



Sway Assignment Report

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Redefining Womanhood Through Language, Inclusion, Sports Segregation, and Pronoun Practices

📅 Timelines

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Completion deadline: | May 13, 2025, 04:00 PM |
| Opinion deadline: | Apr 23, 2025, 03:00 AM |

📘 Info

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Instructor: | [Redacted] |
| Min. chat time: | 35 minutes |
| Created on: | Apr 22, 2025, 03:16 AM |
| Chat threads: | 7 (6 disagree) |

📖 Topics

gender language

We should always refer to women who are not transgender as "cisgender women" to make clear that cisgender women and transgender women (just like Black women, white women, short women, and so on) are different categories of women.

how to define 'woman'

Defining women as "adult human females" is hateful because it denies that transgender women are women.

pregnant people

It is better to speak of pregnant people, than pregnant women, to be inclusive of nonbinary people and trans men who can also be pregnant.

pronouns

It is affirming and positive to encourage people to share their pronouns in their email signatures, on social media, or on name tags.

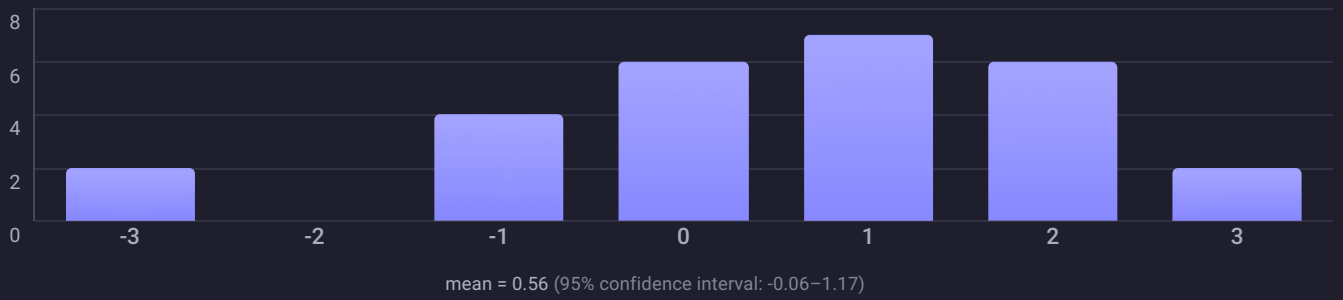
the decertification of sex/gender

I would support changing laws so that the state no longer legally designated a baby as male or female at birth.

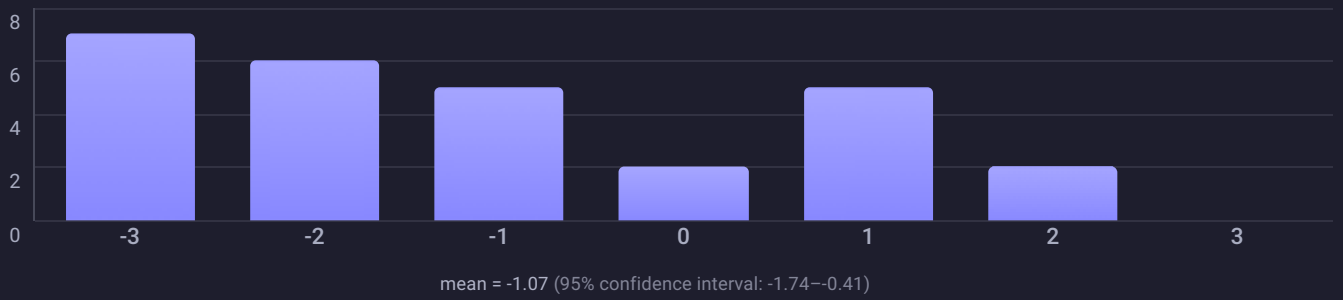
📊 Opinion Distribution

📘 Opinion scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree. Mean and 95% CI shown below each chart.

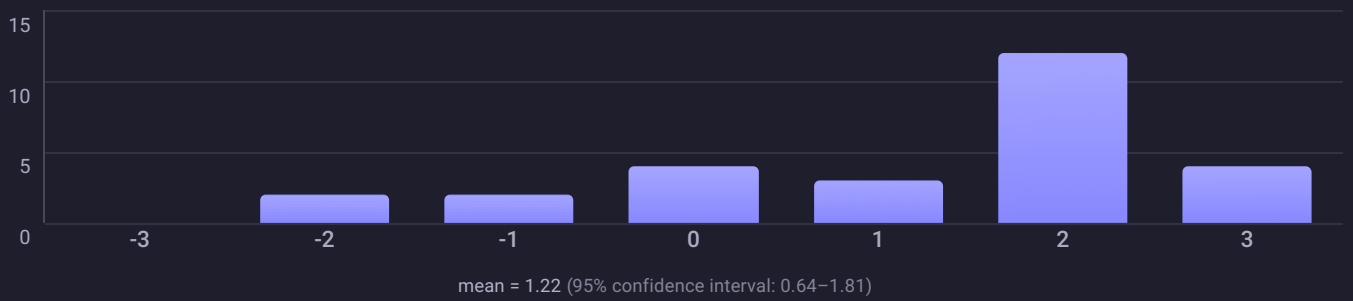
how to define 'woman'



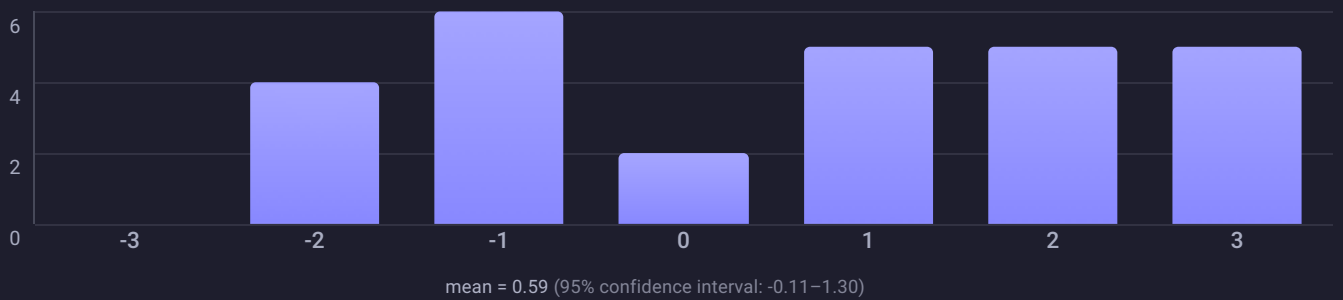
gender language



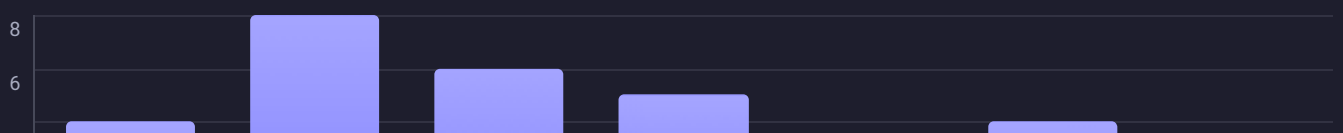
pregnant people

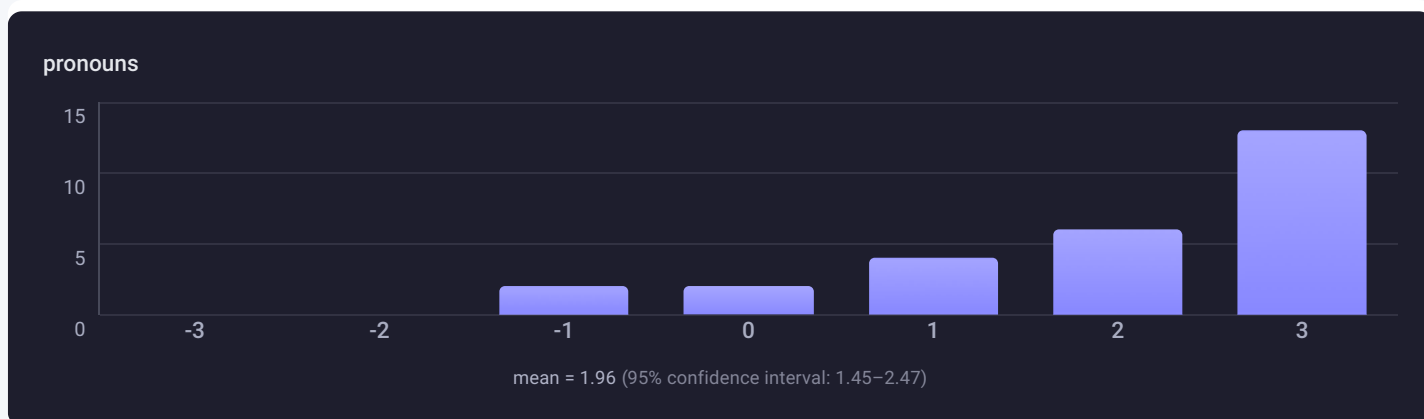
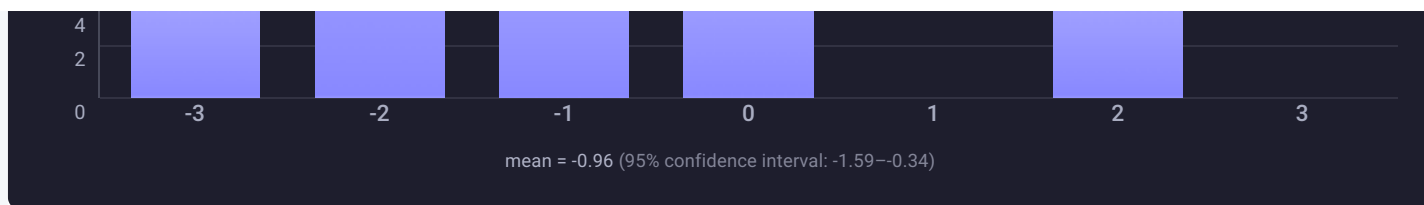


women's sports



the decertification of sex/gender





Instructor Report

For this assignment, pairs (and occasional trios) of students used Sway to debate definitions of sex and gender, trans inclusion in women's spaces, the ethical use of labels like "cisgender woman," and fairness in sex-segregated sports. They wrestled with biological versus social criteria, context-dependent qualifiers, and operational rules for inclusive yet fair competition, while guided by an AI moderator named Guide.

Themes

- **Students repeatedly examined the difference between biological sex and social gender.** Whether defining "woman" or setting sports categories, debates hinged on separating anatomy, hormones, and lived experience.
- **Context emerged as crucial for labeling decisions.** Qualifiers like "cisgender" or "transgender" were seen as empowering in some settings (medical cases, lived-experience discussions) but potentially othering if mandated in everyday language.
- **Fairness versus inclusion created a constant tension.** Whether in defining sport divisions or naming conventions, students balanced equitable competition and respect for identity, often invoking real-world examples like hormone therapy thresholds or chess performance.

Common ground

- **Most groups agreed qualifiers have situational value.** They saw labels like "cisgender woman" as useful when discussing distinct experiences or medical needs but counterproductive if applied universally.
- **There was broad support for context-specific distinctions in sports.** Students converged on the idea that medical or performance data (hormone levels, muscle mass) should drive eligibility rather than pure identity categories.
- **Students recognized overlap in capability despite average group differences.** In sports discussions, they noted that significant performance overlap suggests more nuanced classification systems (e.g., weight or hormone classes) rather than strict male/female splits.

Persistent disagreements

- **Whether self-identification should override biological definitions.** Some students held essentialist views that biology alone determines categories, while others argued lived identity and social recognition must take precedence.
- **The necessity of overtly marking gender in everyday language.** Disagreement persisted over whether always labeling cisgender women as "cis" mirrors other shaming labels or empowers nuanced dialogue.
- **How many divisions sports should have.** Proposals ranged from maintaining two categories to adding nonbinary or marginalized divisions or switching to non-gender-based metrics, exposing trade-offs in fairness, logistics, and international acceptance.

Guide's role

- **Guide pushed students to test assumptions with edge-case scenarios.** It asked tough questions—about atypical upbringings or alternative classification systems—that revealed hidden tensions in students' views.

- **It demanded concrete operational details.** Whether setting hormone thresholds or labeling protocols, Guide repeatedly steered conversations from abstract principles to specific policy proposals.
- **Guide balanced challenge with support for mutual understanding.** By confronting flawed reasoning and prompting empathy, it helped students move from entrenched positions toward shared, context-sensitive solutions.

Lessons

- **Clarifying scope early prevents miscommunication.** Several groups conflated co-ed clubs with elite sports until Guide or students defined parameters, after which debates sharpened on the actual issues.
- **Real-world examples anchor abstract principles.** References like Lia Thomas or hormone-treatment criteria helped move discussions from theory to actionable proposals.
- **Edge-case and “what-if” prompts deepen analysis.** When Guide challenged students with atypical scenarios—like cis women with nontraditional upbringings—participants re-examined rigid views and found new nuance.

Generated on: May 4, 2025, 07:48 PM

Chat Threads

 Only threads with 10 or more messages are shown and processed for summaries. Student names are redacted for privacy.

Women’s Sports

- **Students began with opposing views on sex-segregation in elite sports:** Student 1 argued biological and genetic differences justify separate men’s, women’s, and marginalized categories to preserve women’s championship chances, while Student 2 initially focused on how segregation can suppress leadership and reinforce stereotypes in mixed-gender settings. They frequently conflated co-ed club contexts and elite sports, leading to miscommunication about the argument’s scope and core objectives.
- **Over the discussion Student 1 clarified their position against transgender athletes competing in cisgender categories and settled on a three-category model, while Student 2 shifted from broad opposition to sex-segregation toward emphasizing moral fairness, hormone therapy criteria, and inclusion concerns.** This back-and-forth revealed tensions between ensuring equitable competition and avoiding exclusion, particularly around hormone treatment efficacy and viable league sizes.
- **Guide repeatedly redirected the debate to core fairness questions, pressing for evidence on physical advantages and the practicality of separate leagues, and eventually introduced an alternative classification by physical attributes like weight classes rather than gender.** Its interventions helped students refine their arguments and consider non-gender-based frameworks for competition.

Both of you are highlighting the core tension in this debate: Student 1 argues for a three-category system (men/women/marginalized genders) based on biological differences. Student 2 questions the practicality of this approach and favors inclusion based on hormone levels. What do you both think about sports that classify by physical attributes (like weight classes) rather than gender? Could this address the fairness concerns?

Women's Sports

- **Students largely agree that biological criteria should underpin sport categories while preserving familiar labels like “men” and “women,” and they tentatively support adding a nonbinary division.** They identified testosterone processing, muscle mass, height, and lung capacity as central factors but struggled with setting clear eligibility thresholds and feared potential loopholes and international resistance.
- **The conversation shifted to the practicalities of implementing new categories, weighing tradition against the need for fairness and inclusion.** Students debated whether to base divisions on hormone levels, consider additional biomarkers, or experiment with nonbinary groups, and they questioned what success metrics (participation rates, competitive balance, athlete satisfaction) should guide such trials.
- **Guide persistently probed assumptions and demanded specificity, challenging students to name exact biological advantages, suggest hormone thresholds, and design evaluation criteria.** Its targeted questions pushed the group from abstract agreement toward concrete policy ideas and highlighted tensions between identity, biology, and competitive integrity.

Student 1, that's a key question. The research shows that on average, post-puberty males and females differ in several performance-relevant traits (muscle mass, bone density, etc.), but there's significant overlap between groups.

Student 2, you've highlighted an important point about testosterone processing. This raises the question: If testosterone is the key factor, should competition categories be based on hormone levels rather than binary sex?

Gender Language

- **Students debated whether the default category of “women” requires a “cisgender” qualifier to be inclusive.** Student 1 argued that specifying cisgender status in gender-focused discussions offers valuable insight into differing experiences, while Student 2 objected that an absolute “always” requirement forces unnecessary labeling that can overshadow broader identities.
- **Through iterative questioning, students honed in on the tension between descriptive accuracy and personal autonomy.** They examined scenarios like “clockable” identities and agreed that context matters—labeling can support inclusion when unstated assumptions fail, but mandating qualifiers risks projecting assumptions onto others and may violate self-expression norms.
- **Guide steered the dialogue toward ethical and communicative implications of labeling.** It repeatedly challenged assumptions about default experiences, pressed the group to consider when labels become othering, and prompted reflection on the difference between self-identification and labeling others, deepening the analysis around consent and representation.

Student 1, you've raised an important point about how gender identity shapes experiences. But I'm curious about the implications of your view. If we always label cisgender women as such, doesn't this potentially 'other' the default experience? We don't typically say non-disabled person or non-immigrant in everyday conversation. What makes gender identity different in your view that it should always be specified?

Women's Sports

- **Students unpacked the distinction between sex-segregation and gender-segregation across different sports, noting that physical competitions like track and swimming show clear performance gaps while cognitive games like chess prompt questions about the necessity of separate categories.** They zeroed in on complexities introduced by intersex and transgender athletes, arguing that both medical guidelines and power dynamics shape who is included or excluded.
- **The conversation evolved as Student 1 stressed the role of segregation in encouraging participation but also criticized arbitrary and exclusionary rulings, while Student 2 pointed out the blurred lines in defining “male” and “female” and spotlighted cases like Lia Thomas and an NCAA volleyball player to illustrate regulatory inconsistencies.** They concluded that while sex-based categories are default, operational challenges and cultural debates often override performance-based metrics.
- **Guide consistently steered the students toward concrete examples and challenged them to clarify operational criteria for fair competition and the boundary between necessary segregation and unfair exclusion.** Its prompts helped shift the discussion from abstract principles to landmark cases and regulatory dilemmas.

This highlights a key tension: even when athletes meet established guidelines like hormone levels, they can still face exclusion based on identity rather than performance metrics. Student 1, since you mentioned you “slightly agree” with segregation – where do you draw the line between necessary segregation and unfair exclusion?

How to Define 'Woman'

- **Students clashed over whether defining “woman” as “adult human female” is inherently hateful, with Student 1 arguing it erases transgender women’s social recognition and Student 2 emphasizing medical clarity.** They began by debating inclusivity versus strict biological definitions, with Student 2 drawing on her sister’s experience to show how “transgender woman” can carry different connotations than “woman.”
- **The discussion evolved into a nuanced exploration of how different contexts—medical, social, legal—might require different labeling approaches, leading students to agree on unmarking transgender status socially but retaining it for medical accuracy.** Both participants moved from entrenched positions to common ground, acknowledging that while biological categories matter in healthcare, collapsing them in everyday language can harm transgender people’s safety and recognition.
- **Guide consistently probed assumptions and prompted deeper analysis by asking targeted questions about the consequences of equating sex and gender, helping students refine their positions and find shared solutions.** Its interventions steered the dialogue toward domain-specific distinctions and real-world impacts, ensuring the students grappled with both theoretical and practical dimensions of the debate.

Student 2, that’s an interesting distinction between “female” as biological and “woman” as a social construct. If we accept this distinction, would you agree that defining “woman” solely as “adult human female” could be problematic since it collapses these two different categories?

Gender Language

- **Students wrestled with the use of “cisgender woman” and “transgender woman” labels, agreeing that distinctions are useful in contexts discussing lived experiences but may reinforce othering if used always.** They shifted from debating blanket labeling to exploring how qualifiers can honor different social treatments, seeing common ground that qualifiers have context-dependent value without implying hierarchy.
- **Guide skillfully highlighted tensions and steered the pair to clarify contexts for labeling, encouraging them to pinpoint when distinctions aid inclusion versus when they undermine it.** Its prompts helped students move beyond abstract principles to concrete examples, deepening their mutual understanding and refining their shared criteria for responsible language use.

It seems you both agree some situations warrant it, but I’m curious about where you draw the line. When does acknowledging different experiences become problematic labeling that undermines the goal of full inclusion?

How to Define 'Woman'

- **Students grappled with whether defining “woman” as “adult human female” inherently excludes trans women depending on context and intent.** Student 2 argued that without exclusionary intent it’s less problematic and that including trans women doesn’t erase cis women’s struggles, while Student 1 insisted that early socialization and lived female experience differentiate cis women from trans women.
- **Student 1 relied on essentialist analogies (the house-building example) and an “earned” view of womanhood, drawing a clear boundary around who counts as a woman.** It was striking—and concerning—that Student 1 refused to see trans women as women, arguing that involuntary socialization confers a different status, which Student 2 countered by highlighting cultural variability and overlapping oppressions.
- **Guide persistently challenged core assumptions by raising edge-case scenarios and ethical questions about self-identification versus imposed categories.** It pushed Student 1 to consider cis women with atypical upbringings, cultural differences in socialization, and the implications of segregating trans women into a separate category.

If trans women identify specifically as women (not non-binary), what is the ethical implication of placing them in a separate category against their self-identification? Does this create a hierarchy of womanhood, and if so, what are the consequences?

📊 Post-Chat Survey Data

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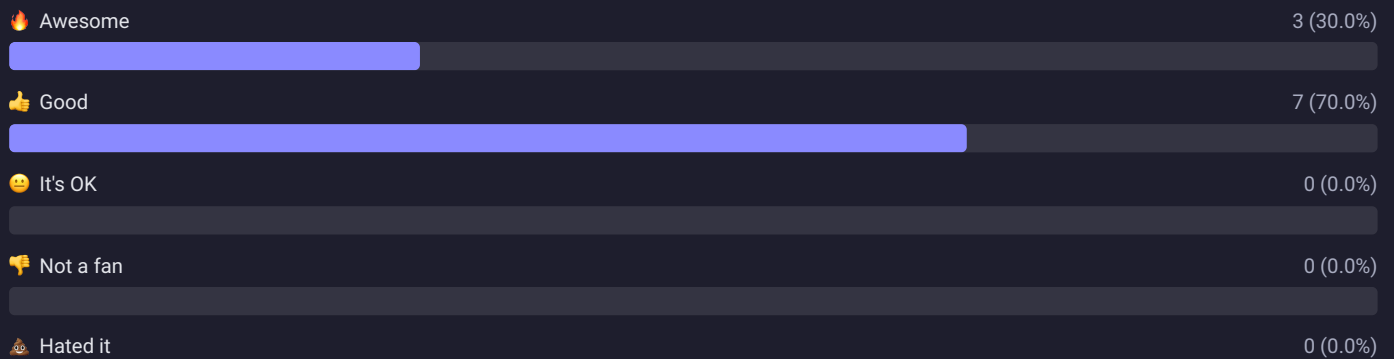
Threads With Surveys

71.4%

Response Rate

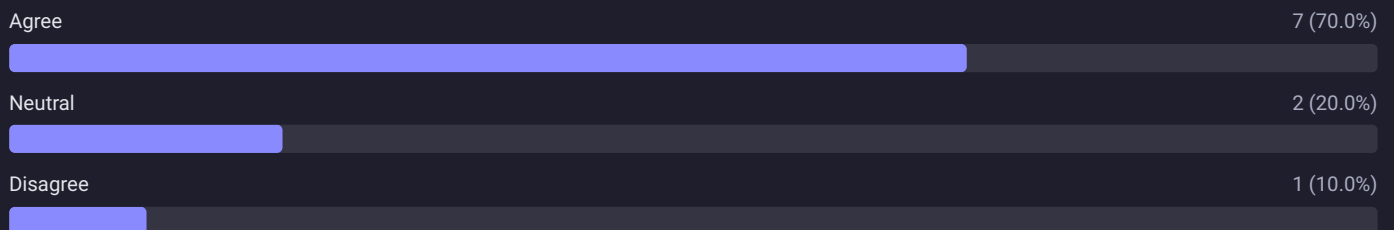
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How was your chat?



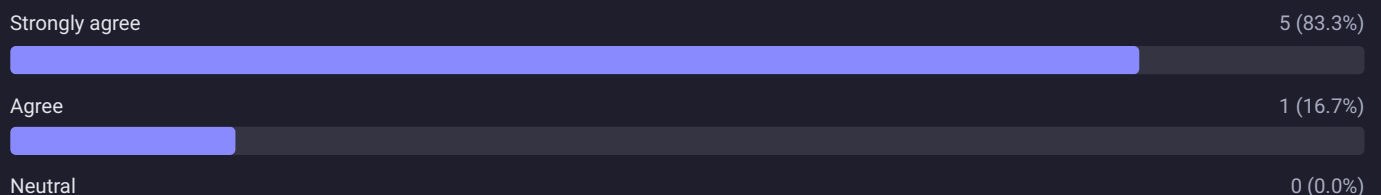
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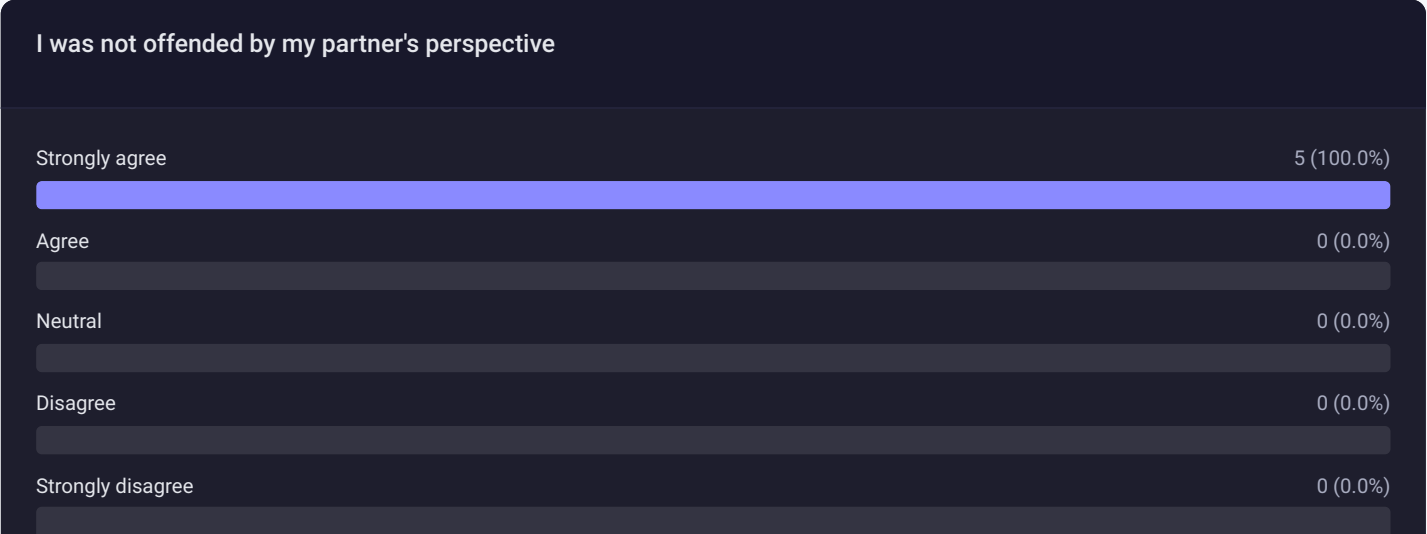
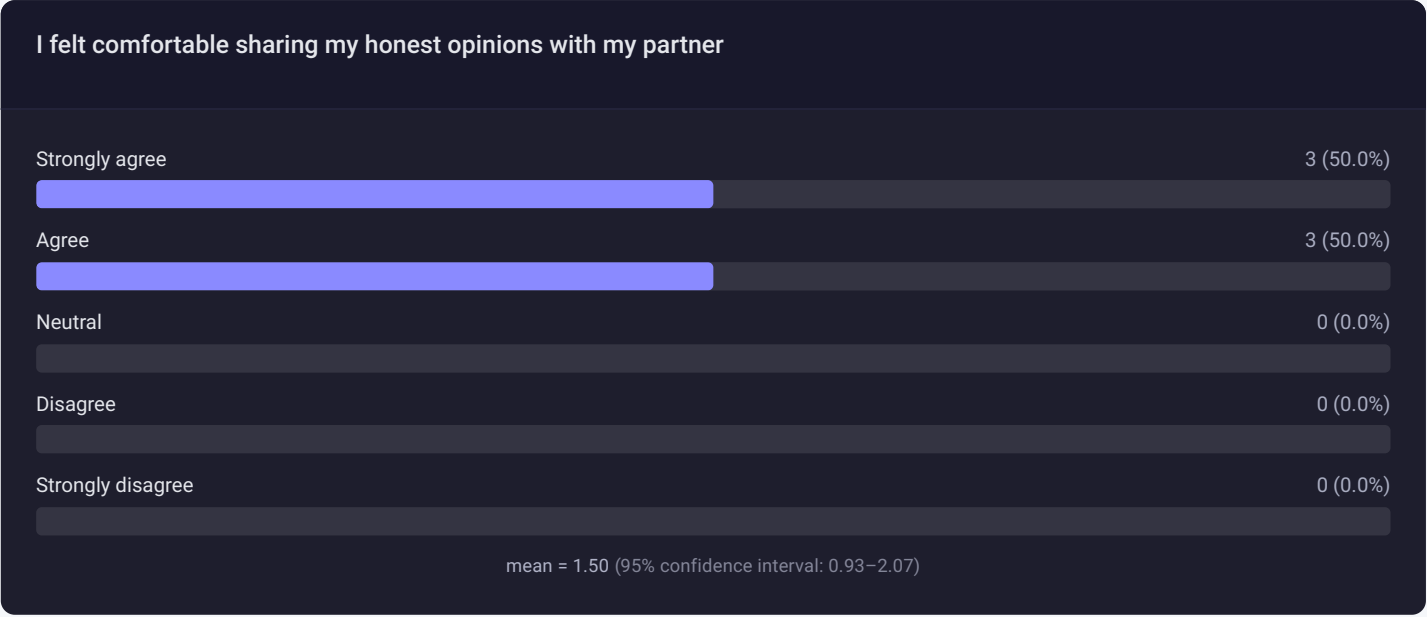
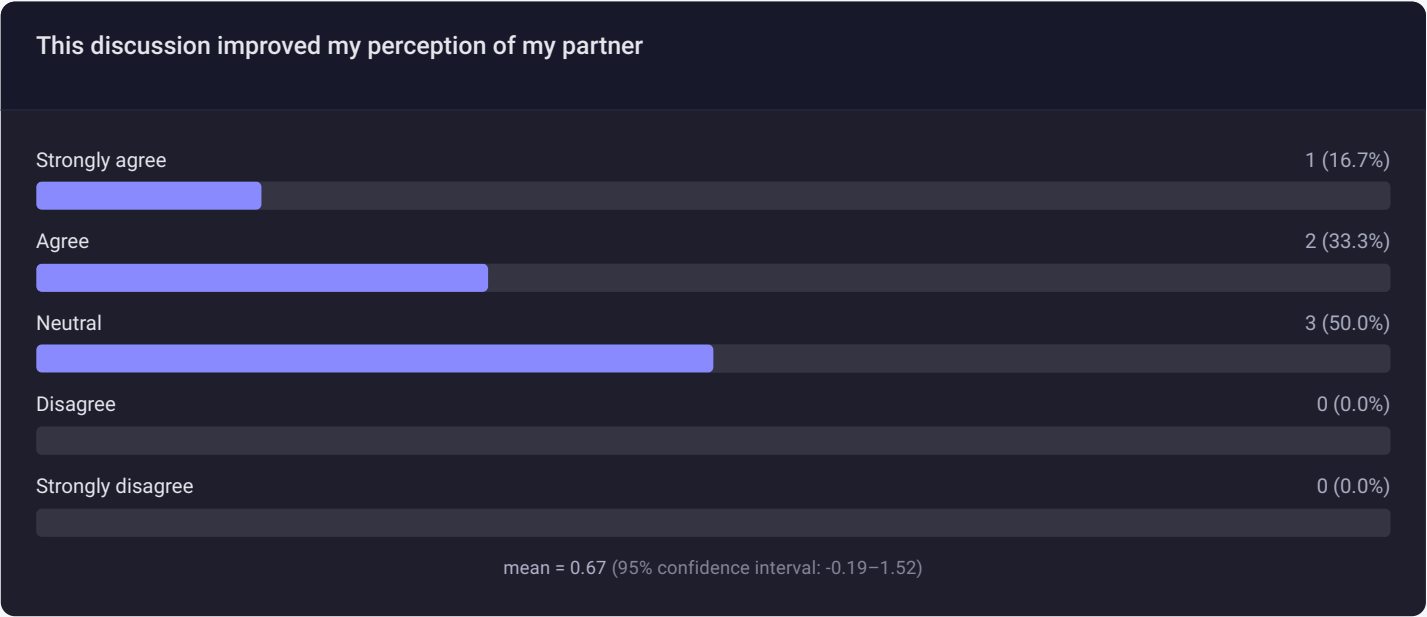
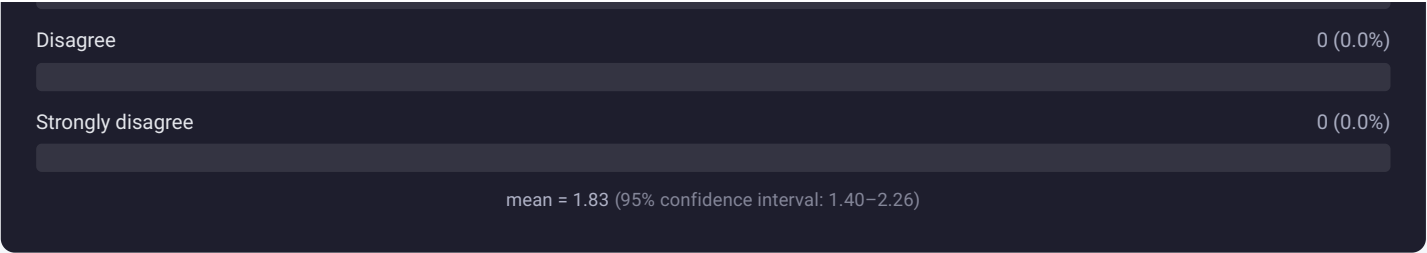
Guide contributed the right amount



mean = 0.60 (95% confidence interval: 0.10–1.10)

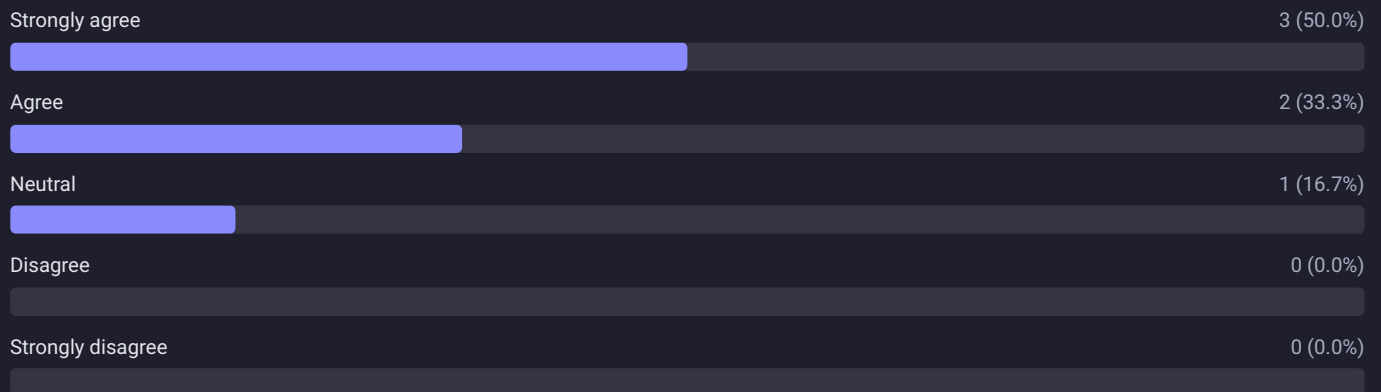
My partner was respectful





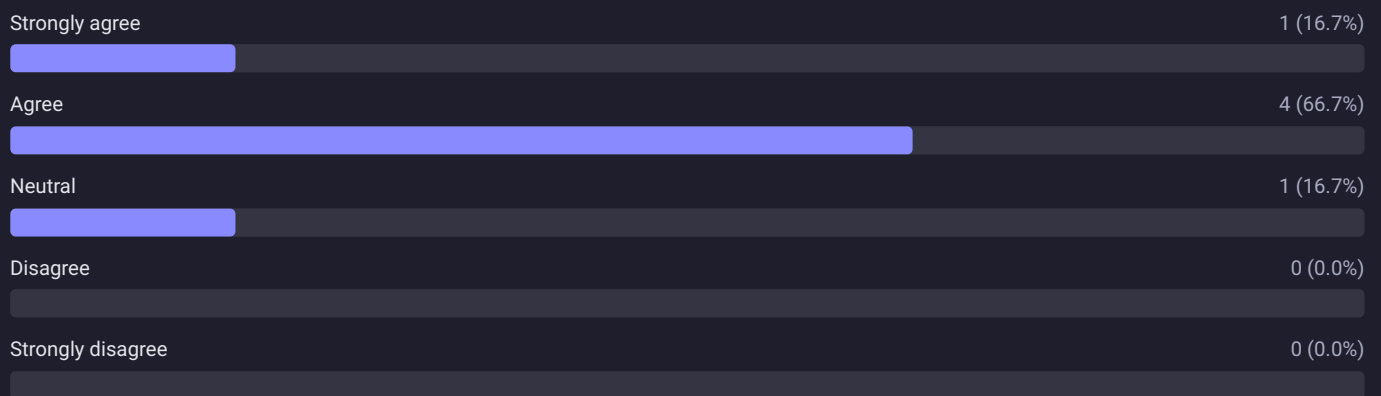
mean = 2.00 (95% confidence interval: 2.00–2.00)

It was valuable to chat with a student who did not share my perspective



mean = 1.33 (95% confidence interval: 0.48–2.19)

It would be good if more students and classes used Sway



mean = 1.00 (95% confidence interval: 0.34–1.66)