**Engineering Writing Apprehension, Engineering Writing Affinity**

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**What is our evidence?**

Some of the most compelling quantitative data regarding engineering students’ aversion to writing comes from the 1970’s, when Daly and Miller first explored writing apprehension as a factor in students’ academic decisions and interactions. “The term writing apprehension was coined... to describe an individual difference characterized by a general avoidance of writing and situations perceived by the individual to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing. The individual who is highly apprehensive finds the experience of writing more punishing than rewarding, and as a consequence avoids it.” - J. Daly

(Daly, 1977: 1-22)

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**We can no longer take a monolithic view of our students.** Instead, we should use investigative methods to better understand who is in the room, and design our teaching accordingly.

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**So are today’s engineering students apprehensive of writing?**

**YES, THEY ARE:**

*In a survey of learning motivations of students toward their engineering writing classes, students reported for more writing apprehension than any other kind of demotivational trait.*

**...and NO, THEY ARE NOT:**

*Writing apprehension was also the most divulsive motivational trait. A comparable group of students who enjoyed writing, or a confidence and enjoyment for writing activities.*

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**How should we design communication learning opportunities for our students, and their breadth of apprehensions/affinities?**

1. We can facilitate classes in which making mistakes is part of learning (and writing).
2. We can adopt inclusive teaching practices.
3. We can give clear feedback and encouragement.

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**Our upcoming work includes:**

*Students’ perception of the credibility of writing instructors’ statements, as a function of the interactional identity of students and instructors.*

*The role of emotions, such as pride and shame, in student experiences and approaches to writing classes.*

*Motivational factors in writing education.*

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**Partner with us!**

Our ongoing work requires partnerships with writing, engineering, and STEM instructors.

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*Graduate work in STEM and engineering education, with a focus on the development of writing and communication skills in these disciplines.*

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*Comments paraphrased from student survey.*

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*UC Davis ranks no. 1 college in STEM for women.*

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*UC Davis: Admits nearly 45,300, makes diversity a priority.*

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*Writing is a good way to exercise that capability.*

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*UC Davis Admits Nearly 45,300, Makes Diversity Its Priority* (July 5, 2017) - UC Davis News

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*Writing apprehension was also the most divulsive motivational trait. A comparable group of students who enjoyed writing, or a confidence and enjoyment for writing activities.*

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*Our research reminds us that writing apprehension is not destiny. It is simply one of many student traits to consider when designing a successful and inclusive class.*

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*UC Davis: Admits Nearly 45,300, Makes Diversity Its Priority* (July 5, 2017) - UC Davis News

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*It's true: for every student who answered our survey this way...*