

Academic Anxiety: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Academic anxiety can have a negative effect on a student's academic performance. Teachers and parents can learn to recognize the signs of anxiety in school students. If teachers and parents help students to learn to control anxiety early, more serious academic problems related to anxiety can be avoided. Anxiety can become more detrimental over time. If academic anxiety is identified on time it helps to improve the performance of students so it necessary to know more about academic anxiety. This paper elaborates in detail about the components of academic anxiety & way to reduce academic anxiety in detail.

Keywords: Academic anxiety, academic performance, school students

Anxiety is a common condition noticed in people of all age groups. It may be caused by a physical condition, mental condition and effects of drugs or due to a combination of these. Anxiety is defined as a painful or apprehensive uneasiness of mind usually over an impending or anticipated ill (Merriam-Webster, 2012). The common types of anxiety is Panic disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Phobic disorder, Obsessive Compulsive disorder (OCD), Separation anxiety and Stress disorders.

There are many external factors that may contribute to anxiety. These include –stress from school, stress in a personal relationship, stress at work, financial stress, stress that result from an emotional trauma such as the loss of a loved one, victimization by crime, a natural disaster, sexual abuse or physical abuse, side effects of medication. Stress from a serious illness, intoxication with an illicit drug like an phentermine or cocaine, noticing symptoms of a severe medical illness and lack of oxygen(as a result of emphysema, pulmonary embolism, altitude sickness). However, the good news is that no matter what the reason of anxiety is, one can manage or handle it effectively.

Academic Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal reaction to certain situations. A small level of anxiety is normal, but severe anxiety can be a serious problem. Academic anxiety can become more detrimental over time. As a student's academic performance suffers, the anxiety level related to certain academic tasks increases Huberty (2012). Most teachers will have students with social anxiety and/or academic anxiety. Social anxiety can also affect a student's academic performance. If a student has social anxiety, the student might not be able to complete group tasks or might not feel comfortable asking for help in class. Social anxiety can go along with or even lead to academic anxiety. Teaching students self-regulation can redulation can reduce anxiety and increase academic performance (Ader & Erktin, 2012). Students experiencing academic anxiety feel apprehensive over academic tasks. Students can feel anxiety related to every academic task. Some may only feel anxiety related to test taking or other specific tasks. Anxiety is not always negative. Some students can be motivated by anxiety.

Components of Academic Anxiety

Academic anxiety has four components, worry,

emotionality, task generated interference, and study skills deficits. The method of reducing your anxiety depends upon which of these you are experiencing.



Fig. 1: Components of Academic Anxiety

1. **Worry:** Thoughts that prevent you from focusing on and successfully completing academic work. For example, prediction of failure, self-degrading thoughts or preoccupation with the consequences of doing poorly. Some effective techniques for managing this component includes, disputing negative and self-defeating thoughts with more productive, realistic thoughts, and self-hypnosis.

2. **Emotionality:** Biological symptoms of anxiety. For example, fast heart-beat, sweaty palms, muscle tension. The most effective strategies for dealing with emotionality are muscle and breathing relaxation exercises.

3. **Task generated interference:** Behaviors related to the task at hand, but which are unproductive and prevent successful performance. For example, constantly checking the clock during an exam, or spending a lot of time on a test question you cannot answer. Since these behaviors can take on many forms, the best management technique is to work with a study skills instructor or a counselor to identify the specific behaviors that cause problems and create a plan to reduce or change them.

4. **Study skill deficits:** Problems with your current study methods which create anxiety. For example, last-minute cramming resulting in not knowing answers to test questions or poor note-taking during lecture resulting in confusion about a major assignment. Many students experience the first

three components of academic anxiety as a results of study skills deficits. If this is the case, then your grades will not improve unless study skills are addressed. A study skills instructor can help you with this.

5. **Procrastination:** Procrastination means to put off or postpone for another day. Procrastination effects the behavioral, psychological, health of students. Academic procrastination is a form of procrastination peculator to education. Procrastination is found to result in stress, anxiety, a sense of guilt and crisis, health problems, and severe loss of productivity, as well as social disapproval for not meeting responsibilities or commitments. These feeling combined may promote further procrastination. Piers Steel (2010) indicated in that anxiety is just as likely to get people to start working early as late and that the focus of studies on procrastination should be impulsiveness. That is anxiety will cause people of delay only if they are impulsive.

How does anxiety affect academic performance?

Anxiety is not bad thing. It is true that a high level of anxiety interferes with concentration and memory, which are critical for academic success. Without any anxiety, however, most of us would lack the motivation to study for exams, write papers, or do daily homework (especially in classes we find boring). A moderate amount of anxiety actually helps academic performance by creating motivation. Anxiety plays important roles in our lives.

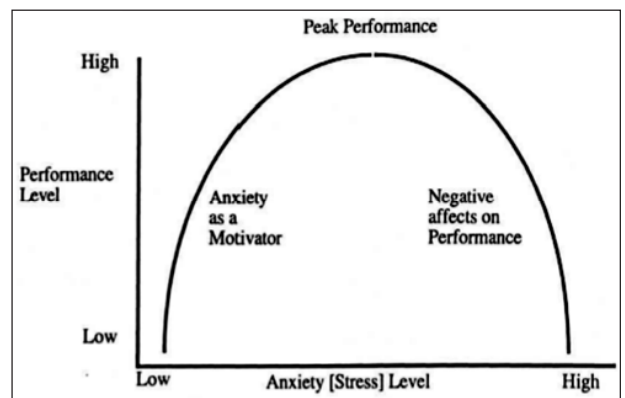


Fig. 2

These include immediate reaction to stimuli following onset, anticipation and being prepared for important events in future. It may be unpleasant, but it is often adaptive and in its absence one may

have trouble as life becomes difficult to organize. They further pointed out that anxiety can disrupt our lives if it becomes maladaptive. Anxiety symptoms are extremely common in childhood and adolescence and can negatively interfere with general well-being, social-life, academic performance and development of social-skills. Stated that anxiety symptoms are associated with impairment of memory and cognitive functions and can contribute to poor school performance and academic failure.

However, explained that the consequences of anxiety during test or examination may limit the educational or vocational development and promotion through the educational system. It is normal for a student to feel anxious before a test or examination, but it becomes problematic when the level of anxiety is excess. Opined that a various factor can contribute to a student's level of anxiety is excess, examples include: past experience with course, perception of course load, their inability to manage time, family issues and beliefs, which may have been shaped by a complex interplay of factors, may result to a unique reaction to a situation and lead to anxiety. The negative effects of anxiety can be explained by two models namely; the interference and the learning deficit models. According to the interference models, anxious student are distracted due to task irrelevant cognitions and negative thoughts during examinations, while the learning deficit model proposes that it is student's ineffective study habits during preparation for an examination that causes them to be anxious.

Ways to Reducing Academic Anxiety

Study and exam related anxiety is a problem for many students, whether or not they are focused on achieving academic excellence and its something that can affect students of any age. Nobody is immune to academic anxiety but there are plenty of things they can do to reduce anxiety that centers on studying and exams.

Student should have Preparation and organization

There are several key skills that go a long way towards reducing anxiety, just because they form a solid base of preparation and organization that help students stay focused and stay on top of his workload. For example, having a good note taking

system is essential for collage lecture, but the same system won't necessarily work for everyone. Some students prefer to write notes by hand, others prefer to use a laptop, and some like to take audio recordings of lectures and write up notes at their leisure is just a matter of trying different method to find out what works best for him? It is also useful to determine what is students learning style; some students learn best by listening, some by doing, some by reading and writing and if they are trying to force their self into a style that is not optimal, studying instantly becomes less effective and more stressful.

Student should have time management skill

One of the most important skill is to have of time management and use it effectively, tasks based on how urgent they are and sticking to whatever schedule they create for their self without good time management, they are likely to end up completing assignments at the last minute, losing sleep studying the night before exams, putting their self through a considerable amount of unnecessary stress and impairing their academic performance. Study and exam anxiety is often related to lack of preparation, so the key way to reduce that anxiety is simple to create a study schedule and stick with it.

Student should have lower goals and focus on performance levels

Stiffeiman said that lower your goals achieve more, this could help to relieve stress and boost academic success. Instead of setting goal to be getting the highest grade in the class, set a goal to feel satisfied with performance.

Stay balanced during exam periods

The importance of taking breaks and working in time to relax during busiest and most stressful periods cannot be overestimated, Stiff Elman urges. No matter how hard you push yourself, nobody can maintain constant focus, and you will burn yourself out if you try. Take frequent, short breaks for fun activities so that you'll be able to go back writing or studding refreshed.

How to manage academic anxiety in classroom

1. Develop strong academic skill to improve academic achievement as test anxiety is frequently caused by poor preparation.

2. If students feel fear from test then there is used to inculcate different skills like relaxation, visualization, self-talk, etc. and that help to reduce their academic anxiety.
3. Use self-talk positive statement test, when student feel anxiety from academic activities. It helps students to replace their negativity toward academic activities.
4. If students feel academic anxiety teacher need to expands fears and realized them their fears are unrealistic.
5. Always visualized when students anxious feel teacher should have done academic work from student's hand.
6. Teacher should remember the goal not to avoid anxiety to manage anxiety that hinders the students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Academic anxiety is one of the important factors to detraining the academic achievement of student, so there is need to manage academic anxiety to improve the academic performance. There are so many factors that increase anxiety among students that effect academic activities in so many ways. However, there are ways to reduce anxiety in students which parents, teachers, students should have known and should followed that's why future generation achieve their target & able to face their life with courage. This paper helps to know more about academic anxiety, component of academic anxiety and ways to manage academic anxiety in classroom.

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