

In the summer of 2022 and winter of 2023, I had the opportunity to work at CoLABorations at John Abbott Cegep, where I was given the opportunity to lead a project in psychology field. The primary objective of my work was to form a survey to question the students at John Abbott Cegep about the anxiety they held linked to climate change. This report will detail the methodologies employed to come to a hypothesis and a project objective, the information we gathered to begin this survey, and the steps we conquered as a group.

My first goal was to gather a group of students within the CoLABorations laboratory that were excited and willing to work on this project with me. During COVID, this proved difficult, as we were confined behind our laptops to meet and discuss our ideas. The group started with 6 people but quickly fell to 3. This slowed our progress, but nevertheless, I was able to learn a lot with this experience. I utilized scientific research articles on climate change, anxiety, neuroscientific bases of emotions, group autonomy, and collective feelings towards climate change, to form a base for my project. During this time period, I learned not only about neuroanatomy, amygdala, collective fear, group bias, and so on, but I also learned how to read scientific articles. My first year of university had just begun, my peers were stressing over scientific articles, but I had an advantage thanks to this experience. After collecting a base knowledge, I called a meeting with my team to gather input and come up with a specific subject for our project, which we chose to be the effect of collective thinking on anxiety about climate change. We began the survey, but unfortunately, the end of the year approached quicker than the survey could be shared to the students.

For this survey, I collected a great deal of information. This taught me an extraordinary amount. For instance, In “Neural Responses to Ingroup and Outgroup Members’ Suffering Predict Individual Differences in Costly Helping”, I learned about parochial altruism which refers to favoring one’s own group characteristics, ideas, and identity. What I learned was that creating a competition between ingroup and outgroup fostered a greater desire to help their own ingroup members and leave outgroup members to suffer. My father is German, and he once told me about a unique German word, ‘schadenfreude’, a word to signify having pleasure watching others suffer. I thought this was really interesting, because many of these articles showed that men tend to have this feeling of schadenfreude when they didn’t like the outgroup member. Nevertheless, increasing the information given to ingroup members about the outgroup members can allow for an increase in empathy and reduce the favoritism towards the ingroup members. In terms of climate change, I think that groups of people need to not feel like they are inflicted with opposition. They require the autonomy to make decisions based on their criterion, but they also require external support – information – to make decisions beyond the emotional realm. Another article, “The Genetic Side of Gene-Culture Coevolution: Internalization of Norms and Prosocial Emotions” delved into the how groups will internalize norms. Internalizing norms is, according to this article, and adaptive function because it allows for humans to favor their own

contentment. Society's values are transmitted by individuals who internalize norms; for instance, the habit to take care of one's hygiene. I learned much about how groups think and how others around us impact our own emotions and beliefs. These are just 2 of around 100 articles I read while I prepared to create a well-rounded survey.

As a group, we were able to read many articles and have a strong basis on a wide-range of topics covering in-group biases, climate change, anxiety, and more. We made a survey, but we were not able to complete the ethics application due to a range of reasons, including the fact that we kept losing members of the group unexpectedly. Nevertheless, I was able to learn a lot and prepare a project for the next phase of students. Moreover, I got to be part of an environment in CoLABorations, where I got to hear and be part of 3 other projects. One of the other projects CoLABorations took part of was an already existing survey. The project included, identifying major elements from responses. We would identify major words within the response to be able to classify the responses. It was an amazing experience, as it taught me quite a bit about how to deal with the responses and draw appropriate conclusions.

Overall, this summer and winter was an extremely educative experience. Sadly, the survey I worked on was unable to be shared to the school, but I did leave the lab with something even greater, and that is knowledge. Without this experience, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to work with peers who love psychology and science as much as me. I wouldn't have been able to learn about climate change and anxiety as in depth as I had. As a student in Neuroscience, I learned an extreme amount of neuroanatomy and how feelings are represented in the brain from working in CoLABorations. I recall being in my neuroscience classes and identifying things I already knew thanks to this bursary and having the opportunity to work in this lab. It was an experience I will always remember and treasure.