

Meeting: 1003, Atlanta, Georgia, MAA CP K1, MAA Session on Countering “I Can’t Do Math”: Strategies for Teaching Under-Prepared, Math-Anxious Students

1003-K1-892 **Fred Peskoff*** (fpeskoff@aol.com), Borough of Manhattan Community College/CUNY,
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Anxiety in College: Not For Students Only!*

Community college students in an elementary algebra course and a precalculus course completed the Composite Math Anxiety Scale in order to provide a math anxiety score. They also rated a set of coping strategies in terms of frequency of use and helpfulness. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on the data. The three independent variables were math anxiety, gender, and course level. The dependent variables were frequency of use and helpfulness of the strategies. Low math anxiety students utilized and valued most coping strategies more than did high anxiety students. Completing homework assignments on time, informing your instructor if you don’t understand the course material, setting aside extra study time before exams, and asking questions in class received the highest helpfulness ratings. This cluster of strategies was characterized as approach strategies inasmuch as they all focus upon confronting the stressful situation at hand (the study of mathematics). Avoidance strategies, such as relaxation or exercise, in which students remove themselves temporarily from the stressful situation, were rated less helpful. The author has used these findings to successfully conduct math anxiety workshops for college faculty throughout the nation. (Received October 01, 2004)