Student Reflections 5 Months Later

participants in the capture

class members who watched the capture

Anna: Working in groups, which we do a lot of, provides a much more solid foundation for me. Seeing myself projected on screen is more difficult; seeing myself thinking through things is not something I am used to. That part is kind of embarrassing.

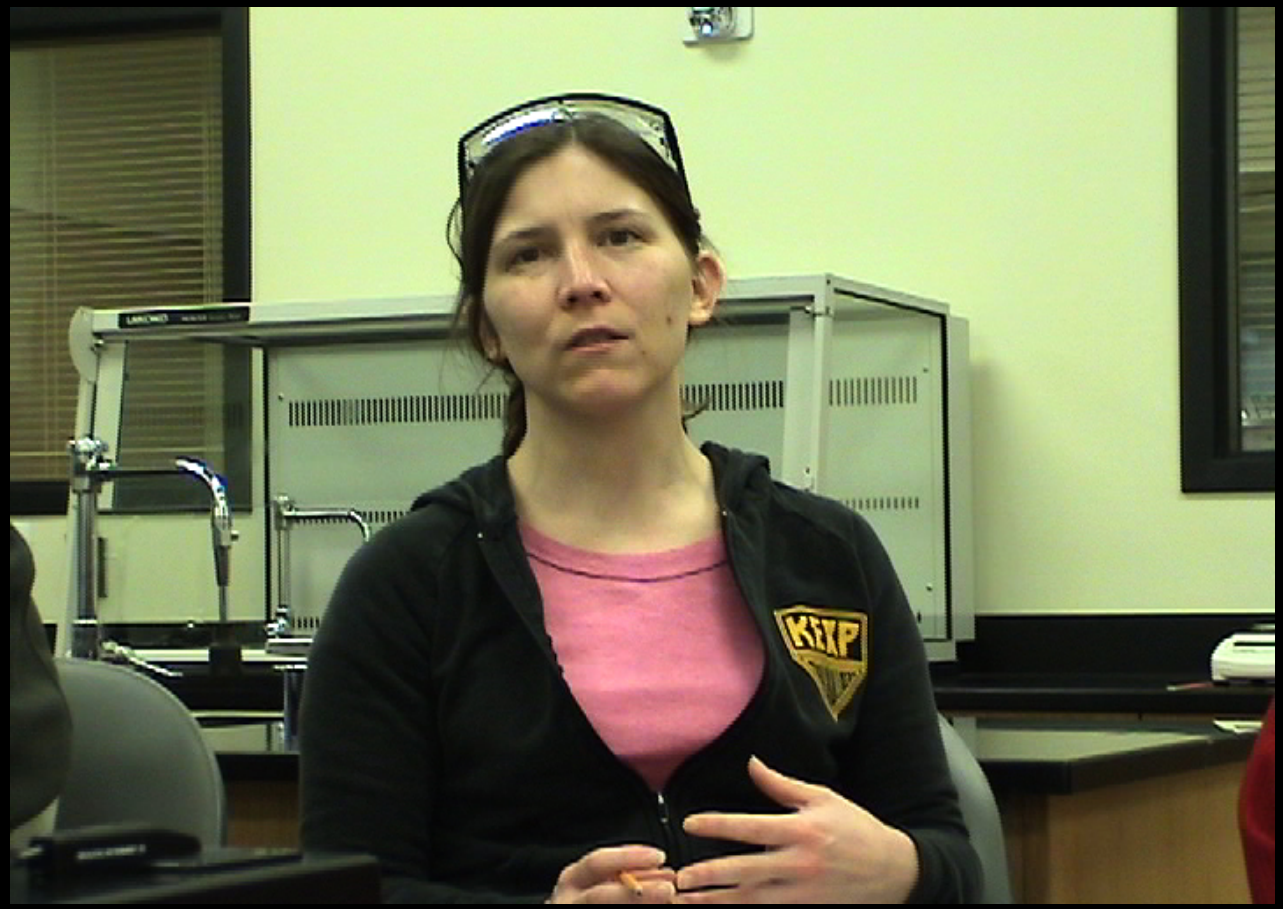
Anna: But I took Chemistry 8 years ago. I need to retake it because I am going on to organic chemistry. I have a much more solid foundation because of the types of activities we have done in this class.

Anna: We have time in class to think around the concept rather than just see the knowledge in a linear manner and then walk out the door.

Anna: Watching it again up there on the screen tells me a bit about my learning process and how I interact in groups, but I don't gain as much from watching the slides as I do from actually doing the projects.

Liz: I, too, went to school a while ago. Now I am going back to school for a graduate degree. I like the group projects. I think some people may not be used to learning that way. They were taught to sit in the class and watch a lecture and never interact with others.

Liz: I find the opportunities we have to sit down together as a group and talk through why we think certain things fills in the holes that I didn't understand. I benefit by hearing someone else explain it.



Liz: Sometimes different people can explain things in ways that might make more sense to you than the first time you heard it.

Jen: I like the group processes as well. It helps solidify things you may have had questions on or were unclear.

Jen: It helps as well to watch the capture, watch the interactions between people, and see how they come through with an idea. You see little bits and pieces of information that you may not have thought about individually.

Sadia: I learn in groups more than I learn in lecture. We learn different ways. Everybody has a different learning style and is able to give further information, especially in Chemistry, which is not easy to understand.

Jen: And it is more fun.

Jen: When you sit in a lecture hall sometimes your attention goes away. You are not as engaged, and you kind of drift. When you are actually speaking to someone what is going on in your head, it really helps make it stick.

Sadia: When you are sitting in groups, you can ask why things are certain ways. Somebody in the group can give the answer. You don't always have to ask the teacher and make the whole class slow down.

Anna: Occasionally, depending on the group dynamics and who is spearheading, the group can move too fast, and I don't gain a lot from it. In the example we saw, our group functioned pretty well.

Liz: William seemed to have a pretty solid understanding of chemistry. I never took chemistry before, so it was nice to have his background on things I never understood, especially the lattice network in ionic bonding.

Bruk: I liked that it was multi-sensory learning. They were drawing; they were connecting models; they were doing things that helped them visualize what was going on.

Bruk: They were speaking with each other. One person may not have the whole idea but say something that sparks on the others. It is like a chain. One idea led to another, led to another, led to another.

Bruk: In the end they all come up with one good idea, which is of the group not of one person.

Bruk: Often good ideas come from people who don't know. People who think they know something a certain way don't like to think another way. People who don't know can come up with new ideas.

Bruk: It is valuable to allow open discussion where the right answer is not limited. Making mistakes is the only way to learn. If the group comes up with a theory that is not really useful, when they learn the actual theory, it just replaces it.

Bruk: It holds a big place in mind, since people don't make the same mistake twice.
It was interesting to see a flow of ideas with no limits or barriers.

Liz: I don't think getting dissociation "right" is actually the point. Maybe you get to a point where you know, but what we drew was not the final answer. It was where we got to by the end of that recording. We are still learning.

Liz: The process is more important than the outcome — the process of the interactions, the process of input, the process of helping each other to understand — is more important than having the correct drawing at the end of an hour.

Liz: Hopefully, we eventually will get to the correct drawing. But the process opens us up to a way of learning, to a model of interaction with each other and with the instructor, to help us understand how we are thinking and what we are thinking.

Liz: And to learn how to learn.

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