

1. Student quotes about why they're quiet in-class (or don't engage in small group work).

1. "If it's something really difficult, I want to be able to think about it a long time in my head, and I feel like there can be a conflict between the people who need to talk about it and the people who need to think about it."
2. "Once I start talking, I get choked up and I feel myself turn very hot and uncomfortable, and my voice gets really small and shaky."
3. "It's weird because it's like I overthink it too much. . . . I'm like 'Oh, how am I going to say this so people understand me,' because . . . I have to prepare what I'm going to say so that I don't stutter as much."
4. "Most of the time we don't learn anything working with the group that we wouldn't learn on our own except for maybe that working with a group is a pain in the ass and that people are not trustworthy because you always have that one person who doesn't do their share."
5. "If I were talking in a small group and I was not knowledgeable on the topic of the question, then I would feel anxious [because] I would feel more judged by somebody just because I don't want to feel or sound stupid that I don't know what I'm talking about."
6. "Sometimes it's just new information doesn't always set in that fast and you're trying to piece it together in your own head. You're trying to connect it with old information and new information."
7. "I feel like professors could just be a little bit more considerate about someone who's introverted. Just because they're quiet doesn't mean they don't want to participate in class and they're not interested in the class. They're just quiet."
8. "I feel like you can tell who's lazy and who's not lazy. Like when I first took this... class. The first group I got was not the best, I could already tell and I was just like, "I'm not going to do this." And then [the instructor] was explaining the assignments and [the instructions] were super confusing. And then I got into this group and they were just like, "I don't know what we're doing," and I'm like, "OK, well, I'm leaving."
9. "I haven't taken the lead, but then the person I'm working with doesn't really know what they're doing...But then I'm too afraid to speak up. And I feel sometimes we'll suffer because they don't know what to do, but then I'm too afraid to tell them this is what we need to do."
10. "I feel less anxious in traditional [lecture] class because there's not that social aspect involved (...). In active learning I worry, 'What are [other students] going to think of me? They probably think I'm dumb for not knowing [the answer].'"
11. "Professors and I guess people in general view that as a bad thing. Like if you're shy or quiet you have something to hide or you don't want to participate or you didn't do the reading or you didn't do the homework."
12. "I can get different perspectives and kind of see, like, I applied it this way, they applied it that way. And so it's a different way to view the same thing...And even if I don't say a lot I like to listen because you know four different people are probably going to see the same thing four different ways."

13. “If I realize that I answered a question wrong when talking with people in my group, it makes my anxiety a little worse. I’m sitting there thinking ‘Oh man, the person next to me probably thinks I’m dumb because I just shared with him the wrong idea.’”
14. “They ask us to participate and that’s always really hard. I’ll do the required work but it’s always hard for me to raise my hand.”
15. “When I speak [in class] I plan out what I want to say. And I make little outlines, almost like little notes that can help guide me before I speak.”
16. “Sometimes it’s hard because you might be in a group where everyone’s opinions are different than yours. But you’re also the minority opinion, and so you don’t want to be like, “Oh, but I think differently of this.” So when that happens, I usually just stay quiet...You don’t want to be the one standing alone, like someone who has an opposing opinion than everyone else.”
17. “Group up with whoever your friends are or whoever you want to.” And then it’s like, well I don’t have friends in this class, I don’t talk to people, I don’t know people. So I can’t really get with a group. And if I end up in a group it’s because it’s thrown together and nobody really wants to be in this group . . . I feel like [finding your own group] is more performative... I have to pretend that I’m outgoing and that I am trying to get a group together whereas if it’s randomized we’re already past that stage and we can get to work.”

Quotes collected from:

- Medaille, Ann, and Janet Usinger. “‘That’s Going to Be the Hardest Thing for Me’: Tensions Experienced by Quiet Students During Collaborative Learning Situations.” Educational Studies 46.2 (2020): 240–257. Web.
- Medaille, Ann, and Janet Usinger. “Quiet Students’ Experiences with the Physical, Pedagogical, and Psychosocial Aspects of the Classroom Environment.” Educational Research: Theory and Practice 31.2 (2020): 41-55.
- Cooper, Katelyn M., Virginia R. Downing, and Sara E. Brownell. “The Influence of Active Learning Practices on Student Anxiety in Large-Enrollment College Science Classrooms.” International Journal of STEM Education 5.1 (2018): 23-40.

II. Some strategies for engaging quiet students in learning

1. Consider other forms of class participation than speaking aloud. (E.g., have students share their thoughts through written responses.)
2. When asking students to speak in front of the whole class, give them time to formulate their responses before requiring them to speak.
3. Use technologies to encourage and redefine what it means to participate in classes.
4. Ask discussion questions that promote critical and creative thinking.
5. Ask questions that invite participation from those with a broad range of experiences
6. Encourage students to communicate with instructors outside of class time.
7. Consider when it is appropriate to assign class presentations.
8. Use group work to help students learn different perspectives.
9. Put structures in place for group work or make some recommendations for successful group functioning.
10. Share strategies for productive discussion, communication, and problem-solving in group work.
11. Give careful consideration to how groups are formed.
12. Encourage students to form study groups outside of the classroom.

Adapted from Medaille, Ann, and Janet Usinger. "Engaging Quiet Students in the College Classroom." College Teaching 67.2 (2019): 130–137.