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### Looking at Gender Differences in Capstone Project Presentation

Lily Palmer

Clark University, lipalmer@clarku.edu

Talia Harlow

Clark University, tharlow@clarku.edu

Sarah Whalen

Clark University, sawhalen@clarku.edu

Erin Curtis

Clark University, ecurtis@clarku.edu

Simi Stark

Clark University, sstark@clarku.edu

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Presenter Information**

Lily Palmer, Talia Harlow, Sarah Whalen, Erin Curtis, Simi Stark, Allison Staples, and Erin Lally



# Looking at Gender Differences in Capstone Project Presentation

Lily Palmer '23, Talia Harlow '23, Simi Stark '23, Sarah Whalen '23, Erin Curtis '23, Allison Staples '23, Erin Lally '23,  
Project in PSYC 060: Education and Effective Practice (A First Year Intensive Course)  
(Sponsor: Professor Nancy Budwig)



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## Introduction

### What is the LEAP Challenge?

The LEAP Challenge, developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), invited a group of colleges and universities to develop curricula that engages students to integrate and apply their knowledge into a capstone project or signature work.

### How does gender affect a college senior's likelihood to showcase a capstone project?

This study focuses on whether there is a gender difference in the presentation of a completed capstone or signature work project. Research has shown that there are gender differences for participation in the classroom, which led us to believe there may be gender differences in presentation of projects. Stereotypes lead people to assume that women and people of other genders would be less likely to present than men, and they are socialized to be less confident. The myth of the gender confidence gap, however, is the root of people's misconceptions of women's abilities to work in a confident manner. Women deem themselves to be as confident as men in self-evaluations of their work performance (Guillen 2018).

### Why is Gender Important to Examine?

Prior research suggests capstone courses as one way to facilitate high impact student engagement, which has been shown to have a big influence on the success of students in the future (Leraas et al., 2018). Thus, if there is a difference between genders on the presentation of their project, reforms are important in order to close this gap and make sure all students are receiving this opportunity.

## Methods

- Participants:** 289 college seniors from a group of four schools that participated in the LEAP Challenge.
- Procedure:** Students were invited to take an anonymous and voluntary survey. The survey contained a total of 12 questions, was conducted online, and was expected to take a total of 5-10 minutes.
- Focus:** This study concentrated on the demographics of students' gender identity and likelihood to present their capstone projects.

## Results

Percentage of Each Gender that Participated in the Study (Combined Schools)

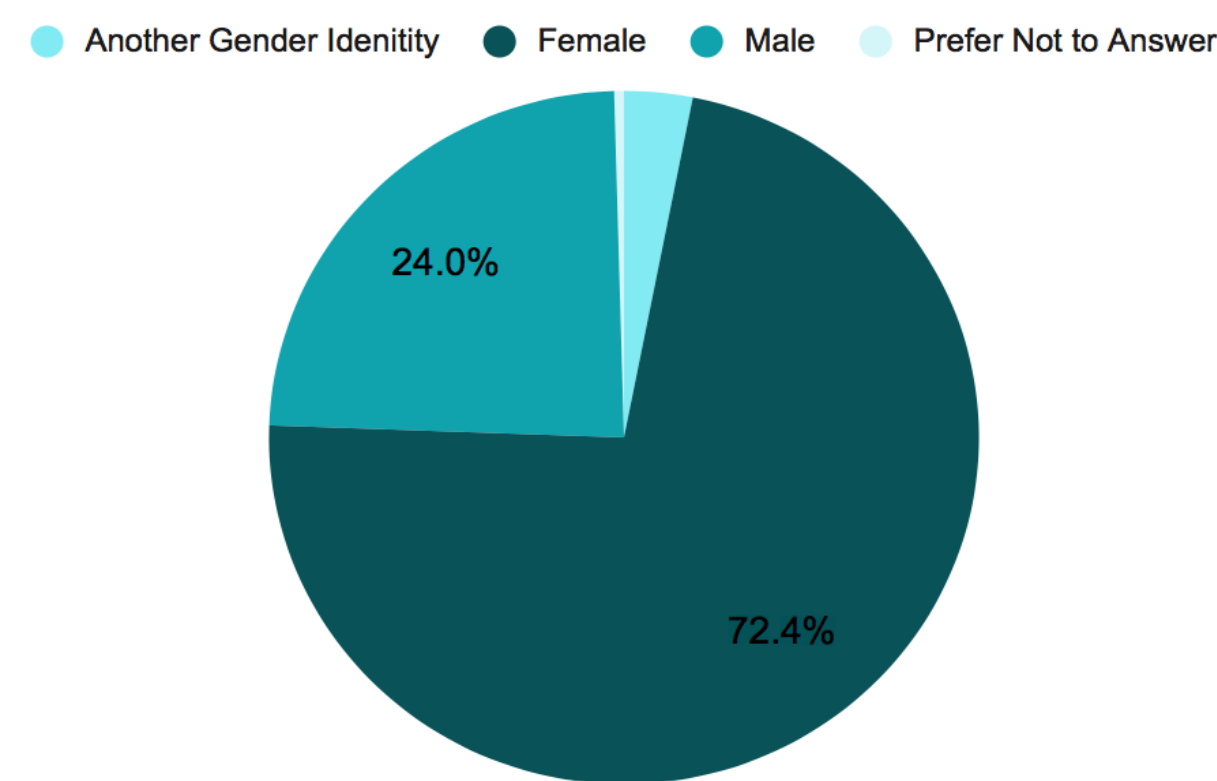


Figure 1:

Female identifying students were more likely to participate in the survey than other genders, with 72.4% of the participants identifying as female. Less than 5% of participants indicated another gender identity or preferred not to answer.

Percentage of Students Who Presented Capstone Projects Based on Gender (Combined Schools)

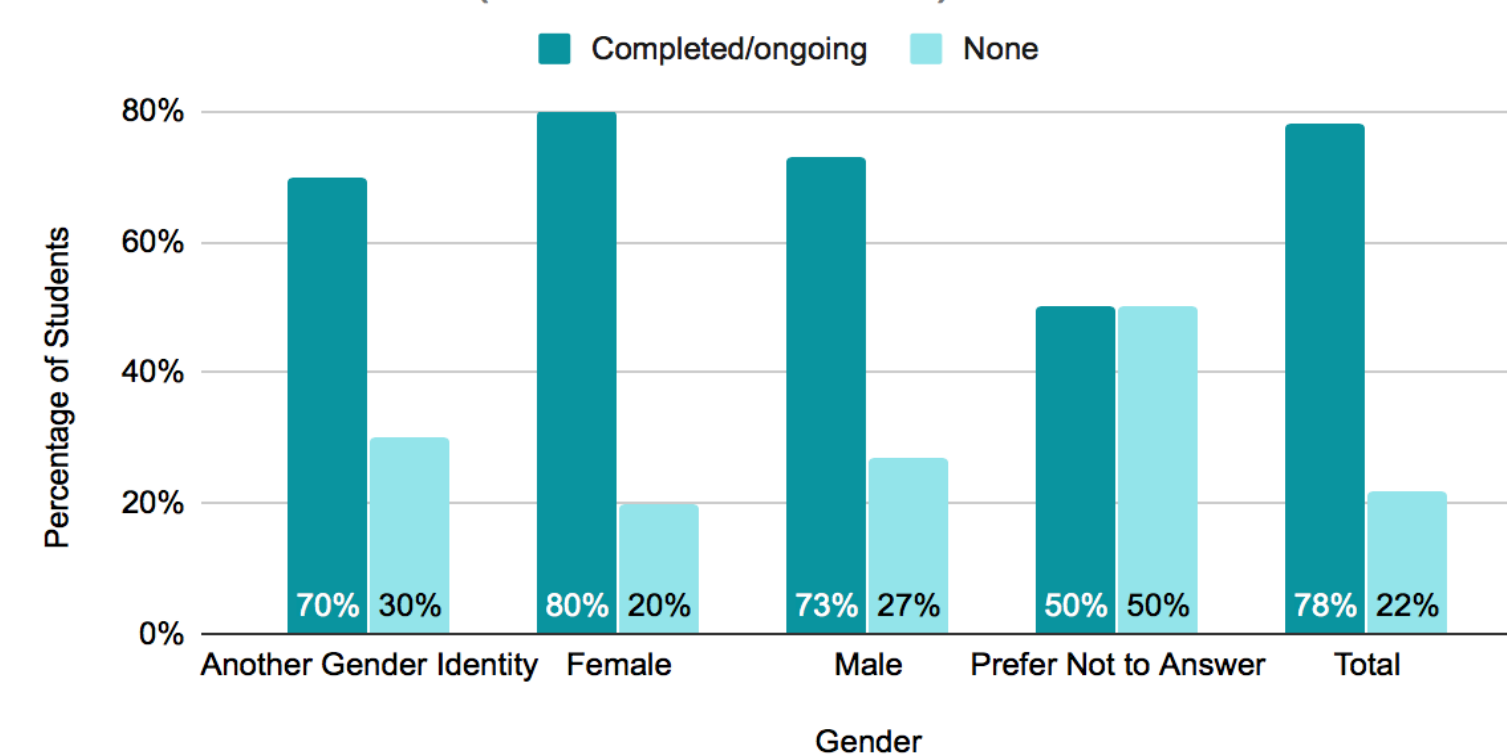


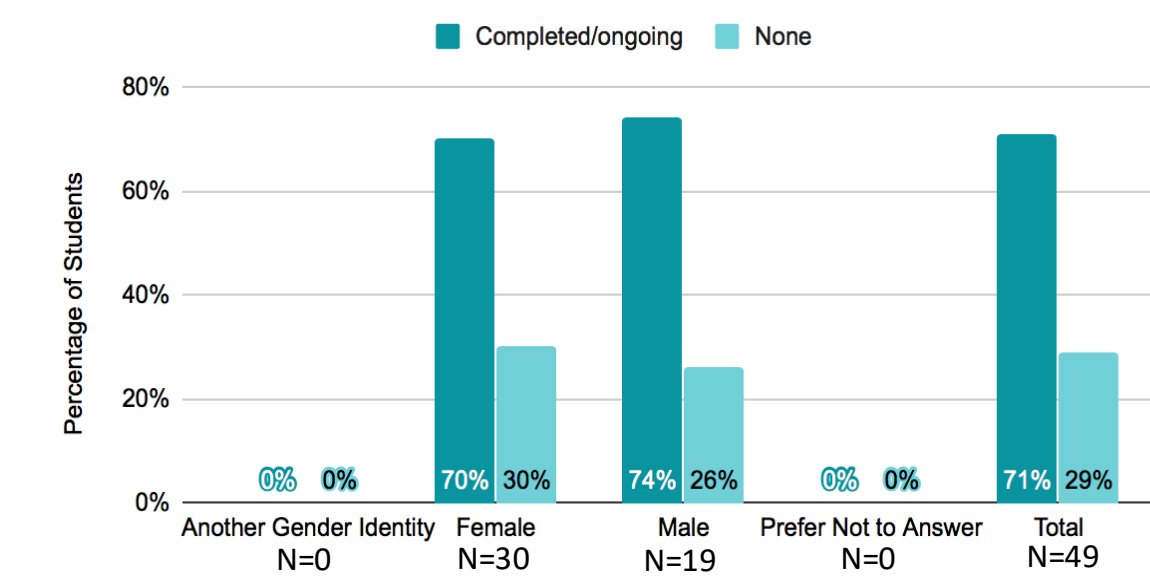
Figure 2:

Across all the schools, all genders were more likely to present than not, with only 22% of the total participants from the combined schools having not presented. Significantly fewer people who preferred not to answer (in regard to gender identity) showcased capstone projects.

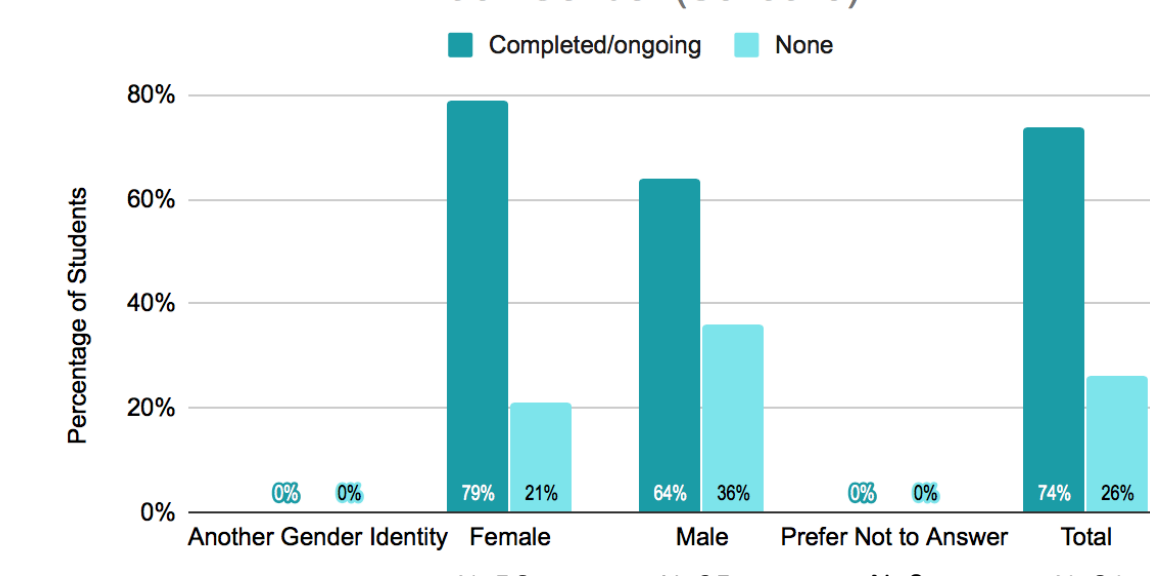
## References

- Guillen, L. (2018, March 26). Is the confidence gap between men and women a myth? Retrieved November 16, 2019, from <https://hbr.org/2018/03/is-the-confidence-gap-between-men-and-women-a-myth>.
- Hawkesworth, K. (2017, October 17). The LEAP Challenge. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/leap-challenge>.
- Leraas, Bethany, Kippen, Nicole., & Larson, Susan. Gender and student participation. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 18(4), 51-70.

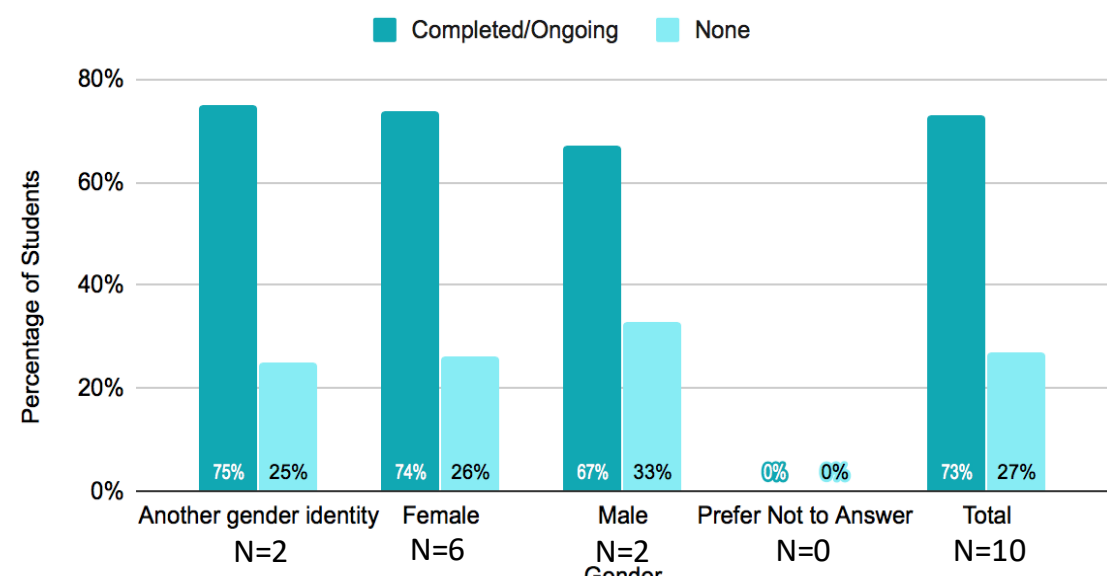
Percent of Students Who Presented Capstone for Each Gender (School 1)



Percent of Students Who Presented a Capstone Project for Each Gender (School 3)



Percentage of Students Who Presented a Capstone Project For Each Gender (School 2)



Percent of Students Who Presented a Capstone Project for Each Gender (School 4)

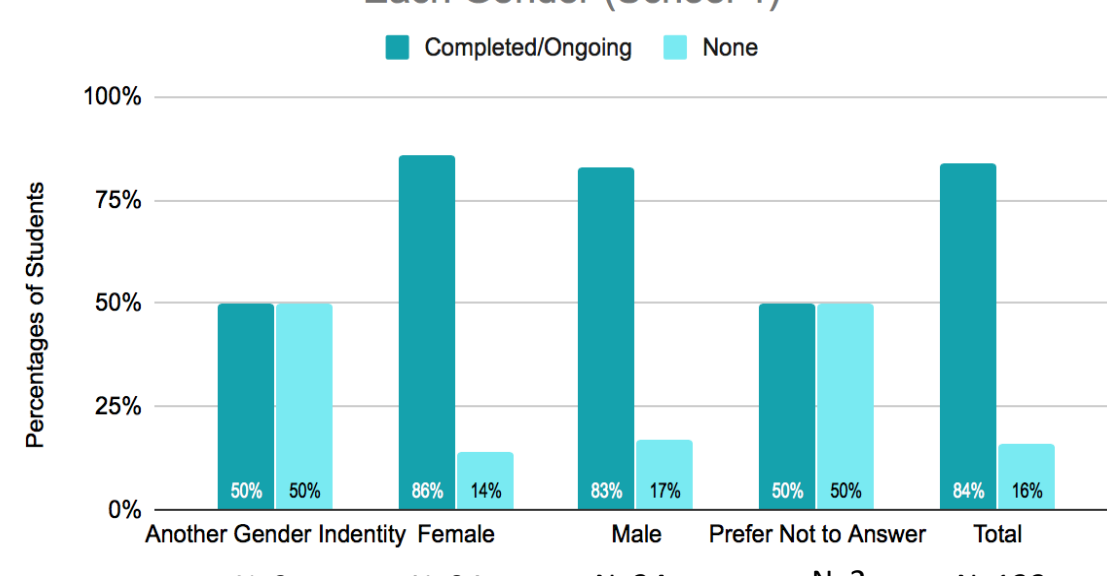


Figure 3:

Overall, there was no significant difference between the schools in terms of genders consistently presenting their capstone work. Women are more likely to showcase capstone projects than the other genders.

## Discussion

- The question this study was analyzing is whether there is a difference amongst the genders on likelihood to present, and it was discovered that all genders were more likely to present than not, women were more likely to showcase their capstone projects than the other genders; there was no significant difference between the schools regarding gender in connecting to presentation of the capstone project.
- Fewer individuals identifying as another gender identity or preferred not to answer participated in the study. In order to include more diverse gender identities in the future, there could be an effort to have a representative population of all genders, by evenly reaching out to each that is included.
- Future research might include studying whether presenting one's capstone project and/or signature work affects future success of students, such as likelihood to get a job, the position they hold, their involvement in various enterprises, etc.