

College students and anxiety



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There are various studies related to college students and anxiety, each has a unique way of looking at the anxiety in college students. Anxiety can be a debilitating disorder alone but can be lost and forgotten when working with younger individuals. It is a common idea that any student faces anxiety during their college experience but the affects of anxiety can affect more than one's test but can have an impact on their academic performance.

In an article by Lauren Sieben (2011) it was found that anxiety is the most common complaint among students. The counseling centers reported that 40 percent of the complaints that they received were anxiety. Sieben states “ Some experts say students are feeling more anxious than ever as they feel greater pressure to succeed in college and make the most of their investment in a college education” (Seiben, 2011). Another article by Seiben reports that there were record-low levels of emotional health and that anxiety is now the primary concern of students according to a University of California survey (Seiben, 2011). According to the article a students' ambition is the driving force therefore leading to lower levels of emotional health. Also explored in the article is the higher the college tuition the more pressure students feel to excel in their academic performance and that with better grades the better chances they have finding a job (Seiben, 2011).

One study done by Davis and Coleman (2007) was the color ink used in feedback for students; the colors of ink used were green and red ink (Davis & Coleman, 2007, p 27). It was found that those that received red ink had a higher level of anxiety then those that received green ink (Davis & Coleman, 2007, p 27). Davis and Coleman (2007) introduce the idea that students respond to the ink color used just as they respond in the environment (Davis

& Coleman, 2007, p 31). The color red in one's environment is to alert individuals of that they need to stop or that there is a present danger (Davis & Coleman, 2007, p 31). The study by Davis and Coleman (2007) found that red ink; a common color used by instructors for feedback was significantly increased a student's anxiety where as students who received feedback in green had a lower amount of anxiety (Davis & Coleman, 2007). Although many of the students stated that the color of the ink did not bother them, in contrast the comments made by students participating in the study was that the underlying tone in the open-ended questions was that the color of the ink did have an effect on their emotional well-being (Davis & Coleman, 2007, p. 39). Davis and Coleman (2007) describe the students ignoring a stress-causing agent as a defense mechanism that ignoring the ink color is in fact a defense mechanism and students employ this defense mechanism to help reduce anxiety caused by the ink color (Davis & Coleman, 2007, p. 39).

A study done by Misra and McKean (2000) discusses interrelationship among academic stress, anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction (Misra & McKean, 2000). The study found that students did have a higher stress due to pressure and self-imposed stress (Misra & McKean, 2000, p. 44). Also found in the study was that females had a higher rate of self-imposed stress and had a higher reaction to psychological stressors than males (Misra & McKean, 2000). Males showed that their stress and anxiety were significantly lower and they had a higher amount of satisfaction from leisure time. Although the roles were reversed when it came to time management, females were better able to prioritize goals, and had an organized approach to tasks where as males have higher amount of anxiety (Misra & McKean,

2000, 44). Although female have a better time management their stress and anxiety were still high, where as male did have a lower amount of stress and anxiety due to their satisfaction in leisure time (Mirsa & Mckean, 2000, p. 49). The outcome of this study was that time management does play an effect on a student's anxiety and stress and that faculty and counselors should emphasize how important time management it is (Mirsa & McKean 2000, p. 49).

Rafiz, Ghazal and Farooqi (2007) worked on a study pertaining to students test anxiety and the annual versus the semester system. The writers described test anxiety a debilitating problem for many students; this can be impairing their performance and undermining their well being. A challenge that has arisen for many students is the increase in demands and pressures that are placed on students to achieve higher test scores, and to perform maximal level, especially in professional education (Rafiz, Ghazal, & Farooqi, 2007, p. 82). The study resulted in their being no significant difference between semester and annual systems (Rafiz, Ghazal, & Farooqi, 2007, p. 91). As for the results of test anxiety was high and that many that experience test anxiety expect too much of themselves and the fear of evaluation (Rafiz, Ghazal, & Farooqi, 2007, p. 85).

After reading many other articles I found the one by Sansgiry and Sail (2006) to be the most interesting, they found that test anxiety to have positives and negatives. Some of the positives found were that those with test anxiety were able to have a positive perception of their course load. Some of the negative effects of test anxiety are the negative effects on one's academic career (Sansgiry & Sail, 2006, p. 4). It was found that older students have

higher test anxiety than younger students. Interventions used need to be aimed towards lowering test anxiety and time management (Sansgiry & Sail, 2006, p. 5).

Although there are many studies on test anxiety, it was interesting to read a study done on test anxiety and learning disabilities. This study was conducted by Sena, Lowe, and Lee (2007) to observe test anxiety and learning disabilities. This study was conducted on students in elementary and secondary school students. The writers of this study discuss that those with learning disabilities have increased test anxiety and view test a threat, where students without learning disabilities have less test anxiety (Sena, Lowe, & Lee, 2007, p. 362). The researchers created a survey to help determine how test anxiety is affecting students with and without learning disability. When evaluated those with a learning disability had cognitive interference as a result of their test anxiety (Sena, Lowe, & Lee, 2007, p. 370).

Although many of the studies up to this point have been on test anxiety and students, but this study was an overall group study on anxiety disorders. This study was done by Van Ingen and Novicki (2009) looks at the results of cognitive behavioral therapy on a wide range of anxiety disorders. The participants of this study were individuals who were diagnosed with a generalized anxiety disorder (Van Ingen & Novicki, 2009, p. 243). Some of the cognitive-behavioral interventions included exposure therapy, ritual prevention, relaxation breathing, and cognitive-behavior modification (Van Ingen & Novicki, 2009, p. 246). Although this study does not focus on

students and anxiety this study did show various forms of working and dealing with anxiety.

Another form of intervention introduced by Gonzalez, Hooper, Lee, Lin is the use of yoga to help student's focus and help prepare them for their academic demands. During the study they found that students had difficulty balancing schoolwork, and leisure time (Gonzalez, Hooper, Lee & Lin, 2010, p. 283).

When students were asked about test anxiety and computer anxiety, they relayed a moderate amount of anxiety, and expressed a desire to incorporate a relaxation technique into their time management (Gonzalez, Hooper, Lee, & Lin, 2010, p. 284). The researchers state that they found that student's are aware of their anxious behaviors and other research has showed that yoga is being used in schools across the country to help decrease test anxiety (Gonzalez, Hooper, Lee & Lin, 2010, p. 284).

Another study looked study anxiety over test anxiety, Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, and Awang identified five potential reasons for anxiety. These reasons are exam anxiety, class presentation anxiety, mathematic anxiety, language anxiety and social anxiety (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010, p. 189). They found that feelings of those with anxiety can interrupt a student's performance and anxiety while studying is a major factor in academic performance (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010, p. 189). Study anxiety has not only been noticed by students but educators as well. With such high anxiety levels it can interfere with one's concentration and memory, which are critical to a student's academic performance. Some the psychological symptoms described by students are feeling nervous before a study class, panicking, drawing a blank during a test, feeling helpless when

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working on assignments, and lack of interest in class subjects (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010, p. 190). Also described are the physiological symptoms as well, these symptoms include sweaty palms, racing heart, or an upset stomach (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010, p. 190). The final conclusion to the article was that if a student has anxiety they cannot perform well (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, & Awang, 2010, p. 193).