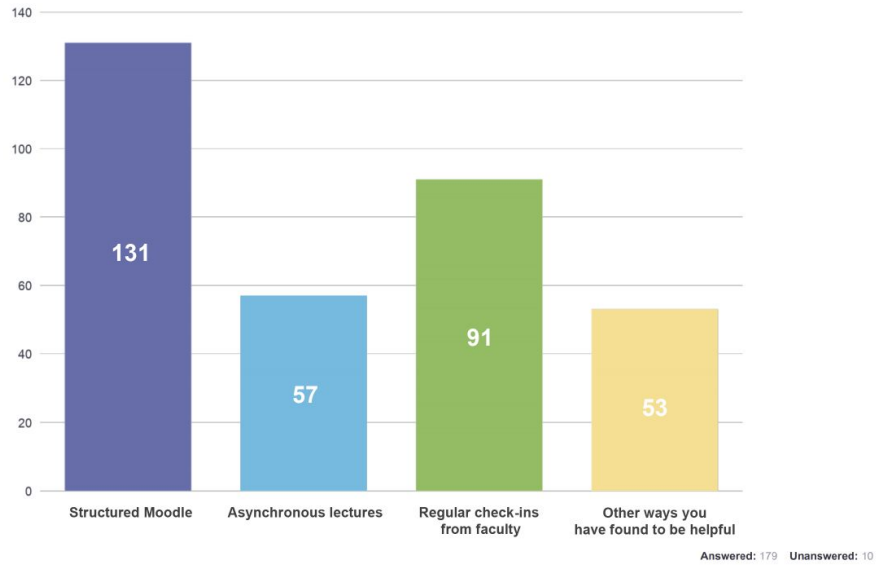
Key points from 'other' option :
- In asynchronous classes, students have mentioned the use of weekly forums helped in keeping on track with the course as well as having flexibility to do work when they can.
- One on one meeting times would be beneficial to fostering a relationship between the instructor and the student, as many students have pointed out the lack of communication in asynchronous classes and the difficulties connecting with the class.

Q16 - "What are some frustrations with navigating new technologies to accommodate online learning?"

Q16 What are some frustrations with navigating new technologies to accommodate online learning?
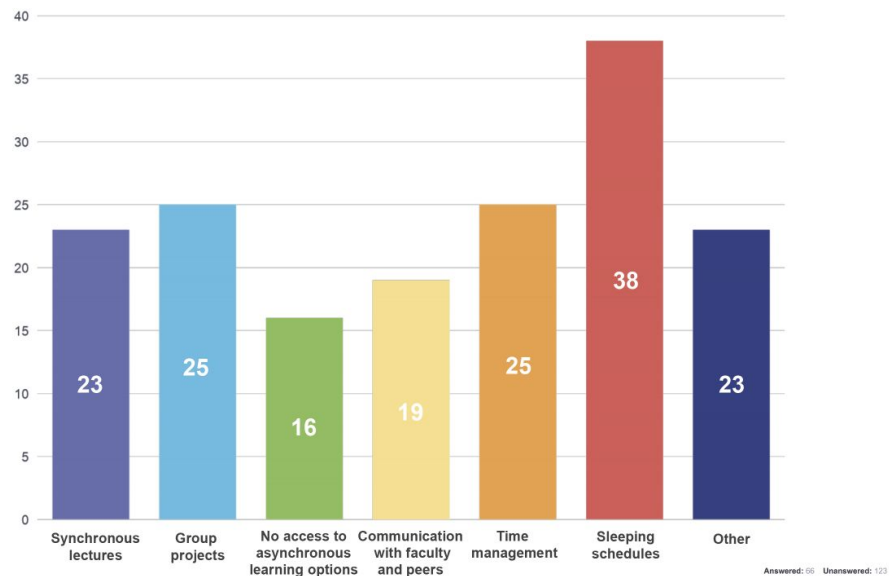
Answered: 175   Unanswered: 14
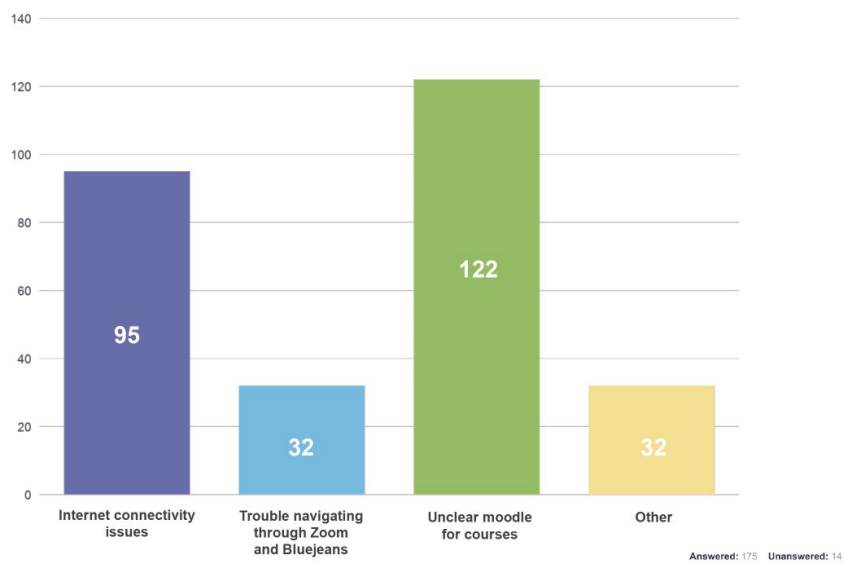
Key points from 'other' option :
- The moodle network is very disorganized and heavily filled with too much content, it may be very overwhelming for students to navigate all the different readings or assignments given.
- Some students feel isolated in their learning and are still unfamiliar with certain technologies.

Q17 - "If you are learning in a different timezone outside of Vancouver, are there factors that negatively influence your online learning experience? (didn't have anything)"

Q17 If you are learning in a different timezone outside of Vancouver, are there factors that negatively influence your online learning experience?

Answered: 66 Unanswered: 123

Key points from 'other' option :
- The moodle network is very disorganized and heavily filled with too much content, it may be very overwhelming for students to navigate all the different readings or assignments given.
- Some students feel isolated in their learning and are still unfamiliar with certain technologies.

Q18 - "How many hours are you spending on synchronous class-related zoom/bluejeans calls a week (per 3 credit courses)?"
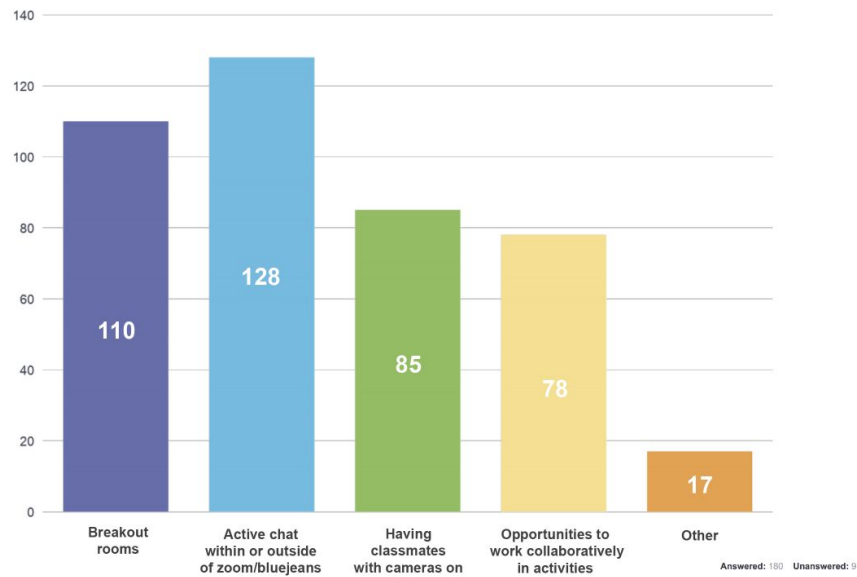

Q18 How many hours are you spending on synchronous class-related zoom/bluejeans calls a week (per 3 credit courses)?

Answered: 186 Unanswered: 3
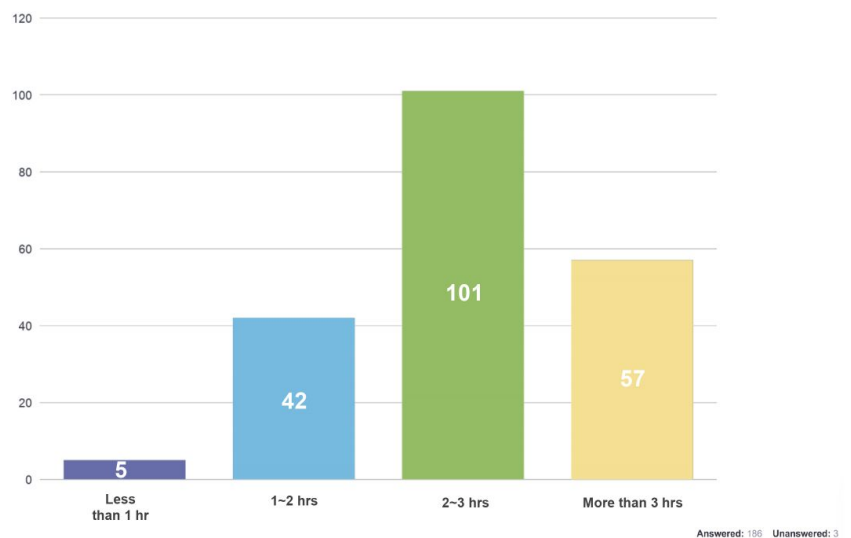
Section III: Community

Q19 - "What are ways that help with keeping up engagement with your peers in class?"
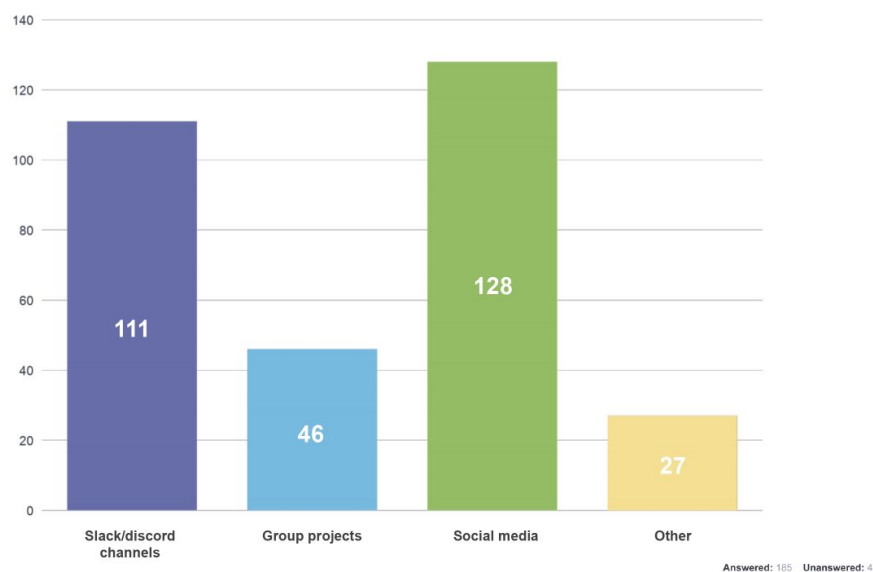

Key points from 'other' option :
- As courtesy, it will be nice for students to have cameras on during critiques to allow people to present and show support to each other.
- Collaborating in work has been suggested by many students as a way of engaging more with peers.

Q20 - "What are ways that help with keeping up engagement with your peers outside of class?"
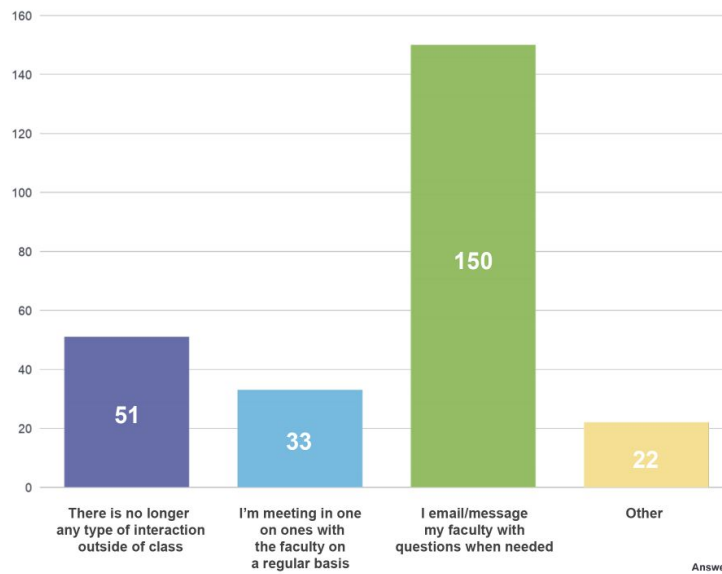

Key points from 'other' option :
- Some students mentioned having forums to connect with peers outside of class time.

- There have been some students who have expressed not wanting to engage outside of class and that they only engage if needed.

Q21 - "How have you been interacting with your faculty during covid?"

Q21 How have you been interacting with your faculty during covid?

Key points from 'other' option :
- Having one-on-one sessions with instructors help build more connections between them and students.
- Many students have reached out to faculty through email but have not received any response. They have also said it is difficult to have interactions with critical studies instructors given the environment of the course.

Section IV: Conclusion

Q22 - "On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the worst and 10 being the best), how would you rate your overall online learning experience?"
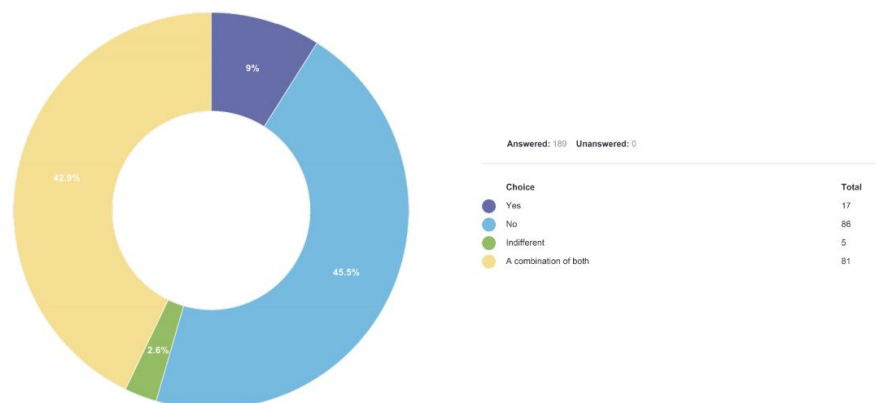

Q22 On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the worst and 10 being the best), how would you rate your overall online learning experience?

1	5.32	9
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
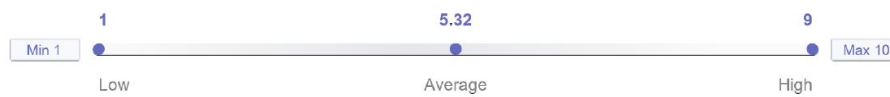
Answered: 189   Unanswered: 0

Q23 - "Do you prefer online learning?"

Q23 Do you prefer online learning?

Answered: 189   Unanswered: 0

Choice	Total
Yes	17
No	86
Indifferent	5
A combination of both	81

Q24 - "Do you prefer online learning? Why/Why not?" (Written)

- The online learning environment can feel isolating to students and many states feel a lack of support from faculty, there has been a loss of sense of community. It is nearly impossible to form sustainable relationships with instructors and other classmates

- Students understand that due to the current global situation, online learning is the only and best option but many mentioned that a lot of courses were not equipped to transition online, some bigger problems being how art is hands on by nature and the difficulty to receive adequate feedback.
- Many students described the amount of stress, given the global pandemic, has affected their mental well-being, the inability to manage a healthy schedule in their personal lives. The excessive workload and expectations cause a great amount of anxiety.

Q25 - "Any last thoughts or general feedback you would like to give?" (Written)

- Some suggestions to improve the online learning experience were to reduce the amount of screen time students and faculty are spending in class on zoom and combining synchronous and asynchronous elements into courses.
- Many students expressed they would like more check-ins from instructors about their well-being and for them to be aware about different life situations that surround different people. Especially for those who are living in different time zones, consideration of different life factors should be taken into account.
- Majority of students asked for workload and expectations to be realistic considering the circumstances right now, some possible solutions raised were to adjust the grading system to take into account the format of classes and to clarify class syllabus to how the course will run in an online setting.