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Anxiety Levels and High-Stakes Testing in At-Risk Students

by
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem or Research Question

Helping students with learning disabilities “make the grade” in their core curriculum classes is always a challenge for today’s teachers. With the advent of higher standards and accountability in recent years, as well as high-stakes tests, the stress and anxiety levels of many students at-risk for school failure are affected in a negative way (Casbarro, 2004).

When taking a high-stakes test, a student who is at-risk feels anxious when asked to do so (McDonald, 2001). Anxiety can fill a child’s day with dread and despair. Anxiety makes one physically uncomfortable and does not help the situation when being asked to take a high-stakes test. Feelings of anxiety and nervousness are negative feelings a child might be experiencing in testing situations. When these emotions are compounded with learning disabilities, failure in test scores is most likely to occur (Thurlow & Yssledyke, 1995). The effectiveness and/or success rate of test results can be hindered by the anxiety a student is feeling (McDonald, 2001). The results of the test scores may produce negative consequences for future outcomes.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this action research study is to add to the literature regarding anxiety levels of students who are deemed at-risk for school failure when taking high-stakes tests. If anxiety does impact students’ scores, then it is the author’s belief that the impact of anxiety and its effect on the validity of test scores should be considered when making decisions about students’ futures. This study is designed to provide insights into the pressures being placed on at-risk students who have to pass such tests. Students who are upset knowing they are required to take high-stakes tests may make themselves more anxious. Education professionals need to find
ways to build confidence and teach students different strategies for handling anxiety. This may help ease the effects of anxiety and give students more control, allowing them to feel more comfortable. When it comes to the children with special needs, it is even more important for them to receive the best strategies, techniques and skills that teachers can provide (Casbarro, 2005).

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions of important terms to be used in this paper.

**Anxiety**: “a painful or apprehensive uneasiness of the mind usually over the impending or anticipated ill” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 1994, p. 53). Levels of anxiety can be measured with a test anxiety scale containing a series of questions that can be administered before and after taking a test.

**At-Risk Student**: a student who performs and exhibits poor academic performance due to high-incidence disabilities (Carter, Wehby, Johnson, Plank, Barton-Arwoodk, & Lunsford, 2005). The IEP team determines the identification and services provided to an at-risk student.

**IEP**: An Individualized Education Program describes an educational program that has been designed to meet a child’s unique needs and is a legally binding contract (Cortellessa, 2004). Concise goals are written and followed accordingly in order to meet the child’s needs and an annual review is held each year consisting of the teachers, supervisor, parents and school professional to check the progress being made and to see if any modifications need to be made.

**High-Stakes Test**: According to Glass (2002), a high stakes test is a test for which there are consequences when a student does not perform well. All students in Ohio are expected to take state achievement and graduation tests based on Ohio’s Academic Standards and are
compared throughout the state with their test results. Final exams are an example of a high-
stakes test.

**Academic Performance**: According to Glass (2002), academic performance is the level
of achievement shown by students during an assessment. On standardized tests, a norm, or
specific level is designated, creating a comparison for students’ academic performance to be
judged as below or above their peers’ average score.

General Hypothesis/Research Question

The hypothesis for this research is that at-risk students will exhibit poor academic
performance due to increased test anxiety level during high-stakes testing. It is predicted that
their academic performance will be below passing levels and that test anxiety will lead to a
higher level of frustration and less confidence, producing lower test scores. Physical reaction
may occur due to the anxiety and produce changes in performance.

It is the researcher’s hope that the information presented and the findings of this research
study will be beneficial to others who may deal with issues of test anxiety and its possible effects
on today’s students.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review will attempt to present findings from professional publications and research on the prevalence and effects of test anxiety on students, as well as some strategies that can be used to prepare students with disabilities for high-stakes testing.

Prevalence and Effects of Test Anxiety

McDonald’s (2001) study of test anxiety seems to demonstrate an increase in test anxiety in students. He states that pressures associated with taking tests produced anxiety and proposed that anxiety will impair test performance resulting in lower grades and not meeting state requirements for passing scores. Kyriacou & Butcher (1993) developed a questionnaire to determine the sources of stress for teens ranging in age from 15-16 years in the United Kingdom. Taking exams was the most frequently reported source of stress in both boys and girls. Tests were identified as a major concern and the anxiety appears to be increasing, possibly from increased testing and the pressure accompanying testing. The findings imply that a negative relationship exists between test anxiety and performance.

McDonald’s (2001), study showed females score higher on tests that measure anxiety than do males. This is partly due to the fact the females are more honest with their feelings. His findings indicate that: 1) Anxiety can affect learning, creating a negative cycle that produces poor test results, 2) Children from low socio-economic backgrounds experience a greater amount of stress and anxiety when taking a test, 3) Favorable conditions would produce more positive results, 4) Pressures associated with increased test taking appear to be on the rise (McDonald, 2001). If the connection between feeling anxious and low-test scores is prevalent, educators may
need a better understanding of how to develop and implement more reliable forms of assessment. In this author’s opinion, future research needs to look at the relationship between test-taking anxiety and academic test performance.

Lufi, Okasha, and Cohen (2004) studied the personality variables of young adults with learning disabilities and test anxiety. Of the 54 Israeli participants, 31 were men and 23 were women. They were first-year Israeli college students with learning disabilities who planned to advance their education and agreed to participate in the study. Twenty-four were diagnosed with test anxiety (mean age 23.19) and 30 (mean age 24.05) were not.

All participants completed two questionnaires that were translated into Hebrew. The Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) was given to measure anxiety. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory – Version 2 (MMPI-2, a personality test containing 567 true or false questions was also given.

Results indicated many differences between the two groups. Significant differences were found on the verbal IQ test and also on all three measures of the TAI. When comparing the two groups, there were significant differences for 35 of the 68 measures of the MMPI-2. The authors report a relationship between depression and anxiety during testing. The authors also recommended future research explore the aspects of depression and how it relates to the test anxiety characteristics.

Wade and Moore (1993) surveyed 160 students using random sampling and provided participants with a questionnaire. Sentence completions were also given to 161 students from part of cross-cultural study that took place in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Students ranging from 7-11 years of made up 45% of the study participants and students ranging from 12-16 years were the remaining 55% of the sample. Boys outnumbered girls about three to one.
Almost half of the students were placed in more than one category of learning disability. The questionnaire had six statements for each topic, three positive and three negative. For the sentence completion, researchers provided four incomplete sentences about assessment and testing for participants to complete. Nearly 40% of the sample was made up of students that qualified for special education services who were included in the regular classroom setting. Even though most of the students were feeling anxious, they were willing to respond. The following conclusions were derived: included students enjoy having tests, test can be regarded as useful feedback on progress, motivational ideas are needed, and feedback needs to be positive.

Casbarro (2005), stated that there are two domains influencing test anxiety: 1) an individuals’ characteristics, and 2) the environment in which the individual lives, plays, and works. Under the domain of characteristics there are three factors related to past experiences that influence test anxiety. First, is an individual’s feeling of self-worth, second is confidence or lack of confidence, and third is the ability to regulate one’s emotions.

Environment focuses on the places an individual must negotiate every day as part of their existence and it is made up of three components. First is the school, which is an environment of data driven accountability that can become a breeding ground for test anxiety. Second is the home, which is critical because parental influence and child rearing can affect anxiety. Finally, is the community-at-large that includes the playground, social gathering places, and the media.

Test anxiety increasingly affects our nation. Current practices have created a stressful learning environment, which may lead to less enjoyment in learning for students. Anxiety can cause lower performance on high-stakes testing. Principals must be able to provide leadership in order to produce positive outcomes in test performance. Students need to express their anxieties and worries when it comes to taking tests. Effective techniques and strategies that reduce
anxiety also need to be incorporated into the school experience. Study skills such as better note taking and test taking strategies can benefit students tremendously Casbarro (2004).

Ysseldyke, Nelson, Christenson, Johnson, and Dennison et al., (2004) studied the consequences of high-stakes testing for students with disabilities. Data was analyzed in order to make judgments regarding the consequences of high-stakes testing. Findings indicated the effects of using high-stakes testing with special education students had both a positive and negative effect. Multiple methods were used to examine the positive and negative effects of high-stakes testing for students with disabilities. One method was tracking discourse using a media analysis to follow certain key issues. Newspaper articles with positive headlines versus negative headlines were looked at for a more balanced perspective. Another method was looking at two states and using two focus groups for each state. One group was to look at students using a high-stakes assessment and the other group looked at students not using a high-stakes assessment. Data was gathered to see if the contents of the I.E.P.’s were reflecting the accommodations and assessments.

After reviewing how teachers in Maine and Maryland prepared for high-stakes tests, researchers found many of the teachers were teaching to the test. This hurts a child’s development of higher-order thinking skills because instruction becomes a memorization drill, rather than one requiring higher level thinking skills.

The study discussed various consequences of high-stakes testing for students with disabilities. The authors suggested we need to know more about the consequences. Better communication between parents and students is a vital part of the assessment process. Schools do not possess all of the answers as the No Child Left Behind Act infers. This is a joint effort of everyone involved, and both students and parents need to take ownership when pursuing
intervention. More data should be collected and reviewed regarding raised expectations, increased participation, and improved performance in order to have a clearer picture of the consequences of high-stakes testing for students receiving special education.

Standards-based teaching and high-stakes testing seems to fail when it dictates the curriculum resulting in teaching to the test, and when test scores become the sole criterion for awarding credit or promotion and for judging the quality of schools or statewide school systems. Standardized test scores should play “a” role not “the” role in policy and decision-making (Popham, 2003).

It is important that accommodations are provided in order to better serve students’ needs. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 states at least 95% of students labeled with disabilities must participate in statewide assessments. A lack of accommodations could result in academic failure, dropping out, not accurately showing educational improvement, teachers spending too much time preparing for the test, and teachers being held accountable when achievement does not reach target goals.

In more recent years, there has been considerable debate regarding the current approach of using high-stakes testing to increase student achievement. According to Goldberg (2004) an education writer, book editor, and consultant, the objections to several aspects of testing have dramatically increased. Many teachers and administrators object to tests on the grounds that they fail to measure what is important to many categories of students, in particular students in vocational programs or those receiving special education services. Others argue that some questions raise uncomfortable issues related to class or race as well as the matter of funding. Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, characterized the NCLB accountability regime as suffering from “a severe lack of funding and a totally unworkable
The numbers of objections continue to increase. Many advocate for tutoring, increases in early development programs, use of alternative methods to help struggling students, and funding for more research. According to Goldberg (2004), many cities, states, and even parents have discovered or developed some creative ways to help students circumvent the tests or their results.

*Preparing Children with Disabilities for High-Stakes Testing*

Carter, Wehby, Hughes, Johnson, and Plank et al., (2005) studied the effects of testtaking with strategy instruction for students labeled with disabilities. The study examined the effects of test-taking strategy instruction for at-risk secondary students. Following intervention, the students demonstrated small but significant increases in test performance and test anxiety was decreased. One group of students ranged from 15-19 years of age with the majority being male (65%) and African American (60%). A second group of students were 15 - 19 years of age and half (50%) were male and the majority African American (78%). All 38 participants were at-risk students according to their IEP’s. All students showed signs of behavioral problems and academic problems. After proper instruction in strategies to reduce anxiety, a random sampling of the first group demonstrated a significant increase in correct responses and the control group (the second group) demonstrated a slight increase in correct responses.

Teachers should be aware of three types of anxious test-taking students. First is the student who does not have proper study skills, the second has a fear he/she might fail when taking the test, and the third kind is one who believes he/she possesses good study skills when this is not the case.

Supon (2004) studied five strategies that teachers can implement to assist test-anxious students. With proper strategies, anxiety levels decrease and the instructional process increases.
Students of all levels of academic abilities can experience test anxiety. At-risk students sometime have higher levels of anxiety when it comes to testing. Emphasis needs to be put on the time before, during, and after the assessment. Incorporating note taking should be encouraged for students to better retain key concepts. The teacher should keep distractions to a minimum and make the room a comfortable atmosphere. Directions should be clearly given along with positive feedback.

Another strategy would be not to let the classroom be the drill and practice room but rather balance the curriculum by using multiple teaching techniques. Giving students practice tests before they are asked to take the high-stakes test will help familiarize them with the types of questions on the test so they will be more comfortable and help reduce stress.

Thurlow and Yssledyke (1995) focused on testing accommodations for students with disabilities in the United States. There seems to be great variability in the accommodations available. Modification, eligibility, and description of non-standard conditions are areas of concern. Practice need to be more consistent to end the confusion over policies, scores, and data interpretation. Parents are another factor because they want their child with disabilities to be tested for accountability purposes, but they do not want it to be a painful experience for their child. The delicate balance of handling individual and societal rights needs to be addressed. This can be done if proper guidelines are set up for testing students with disabilities. The whole idea is to be able to maintain integrity and still obtain reliable and valid results.

Donlevy (2001) compared and contrasted educational influences on regular and special education students. The variables influencing students in special education have more to do with the lived experience and relationships with adults rather than just the curriculum. Effective relationships can be great influence on a child’s life. Children in special education need to have
a secure and competent relationship with an adult to help deal with the shortcomings of their struggle in dealing with academic material. IEP’s are useful tools to have detailed specific goals and objectives to follow in order to meet the child’s needs. Emotional, social, and behavioral aspects also need to be taken into account. A positive relationship between a teacher and student is a key component in helping and children with special needs. Incorporating trust, cooperation, being competent and flexible all lead to positive learning environment. Pressures of the new academic requirements can place additional demands on special education students.

High-stakes testing is clearly going to be around for a while. Only time will tell if teaching guided by standards will succeed or fail. “There is some data beginning to support positive instructional changes; (a) alignment of IEP’s, (b) increased access to the general curriculum, (c) alignment of curriculum with assessments, (d) supplemental curricula, and (e) improved instructional practices” (Braden, 2002, p. 76). One piece of a better system might be a program that focuses on identifying difficulties and working to assist students before remediation becomes necessary.

Test anxiety was the most common problem addressed by the parents of students with disabilities, special educators, and administrators reported by Ysseldyke (2004). There are many methods for dealing with test anxiety, but the most widely used include developing good study habits, getting plenty of rest, proper exercise, relaxation techniques, and learning good test-taking methods (Casbarro, 2005).

Psychologists and counselors report that test anxiety can result in many physical symptoms including headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cold sweats, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, and fainting spells (Casbarro, 2005). Daniel Goleman’s (1995) internationally best selling book, Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ discusses the emotional
side of test anxiety. He states that learning to identify, understand, use, and manage emotions are very valuable skills. Emotional skills play a critical role in achieving success both in school and the “real world”.

Hollenbeck (1998) conducted a study to determine how knowledgeable teachers were about accommodations and then adhering to those accommodations for students with disabilities on statewide testing as well as statewide implementation. The survey was developed by the Oregon State Department of Special Education and given statewide. The teachers were given a survey related to the teacher’s knowledge of accommodations, use of accommodations, and testing conditions. The surveys were sent to 633 elementary and middle school teachers, which represented a range of urban and rural settings. Only 21% of participants were actually implementing the specified accommodations. Teachers’ knowledge ranked at 54.8% of the allowable accommodations to be used while testing. The findings showed there was a need for assessment training to be offered to teachers.

It is important that accommodations are provided in order to better serve students’ needs. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 states at least 95% of students labeled with disabilities must participate in statewide assessments. A lack of accommodations could result in academic failure, dropping out, not accurately showing educational improvement, teachers spending too much time preparing for the test, and teachers being held accountable when achievement does not reach target goals (Gartland, 2004).

Accommodations available to assess individual abilities rather than just disabilities should be considered. All schools and students face the consequences of district-wide assessments. High-stakes exams are common and special educators need to help students better prepare for them. One way to prepare students for high-stakes tests is to practice the procedures
and provide cues about important content when covering the curriculum. Preparing students for test-taking skills include speaking to them about proper rest and nutrition, understanding the directions for the test questions, and understanding the different types of content questions. Having these test-taking skills could lead to better test scores (Washburn-Moses, 2003).

One can see from the review of the following literature that test anxiety is prevalent in today’s society. High levels of anxiety cause students to become anxious which in turn may affect their individual performance. There are several ways to reduce test anxiety in students that include: proper rest, controlling emotions, carefully following IEP accommodations, practice tests, and relaxation techniques.
In Chapter 3, the research procedures are described in detail and include the school setting and participants, the instrument used for data collection, analysis of the data, and the over-all results and findings.

Research Question

The focus of the proposed research is to determine if there is a correlation between test anxiety levels and individual performance and/or scores on a final exam for adolescents at-risk for school failure.

Setting and Participants

The setting is a vocational high school in rural Eastern Ohio with a student body of approximately 350 students. The researcher’s classroom from whom the project participants are drawn are a group of at-risk students divided into 9th and 10th grade social studies classes with daily attendance ranging from 12 to 22 students. The students were determined to be at-risk for school failure by their middle school guidance counselors from their respective home schools. This was based on a variety of factors such as academic failure, poor attendance, behavioral problems and student interest in a vocational career. The majority of these students have Individualized Education Programs (IEP’s), and receive special education services due to below grade-level reading skills and/or behavioral problems.

Instrument

The data collection instrument for this study was a 15-question survey designed to measure student anxiety level prior to taking a test. The questionnaire was given two days before a social studies final exam was administered. Scoring for this questionnaire was on a
three-point scale ranging from low to high ratings of anxiety related to the testing situation. The survey was taken from a sample presented in Joseph Casbarro’s (2005) book, *Test Anxiety and What You Can Do About It*. The survey was determined to be a good instrument to use due to the fact it was short and its simplicity, which accommodated some of the students’ short attention span. A copy of the survey can be found in the appendix.

**Procedures**

Prior to conducting the research official approval was granted by the Ohio University office of Research Compliance. Each student was given an assent form, as well as a parental consent form explaining the research. Twenty-five students in the class returned the signed consent and assent forms and these were the only ones used in the data research findings.

All the participants were students in the researcher’s class during the school day and were given the stress anxiety questionnaire/survey two days prior to the final exam. All students completed the survey in five minutes or less due to its short length. No writing was involved. The directions were explained verbally to the students the researcher helped any students with reading difficulties to understand each question before they answered the questions.

Two days after taking the Stress and Anxiety Questionnaire, the students took their final Social Studies exam, which consisted of multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions worth 100 points. The context of the test covered U.S. History highlights of the 20th Century. This was the time period in history covered during the second 18-week semester of the school year. The students were given notes and study guides during the two week period prior to the final exam date.
Data Analysis

Students were asked to answer the 15 questions honestly. Ratings for the 15 questions were 1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, and 3 = Always. Upon completion, responses were scored and coded as Never = 0, Sometimes = 1, and Always = 2. Scores were summed and a rating of 0 - 9 indicated low anxiety, 10 - 19 indicated a medium to moderate anxiety level, and 20 - 30 a high anxiety level.

Results

The anxiety scores for the 25 study participants ranged from 0 to 27 out of a possible score of 30. The average score was 10.24, which falls in the moderate range of test stress anxiety. On the Social Studies final exam the scores ranged from 20% to 100%, with an average of 57.2% for the 25 students.

An analysis of the student’s stress anxiety scores and the final exam scores resulted in the following: 11 students whose anxiety scores ranged from 10 - 27 (moderate to high) scored between 27% and 60% on the final exam; conversely, eight students whose anxiety scores were in the low range of 0 - 8 scored between 70% and 100% on the final exam. Of the remaining six students, four students with low anxiety scores had low exam scores and two students with high anxiety scores also had high exam scores. For the participants in this study, anxiety appeared to have a negative effect on the majority of the students’ exam scores.

Overall, there was a negative correlation of -0.44 between test anxiety as measured by the Text Anxiety Survey and Social Studies final exam performance. See figure 1 for a visual comparison of student anxiety levels and final social studies exam test scores.
Figure 1.

*Anxiety Level and Test Score Correlation*
Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study included the fact that only 25 of the 50 students were part of the study due to the lack of return of permission slips. Also, this group of students was a specially selected group of students who were identified as at-risk due to the fact that they were not succeeding in school. Some of them portrayed an attitude of “I don’t care let’s just get it over with” and move on when it came to accomplishing schoolwork. This was the only semester exam that the students took in social studies for the school year. There was no way of comparing these results with another semester exam of its type during the school year.

These findings are also limited in generalizability to other students within this class and grade level and cannot be generalized to other students of similar age or ability level due to the specificity in specific content and content delivery. The findings are also limited due to the unavailability of a control group to use for comparison.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it may be concluded that some at-risk students experience high levels of anxiety when taking high-stakes tests. For some students, these anxiety levels appear to have an impact on test performance and it should be carefully considered whether or not at-risk students should be subjected to the pressures associated with high-stakes testing. If the correlation in fact does exist for at-risk students, one must question whether or not their results can accurately be used to compare them with their typically developing peers.

Anxiety levels that accompany such tests are sometimes difficult to control for regular education students much less than for students who have been identified as an at-risk student. The results of this study seem to indicate that the anxiety students experienced interferes with their ability to do their best on tests. Some anxiety might actually be helpful when students have
the proper skills for how to handle it or channel it. Proper modifications for students who experience unhealthy levels of anxiety need to be taken into consideration for high-stakes testing and implemented correctly by classroom teachers.

In this particular case study, the results indicate high anxiety being present for some at-risk students. The students who do not have the proper tools and skills needed to take high-stakes tests need to have a leveled playing field that accommodates students that do not have the cognitive skills necessary in order to be successful during testing. A more fair form of assessment is needed and should be incorporated to help meet the needs of at-risk students, especially those that are affected by high anxiety test stress.

Recommendations

Casbarro (2005) states that students can develop Post-Traumatic Test Disorder (PTTD) whose symptoms include persistent feelings of failure, an avoidance of test taking, difficulty concentrating, and an increased anxiety towards school. If these symptoms are not addressed after each high-stakes test, the students will continue in this vicious cycle. Taking control of the situation, which includes developing and executing an effective plan to lower test-anxiety levels, can only break this cycle.

In this research study, the 25 at-risk students were taking a final exam at the end of the school year. There was no time for intervention or remediation for this particular exam. It is unclear whether some of these students might have, or will experience Post-Traumatic Test Disorder based on anxiety-inducing test-taking experiences.

Future considerations should be given towards controlling or managing individual student anxiety levels for high-stakes testing starting from the early stages of the school year. Hopefully,
through the use of remediation, teaching anxiety reduction strategies, and alternative assessments, student test anxiety may be reduced.

**Summary**

Overall, most studies have reported negative correlations between test anxiety and performance, with coefficients of up to -0.5 and -0.6 being observed, although more frequently correlations have ranged between -0.2 and -0.3 (Crocker, 1988). The -0.44 negative correlation found in this study falls within the range of many other recent studies.

In most studies, higher levels of test anxiety appear to negatively impact exam performance, but not performance on class work and essays. It would be a mistake to say that test anxiety has a negative effect on all forms of assessment (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). A test-anxious student may not experience excessive anxiety during a low-stakes test they might feel confident about, although they may during a high-stakes test (Speilberger & Vagg, 1995).

McDonald, (2001) states that two main findings have emerged from test anxiety studies. First, fear of exams is wide spread and becoming more prevalent. Secondly, test anxiety has a negative effect on test performance.

This correlational study between test anxiety and final exam scores also demonstrated a negative correlation of -0.44 with the particular students involved in this study. A few unanswered questions that need to be explored in more detail are: does test anxiety cause low achievement or does a lack of knowledge result in children becoming anxious about testing. The evidence from the majority of studies in the literature indicates that moderate to high-test anxiety leads to low achievement. Future studies need to explore the relationship between anxiety, learning, and academic performance. A greater understanding of this relationship could lend itself to developing better assessment for at-risk students who suffer from test anxiety.
References


Appendix A

A checklist designed to help students overcome test anxiety. The questionnaire includes 15 questions, each rated on a scale from Never to Always, to assess the level of test anxiety a student experiences. The questions cover various aspects of test anxiety, such as feeling nervous, having difficulty concentrating, and worrying about performing well.

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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<td>1. I become nervous several days before I have to take an important test.</td>
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<td>2. I cannot sleep the night before a test.</td>
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<td>3. I cannot eat the morning of an important test.</td>
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<td>4. My palms sweat, my stomach has butterflies, or I have other similar symptoms when the test is being handed out or distributed.</td>
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<td>5. I cannot focus or concentrate when I first open the test booklet.</td>
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<td>6. I have to read and re-read the directions many times.</td>
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<td>7. I feel light-headed or like I’m going to pass out during the test.</td>
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<td>8. I cannot concentrate or focus during the test.</td>
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<td>9. My mind goes blank during the test.</td>
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<td>10. Negative thoughts enter my mind during the test.</td>
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<td>11. I change my answers many times.</td>
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<td>12. I constantly worry about what time it is and how much time I have left.</td>
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<td>13. During the test, I feel like I’m going to have a panic attack.</td>
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<td>14. After the test, I am totally exhausted.</td>
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<td>15. After the test, I usually think I have failed.</td>
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