

A PROPOSED GROUNDED THEORY ABOUT THE SOURCES AND EFFECTS
OF TEACHING ANXIETY AMONG TWO-YEAR
COLLEGE FACULTY

by

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of the requirements for the degree

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ABSTRACT

Everyone occasionally experiences anxiety. In fact, an appropriate level of anxiety allows for the optimal performance of any task. There are times, however, when anxiety becomes problematic, undermining one's confidence and ultimately his or her performance. For teachers, there is a specific anxiety, teaching anxiety, which can lead to long term struggles in the classroom. Teaching anxiety appears to be a predicament for a significant number of post-secondary educators; yet little data were found on the subject. The purpose of this study was to systematically examine perceptions regarding the sources and effects of teaching anxiety among two-year college faculty. The aim was to assemble details about those college faculty members' insights through an assessment of their perspectives on the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. The study was directed by the following central research question: What do two year college faculty members perceive as the sources and effects of teaching anxiety? The following subquestions further clarified the direction of the study: (1) How do the participants describe their own or their colleagues' experiences with teaching anxiety? (2) What do the participants understand about both the immediate and long-term effects of teaching anxiety? (3) How do those participants cope with teaching anxiety if they experience(d) it? To propose a grounded theory, this study utilized partially structured one-on-one interviews with two-year college faculty to illuminate the intrinsic properties of their perceptions about teaching anxiety. A conceptual model of inter-related perceptions concerning the sources and effects of teaching anxiety emerged from the data.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

Anxiety is a common human condition with which everyone must cope from time to time. Identified as a group of physical, behavioral, and mental changes occurring in response to danger or threat, anxiety actually serves a protective function by creating a sense of caution, care and focus (Barlow, 2002). On the other hand, if it becomes toxic, it can intrude upon one's awareness in a distressing manner, creating feelings that lead individuals to believe their abilities in any given situation are sorely lacking (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). These feelings in turn can result in a reduction in attention, ineffectiveness, and/or a lack of enjoyment in any given situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Experiences of anxiety that deviate from the norm are maladaptive, and can result in the diagnosis of an anxiety disorder. (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Few people do *not* experience some degree of anxiety or apprehension when speaking to a group. In fact, nearly 85% of respondents surveyed, reported that public speaking generated feelings of anxiety severe enough to cause avoidance of such situations. (Motley, 1990). Kessler, Stein and Bergland (1998) reported that 30.5% of individuals in the United States experience phobic reactions to public speaking, staying away from it at all costs. College instructors spend a great deal of their time addressing and interacting with large groups of people in the classroom setting. It might be assumed that, over time, they acclimate to the stress that accompanies working in front of a group

of people; however, studies confirm that even veteran faculty and other seasoned professionals experience an omnipresent discomfort each and every time they perform their duties (Motley, 1990). Gardner and Leak (1994) distinguished "...anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities" as teaching anxiety (p. 28).

Teaching anxiety is not limited to lecturing or speaking. While working with a group of students in class, instructors are required not only to disseminate content, but also to deal with any questions that might arise during class time. They must be in command of the class as well. This includes addressing potential classroom incivilities and dealing with an outright or perceived lack of respect. In addition, during any given classroom session, faculty may be subjected to formal and/or informal evaluation by students, peers, colleagues, or administrators. The pressures of these experiences may render ill-equipped college instructors more susceptible to teaching anxiety which may, in turn, impede their overall effectiveness in the classroom (Bernstein, 1983).

Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson (2002); Motley (1990), and Bernstein (1983) all speculated that the type of stress created as a result of teaching anxiety led to long-term struggles in the classroom and was a significant cause of burnout, or "the inability to function effectively in one's job as a consequence of prolonged and extensive job-related stress" (Byrne, 1991, p. 197). In addition, there might be physiological consequences (Hapuarachchi, Winefield, Chalmers, Blake-Mortimer, Stough, Gillespie, & Dua, 2003).

One of the primary coping strategies for the problems associated with teaching anxiety is to leave teaching for work in another field (Drake & Hebert, 2002). Thus, it is

assumed that many who are unable to manage their teaching anxiety simply leave the profession claiming they are burned out. Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson (2002) and Motley, (1988) considered burnout preventable through the awareness, training, and management of symptoms of teaching anxiety.

In a recent study of Australian university faculty by the National Tertiary Education Union, it was determined that 50 percent of the participants in a national survey on occupational stress in Australian universities were experiencing such high levels of stress that they were in danger of developing a “psychological illness”. This number was compared to 19 percent of the general population of that country (National Tertiary Education Union, 2000, p. 1). At the University of South Australia, researchers measured 43 faculty members’ metabolites (homocysteine, creative protein levels, salivary IgA and oxidative stress). Through their analysis of these physiological components, they determined that the faculty members’ psychological health, as it related to their stress levels, influenced their physiology in both positive and negative ways. Ultimately this was connected to their cardiovascular health and their immunity (Hapuarachchi, et al, 2003). It is believed that teaching anxiety could be a catalyst for stress reactions in many college faculty (Fish & Fraser, 2001).

Rationale

The earliest research on anxiety and its effect on teaching can be traced back to the 1930s (Peck, 1936; Hicks, 1933). These studies focused on kindergarten through twelfth-grade (K-12) education. In the 1950s and 1960s, the National Education

Association (NEA) proposed that teaching anxiety did, in fact, exist and could negatively impact the quality of the educational experience for both faculty and students (Cartwright, 1986). Bernstein's (1983) account of his own experiences with teaching anxiety at the post-secondary level was described in his classic essay, *Teaching Anxiety: A Personal View*. This essay established a foundation for further empirical exploration; however, as of this writing, in the United States, only two empirical studies on teaching anxiety at the postsecondary level were located. One of these studies, directed by Gardner and Leak (1994) was specific to psychology instructors. The other, by Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson (2002), focused upon accounting faculty. One of these discipline-specific descriptive studies was conducted at a public four-year higher education institution and the other at a private four-year higher education institution. Both studies utilized questionnaires. This lack of literature regarding the perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety by college faculty has provided the rationale for further study.

Statement of the Problem

It has been proposed that teaching anxiety has a significant impact on college teaching effectiveness and causes negative long-term professional ramifications for those who experience it. In spite of this, no empirically supported coping strategies or recommendations for post-secondary educators could be located (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner and Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983). In the United States, no studies were identified which examined perceptions regarding the sources and effects of

teaching anxiety among college faculty. Because of its potential risks, college faculty members require an understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to systematically examine perceptions regarding the sources and effects of teaching anxiety among two-year college faculty. The aim is to assemble details about those college faculty members' insights through an assessment of their perspectives on the sources and effects of teaching anxiety.

Research Questions

This study was directed by the following central research question:

What do two-year college faculty members perceive as the sources and effects of teaching anxiety?

The following subquestions further clarified the direction of the study:

1. How do participants describe their own or their colleagues' experiences with teaching anxiety?
2. What do participants understand about both the immediate and long-term effects of teaching anxiety?
3. How do participants cope with teaching anxiety if they experience (d) it?

Significance of the Study

Teaching anxiety appears to be a predicament for a significant number of post-secondary educators. (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994;

Bernstein, 1983). Gardner and Leak (1994, p. 30) found that 87 percent of psychology faculty experienced teaching anxiety. In a national survey of four-year college faculty, Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke (1984, p. 477) determined that teaching was the most stressful task for post-secondary educators. These educators also reported that 60 percent of the overall stress they experienced was directly linked to their jobs (Gmelch, Lovrich & Wilke, 1984, p. 477).

In addition to establishing that teaching anxiety exists, Gardner and Leak (1994) originally identified a strong denial exhibited by post-secondary educators in regard to teaching anxiety. This denial has been confirmed by Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002) and centered upon the dismissal of the existence of teaching anxiety as well as the denial of the effect it may have had on the individual educator. In other words, an educator might be oblivious to the impact of teaching anxiety.

Gardner and Leak (1994) and Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002) further proposed that teaching anxiety could become so severe that it might well cost an instructor his or her academic career. It was also proposed that with awareness and simple self-administrable intervention this could be avoided and outstanding educators could be retained (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983). This study makes important contributions to the field of higher education by highlighting the perceptions regarding two-year college educators' understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety and suggesting grounded theory to support a foundation for self-administrable coping strategies for those who experience this event.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be used:

Anxiety:	physical, behavioral and mental changes occurring in response to danger or threat (Barlow, 2002).
Burnout:	“...the inability to function effectively in one’s job as a consequence of prolonged and extensive job-related stress” (Byrne, 1991, p. 197).
Denial:	“...an ego defense mechanism subconsciously invoked to protect individuals from the anxiety that might manifest in response to the reality of their situation(s)” (Engler, 2006).
Persona:	a façade that allows an individual to adapt to the demands placed upon him or her by a variety of social situations (Engler, 2006).
Phobia:	“...clinically significant anxiety provoked by exposure to a specific feared object or situation, often leading to avoidance behavior” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 429).
Public Speaking Anxiety:	“...a fear and uneasiness caused by the potentially threatening situation (real or anticipated) of speaking before a group of people” (MacIntyre & MacDonald 1998, p. 359).
Self-Administrable Coping Strategies:	Coping strategies that are implemented by the individual with no professional intervention (Auerbach, 1981).

- Stage fright: “...a dynamic event that revolves around fluctuations in individuals’ perceptions of their own competence in public speaking settings” (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998, p. 360).
- Stress: “...any characteristic of the job environment which poses a threat to the individual – either excessive demands or insufficient supplies to meet his/her needs” (Gmelch, Lovrich & Wilke, 1984, p. 481).
- Teaching anxiety: “...anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities” (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 28). It is important to note that for the purposes of this study, the focus will remain upon classroom activities and not spread to the more general areas of teaching such as time management, workload, assessment or individual interactions students or colleagues (Bernstein, 1983).
- Two-year College: “...any educational institution holding accreditation to grant the associate degree in arts or sciences as its highest degree” (Shearson & Tollefson, 1989, p. 317).

Research Structure and Procedures

This grounded theory study utilized partially-structured one-on-one interviews to illuminate participants’ perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety.

Approval for the study was secured through the Human Subjects Research Board at both Montana State University-Bozeman and University of Montana-Missoula.

Interviews were conducted during the academic year 2005-2006. The focus of this study was two-year faculty from a variety of academic disciplines employed at colleges of technology in the state of Montana. Two-year college faculty members were selected because they spend so much of their time in the classroom. Based upon these interviews, analysis focused upon key responses, their implications and the assertions around the implications of those responses. Data were amplified through researcher self-reflection and compared to previously accumulated data based upon the review of the significant literature. Analysis of the data remained true to the grounded theory tradition of qualitative research as identified by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Open coding, followed by axial and selective coding was used to incorporate all the categories identified. In this manner, the constant comparative method was employed to combine coding and the suggestion of a core category in an effort to uncover new theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This resulted in a conceptual model of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety.

Conclusion

Teaching anxiety does, in fact, exist for some post-secondary educators and it extends far beyond simply feeling anxious in front of a classroom full of students (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994). Moreover, it appears that teaching anxiety has negative outcomes in regard to teaching effectiveness at the post-secondary level and may cause college faculty significant occupational stress leading to

the possible termination of otherwise promising academic careers (Ameen, Guffey, & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983). In short, teaching anxiety can be a significant problem for the post-secondary educator. Realistically, anxiety in the classroom cannot be completely eradicated; however, with further understanding of its sources and effects, two year college faculty might better understand how to cope with teaching anxiety before it becomes incapacitating. A detailed review of the existing literature on teaching anxiety will be provided in chapter two.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter two presents a review of the literature relevant to this study and identifies the structural themes necessary to suggest grounded theory about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. The chapter commences with the definition of teaching anxiety and a thorough exploration of its elements. Subsequently, an investigation of the literature related to public speaking anxiety, stage fright, and performance anxiety is offered. The origins of general anxiety and anxiety disorders are discussed. In addition, an overview of the existing data on teaching anxiety at both the kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) and post-secondary levels is presented. Denial and its impact on teaching anxiety is also discussed. The chapter closes with a synopsis of strategies for coping with anxiety and teaching anxiety.

Teaching Anxiety-Definition and Components

Gardner and Leak (1994) have identified "...anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities..." as teaching anxiety (p. 28). This definition established that the experience of teaching anxiety is not limited to lecturing or speaking in front of a group. In fact, when examined more closely, college teachers could be affected by a variety of classroom action. For example, answering student questions; observing large and small group discussion;

monitoring and manipulating classroom dynamics, and handling classroom incivility are all activities requiring a wide range of skills and abilities (Gardner & Leak, 1994). As if that were not enough, college faculty members are constantly being evaluated by students, colleagues, peers and administrators. To accommodate all of these proceedings, Gardner and Leak (1994) formulated their definition of teaching anxiety so that it included distress related to interfacing with students/listeners. In other words, Gardner and Leak (1994) suggested that teaching anxiety is more than a fear of public speaking.

So that the definition of teaching anxiety did not become too broad, Gardner and Leak (1994) excluded a myriad of teaching duties such as grading, academic advising and other instances of student interaction. Additional manifestations of stress in academe were also excluded. For example, college faculty experience stressors such as extended working hours; uninteresting administrative tasks; substandard physical surroundings; hostility between colleagues, and administrative red tape (Gmelch, Lovrich & Wilke, 1984). These stressors were not built into the Gardner and Leak (1994) exploration of teaching anxiety.

Public Speaking Anxiety

College teaching in a face-to-face classroom involves public speaking; however, Gardner and Leak (1994) indicated that managing a college classroom is more challenging than delivering a talk in a public forum. An intense fear of public speaking has been identified as the most common social phobia among Americans (Clevenger, 1984). Social phobia, the most frequently diagnosed anxiety disorder in the United States, is characterized by nervousness and fear, intense discomfort and/or complete

avoidance of social or performance situations where the individual might experience humiliation. These experiences incite a powerful anxiety response that may or may not lead to a full-blown panic attack (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

In the case of public speaking, experiencing the intense discomfort of a phobic reaction causes individuals to go to great lengths to circumvent exposure to any public speaking event—even to the point of complete avoidance of all potential situations where such an event might occur (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Public speaking anxiety as defined by MacIntyre & MacDonald (1998, p. 359) is “...a fear and uneasiness caused by the potentially threatening situation (real or anticipated) of speaking before a group of people.” When a speaker is anxious, responses will occur in the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains. These responses include sympathetic nervous system over-arousal, decreased cognition, and an intense desire to break away from the situation (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998).

Most experts believe that the anxiety caused by anticipating a public speaking event is more intense than the anxiety experienced once the public speaking event is in progress (Behnke & Sawyer, 1999). This anticipatory anxiety transfers to other stressful situations as well. For example, test anxiety has been found to be more intense during the anticipatory phase (Martin, 1997). For this reason, it is believed that the most unpleasant experience of anxiety is most likely to occur during the anticipatory phase of any performance event (Andrews, Freed, & Teeson, 1994).

Anxious speakers are more watchful as they analyze audience reactions to their performance. If the audience appears friendly, anxiety levels drop (MacIntyre &

MacDonald, 1998). Daly, Vangelisti, and Lawrence (1989) surmised that anxious speakers do not have the ability to properly analyze audience reaction due to increased self-focus. Carver and Scheier (1990) believed the opposite is true and reported an increased self-focus leads to a better and more complete analysis of audience reaction to performance. Perhaps the determining factor as to which direction the self-focus might take would be the presence of anxiety. In other words, the anxious individual would struggle more with his ability to properly analyze the audience reaction while the more confident speaker could use the experience more constructively (Carver & Scheier, 1990).

Stage Fright

Stage fright, a close relative of public speaking anxiety, is “a dynamic event that revolves around fluctuations in individuals’ perceptions of their own competence in public speaking settings” (Ayres, 1986, p. 275). In a social comparison theory study on stage fright, Ayres (1986) further clarified that individuals struggling with public speaking anxiety believe their capability as speakers does not measure up to the expectations of the audience. “...The more one’s perceived communication ability falls below one’s perception of others’ expectations in a given public speaking situation, the higher one’s level of stage fright” (Ayres, 1986, p. 360). This perceived ability can fluctuate during the course of the speaking event. As the speaker senses acceptance from the audience, anxiety decreases and vice-versa. Thus, these social comparisons of competence are adjusted one way or the other as the speech progresses (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998, p. 360).

Coping with Performance Anxiety

As previously noted, most people become apprehensive before any type of performance (Powell, 2004). These performances could include: public speaking; teaching; dramatic events; athletics; testing, or writing (Powell, 2004). Performance anxiety is cited, but not listed as a psychiatric diagnosis in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed. revised* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Performance anxiety is usually considered a component of social phobia or social anxiety disorder. Powell (2004) points out that for performance anxiety to be a real problem, it has to be debilitating. “Debilitating performance anxiety is defined as “...strong but delimited fears that severely compromise an individual’s capacity to execute a task at a level that could be reasonable expected, which is crucial to that person’s normal adjustment” (p. 804).

Individuals who experience debilitating performance anxiety have very high expectations of themselves and others (Powell, 2004). In other words, they are not interested in being just average. In the classroom this is often seen among students and instructors. “People...in class frequently believe that unless they can have a brilliant thought and can frame it in words of gold, they have nothing worthwhile to contribute” (Powell, 2004, p. 805). They are not necessarily nervous about interacting with other people as say, a social phobic would be. Rather, they are concerned about meeting their own standards. And, when they do not feel they can do that, they feel anxious. So, their apprehension is not so much in the performance itself but causes distress after the fact (Powell, 2004). This is an example of dysfunctional thinking (Conroy & Metzler, 2004).

Sport psychologists have led the way in the research on performance anxiety (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). In sport psychology, it is implied that together self-talk and anxiety contribute significantly to the quality of an athlete's performance (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). Understanding how the two work together have given sport psychologists a deeper insight into improving athletic performance. More clearly grasping how the two actually influence an athlete's performance might become relevant to how they might influence a college teacher's performance in the classroom (Conroy & Metzler, 2004).

In sport psychology, there are different types of self-talk. Positive self-talk might be defined as "...congratulatory self-statements" (Hanton & Jones, 1999, p. 27) or, "...affirming self-statements" (Elko & Ostro, 1991, p. 237). Positive self-talk also manifests as outward behaviors, such as gesticulation like a "fist-pump" or a "high-five" (Hardy, Hall & Alexander, 2001, p. 472). On the other hand, negative self-talk is "...self-condemning statements...self-defeating statements and instructions (Elko & Ostro, 1991, p. 239). Negative outward behaviors such as "... ball abuse, laughing in frustration, and throwing things..." are all identified as negative self-talk by sport psychologists (Conroy & Metzler, 2004, p. 70).

It might be helpful to pull this together into an example centered on teaching anxiety. First, remember that the quality of one's thought processes are interrelated (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). So, if a college instructor has the schema of "I'm not too good" that will cause certain inner postulations ("I do not think my students respect me"). The result would be automatic thoughts of "I do not enjoy being a teacher". These

automatic thoughts cause the teaching anxiety. The teaching anxiety then manifests as behavior.

Anxiety and Anxiety Disorders

As mentioned previously, everyone experiences anxiety. Typically, in the short-term, anxiety transpires in response to danger or threat; however, periodically, it can cause long-term difficulties because of a weakened discernment in relation to one's sense of control (Barlow, 2002). This differs from outright fear, which characteristically manifests in relation to a more tangible, alarming episode. In short, when one is afraid, she typically has a clear understanding of what it is that is frightening to her. Anxiety is indistinct in the sense that a person can be apprehensive for no particular reason (Barlow, 2002).

In 2001, The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reported that anxiety was a significant concern for 6.3 million Americans. In the age group from 18 to 54 years, 19.1 million suffered a clinically diagnosed anxiety disorder such as generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001 p. 285). Of this same group, 4.4% developed a specific phobia in which the individual exhibited an anxiety response so great that it became maladaptive, interfering with everyday life (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001, p. 285).

In the United States, mental disorders are organized and coded in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published by the American Psychiatric

Association (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Moreover, statistical data and nomenclature are presented in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* via the ICD-10-CM (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). At the time of this writing, the manual was in its fourth text revision and will be referred to henceforth as the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The DSM-IV-TR is used by mental health clinicians and researchers with a wide variety of backgrounds. It is used by medical personnel and occupational and rehabilitation specialists as well (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Teaching anxiety is not identified as a mental disorder in the DSM-IV-TR. To clarify the definition of a mental disorder the DSM-IV-TR states

Although this manual provides a classification of mental disorders, it must be admitted that no definition adequately specifies precise boundaries for the concept of “mental disorder.” The concept of mental disorder, like many other concepts in medicine and science lacks a consistent operational definition that covers all situations...In DSM-IV-TR, each of the mental disorders is conceptualized as a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is associated with present distress (e.g., a painful symptom) or disability (i.e., impairment in one or more important areas of functioning) or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom. In addition, this syndrome or pattern must not be merely an expectable and culturally sanctioned response to a particular event, for example, the death of a loved one. Whatever its original

cause, it must be considered a sign of a behavioral, psychological or biological dysfunction in the individual. Neither deviant behavior (e.g. political, religious, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of the dysfunction in the individual, as described above (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. xxx-xxx).

In the DSM-IV-TR, anxiety disorders range from the specific, such as phobias to the more global generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Phobias manifest themselves thematically in response to either real or imagined interactions with specific people, items or sets of circumstances (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Performing in front of a group of people, for instance, is one of the more common manifestations of phobia. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) presents as broad-spectrum apprehension or dread (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

There are several other anxiety disorders identified in the DSM-IV-TR. Disorders such as panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder, anxiety disorders associated with certain medical or physical conditions or substance abuse problems, and anxiety disorders not otherwise specified are all classified as anxiety disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

In 1963, Preplau classified anxiety into levels of severity. Mild anxiety is usually in response to an event or activity that would normally produce an increase in one's level of arousal. It is perhaps a bit uncomfortable; however, for the most part it serves a motivational purpose and is not particularly distressing. Moderate anxiety causes one to

lose his or her focus and ability to attend. Moderate anxiety begins to affect performance, but the individual can still function normally. It might be noticeable to others that the individual seems over stimulated or on edge. Severe anxiety causes an inability to attend and focus on the task at hand. Physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, rapid breathing and sweating become uncomfortable and the goal for the individual becomes release from the discomfort he or she is experiencing. Beyond severe anxiety is panic. In a panic situation, the main concern becomes flight or fight. Communicating with a panic-stricken individual is usually very difficult if not impossible (Preplau, 1963).

Biological Origins of Anxiety

Biologically speaking, anxiety might be a result of a physical condition, an illness or a medication. Some individuals have a biological predisposition toward anxiety. They are literally more susceptible to pressure and tension in their every day lives than others might be (Comer, 2005). The medical or biological model traces the source of anxiety to the brain (Comer, 2005). Modern researchers can access the living brain in ways never dreamt of in the past. Through the use of positron emission tomography (PET) scans experts have identified which areas of the brain specialize in fear and anxiety. More specifically, neurons in a region of the brain stem identified as the locus ceruleus became more active during experiences of anxiety (Comer, 2005). In animal studies, when cells in the locus ceruleus were stimulated with electricity, a fear response ensued. When these cells were destroyed, anxiety was resolved. In this way, the receptor sites for

benzodiazepine drugs like Librium, Valium and Xanax—drugs used today for short-term management of anxiety were pinpointed (Comer, 2005).

Psychological Origins of Anxiety

According to the psychodynamic approach, anxiety indicates the presence of a threat to the “integrity of the ego” (Menninger, 1990, p. 3). The ego is one of three components (id, ego and superego) of the personality and is sometimes referred to as operating on the principle of reality (Comer, 2005). To manage anxiety, the ego utilizes defense mechanisms which have a two-pronged mission. They keep the anxiety at bay and also banish it to the subconscious (Engler, 2006).

The risk of anxiety is beneath the individual’s conscious awareness and could result in the loss of “...control, relationship(s), competence, or guilt feelings and loss of self-esteem” (Menninger, 1990, p. 3). Since these are subconscious experiences, their exact origins are difficult to identify and even more difficult to “cure” (Engler, 2006). For instance, they could be related to innate memory or early trauma. Pinpointing anxiety’s exact cause might involve the assistance of a trained therapist who could lead the individual toward catharsis, or release of the subconscious distress (Engler, 2006).

Cognitive Origins of Anxiety

In the *Encheiridion*, Epictetus wrote, “People are not disturbed by things, but by the view which they take of them” (Engler, 2006, p. 424). This proposition provides a solid foundation for modern cognitive-behavioral oriented theories of the origin of anxiety. It has been shown by cognitive-behavioral theorists that what the Stoic

philosophers proposed is, in fact, accurate. Irrational beliefs as well as cognitive schemas can evolve into delicate personal philosophies used repetitively as individuals work through the challenges of everyday life (Engler, 2006). Of course, the genetic make-up of the person as well as his or her environment influences behavior; however, by and large, behavior is primarily determined and free and each individual develops a unique way to cope and survive (Engler, 2006). Cognitive-behavioral theorists like Albert Ellis, Aaron Beck and Arnold Lazarus all emphasized these interesting ideas supported by the paradox of individual sabotage and positive change through emotional freedom and rational thinking (Engler, 2006).

Anxiety – State versus Trait

Anxiety is multidimensional (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). Emotional states are characterized by specific thought patterns (Engler, 2006). When one is experiencing an anxious state, thoughts are centered on threat. State anxiety is all about how apprehensive and stimulated an individual feels at any given point in time. “When a person is bombarded with demands which he or she feels unable to meet, a state of anxiety ensues” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 50). State anxiety is often referred to as a mood or an emotion.

Self-talk essentially causes state anxiety. (Conroy & Metzler, 2004). Self-talk, as it relates to an anxious state, originates in automatic thoughts, or those that are preconscious and not easy to regulate. These automatic thoughts become the self-talk or inner voice, which is either affirming or disparaging (Engler, 2006). They can become

invasive and result in a failure to correctly interpret danger or threat—even though, at the time, the interpretations seem quite accurate (Conroy & Metzler, 2004).

Trait anxiety is all about personality characteristics. Trait anxiety signifies how apprehensive and stimulated an individual feels long term (Spielberger, 1966). In general, personality traits, or characteristics, determine “...tendency or predisposition to respond in a certain way” (Engler, 2006). Trait and factor models of personality development, or dispositional theories, center upon distinguishing features that influence individuals’ responses. These traits tend to remain constant throughout the life span (Engler, 2006). Thousands of personality traits have been identified by various theorists and because there are so many they have been difficult to measure. In an attempt to provide measurable traits, more contemporary trait and factor theorists such as Costa and McRae (1992) have worked to create an empirical consensus model based upon factor analysis, known as the *Big-Five Personality Traits*. These traits are most commonly identified as Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (also known as mental stability). They can be easily remembered using the acronym O-C-E-A-N (Costa & McRae, 1992).

Cattell (1950), who provided much of the foundational research for the Big-Five traits, defined personality in this way, “Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation” (p. 43). Cattell’s (1950) explanation of personality “...provides a striking and important contrast between his approach...and that of other theorists. Cattell (1950) was concerned with the power of a construct to predict future events. His stance was that of the empirical scientist who derives from his or her

theory propositions that are subject to empirical test. In a sense, prediction is more difficult than explanation, as it is easier to account for events that have happened than to predict them. Prediction is "...useful in that it enables us to anticipate what will happen in certain situations" (Cattell, 1950, p. 48). Thus, by measuring and understanding individuals' characteristics, we ought to be able to predict, to some extent their behaviors. Personality characteristics, or traits, linked with anxiety in general include hypersensitivity to criticism; negative evaluation or rejection; difficulty being assertive, and low self-esteem or feelings of inferiority" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 451).

Based upon their initial research on teaching anxiety as well as their interpretation of numerous studies of speaking anxiety, Gardner and Leak (1994) proposed that teaching anxiety is a state condition. They did not believe teaching anxiety to be a personality characteristic, but an association the individual had made between anxiousness and teaching. As a result, any time the faculty member might be involved in teaching behavior; the anxiety would surface (Gardner & Leak, 1994)

Existing Data and Foundational Theory for Teaching Anxiety

In theory, a college classroom should be objective and grounded in reason. Sentiment should not rule there. In reality, the college classroom, just as any other group of human beings, quickly becomes befuddled by interpersonal dynamics involving a myriad of affect. (Lowman, 1984). For a number of otherwise talented and capable college faculty, this means operating from a base of fear and anxiety about their work in

the classroom (Bernstein, 1983). This mind-set may manifest as teaching anxiety, a phenomenon some experts believe stymies teacher effectiveness and destroys promising academic careers (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983). Motley (1990) reported that some faculty members never become accustomed to working in front of a group of people. On the contrary, they are plagued by an ever present awkwardness while performing their classroom duties.

In a national survey of university faculty, Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke (1984) reported that college faculty, regardless of discipline, indicated that teaching was their most stressful activity and that 60 percent of the stress they experienced in general could be attributed to their jobs. Occupational stress has a direct effect upon employee output, contentment, and ultimately the overall physical health of workers. It can lead to disillusionment and burnout (Gmelch, Lovrich & Wilke, 1984). Burnout is defined as “the inability to function effectively in one’s job as a consequence of prolonged and extensive job-related stress (Freudenberger, 1974). Since the early 1980s, there has been a significant increase in burnout among educators at all levels (Bryne, 1991). It has been determined that both individual characteristics and organizational struggles contribute to educator burnout (Bryne, 1991). Perceptions are also important in understanding burnout among college faculty (Bryne, 1991).

Gardner and Leak (1994) reported that 87 percent of psychology instructors surveyed reported experiencing teaching anxiety at some point in their academic careers (p. 30). This draws a parallel with the number of Americans (85 percent) who experience speech anxiety (Motley, 1990). Sixty-five percent of those psychology instructors

“...reported that their most extreme incidence of teaching anxiety was from definitely unpleasant to severe or extreme” (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 30). The intensity of the experiences of teaching anxiety reported on the Gardner and Leak (1994, p. 30) survey was rated as:

- quite mild (8%);
- somewhat unpleasant (22%);
- definitely unpleasant (29%);
- very unpleasant (25%), and severe/extreme (3%).

More specifically, 40% of those surveyed in the Gardner and Leak (1994) study declared that during the past one year period their level of teaching anxiety had been “somewhat unpleasant” (p. 30). Eighty percent claimed they had experienced one or more episodes of teaching anxiety in the just the past semester. From these data, it appears that the academic year influenced the experience of teaching anxiety among the psychology faculty surveyed. It was more intense for them during the first few days of the semester. Forty percent stated they experienced teaching anxiety during the first few days of classes. Twenty-two percent said they felt the anxiety even before classes began. At midterm the numbers dropped. Only 2% reported incidents at midterm and during finals, 8% stated they had experienced teaching anxiety (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 30).

In a more recent survey of accounting educators, Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson (2002, p. 20) reported that “...78% of the respondents... had experienced teaching anxiety and that almost 70% of them experienced it on an ongoing basis.” The academic year did *not* seem to influence the accounting educators studied by Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson

(2002). Of these faculty surveyed, 48.4% reported that “teaching anxiety was equally likely to occur at any time during the term” (p. 18). The beginning of the term affected 20.4% of these respondents negatively. Thus, teaching anxiety seemed to be more enduring for this group.

Teaching Anxiety and the K-12 Educator

Ever since the 1950s and 1960s when the National Education Association (NEA) proposed that teaching anxiety did in fact exist for some teachers, it has been a focus of interest for kindergarten through twelfth-grade (K-12) educators (Cartwright, 1986). The classic literature reviewed for this study indicated that experts in K-12 education have worked diligently to understand the concept of teaching anxiety and have proposed a variety of coping strategies to deal with it and other sources of teacher stress. In fact, there were ample data located to support the theory that teaching anxiety can have a significant negative consequence for certain teachers.

These data confirmed that teaching is truly stressful for a considerable number of teachers. Greenberg (1984) reported that one-third of all K-12 teachers surveyed indicated they would *not* choose to become teachers again had they known earlier what they currently know about the anxieties associated with teaching. Based upon the reasons these teachers cited, Greenberg (1984) supposed that the exodus was due in large part to the stress associated with teaching as well as the anxiety produced by being in the classroom. This research was supported by a more contemporary study by Darling-Hammond (2001) who found that 30 percent of new teachers quit their jobs and left the

profession before the completion of their fifth year. Darling-Hammond (2001) also postulated about the effect of anxiety in the classroom; however, was not able to isolate that as the precise contributor in that study. Earlier, however, Borg and Riding (1991) found that one-fifth to one-third of teachers they surveyed indicated that increased levels of anxiety in the classroom caused them extreme stress.

Coates and Thoresen (1976) presented a review of the literature on teaching anxiety and offered the following overview of teaching anxiety:

1. Anxiety seems to be quite pronounced among both beginning and experienced teachers.
2. Anxiety among teachers seems to be related to several personal, physical, and social circumstances.
3. There are no general conclusions about the specific effects of teacher anxiety, or of other teacher behaviors, on students.
4. There is evidence that systematic desensitization and instruction on effective classroom techniques tend to lessen self-reported anxiety (p. 17).

Later, Keaveny and Sinclair (1978) determined:

1. Causes or sources of teacher anxiety remain unclear.
2. The measurement of teacher anxiety through standardized instruments falls prey to the limitations of self-report.
3. Studies that have investigated the consequences of teacher anxiety (i.e., a negative impact on student behavior and/or achievement) have derived ambivalent findings (pp. 273-288).

These generalizations led Walton (1981) to develop a progression of teaching anxiety. He hypothesized that in order for a teacher to experience teaching anxiety there first had to be genetic vulnerability to anxiety. As this person experienced life, he or she was exposed to a series of events that resulted in certain learned behaviors evoked in response to situations that might provoke anxiety. This set the foundation for teaching anxiety. When that individual was placed in certain intimidating situations in a classroom setting the classroom itself became a threatening place. Once the classroom environment was perceived as threatening there were physiological components that further contributed to maladaptive behavior in the classroom. The end result for that teacher was teaching anxiety and its accompanying negative consequences (Walton, 1981).

Some of the negative consequences of teaching anxiety were related to physical health and well-being (Pert, 1986). A number of others focused upon the negative effect of teacher stress on teacher retention (Tye, 2002). Others focused upon psychological determinants and stress-management (Coates & Thoresen, 1976). And, the effect on the quality of teaching and learning was also a focal point. Most reported strategies designed to help teachers manage anxiety and stress so they could lower levels of burn-out and focus on effective teaching (Cartwright, 1986).

For instance, DePorter, Reardon and Singer-Nourie (1999) proposed that teachers operate from an established comfort zone. In this zone, the teacher feels as if she can function at her peak level and does not experience an inordinate amount of anxiety or stress. She is confident in her abilities. Adding a new methodology might become

somewhat over-stimulating and cause her to exit her zone of comfort. Conversely, too much routine might result in under-stimulation, again causing an egress from the comfort zone. Extrinsic variables can also cause one to be instantly zapped from the comfort zone. If a student is misbehaving, that may provoke an anxiety response. Parent-teacher interactions can quickly become stressful. And, not feeling prepared for classes might also be a pre-cursor to teaching anxiety (DePorter, Reardon & Singer-Nourie, 1999).

Coping strategies for teaching anxiety are rooted in awareness and subsequent correction. In other words, confident teachers recognize when they are outside of their comfort zone. And, they are able to take note of that and make the appropriate adjustments. Thus, awareness facilitates a correction and the teacher can avoid feeling excessive anxiety in the classroom. This reduces the intensity of stressor(s) and allows the teacher to be more effective in the classroom (DePorter, Reardon & Singer-Nourie, 1999).

Coates and Thoresen (1976) reported a strong positive correlation between teacher and student stress. If students perceive their teacher as anxious or stressed, it might have a negative impact on their behavior. If misbehavior increases, this can cause an upswing in the teacher's level of anxiety. This reciprocal effect transfers back and forth between students and teacher, creating unstable classroom dynamics. Coates and Thoresen (1976) called this a circle of stress. They proposed that teachers cope most effectively through self-administrable strategies like consistently projecting confidence and deep breathing. It is essential that a teacher project strong non-verbal behaviors that

do not indicate a sense of anxiety or loss of command of the classroom (Coates & Thoresen, 1976).

Abbey and Esposito (1985) proposed that teachers who have a solid base of support from administrators and are connected to their fellow teachers experience less anxiety and stress. Abbey and Esposito (1985) advocated mentoring programs as well as educational endeavors that promote a spirit of collegiality, or camaraderie. Byrne (1991) spoke of collegiality as contributing to a decrease in anxiety and proposed that good communication between colleagues alleviates the development of maladaptive teaching personas.

Adequate time to prepare to teach class has been found to be a significant factor in promoting confidence in the classroom (Aquila, 1992). Seaward (2002) recommended “boxing” preparation time into 3-5 hour blocks of uninterrupted time so that teachers can read, study and philosophize about teaching. Walking into the classroom under-prepared was determined by Bliss (1976) to be a contributor to teaching anxiety. Good time-management of preparation hours reduce overall anxiety and contribute to the effective delivery of course content (Bliss, 1976).

Good self-care has been determined an effective self-administrable coping strategy for teaching anxiety. In the early 1970s, Winder and Heinger (1973) first hypothesized that a regular exercise program coupled with high-quality nutrition might help people develop physical resistance to anxiety and stress. They found that when individuals managed anxiety effectively, less stress hormones were released into their bloodstreams. They knew that stress hormones were associated with a decrease in disease

and the development of other conditions such as obesity and addictions (Winder & Heinger, 1973). Simply put, when people reduce their levels of stress, they increase their level of overall health. Today, this is accepted widely as common knowledge. In the popular media, Americans are constantly encouraged to control their anxiety and reduce their levels of stress (Drake & Hebert, 2002).

Perceptions also shape teachers' experiences (Allen, 1983). If teachers can restructure the way they think about situations that provoke anxiety, they can react to them appropriately and avoid a potential stress response. Catastrophizing, or constantly thinking the worst will happen must be avoided in favor of more positive self-talk (Allen, 1983). And, ruminating, or worrying about events that may never occur, should be circumvented through more positive thinking strategies as well (Allen, 1983). Cognitive restructuring is self-administrable and can be implemented without outside intervention.

Teaching Anxiety and Denial

Although they did not research it directly, Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983) were all of the opinion that college faculty exhibit denial of teaching anxiety. For the purposes of this study, denial is defined as an ego defense mechanism subconsciously invoked to protect individuals from anxiety that might manifest in response to the reality of a situation or act (Engler, 2006). All of the ego defense mechanisms are components of unconscious thought, or the assemblage of thoughts, desires, and emotions of which individuals are not consciously aware (Santrock, 2005).

Denial allows individuals to cope with outside stressors or long-lasting situations they are powerless to control. (Ortega & Alegria, 2005). Since most of the research on denial centers upon its use in relation to mental or physical illness, it would make sense that denial be clearly defined and understood by practitioners in the mental health and/or the medical fields. Interestingly, Ortega and Alegria (2005) pointed out that "...denial has not been standardized or operationalized for mental health research"(p. 320). In the medical fields, Shockey-Stephenson (2004) proposed that practitioners are forced to deal with broad definitions of denial easily confused with other defense mechanisms such as avoidance or disavowal. This lack of a clear way to identify denial means that denial can be attributed to a refutation of a phenomenon when, in fact, it is simply a negation (Shockey-Stephenson, 2004).

Breznitz (1983) characterized denial as "a defense mechanism...through which a person attempts to protect himself from some painful or frightening information related to external reality" (p. 33). Denial is either "adaptive" or "maladaptive" in that its use in any given situation can lead to coping and adjustment or to avoidance. Thus, denial is not necessarily negative because of that protective function—especially on the short-term (Shockey-Stephenson, 2004). An example of an adaptive use of denial is when someone uses denial initially after receiving bad news. Most people have experienced this phenomenon either in their professional or personal lives. For instance, if a faculty member is told that the research she has been doing has lost its funding, she may remain suspended in disbelief until she discovers ideas to move forward or comes to terms with the demise of the project. This short-term use of denial is a way for the individual to

subconsciously pull herself together as she devises strategies to cope with the situation at hand (Stephenson, 2004).

A maladaptive use of denial might be illustrated through a further exploration of a study by Boice (1982, p. 88) in relation to psychology faculty “practicing what they teach” in their college classrooms. Although he did not identify it specifically as denial, he recognized a great deal of refutation in his study of psychology teachers. In an effort to determine if they practiced what they taught in their college classrooms, he surveyed faculty about sixteen areas of applied understanding in the field of psychology:

1. learning and memorizing;
2. problem solving;
3. creativity;
4. fostering student learning;
5. motivating yourself;
6. motivating others;
7. inappropriate emotions;
8. strong emotions;
9. resisting manipulation;
10. influencing others;
11. physical environment;
12. social environment;
13. helpful advice to students;
14. helpful advice to family;

15. adjustment to environment;
16. actualizing own potential, and
17. other activities, (Boice, p. 88).

His goal was to determine whether the instructors applied these areas in their own lives. He summarized his results by stating, “What it comes down to, in the final analysis, is a likelihood that in our eagerness to teach others effectively we may have overlooked the importance of continuing to teach ourselves to reach higher potentials as psychologists” (Boice, 1982, p. 88). It appears that their independence contributed to their inability to apply principles that they were telling others would be helpful to them in their lives.

Bernstein (1983) proposed the more precise explanation for the denial of teaching anxiety is that the majority of faculty do not consider anxiety and the act of teaching as a logical amalgamation. In other words, a *good* teacher should not experience or exhibit anxiety. Boice (1982, p. 88) described college teachers as “enamored of autonomy”. In fact, Gardner and Leak (1994) identified “...a reluctance on the part of colleagues in the teaching profession to admit to or discuss the possible reality of any such problem [teaching anxiety]” (p. 29). This disinclination was so powerful that Gardner and Leak (1994) decided not to conduct individual faculty interviews and focused instead on anonymous questionnaires to explore the experience of teaching anxiety.

Bernstein (1983) suggested that despite the existence of faculty denial, it is likely that more faculty than not enter the classroom “...experiencing the physiological arousal, subjective distress, and behavioral disruptions known collectively as anxiety” (Bernstein,

1983, p. 4). For this reason, it is imperative to understand the theoretical framework supporting the ideas surrounding teaching anxiety. Even though there are several components of teaching anxiety, its origins appear to lie in performance anxieties such as public speaking anxiety and stage fright.

Sources of Teaching Anxiety

Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002, p. 18) identified four sources, or triggers of teaching anxiety among accounting faculty they surveyed. They reported that 49.6% of respondents experienced the most intense teaching anxiety when they were unprepared to deliver course content. Antagonistic questioning or commentary from their students prompted 41.1% to experience teaching anxiety. An inability to answer questions effectively caused 38.8% to experience teaching anxiety. Student evaluation bothered 29.6%.

The accounting instructors reported three additional items associated with the “onset or intensity of teaching anxiety”. Experience-either as a teacher or with subject matter-was rated number one with 53.1% of respondents identifying it. Forty-two percent of faculty who had aversive incidents with a certain class identified negative experiences as a source. New students affected 26.9% (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2001, p. 17). These are all circumstantial and instructors indicated that they would not respond anxiously had those circumstances been different. This data indicate that teaching anxiety might be more situational, or state dependent, and not attributed to personality characteristics, or trait oriented. It may also indicate that teaching anxiety does not

necessarily cause long term problems; rather, it is simply experienced circumstantially and then resolved. In other words, it would not contribute to an instructor's experience one way or the other about teaching in general (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2001).

Few faculty responding to Gardner and Leak's (1994) survey reported that their experience of teaching anxiety was magnified by factors such as the size of the class or their own personal traits. Interestingly enough, the faculty who responded did not connect their own experiences of teaching anxiety to something inside their locus of control. Seventy-eight percent believed that their experiences of teaching anxiety resulted from something located outside the periphery of their control. Only 22% recognized teaching anxiety as a component of their own personality (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 30).

In their assessment of demographic correlates, Gardner and Leak (1994) established a positive relationship between the intensity of respondents' teaching anxiety experienced during the past academic year, and the overall number of classes delivered. This would indicate that seasoned faculty experience less teaching anxiety. This differed from the results of studies on speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety does *not* improve with the number of speeches given. In fact, the more one speaks in public, the more difficult it may become if that speaker perceives his experiences as aversive (Beatty, 1988). Gardner and Leak (1994) speculated that college teachers are constantly exposed to the arousal produced by teaching anxiety and they adapt to that feeling. This habituation to teaching anxiety does not result in its disappearance, but may instead produce the maladaptive dynamics identified originally by Bernstein (1983).

For respondents experiencing teaching anxiety during the most recent semester, the incidence of those episodes could be linked to a number of experience-related factors. In those instances, the age of the respondents; the number of years they had spent as full-time faculty; their position within their academic department, and whether they had acknowledged some type of treatment for public speaking issues were all contributing factors (Gardner & Leak, 1994). Therefore, past teaching experience seems related to the frequency and intensity of occurrences of teaching anxiety. Other possible sources of teaching anxiety such as student evaluation, dealing with student's questions and perceptions of preparedness did not appear to be related to teaching experience. Similar findings were reported by Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002) in their survey of accounting educators. Accounting educators' intensity of teaching anxiety was also affected by "rank, age and teaching experience" (p. 18). They determined that some factors not affecting intensity were "gender, race/ethnicity, highest degree obtained, or the number of schools at which respondents had held tenure-track positions" (p. 18).

In an Australian study where university professors were surveyed about teaching anxiety, gender was a factor, with female faculty reporting more teaching anxiety than males (Fish & Fraser, 2001). This could be because females in Australia experience more teaching anxiety or perhaps it is because they are more willing to admit it than are male faculty. In addition to experiencing more teaching anxiety, the Australian female faculty reported that they felt less able to deal with teaching anxiety (Fish & Fraser, 2001).

Teaching anxiety was felt more intensely when faculty members were expecting evaluation by either administrators or colleagues. Fifty-three percent reported an increase

in the intensity of the experience of teaching anxiety upon evaluation (Gardner & Leak, 1994, p. 30). Of that 53%; however, the more experienced faculty (10% for full professors) reported experiencing teaching anxiety upon evaluation. Twenty-nine percent of associate professors and 53% of assistant professors reported experiencing teaching anxiety upon evaluation.

Teaching Myths

Bernstein (1983) believed that college faculty members espouse several fables about teaching at the college level. Belief in these “myths” makes teaching more stressful than it ought to be. The myths college faculty might subscribe to are (p.6):

1. “I must remain in the teacher role while I am teaching, even if that means suppressing spontaneous human responses”.
2. “If I come out of role, I will lose the respect of my students”.
3. “I can never allow myself to be unsure, to admit I am wrong, ignorant, weak, vulnerable, or humorous. I should never say, ‘I don’t know’.”
4. “My students must respect me because I am their teacher”.
5. “I must include in my course everything about the subject matter. Any omission makes me a poor teacher”.
6. “My students should always be interested in what I have to say”.
7. “My students must learn everything I teach”.
8. “Students are basically lazy, untrustworthy, and not very bright”.
9. “This is my students’ only class or at least their only important class”.
10. “My colleagues probably teach better than I do”.

Bernstein may well have been correct in his assumption that the ten myths might indicate another source of teaching anxiety. Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke (1984) noted that 53% of U.S. college faculty they surveyed for their study on stress in academe reported “demanding self-imposed standards” as one of the highest stress producing events for them (p. 488). Furthermore, irrational beliefs cause some individuals undue stress, or distress, because those beliefs ultimately manifest as dysfunctional behaviors (Engler, 1999). Irrational beliefs become absolute *musts*. Absolute *musts* create distress. For example, teaching myth number seven proclaims, “My students must learn everything I teach”(Bernstein, 1983, p.6). This is an example of an irrational belief that has resulted in an absolute must. The *must* is now the source of an individual’s distress, because it is unrealistic to expect that one will be treated well by everyone he or she encounters. Each of Bernstein’s (1983) myths seems to involve some form of an absolute *must*.

Hegemonic Assumptions

Hegemonic assumptions are “...those we think are in our own best interests but that have actually been designed by more powerful others to work against us in the long term” (Brookfield, 1995). Hegemony is understated and persists until it becomes entrenched in the universal traditions that become the norm of a given group. For example, teachers hold evident many foundational truths about teaching. These truths may not truly serve their best interest; in fact, they may represent the “dark side” of teaching or even, as Brookfield (1995) said, make “...teachers become willing prisoners who lock their own cell doors behind them” (p. 15).

It may be helpful to provide some examples of common hegemonic assumptions about being a college teacher. Brookfield (1995, p. 15) identified four:

1. teaching as a vocation;
2. the “perfect ten” syndrome;
3. *Deep Space Nine*: the answer must be out there somewhere, and
4. we meet everybody’s needs.

Perceiving teaching as a vocation can lead anxious college teachers to a belief that they must provide “selfless service to students and educational institutions” (Brookfield, 1995, p. 15). That often means they are willing to overload themselves with teaching duties which may be great for the institution, but will take a physical and emotional toll on them. Conversely, a teacher who is not a slave to this hegemonic assumption understands there is a balance between what is good for the institution and the student and “self-destructive workaholism” (p. 16).

Brookfield (1995) identified another hegemonic assumption he referred to as the “trap of conversational obsession, or the “perfect ten syndrome” (p. 138). This phenomenon causes anxious college teachers to focus on the conversion of the students in their classes, even the most unfriendly or unmotivated, from disinterested, unenthusiastic slackers to the most eager supporters of the subject or practice at hand. Oftentimes, these faculty members feel that if they are unable to motivate all of their students and get them excited about what is going on in the class, then they are not successful at what they do. The way most faculty members measure this is to look for a perfect batch of student evaluations (Brookfield, 1995).

Most faculty have experienced a sense of dread and excitement as they open their student evaluations or informal feedback forms and begin to search through the individual comments section. As their eyes scan the remarks, they secretly hope for the “perfect ten”, or those feedback forms that contain no negative comments whatsoever (Brookfield, 1995). Confidence vanishes upon the discovery of comments that report disaffection and unaccommodating deeds. Unfortunately, this is an irrational response that most teachers have to “negative” feedback. This can be combated with an appreciation of the fact that no matter what they may do in the classroom, the chances are that their actions will never be seen as overwhelmingly positive. And, good evaluations are not necessarily the result of good teaching. Some good reviews come to teachers who make things easy for students and do not challenge them (Brookfield, 1995).

There is typically a great deal of secrecy that surrounds the “bad” evaluation. Faculty members rarely share student evaluations with other faculty or process them in any way. They are simply tucked away in a filing cabinet. Because the negative feedback given by the students is not shared or processed, it can produce shame and doubt (Brookfield, 1995).

College teachers and administrators always seem to think that problems of practice should be solved by some outside source (Brookfield, 1995). For example, a book or a workshop can be found to address almost any problem that occurs in the classroom. This is true to some extent and it is not necessarily bad to look for outside resources; however, it also limits teachers from looking within. It interferes with a more

reflective process that can help the teacher to understand her own experience, which is believed to be an important foundation of effective teaching (Brookfield, 1995).

Meeting everyone's needs is another hegemonic assumption that can cause a great deal of guilt in the individual teacher. Brookfield (1995) proposed that higher education's philosophy of meeting everyone's needs originally sounds terrific and even appears very student centered. It can lead the teacher to a sense of confusion or even result in anger because he does not dare challenge the "customer". Students need to be challenged and asked to assume tasks that are thorny and complex.

Wrestling with Inner Demons

Palmer (1998) is one prominent post-secondary educator who has acknowledged and described a certain apprehension about the act of teaching. For instance, in his classic book, *The Courage to Teach*, he described his own experience with anxiety in the classroom:

After thirty years of teaching, my own fear remains close at hand. It is there when I enter a classroom and feel the undertow into which I have jumped. It is there when I ask a question—and my students keep a silence as stony as if I had asked them to betray their friends. It is there whenever it feels as if I have lost control: a mind-boggling question is asked, an irrational conflict emerges, or students get lost in my lecture because I myself am lost. When a class that has gone badly comes to a merciful end, I am fearful long after it is over—fearful that I am not just a bad teacher but a bad person, so closely is my sense of self tied to the work I do (p. 135).

Where might feelings like these originate? As Palmer (1998) explained it, teaching anxiety is a subtle, private experience and that anxiety is not overt, or outwardly observed by others. Other instructors might readily admit that teaching is consciously quite frightening for them. These instructors' fears are usually evident to others because they manifest themselves in various ways once the instructors are in front of the class (Bernstein, 1983). For example, they lose track or lack focus during lecture or discussion; they do not maintain eye contact with their students; they struggle openly with questions they have not prepared for ahead of time, and they tend to feel conscious dread when planning or contemplating classroom activities (Bernstein, 1983). These instructors will either work through their fears or continue to teach under duress. In most cases, instructors suffering from this more overt anxiety lack effectiveness which in turn affects students and the educational process in general (Bernstein, 1983).

This distress as experienced in the classroom is further fueled by the inherent risks associated with all types of interactions required by the faculty member—whether those interactions are with students, colleagues, information or the inner self. Palmer calls these interactions “live encounters” (Palmer, 1998, p. 37). Live encounters are unpredictable in that the individual loses the illusion of control in any given situation. Thus, live encounters can be avoided through such things as faculty over-use of lecture, unavailability to students, retreat into the discipline or even neutrality on certain issues. This fear or anxiety is about avoiding a clash at all costs. Conflict results in anxiety. And, perhaps, that anxiety is strong enough to affect one's foundation—one's identity. In other words, there are many ways to look at things. That can generate anxiety (Palmer,

1998). These thoughts seem to parallel Bernstein's (1983) work in regard to the various ways in which teaching anxiety may manifest itself inside the classroom.

Student Evaluation

Teachers often perceive students as evaluators. Students appraise the teacher's performance and will, at the end of the term provide formal evaluation that may or may not affect that teacher's career. (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002). Affirmation was the number one concern for this type of teacher. This belief can lead faculty to feel uncomfortable just being themselves and cause them to become extremely focused upon the feedback they receive from the students. This can occur minute-by minute in a classroom. These faculty members would tend to think that any mistakes they might make in front of students would make them appear foolish or incompetent. They tend to be too concerned with making these types of mistakes (Ameen, Guffey and Jackson, 2002).

Administration

Administrators are often viewed by faculty as the enemy and seen as untrustworthy-traitors who have abandoned scholarship for the almighty dollar and the power to lord over the lowly faculty (Palmer, 1998). This base of apprehension results in anxiety in the classroom. Teachers circumvent their students and are content to stand before the glass-eyed masses whose names they do not even know. Ultimately, unless college educators can come to grips with the structural problems, there is to be no confidence in the classroom and for that matter in the higher education system (Palmer, 1998).

Focus on Course Content versus the Instructor

In their study focusing on accounting teachers, Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002) determined that instructors who reported suffering less teaching anxiety tended to believe that the content they delivered was the focus of what they did in the classroom (Ameen, Guffey, & Jackson, 2002). The focus was not on them as individuals. These instructors also tended to have confidence in their teaching abilities and did not, for example, believe that their colleagues were superior. They saw students as pleasant, responsive and did not perceive them as threatening or interested in challenging them or making them look bad (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002).

Type of Institution

Where faculty taught seemed to be a determinate of the severity of the experience of teaching anxiety (Ameen, Guffey, and Jackson, 2002). Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002, p. 22) reported that faculty at doctoral-granting institutions (54.4%) had less teaching anxiety than did faculty who were at nondoctoral-granting institutions (89.9%). In a study by Byrne (1991, p. 206) it was determined that faculty teaching graduate students reported "...a greater sense of personal accomplishment than those teaching undergraduate students..."

There were several explanations offered for these findings. Foremost, individuals teaching at doctoral-granting institutions spend less time in the classroom than those at nondoctoral-granting institutions because a significant amount of their time is dedicated to research and community service. It may also be true that the educational level of the student has a role to play in the anxiety level of the instructor (Ameen,

Guffey & Jackson, 2002). What's more, classes are smaller and teachers and students can interact on a more intimate and scholarly level (Byrne, 1991).

Effects of Teaching Anxiety

Gardner and Leak built their definition of teaching anxiety on the foundational work of Bernstein (1983), who wrote a classic essay exploring his own experiences with teaching anxiety. His belief was that teaching anxiety was a special type of speech anxiety experienced by teachers in the college classroom. He recognized three components to the experience of teaching anxiety: physiological arousal; subjective distress, and behavioral disruption (p. 5). These components are recognizable in that they are the common components shared by anxiety in general (Bernstein, 1983). He surmised that the pressures and thus the resulting anxiety that centers upon classroom experiences render unsuspecting college instructors more susceptible to teaching anxiety. Teaching anxiety, in turn, might well impede their overall effectiveness in the classroom. It was his thought that this was the case for even the best and most talented instructors (Bernstein, 1983). He further clarified some specifics in the area of how teaching anxiety results in a lack of effectiveness in the classroom. In particular, Bernstein (1983, p. 5) proposed the following teaching problems that could be attributed to teaching anxiety:

1. Inability to “think on your feet” (e.g., giving confused or overly lengthy answers to student questions);

2. Consistently negative interactions with students (e.g., hostility and sarcasm toward students' questions or comments, inappropriately nasty remarks about students' abilities, interests, and motivation);
3. Development of escape/avoidance patterns and tactics (e.g., inconvenient office hours, being "too busy" to talk to students after class or by appointment, lack of preparation for class, heavy reliance on films, guest lecturers, or student presentations);
4. Development of overly rigid or overly lenient relationships with students (e.g. fanatical adherence to class or institutional rules and regulations, insistence on outward signs of deference from students, obvious attempts to curry favor with students via easy exams, overly flexible requirements, capricious grading policies, revelation of upcoming test material, expression of indifference over the meaning of grades);
5. Appearance of "multiple personality" (typified by the person who is reasonably calm, relaxed, and gracious in most situations but who becomes defensive, hostile, and rigid in class), and
6. Appearance of paranoid thinking (e.g. "students enjoy making me look foolish").

In addition, instructors who suffer from teaching anxiety appear to develop an exclusive teaching persona (Bernstein, 1983). A persona, or façade, allows an individual to adapt to the demands placed upon him or her by a variety of social situations (Engler, 2006). In the case of teaching anxiety, the facade maintained by faculty may involve

viewing the students as hostile, unwilling to listen, impertinent or obtuse (Bernstein, 1983). Anxious instructors may exhibit overt hostility, even assuming the role of the antagonist (Ameen, Guffey, & Jackson, 2002). Teaching anxiety may well create a stressful work environment for a faculty member and could become so unpleasant that teaching would be evaded. For the most part, once an instructor identifies teaching anxiety, a great deal of time and energy has already been devoted to the career of teaching and the path chosen is unalterable at that point (Gardner & Leak, 1994).

Long term teaching anxiety, as with any form of anxiety, also leads to physical problems and potentially harmful behaviors outside the classroom (Bernstein, 1983). Physical symptoms of anxiety are present during *any* fear-provoking situation. These symptoms may include: “palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate; sweating; trembling or shaking; sensations of shortness of breath or smothering; a feeling of choking; chest pain or discomfort; nausea or abdominal distress; feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded or faint; paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations), and chills or hot flushes” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 432). Struggling with substance abuse; difficulties in personal and professional relationships, and even sexual dysfunction might develop as a result of the constant stress of coping with the symptoms associated with chronic teaching anxiety (Bernstein, 1983).

Coping Strategies for Teaching Anxiety

In their research on teachers’ coping with occupational stress in an effort to avoid burnout, Mearns and Cain (2003, p. 72) determined that “...differences in how people

cope with occupational stress affect the outcomes of that stress.” Coping can be defined as, “...the ways that individuals cognitively and behaviorally manage environmental demands in their lives” (Mearns & Cain, 2003, p. 72). Thus, an individual’s ability to cope is directly proportional to the level of discomfort he or she will suffer as a result of the stress being experienced (Pithers, 1995). This could actually be determined by the coping strategies used by that individual (Chan, 1988). In a Swedish study by Brenner, Sorbom, and Wallius in 1985, proactively coping with teaching stress cushioned the negative effects of stress for teachers.

Bernstein’s (1983) supposition that it is proscribed to articulate experiences of teaching anxiety and other difficulties in the classroom is a powerful variable that he believed perpetuated needless suffering throughout the academy. Teachers at the college level are competitive and isolated from one another across departments and disciplines (Gardner & Leak, 1994). Colleagues typically do not collaborate nor is there the belief that excellent college teachers can still have struggles in the classroom. And, most disturbing of all, even faculty mentors do not appear to help one another with such struggles. These convictions can only complicate the circumstances around an individual’s experience of teaching anxiety and lead to alienation and shame (Gardner & Leak, 1994).

Gardner and Leak (1994) reported, “Our conversations with colleagues at a national institute on teaching indicate that some teachers have developed idiosyncratic coping methods that are effective when faced with teaching anxiety” (p. 31). In other words, people just learn to battle through it the best they can. One of Gardner’s and

Leak's (1994) hopes was that an enhanced appreciation of more distinctive coping strategies might accommodate the development of universal instructional methodology for educators at the college level. As they poured over the abundant literature on teaching anxiety geared toward K-12 educators, they focused on the work of Romeo (1987) who proposed that *all* teachers should be equipped to handle teaching anxiety. Despite these urgings; however, no definitive recommendations were found during the course of the research for this study.

There were no particular techniques identified to assist college faculty in counteracting teaching anxiety; however, Bernstein (1983) related some helpful ideas based upon the individual source(s) of the anxiety being experienced. This seems plausible. For example, if a teacher acknowledges teaching anxiety and determines that it is rooted in a lack of preparation or because she is deficient in her ability to lecture well, those areas can become a focus for training and development. If the anxiety is a learned response, Bernstein suggested that systematic desensitization (SD) may be employed. SD is a therapeutic technique that involves utilizing a hierarchically structured inventory of anxiety provoking events, being exposed to those events in various ways, and employing the use of relaxation techniques during the exposure to overcome anxiety (Auerbach, 1981).

Even though Bernstein (1983) recommended SD for learned teaching anxiety, he did not support himself with data relevant to teaching anxiety, speaking anxiety or stage fright. He cited only one study on small animal phobia. Because so little data exist in the area of college teaching anxiety, Gardner and Leak (1994) suggested that individuals

looking to counteract teaching anxiety needed to look toward the literature on conquering speaking anxiety and stage fright. Upon further investigation, it was established that many experts did not consider SD particularly effective in addressing speaking anxiety and/or stage fright (Auerbach, 1981).

For example, Auerbach and colleagues used SD as a treatment option for university students experiencing stage fright and public speaking anxiety. They found it to be cumbersome and ineffective because the students could not effectively determine the hierarchy and then pair it with a relaxation event. Thus, the treatment method became too complicated. Instead, the research team devised sixteen strategies, created a handout and encouraged students to utilize those strategies to help them with their speaking anxiety and stage fright. The 16 strategies presented by Auerbach (1981) are as follows (p. 108-109):

1. Choose the right topic.
2. Over prepare.
3. Rehearse.
4. Start effectively.
5. Declare you anxiety.
6. Redirect the focus.
7. Redirect the pressure.
8. Don't dry up.
9. Choose your stance.
10. Entertain.

11. Handling questions.
12. Don't feel like a freak.
13. Don't be self-conscious.
14. Prepare an "out".
15. Don't "peter out"
16. Think positively

One particularly helpful self-administrable coping strategy for stage fright was the use of bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy employs books and other reading matter to help people to deal with problems on their own (Auerbach, 1981). Auerbach's (1981) handout with information about stage fright and coping strategies was used as a form of bibliotherapy. This type of coping strategy for stage fright was developed so that outside help and complicated techniques would not be necessary to assist the subjects with their stage fright.

In addition to recommending the use of SD, Bernstein (1983) suggested simply thinking differently about the classroom. This idea is better supported in the literature than is the use of SD. Cognitive restructuring, a technique used to counteract speaking anxiety, holds promise as a coping mechanism for teaching anxiety (Beatty, 1988; Motley, 1990). One of the best ways to shift the spotlight from anxiety to confidence is to practice removing the focus from the performance aspect of teaching and re-direct that focus toward its communicative function (Beatty, 1988; Motley, 1990).

Cognitive restructuring efforts need to be supported by a solid foundational knowledge of the physiological and behavioral manifestation of teaching. In addition, it

can be helpful to understand some of the research that has been done on the traits of audiences (Gardner & Leak, 1994). Furthermore, there are experts who believe that more qualitative data need to be gathered in the area of coping mechanisms used by college faculty. Many techniques that assist faculty in this area remain a mystery because no one is talking about teaching anxiety and what can be done to combat it (Gardner & Leak, 1994). Pulling these methods together could result in further research to establish the effectiveness of such coping mechanisms.

Self-assurance also appears to counteract anxiety; but it can be difficult to find a sense of confidence while locked tightly in the grip of teaching anxiety (Gardner & Leak, 1994). There are several theories that attempt to shed light upon the various methods of developing the confidence necessary to become an effective post-secondary educator. One of the most parsimonious might well be Eison's (1990) work, *Confidence in the Classroom: Ten Maxims for the Teachers*. In this work, Eison (1990) formulated ten supportive sayings, or maxims, to assist post-secondary faculty with self-assurance in the classroom. Each maxim is supported by literature pertinent to teaching effectiveness. Eison's (1990, p. 21) *Ten Maxims for the Teachers* are:

1. To feel confident, act confident.
2. Examine why you want to teach.
3. Learn the characteristics associated with effective teaching.
4. Enter each class with specific educational goals and objectives.
5. Teach less, better.
6. Use active learning strategies regularly.

7. Don't be a perfectionist.
8. Be relaxed about admitting it when you don't know something.
9. Ask for response from students and colleagues.
10. Remember that enthusiasm and energy can carry the day.

William James said, "There is no impression without expression." If one is to first *feel* confident and then make it noticeable, then, he or she will *become* confident. It sounds so simple; yet, it can be an extreme challenge to conjure up confidence where little or none exists (Eison, 1990). Since post-secondary educators who struggle with teaching anxiety would likely lack confidence, it is important for them to discover practical methods to assist them in increasing the frequency of confidence building experiences (Eison, 1990). It would, after all, be unrealistic to suggest that becoming more confident in the classroom is just telling oneself to do so. It does take a concentrated effort.

To become more confident, a faculty member may also want to understand what traits are linked to effectiveness. In general, personality traits, or characteristics, determine "...tendency or predisposition to respond in a certain way" (Engler, 1999). Lowman (1994) identified several components of effectiveness which he organized into dimensions of outstanding teaching. These dimensions include intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport, and he combined them to present a two-dimensional model of effective college teaching identifying specific ways students feel supported in the areas of leadership and control. Instructors with a low level of interpersonal rapport are "cold, distant, highly controlling, and unpredictable. Instructors falling within the moderate

range would be “relatively warm, approachable, and democratic; predictable. Instructors with the highest degree of interpersonal rapport are “warm, open and predicable and highly student-centered” (Lowman, 1994, p. 513). Teachers with high levels of intellectual excitement are “extremely clear and exciting. Those who fall in the moderate range are reasonably clear and interesting and low level instructors are vague and dull.

Within each level of intellectual excitement, Lowman (1994) proposed the following nine *cells*:

- Cell 1: *Inadequates*. Unable to present material or motivate students well. Cell
- 2: *Marginals*. Unable to present material well but will be liked by some students.
- Cell 3: *Adequates*. Minimally adequate for many students in lecture classes. Cell
- 4: *Socratics*. Outstanding for some students and situations but not for most. Cell
- 5: *Competents*. Effective for most students and classes. Cell 6: *Intellectual Authorities*. Outstanding for some students and classes but not for others. Cell 7: *Masterful Facilitators*. Especially skilled at smaller, more advanced classes. Cell
- 8: *Masterful Lecturers*. Especially skilled at larger introductory classes. Cell 9: *Complete Masters*. Excellent for any student and situation.

Working from the two-dimensional model proposed by Lowman, (1994), faculty seeking a reduction in teaching anxiety could focus on the specific traits and characteristics that might help them to improve their intellectual excitement and interpersonal rapport. If an instructor is to even be competent, he or she would need to have at least reasonable capability in both dimensions. Lowman (1994) has written a

book on how instructors can achieve effectiveness in the college classroom based upon his model.

Feldman (1994) cited experimental studies that pointed to enthusiasm and clarity as critical components of teacher effectiveness. “Relevant research has been reviewed (selectively) by Murray (1991), who noted in his analysis of pertinent studies that either teacher enthusiasm/expressiveness or teacher clarity (or both) has been a concern in nearly all relevant experimental research, and that these studies usually include measures of amount learned by students. In his overview of this research, Murray (1991) reported that “classroom teaching behaviors, at least in the enthusiasm and clarity domains, appear to be causal antecedents (rather than mere correlates of various instructional outcome measures) (Feldman, 1994, p. 398, emphasis added by Feldman).

Palmer (1998) did not speak directly of conquering teaching anxiety as defined for the purposes of this study; however, his advice to instructors experiencing anxiety in the classroom centered on courage and confidence in the classroom. He proposed that the teacher must rid herself of ostentatious “tips, tricks, and techniques”, move toward her heart, and discover the quality of mind and spirit necessary to enter the classroom confidently (Palmer, 1998, p. 5). This so called heart is literally the heart of success—the heart of a life of quality. His teaching philosophy, as set forth in the book, *The Courage to Teach* is considered to be somewhat exotic, as it deviated from the more traditional pedagogical models and incorporated the intellect, the emotions, and the spirit of the educator.

Palmer's (1998) viewpoint is not particularly fashionable in scholarly circles and has been criticized as nothing more than frivolity. Parker (1998) explained:

...The most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching—and living—becomes" (p. 5).

Palmer (1998) regarded individualism as the scaffolding supporting the basic structure of distinctiveness. "We teach who we are" was presented as his teaching mantra. "Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). He had such confidence in this truth that he felt compelled to guide educators toward an adoption of it as a foundational reality. He proposed that teachers operate from a base of fear and anxiety about their work. Faculties lack continuity. They are divided into isolated content-oriented departments that rarely interact. They are separated from their students by the grade—an evaluation tool which puts them in a power position over learners. They are paralyzed by suspicion of other educators who may be more popular with students or publish more frequently or have stronger curriculum vitae.

Conclusion

This review of the related literature provided the theoretical framework and background information for this study. The existence of teaching anxiety was established and accessible descriptive data on its origins, prevalence, sources and effects were noted. Personality characteristics specific to anxiety and teaching anxiety were investigated.

Denial of teaching anxiety was queried and related material on public speaking anxiety and stage fright was considered. An overview of coping strategies was provided through an investigation of confidence in the classroom and various self-reflective post-secondary teaching techniques.

Clearly, the potential harmful effects of teaching anxiety on college faculty and students provide justification for further investigation of this phenomenon. Since the existence of teaching anxiety has been established and the rather wide-spread denial of its existence appears to be genuine, the next task must be to explore in more detail the data gathered regarding college faculty members' understanding of its sources, effects and its coping strategies. In the subsequent chapter, an exploration of the methodology used to gather these data is offered.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter opens with an overview of the positionality of the researcher accompanied by a brief exploration of the primary motivation for the initiation of this study. A detailed description of the research design follows. The chapter subsequently examines the process used for gaining entry into the field of study and locating participants. Sample size and demographics as well as a brief profile of each participant (pseudonyms are used to identify each participant) is presented. Instrumentation, data collection procedures, and analysis are addressed. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the assumptions underlying the study and the limitations of the methodology employed.

Statement of Positionality

At the time of this writing, I was a full-time tenured faculty member with six years experience teaching psychology and education courses in the Department of Arts and Sciences at Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology in Great Falls, Montana. In addition, I was licensed as a clinical counselor in the state of Montana. Supporting my work as a professional educator is a decade of professional practice in the human services, community mental health, and higher education.

After discovering a copy of Bernstein's (1983) classic essay, *Dealing with Teaching Anxiety: A Personal View* tucked inside an instructor's resource manual I was using for a general psychology class, I felt intrigued by the author's assertions about teaching anxiety. Bernstein (1983) pointed out that most college instructors were not particularly familiar with teaching anxiety and its effects on post-secondary teaching careers. After some further exploration, I believed I had experienced teaching anxiety as it was described by Bernstein (1983) in the essay. Over the years; however, I devised informal strategies to cope and it had not manifested as highly problematic. When I discussed the phenomenon casually with colleagues, I discovered that many of them believed that they too had experienced teaching anxiety. Some had devised coping strategies while others found it so unpleasant that they assumed it was affecting their careers and or their overall health in the form of occupational stress and/or burn out. They disliked teaching and dreaded coming to work. Interestingly, most of the latter did not remain in the field. Or, if they did, they were known by colleagues and students as ineffective teachers.

After searching for additional literature on the subject, it became evident that this was a topic in need of further formal study. I was unable to locate much data on teaching anxiety at the post-secondary level; however, I kept searching and eventually began keeping a personal journal that focused upon teaching anxiety and my pursuit of further information about it. In the journal, I also kept informal observations and noted casual comments made by my colleagues on the topic.

Research Design

In an effort to discover conceptual categories relevant to the perceived sources and effects of teaching anxiety and to suggest theory from data gathered, this study employed the grounded theory tradition of qualitative inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Specifically, Glaser's and Strauss' (1967) ideas on the discovery of grounded theory were chosen as my primary philosophical foundation; however, Strauss' and Corbin's (1998) well defined procedures were also consulted. This allowed for a comprehensive, accommodating process tolerant of flexibility and regulation by the participants; thus, permitting their experiences to materialize from the investigative process (Babchuck, 1997).

According to Charmaz (2005), the expression, "grounded theory" describes not only the approach to a study, but the end result of the research as well. An important issue addressed through any work employing the grounded theory tradition of qualitative inquiry is how "... an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon [is] grounded in the data in a particular setting" (Patton, 1990). These thoughts, combined with Glaser's and Strauss' methodology, provided the preeminent foundation for the exploration of the central research question to be answered by this study: What do two year college faculty members perceive as the sources and effects of teaching anxiety?

The study's subquestions further illuminated the perspectives of the participants in regard to their understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety; what themes precipitated the various ways of thinking about those sources and effects, and the understanding of possible coping strategies used by faculty who experience it.

The study's subquestions:

1. How do participants describe their own or their colleagues' experiences with teaching anxiety?
2. What do the participants understand about both the immediate and long-term effects of teaching anxiety?
3. How do participants cope with teaching anxiety if they experience(d) it?

Context of the Study

The setting of this study was identified as the Montana colleges of technology. These institutions were chosen primarily because they provided a homogenous group of two-year college faculty members within a reasonable proximity of my home campus in Great Falls. Two-year educators were selected because their chief mission is to teach; therefore, they are either preparing for classes; in the classroom, or interacting with students the majority of the time (Outcalt, 2002). In addition, 31 percent of all higher education faculty members in the United States teach at two-year institutions (Huber, 1997, p. 33). Thirty-nine percent of all college students and 46 percent of all first-year students are taught by these educators (Huber, 1997, p. 33). It is apparent that two-year college faculties have an enormous effect upon higher education in general. Outcalt (2002, p. 128) put it this way:

As the essential bridge between students and institutions, community college faculty members play a wide array of professional roles, yet they are often

overlooked in the educational literature or grouped with four-year faculty in ways that make it difficult to see them in their own light.

To more precisely define the role of the two-year college, it might be helpful to clarify that the two year institution more often than not focuses on courses and programs that include transfer, vocational-technical, and remedial education programs (Shearon & Tollefson, 1989). In addition, two-year colleges (i.e. community colleges, technical colleges, junior colleges and institutes) present other programs for students to meet a wide variety of educational goals. Two-year colleges also provide customized training to meet the needs of the local community as well as fostering local economic development (Shearon & Tollefson, 1989). Since two-year educators spend the bulk of their careers in the classroom, they provided valuable information about the sources, effects and coping strategies for teaching anxiety. At the time this study was implemented, no studies dealing with teaching anxiety at the two-year level were found.

The colleges of technology in the state of Montana originated from five training centers first designated by the Montana Office of Public Instruction in 1939. In 1969, they were recognized as vocational training centers by legislative mandate. Upon such recognition, their administration became a united effort between each center's local school district and the state Office of Public Instruction. In 1989, the state legislature shifted the control of the vocational technical centers to the Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education and they were deemed the Montana colleges of technology (University of Montana – Helena College of Technology, 2003-2004, p.3). At that time, they joined the ranks of the community colleges and the tribal colleges as providers of public two-

year education in the state of Montana offering certificates and associate degrees (Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology, 2005).

The Helena College of Technology; the Missoula College of Technology, and the Montana Tech College of Technology are affiliated with the University of Montana in Missoula. MSU-Billings College of Technology; MSU-Great Falls College of Technology, and the Bozeman Tech Center are affiliated with Montana State University in Bozeman. All six of the colleges of technology offer associate of applied science degrees (AAS); associate of science degrees (AS); associate of arts degrees (AA), or certificates in a variety of programs. Programs represented are: agriculture and resource management; aviation; arts and sciences; business management, administrative and support services and marketing; computer and information services; construction/trades; culinary arts; education; engineering; health professions; human services; legal professions and studies; mechanics, repair and production; protective services; transportation and material moving; visual arts, and the Montana University System general education core (Montana State University Great Falls College of Technology, 2005).

Participants

As is customary in the grounded theory tradition, theoretical sampling was employed. When attempting to inductively generate grounded theory, the researcher focuses upon the concepts that emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These original concepts are then closely analyzed in relation to a review of the relevant literature to determine why they did or, in some cases, did not manifest. This is vastly

different than quantitative research, where the researcher strives to select a random sample from a population of subjects so that she can generalize her findings to the entire population. The focus in that case is upon the sample rather than the concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Seventeen individuals participated in the study. Participants were sixteen full-time faculty members and one adjunct from four of the colleges of technology granting entry into the field of research. Participants ranged in age from their mid-twenties to mid-sixties. Five were male and twelve were female. The following disciplines were represented: accounting, business, communication, a technological program (for reasons of confidentiality, specific program will not be identified), English, mathematics, natural science, nursing, physical science, psychology and sociology. All of the participants held at least one master's degree. Two had earned doctorates and one was a doctoral candidate. Years of experience in higher education ranged from 1-25 years. Sixteen of the participants were Caucasian. One female participant was American Indian.

Pseudonyms were assigned to each of the participants. Their brief profiles are listed below:

Clarence was a math teacher with nine years of college teaching experience. He taught as a graduate teaching assistant at a four-year college and served as an adjunct at that same university for five years. He had been in his current position as a full-time tenure track faculty for one year at the time of this writing. Clarence held a master's degree in mathematics.

Charlotte taught mathematics. At the time of the study, it was her first year as a full-time tenure track faculty member. She worked previously as a teaching assistant at the university where she completed her master's degree and had taught at the K-12 level for three years. Charlotte's master's degree was in math education.

Elizabeth taught science. She had been teaching in her current position as a full-time faculty member on a tenure track for three years. Prior to that, she worked as an adjunct instructor at a private four-year college and served as a graduate teaching assistant in college while completing her master's degree in chemistry.

Helen taught English literature and composition for 20 years as an adjunct while teaching English at a local public high school. She taught for two years as a full-time temporary faculty member and stepped in to help with the learning center this past academic year. She was not teaching a class at the time of this study. Helen had a master's degree in English.

Lily was a tenured business instructor. She had served for thirteen years in that position. Lily was a doctoral candidate in education.

Maria taught business classes and was a full-time tenured faculty member. She taught as an adjunct for 10 years before accepting her current position. She had, at the time of this study, thirteen years experience in addition to her years as an adjunct. She held a master's degree in business administration.

Alyssa taught psychology classes. She had fifteen years experience as a college teacher and was tenured. Alyssa had earned a master's degree in psychology.

Jude was an English teacher. He was on a tenure track and had served as a full-time faculty member for five years. He worked previously for 15 years as an adjunct professor of English at a private four-year college in his hometown. He held a master's degree in English.

Avery taught in a technical program. He had been an instructor in that program for 14 years and held tenure at his college. Besides his expertise in the technological skill he taught, he had completed a master's degree in education.

Dora taught English and had been in her position for seven years. She had previous college teaching experience and had worked as a teaching assistant while completing her doctorate. In total, she had thirteen years of college teaching experience and had a PhD in English.

Jenny was in her first year of teaching as a full-time tenure track math faculty. She had just completed her doctorate in mathematics and had worked as a teaching assistant and adjunct professor for ten years.

Luke was a tenured math faculty. He was in his tenth year of full-time teaching. Prior to that, Luke taught as an adjunct at a four-year university and had also served as a graduate teaching assistant. Luke had a master's degree in mathematics.

Connie was a tenured instructor of nursing with 25 years of service to her institution. She had a master's degree in nursing education.

Annabelle was an accounting and business teacher with eleven years of service as a tenured faculty. Prior to her current employment, she had taught as a graduate teaching assistant while completing her master's degree.

Virginia was an English instructor in her fifth year of teaching at her college. Prior to accepting her position there, she had taught as an adjunct at various four year colleges all over the nation. She had also taught at the secondary level and had over 20 years of experience as an educator. Virginia held a master's degree in English.

Olivia was an adjunct instructor of psychology and communication classes who had one year of teaching experience at the college level. Olivia had a master's degree in psychology with a counseling emphasis.

Joshua was a sociology teacher in his first year as a full-time faculty member. Prior to his current position, Joshua had served as an adjunct faculty member for six years. He taught as a graduate assistant while completing his master's degree.

Instrumentation

The grounded theory tradition typically includes detailed interviews with individuals or groups willing to share the conscious aspects of their experiences with the researcher (Creswell, 1998). The primary data used were partially structured one-on-one in-depth interviews ranging from 15-120 minutes. A basic protocol (see Appendix A) served as the foundation for the interviews; however, to allow for flexibility, impartial prompting was occasionally employed to further elucidate clarification. The final protocol was developed following an exhaustive review of the relevant literature; however, the intention was not to confine the data gathered to previously identified categories as might be done in a structured in-depth interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Rather, the goal was to allow the data to reveal itself without following a general

principle that might place boundaries upon the field (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In an effort to assure maximum validity of the interview protocol and diminish researcher bias and errors of fact, I implemented an approach including a combination of strategies designed to increase validity (Gay & Ariasian, 2000; Creswell, 1993; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The protocol was peer reviewed, externally audited, and piloted during the development phase. It was then presented to my committee during the dissertation proposal defense committee meeting and subsequently revised based upon their feedback. Upon approval of the proposed study by the committee, the protocol was reviewed by the human subject research boards at both Montana State University in Bozeman and the University of Montana in Missoula. All granted approval of the instrument. As mentioned previously, I kept a detailed journal throughout the course of the study.

Triangulation is defined as "...the confluence of multiple sources of evidence or the recurrence of instances that support a conclusion" (Eisner, 1998, p. 55). Triangulation was employed through the use of comprehensive field notes and a journal. Detailed descriptions were noted in regard to the setting for each interview. Descriptions of every participant and a brief assessment of his or her overall mood and level of interest were also recorded. A thorough analysis of my thoughts and circumstances at the time of each interview was conducted as well. This process served to note any variables influencing the interview sessions.

After identifying each participant with a pseudonym and specifying the date, time and place of interview, I began the sessions by establishing rapport through casual

conversation. I reviewed the consent forms and addressed questions about the study and/or the methodology. Consent forms had been e-mailed to each participant prior to the commencement of the interviews; however, they were not signed until right before the interviews commenced. One copy of the form was given to the participants for their records. The protocol commenced with the reading of two statements followed by six questions related to demographics and participant background information.

Data Collection Procedures

Gaining entry into the field of research involved initial contact with a gatekeeper, or an individual at each institution who decided whether research could be conducted in the desired setting (Gay & Ariasian, 2000). For the purposes of this study, the gatekeepers were determined to be the deans at each of the Montana colleges of technology. All the deans were initially contacted via e-mail. These early e-mails briefly explained the study and presented a *Consent to Participate Form* (see Appendices B and C). Two separate consent forms were required. One form was for the colleges of technology of the University of Montana in Missoula (see Appendix B), while the other was for the colleges of technology of Montana State University in Bozeman (see Appendix C). Both consent forms were submitted to and approved by my doctoral committee as well as the human subjects' research boards at both Montana State University in Bozeman and University of Montana in Missoula.

Given that each of the gatekeepers required an understanding of how the data were going to be used, e-mail messages were followed by telephone contacts addressing

the specifics of the study. The following questions, proposed by Gay and Ariasian (2000, p. 207) were explored by the parties as access was negotiated:

1. What are you trying to do in your study?
2. How much will your presence disrupt my classroom and students?
3. What will you do with the findings?
4. Why did you select our setting?
5. What do we get out of this?

Five deans granted permission for the study to be conducted on their campuses. One of the deans did not consent. At one of the campuses, not enough interest could be generated to justify a 500-mile round trip to gather data. As a result, interviews commenced at four of the six campuses. Once permission was granted by the gatekeepers, individual e-mails were sent to all instructors on public contact lists garnered from the campus websites. Responses were received from approximately 14 individuals. Eleven interview appointments were scheduled using this approach. Six additional participants were secured via opportunistic sampling once entry to the field was gained and scheduled interviews had commenced.

The opportunistic, unscheduled interviews were secured as a result of individuals' hearing about the opportunity to participate in the study once I arrived at their campuses. At one of the campuses, I was assigned a sponsor who provided me with a campus guide. The guide greeted me; gave me a tour of the campus, and helped me to locate scheduled participants. She introduced me to two additional participants she thought would be interested in participating. At the other campuses, opportunistic sampling also occurred

through scheduled participants' introduction to additional interested faculty members; however, none of the other campuses provided a sponsor or guide. Those interviews were secured after a participant introduced me to colleagues he thought might be interested in participating in the study.

Sixteen of the participants were interviewed individually during two day excursions to their institutions that were made specifically for gathering data. The trips required considerable travel and resulted in appointments being scheduled one after the other to guarantee an efficient use of time. One participant was interviewed by telephone because she was unable to keep her scheduled appointment during the physical visit to her campus, but still wished to participate. This interview was held two weeks after the visit to her campus. I was able to leave a permission slip with her when I visited her campus. She signed it and sent it back to me. I then e-mailed her to schedule the call and the interview protocol was followed over the phone.

To assure that subjects' responses were clearly understood, it was intended for each interview to be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Eight of the participants did not wish to be tape-recorded and indicated they would not take part in the study if it meant they had to be taped. Two tape recordings were of poor quality and were somewhat inaudible. Two participants were secured opportunistically and were willing to be taped; however, I did not have a recorder with me for those interviews. The interviews were secured during a lunch break and I left my recorder set up for my next interview in another building. I did have my backpack with the interview protocol and my field journal. Since there was limited time, we did not move back to the other building for the

interview. I conducted those interviews in a small private room off the commons area of the institution. The telephone interview was not tape recorded.

Thus, for 13 of the interviews, I relied upon detailed notes and journaling in the field. These notes were written by hand on the protocol forms. Additional annotations were made on a lined note pad following the interviews. Journal notes were taken by hand before and after the interviews. My training as a clinical counselor and the many years of experience listening to, assessing and diagnosing a wide variety of clients helped me to gather data efficiently.

In an effort to ascertain the concepts pertinent to this study, the definitive number of interviews necessary to systematically gather the necessary data was ultimately determined upon the attainment of theoretical saturation, which involved the discovery of a repetition in the responses gathered from all of the subjects (Gay & Ariasian, 2000).

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 61) explain theoretical saturation:

... [N]o additional data are being found whereby the [researcher] can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. He goes out of his way to look for groups that stretch diversity of data as far as possible, just to make certain that saturation is based on the widest possible range of the category...

It was through saturation that I recognized I had discovered categories in the data. These categories eventually manifested as modes of conceptualization that emerged

as a model of the perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety among two-year college faculty. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 1998).

Analysis

“Grounded theory is a comparative method in which the researcher compares data with data, data with categories and category with category” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 527). Consequently, I began my analyses early in the study and focused my course upon emerging and evolving groupings. Constant comparative analyses as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) allowed me to identify and confirm a group of common themes through personal contact and insight. The integration of the resulting themes then demonstrated various associations that emerged as a visual model (Creswell, 1998).

I codified the data by hand using the read, theme, re-read and re-theme model espoused by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Creswell (1997, p. 57) appropriately dubbed this technique of gathering, analyzing and then returning to the field for more data the “zigzag” method. To create my foundation, I manually categorized participants’ responses and comments from my field notes utilizing common themes identified via an analysis of those responses compared to premises identified through the review of the literature. I then contrasted the responses to one another. All the while, I was immersed in the data gathering process, conducting interviews with participants in the field of study. As I interviewed and continually reviewed transcripts and field notes, new leads were identified.

Logistically, in an effort to segregate themes and concepts, I scrutinized each intact interview and my field notes using an assortment of colored highlighters. I highlighted individual comments in a thematic fashion. Primarily, I sought common verbiage. For example, when a response presented with the theme of confidence, I highlighted that in one color. If the theme preparation was cited, I highlighted that in a different color. This resulted in a large quantity of individual comments that began to manifest as foundational concepts. I then reviewed each highlighted comment and transferred it to a 3" x 5" lined index card. Having the individual cards allowed for the flexibility to sort them as I themed, revisited the field of study, and then re-themed. They also allowed for comments that were multi-thematic to be moved about to determine where they best fit. My goal at this point was not to formally assign a moniker to the themes; but to cluster the responses that appeared similar.

Subsequently, I assigned each category of themes a moniker. At that point, there were a wide-range of categories and some were comprised of only one card. But, once the initial sorting was accomplished, axial coding allowed me to re-theme even further - according to the more precise ideas that began to emerge as subcategories. Eventually 5 major categories were identified as foundational Figure 1 presents an overview of the coding categories I explored. Moreover, I began to experiment with memo writing. Memos were hand written directly on the back of the original transcripts and analyzed similarly to individual participant responses. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described memoing as "fitting the puzzle pieces together" (p. 229). As I worked with the cards,

wrote the memos, and became more sophisticated to the themes, they moved from one pile to another and the subcategories began to feed into the emerging overarching themes.

Figure 1. Coding Categories

Major Categories	Subcategories	Themes
Preparation	Being Stumped by Students	Preparation
	Handling Student Questions	
	Appropriate Level of Knowledge Of Subject Matter	
Self-Assurance	In-Class Personal/Individual	Confidence
Access and Working Together – Colleagues	Questions About teaching	Formal Training in Instructional Methodology
	Asking for Help	Collaboration with Colleagues
Respect	Getting Back to Students	Classroom Civility
	Disrespectful Students/Faculty	
	Appropriate Boundaries	Immediacy
	Accessibility	
	The Inner Teacher	Philosophizing/ Reflective Practice

I also mapped the themes by drawing concept maps, diagramming how themes fit together and where, if identified, the sub-themes fell. I used large sheets of paper to draw the concept maps which I then hung on the wall so that I could see them and work with them more easily. At first, the concept maps looked similar to organizational charts with a hierarchy; however, I re-configured them so that they were more circular in nature. These early concept maps allowed me to clearly identify the main themes and determine how the sub-themes fit into the overall picture. As the scope and assets of each theme became apparent to me, I was able to isolate them more precisely and as I did, the conceptual model emerged.

As I worked through this process, participants were asked to clarify their responses through member checking. Verbatim transcripts and/or summaries of interview notes were sent via e-mail for further comment following the initial interviews. One individual responded to the request for further comment. The others indicated that the essence of their voices had been captured and that all quotes appeared accurate. Tapes and field notes were secured in a locked cabinet throughout the study. Upon completion of the study, these materials were destroyed.

Peer reviews were used to assure validity. Peer reviews help researchers to avoid misreading their data (Creswell, 1998). I employed peer debriefing sessions about my methodology with one colleague, a social sciences instructor. He scrutinized the process as it unfolded and helped me work my way through the study in an objective manner. He was trained in qualitative research methods and had experience as a peer reviewer. He also was able to spend time discussing the coding process. Specifically, he had

proficiency in Glaser's and Strauss' (1967) method of discovering grounded theory and was a valuable resource in the logistics of the coding process. Peer review for the interview protocol and results acquired was provided by two colleagues with a variety of expertise in scholarly research. One was a professor of English, familiar with qualitative inquiry. The other was a math instructor well-versed in quantitative research. Written documentation of peer review sessions was kept. The study was also supervised by my dissertation committee chair.

Assumptions and Limitations

At the outset, I assumed that two-year college faculty would be most in touch with teaching anxiety because they spend so much of their time either in the classroom or preparing to teach classes. Speaking directly to the instructors appeared to be the best resource in terms of gathering the data necessary to address the research questions. To support these assumptions, I conducted partially structured one-on-one interviews and analyzed the data using the grounded theory tradition of qualitative research. I further assumed that from the data, a conceptual model would emerge. Since the study was limited to two-year faculty members at colleges of technology in the state of Montana, it was further assumed that participants would provide accurate and honest data concerning the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. What's more, the resultant grounded theory was conditional in regard to the research setting and did not replicate the current distribution of two-year college faculty on a national level.

The methodology of this study was limited by the necessity to travel in order to gain entry into the field of research. Gaining entry involved overnight stays in the field as the distances from my home were considerable. Because of personal finances, there were limitations on the number of trips I was able to make. One example of this limitation was my inability to generate interest at an institution some distance from my home. I was able to schedule only two interviews via email and/or by making telephone contacts. This was the case even when I recruited an acquaintance to assist me. Had I made two trips to that institution: one to generate participants and another to conduct interviews, access might have been gained; however, it was too far and too costly to make the 500-mile round trip on more than one occasion.

In regard to the selection of participants, I speculated whether supplementary data might have been acquired from individuals with whom I had established long term professional relationships. Since teaching anxiety seemed to be a sensitive topic, it might have been possible to have gathered additional data from trusted colleagues who were comfortable sharing more detailed information. However, since I was attempting to assemble the most valid data possible, working with colleagues was not my best option and there was not the time to gather such supplementary data.

There were numerous two-year college faculty at Montana colleges of technology who chose not to participate in this study. Originally, e-mails were sent to all two year faculty at the colleges of technology where access was granted by a gatekeeper. This resulted in contact with approximately 100 individuals. Not all granted access into the field of study; however, of those who did, only 14 actually scheduled interviews. And, as

mentioned above, at one institution, I could not secure enough participants to make the trip worthwhile. Thus, I cannot postulate as to why these potential contributors did not choose to participate. Nor can I make assumptions concerning their perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety or its coping strategies.

It was important for me to accept the participants' reactions objectively; however, there were occasions when verbal responses in regard to teaching anxiety and non-verbal responses did not match. As a clinical counselor, I had a great deal of experience straightforwardly reading individuals' non-verbal responses in a variety of situations. This was one area where I had to remain in constant contact with my positionality. This was especially true in relation to the indications of discomfort that could have indicated denial or shame on the part of the participants. Prior research on the subject of denial and shame associated with teaching anxiety had to be carefully scrutinized so that I did not project my positionality upon the participants.

Conclusion

This study examined perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. Two-year college faculty members from colleges of technology in the state of Montana were its focus. I systematically collected data through partially structured one-on-one interviews with participants selected using the snowballing and criterion approaches to purposeful sampling (Gay & Ariasian, 2000). I identified specific elements of the emerging theory as a result of the scrutiny of various themes by sorting them, coding them, and organizing them into categories. I further categorized participants' responses

by employing the constant comparison method, coding and analyzing in a combined fashion the common themes identified via an analysis of the literature (Glaser & Straus, 1967; Creswell, 1998). In an effort to avoid errors of interpretation, I employed peer review and member checking to assure trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

To establish conceptual categories relevant to the sources and effects of teaching anxiety and to suggest theory from data gathered, I engaged the grounded theory tradition of qualitative inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I gathered data through partially structured one-on-one in-depth interviews of 17 faculty members at Montana colleges of technology. In an effort to determine a group of common themes, I subsequently coded the data by hand and scrutinized the participants' perceptions about their understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety alongside the existing data identified in the literature.

To address the central research question and the three subquestions, I present the common themes identified by sharing the participants' awareness of teaching anxiety and their individual experiences. I convey a summary of the common themes evident in the data using the subjects' responses to the interview protocol. In addition, I present results from two special participants and review some unexpected results. Next, I explore the significance of the findings. Moreover, I summarize the answers to the research questions. To adequately depict the diversity of the varied sources of teaching anxiety, quotes from the participants are the focus of this chapter. Without a clear picture of these sources and the understanding of their effects, the reader will not be privy to the essence of the participants' voices as they stand on their own merit.

For convenient reference, a table identifying the participants' pseudonyms and their academic discipline is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Faculty Pseudonyms and Discipline

Pseudonym	Discipline
Clarence	Math
Charlotte	Math
Elizabeth	Science
Helen	English
Lily	Business
Maria	Business
Alyssa	Psychology
Jude	English
Avery	Technology
Dora	English
Jenny	Math
Luke	Math
Connie	Nursing
Annabelle	Accounting
Virginia	English
Olivia	Psychology
Joshua	Sociology

Awareness of Teaching Anxiety – Participants' Experiences

Charlotte indicated that she had heard of teaching anxiety. She had been trained as a K-12 teacher and remembered reading about it during her undergraduate work.

Charlotte did not feel she had struggled much with teaching anxiety; however, the first day of classes presented some anxiety for her:

I am very confident and comfortable in the classroom. I always have been-even as a student. When it comes to every day teaching, I have no apprehension whatsoever. But I don't like the first day of class because there is new students

and there is so much on my mind. I always have first day flutters. As soon as I say, “OK, this is Math...blah, blah, blah...I’m Charlotte...then it goes away.”

Clarence said he was not familiar with the term “teaching anxiety”, but when the definition was read to him, he believed that such a phenomenon did exist. He indicated it was not a problem for him on a day-to-day basis; however, he did point out that he experienced some uneasiness at certain points in his teaching career in the past and occasionally in his present position. Clarence had this to say about teaching anxiety:

Currently I don’t have problems with that. Every once in awhile, when I have to teach a new class, I feel nervous. And, on the first day of class maybe I am a little nervous. As far as apprehension in the classroom environment, or like when I am getting ready to teach-at this point, I don’t have problems with that.

Both Helen and Maria agreed they were aware of teaching anxiety. Both specified they did not have teaching anxiety as a general rule; however, apprehension did strike them when getting started with new classes at the beginning of each semester. Helen related, “Those first days can be nerve-wracking form me.”

Maria stated, “I hate that first day of class. The first 1-2 weeks actually, is stressful until I feel comfortable with my students.”

Alyssa shared that she never thought she had suffered from anxiety in relation to her teaching or as she prepared for classes; however, this past academic year, she had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and she wondered if perhaps there might be a link between her anxiety related to her teaching and her ill health. Alyssa explained it this way:

Well, this is sort of funny, because I would have probably said to you that I do not have any apprehension in the classroom and I do just fine. But, two years ago...I was having a few problems in two of my classes. And, I started to dread these two classes. It was mostly because some students in the classes banded together and I was always being attacked—questioned—it got kind of dicey. Toward the end of the semester, I started to hear my heart beating in my head. It turned out, I had developed high blood pressure. I still have to take medicine. Now, I don't know if that was a direct result of the anxiety I was experiencing that semester, but I bet it makes me wonder.

Luke reported he was secure about his abilities in the classroom. When asked about experiencing any uneasiness in the classroom, he responded:

I'm a total ham. I'm in my element when I'm in front of a classroom. I've never experienced this [teaching anxiety] except when I had to deal with a student with disabilities once.

Jenny did not feel she had suffered from teaching anxiety. She said, "I don't worry about the people in my classes. But, I do worry about the material."

When asked to explain her worry about the material she responded further:

I never thought about it. You know, I am a preparation fanatic. I like to stay ahead of my classes and if I don't have time to do that I guess I do get a little worried. I said a lot, didn't I [laughter]?

Avery, who indicated he was an introverted and very private man, talked about his comfort level in the classroom:

Even though I am a man of few words, I like to teach and I like to work with my students. My classes are small and for the most part hands-on. I do a lot of one-on-one work with my students in the shop. That is a good thing for me.

Joshua was introspective as he pondered his experiences with apprehension in the classroom:

I'm trying to imagine if this is something I've ever experienced. While I have no real recollection of this feeling, I'm sure it does exist to some degree in anyone who has to deal with large groups --as an authority figure. I think people who do experience this may not want to admit it, as they would tend to think that the admission would make them more vulnerable, and that would create further anxiety.

Some associated teaching anxiety with specific difficulties or fears. For instance, Avery identified one specific cause for anxiety in the classroom. He had experienced two unpleasant incidents with female students in his male dominated classes. In both cases, the female students indicated that they thought Avery was "too quiet" and favored the male students. These two experiences had occurred over a period of a twenty year career in higher education; however, the most recent had just been resolved in the semester before this study took place. It was clear that the experiences had shaken Avery and he was unmistakably very concerned about them:

I don't want to scare you [laughter] but it seems I have a problem with women [laughter]. I teach in a male dominated field and when women take my classes a few of them have said that I worry them because I am quiet. There have been two

complaints to the dean along these lines over the years. One was just this past year—with one of the female students still in my program. It was resolved OK, but I am still shaken up about it. I didn't do anything but keep my distance and I don't play favorites. I am a really quite and private guy—I like to keep to myself and some people think that is unfriendly, I guess. But, I don't like it now when women are in my class. I am thinking to myself about whether I am not friendly to them or whatever and I am not as able to concentrate on what I need to do to teach my classes. I dread it. I dread seeing a female student in my classes now since all of this. I wonder what kind of complaint they will have against me.

Charlotte had these thoughts about teaching anxiety:

You know, now that I think about it, some people- you'll never be able to make them become a good teacher. I think it takes a special person to get up there and relay the information so I think some people have it and some people don't. But, I think there might be a group—leaning more toward the “have it” side that maybe might respond to some help with their teaching. But, I think you have to have a certain personality to do this.

Dora indicated that teaching a class did not make her uneasy; however, she did not like to speak in public.

You know, I have this terrible phobia of public speaking. But, I don't feel like that in the classroom. I avoid giving speeches to the general public.

When the researcher probed for further information, she declined to comment, saying, “I just don't want to talk about that. I just don't do that for the public.”

Charlotte recalled a particularly disconcerting memory of a fellow graduate teaching assistant's struggles in the classroom:

I've seen it [teaching anxiety] with my own eyes. When I was in grad school, we actually had to go to two other people who were grad students and watch them teach. The one guy I chose was not comfortable in front of a group talking—it was not good. It was a disaster, actually. It made *me* uncomfortable. I got so uncomfortable I got up and left. I had to give him feedback on this form. We had to put our name on it. And, I should have been honest; but it was the first year. We were all brand new grad students and we all pretty much hung out together and went out together so I didn't want to be brutally honest and just hurt their feelings so I just wrote, "maybe turn around and talk to your audience instead of just turn your back.

Joshua indicated that he had worked closely with an individual who had suffered from teaching anxiety:

I do know of at least one colleague who has had a level of anxiety that was great enough to cause him to have dreams--nightmares actually--about not being prepared for classes and being unable to answer questions from students. I'm not sure how this may have affected his classroom experience, but if it were me, I would be doubly sure that I was prepared for each and every class. Do I think that he is able to cope with his anxiety? Well, he is still teaching, so that must be a good sign, and the students seem to like him. We haven't talked about it for a long time.

Luke wondered what had become of a former faculty member who served under him when he was a department chair:

I knew this guy who—geeze, I wish I knew what ever happened to this guy—who—when I went in to observe him—he just freaked. He was stuttering and stammering and all sweaty. He told me later that he wasn't that way in class usually. He wasn't like that until I came in to watch him teach. Could that be like teaching anxiety?

Joshua recalled he once knew a graduate teaching assistant who he felt had struggled somewhat with teaching anxiety:

I worked with a TA once who got really scared in front of a big class. We had a mentor who worked with him...don't know exactly what they did for him; but he got over it. He wasn't that way with seminars or smaller classes.

Connie helped a colleague who fought feelings of discomfort in the classroom:

One of my colleagues—when she first started, told me that she just felt scared all the time while she was teaching. I asked her, “What part of the teaching makes you feel anxious?” We came to the conclusion that she got nervous getting up in front of people. She was the type of person who really did best working one-on-one with people—a very private lady—and quiet. She is a nurse and she does a terrific job in clinicals—where she works individually with the students. I really just tried to encourage her and the students picked up on it and they just loved her and they too encouraged her and supported her. She has decided that part of the job is just not her favorite part...but, she works on it all the time...she is always

well prepared for class and organized and that helps her. And, she works on relaxation skills and whatnot while she is teaching a group. She says once she gets going she is OK. I think there are people who are timid. They are just not comfortable in front of a group and they never will be. Should they keep teaching? Well, only if they can work their way through that part...like my colleague has. She did say that if she would not have had the support she got from me and the students she wouldn't have made it through the first year and would have just gone back to nursing.

Summary of Common Themes Evident in the Data

Preparation

By far, the most common theme in relation to the two-year faculty members' understanding of the sources of teaching anxiety was preparation. Fifteen of the seventeen participants commented on preparation and their belief that the prepared teacher will not feel apprehensive about his work in the classroom. Connie talked about her need for preparation and her early years as a "green" instructor:

Being very organized helps me. I plan my time. I don't start thinking about teaching in June, but by July, I'm really thinking, "What do I need to do to get ready to go?" I plan my prep time into my daily schedule. That way, I never feel like I am just walking into a class "cold". I also plan time to grade and evaluate my students' work into my daily schedule. It helps me to do them justice. If I don't plan and organize that really makes me uncomfortable.

When I first was starting out, I wrote down everything—absolutely everything—I was going to say in class. I even wrote down in my lecture notes when to turn on the projector and dim the lights. Isn't that nutty? That was about 25 years ago and I think I have it down by now; but, that helped me with my confidence.

Being over prepared, I guess is what you'd call it.

Like Connie, Helen was extremely serious about her preparation for classes.

Maria said this about being well prepared:

Preparation is important. Student questions can make me nervous. But, I make sure I am well prepared when I go into class. I'm so weird. I have to do everything my students do before they do it. I am that anal [laughing]. If I don't I am a wreck. You see, I have very high standards because essentially, perfection is expected in the business world. Things cannot be done half-way.

Helen went on to share a story about a colleague who taught as an adjunct in the

English department:

We hired a lawyer who is a prominent local writer to teach comp classes here as an adjunct. He has to spend hours prepping the grammar because he writes and he knows what he's doing; but he doesn't have the formal training in English and has to go back and review that. He has told me he just dreads it when they [the students] start asking him questions about grammar.

Elizabeth was another instructor who believed that adequate preparation was imperative. She indicated that not feeling prepared was a real stumbling block for her and

caused her anxiety not only for herself but also caused her to worry about the safety of her students in science labs:

I get upset about not being ready to go. That makes me feel apprehensive with a capital “A”. Here at this college, I teach chemistry and geology. Those are two very different preps. A lot of people think that if you teach science, then you can teach every science. That just is not the case. I am a chemist. When it comes to A & P, well, I can tell you where your arm is [laughing] but it is not my area. Anyhow, I have to be on my toes. I have 3-4 preps and labs. Not only do I have to be prepared as far as my content goes—I have to think about safety in the labs. Part of my job is to prepare labs that are safe for the students. That can be a lot of pressure.

Lily explained how preparation and organization worked in tandem

When you are thrown into a new class/course—like a faculty hired at the last minute—that prep time taken away can add a lot of stress. I am a business teacher. I feel nervous when things don’t go as planned. For that reason, I spend a lot of time preparing for my classes—until I am very comfortable with the material. That way, I can avoid problems like with the technology in the classroom. I hate that. So, I practice and I prepare and I make sure that things work in the classroom. I have to make sure that things don’t pile up. I am organized. I have to keep to a schedule and plan. I can’t get distracted by things like my personal life or my workload. I have been doing this awhile. I am a

veteran faculty and I am comfortable with my level of knowledge of my subject matter.

Interestingly, Lily wondered if perhaps all her concern with preparation might an underlying source of stress:

I wish someone would have told me to take things day by day—take things more as they come. I think that would have helped me a lot with my anxiety. In some ways, being too prepared and always trying to anticipate everything can cause all kinds of problems.

Jude felt that preparation was the solution to anxiety that might be experienced in the classroom:

You have to prepare, repeat and practice your material over and over again. I still need to spend a good bit of time preparing and making ready to teach. I mean, I can fool them sometimes [laughter]. If I don't have the time, like if I have to do other things, and I feel rushed, my students can sense that. They recognize that and it bleeds into classroom. Without prep time, I feel like I let my students down. That just annoys me and makes me frustrated—when I can't deepen my level of knowledge and increase the quality of my teaching.

Jenny talked about her confidence in the classroom as stemming from good preparation and effective teaching:

I am confident in my abilities because I am well trained. It all began with my wonderful high school education. I had terrific math teachers and I learned a lot. That continued in college. I have a very high aptitude in math. I am in the

ninety-ninth percentile when it comes to my abilities—very high. I know I can do anything in my area. I am always comfortable up in front of my students.

Of all the participants Clarence was the most adamant about the importance of preparation in his ability to be anxiety-free in his classroom. He consistently indicated that preparation was the key to good solid college teaching. When originally asked about colleagues with teaching anxiety, Clarence said, “Yeah, absolutely, many people do [have teaching anxiety]. I can make some comments to that. I think it is how well prepared they are. Their competence with their subject matter causes the problems.”

Clarence spoke further about why he believed he was not anxious when he was in front of a class:

I would say I don't have any anxiety and I think I do well in class because I know my material well. As a new teacher you are what you would say is nervous. I was nervous when I first started. But, I would always make sure that I was ready to go and that helped me. I have a degree in pure math. So, I have a good background in math and the students can't stump me very easy. I have a very solid math background. So, I am very competent. You have to prepare. You have to study.

Teaching outside his area of expertise was a problem for Luke, a math teacher who was also teaching a physics class. He shared an interesting story:

I teach math, but early on [in my career] they asked me if I could teach physics. I, of course, said yes—being new and all—you know, you don't want to say no or anything like that because you want to get your tenure—you want respect. What

a nightmare. I never felt like I knew what I was doing. But, you know—that was years and years ago and I still teach it! I tell you what—that class still—to this very day—makes me uncomfortable. Isn't that interesting? I never thought about that before talking to you today.

Joshua was an instructor who said that he really focused upon having a positive attitude and saw his classroom time as an opportunity to challenge himself. He seemed open to anything as long as he was able to see it from a positive perspective.

Preparation should be the same, no matter how you feel about an individual class. It is time well spent. Time to enjoy. I would prefer to focus on the positive aspects of being able to challenge myself each time I go into a classroom, regardless of the students or the subjects that are involved.

Like Joshua, Luke felt that preparation was important to his success in the classroom and he believed he was there to learn *with* his students.

Sometimes when students know things and I don't, I get a little freaked out. But, I have decided over the years that I have come [to class] to learn. I can't know it all. But, I'm really well prepared—always...And, this has always been the case. In the beginning I over prepared...totally. And, today, I could turn to any chapter in my book and teach it—at a moment's notice. I sure like that feeling. That took a lot of the pressure off.

Confidence

Confidence was the second most prevalent theme. Thirteen participants gave confidence related responses. Elizabeth summed up the importance of confidence to the college teacher:

You can never let them [students] smell fear [laughing]. Seriously, if you do, they will pounce. Really, I mean it. If you lose your confidence they know that right up. Right up—and you will never be able to recover from it.

Maria had this to say about confidence:

My experience and my knowledge base helps me feel very confident as a teacher. I don't like to make mistakes; but, when I do, I use them as learning experiences for my students. Sometimes when I don't know things outside of class I get anxious. For example, I taught a class to legal secretaries a long time ago. They all assumed I was a legal expert. I started to dislike that class because it made me feel kind of stupid that I couldn't answer their legal questions [laughter]. You kind of have to remove your sensitive self and replace that with a business-like self. Otherwise, you'll be getting your feelings hurt all the time. And, you have to be a good role-model to your students—on the confidence.

Alyssa was anxious about not being well liked by students.

I second guess myself a lot. That really leads me to a lot of stress. This happens when I have classes that are not all that responsive—not interacting. I am very sensitive. I want my students to like me as their teacher. A lot of students *have* to take my class and they often have a bad attitude about that. I always want to win

them over and get them to like my class. Evaluations are very stressful for me. I am a sensitive person and I want my students to say good things about me. I hate those negative comments and when I see them, I get to thinking I am not a good teacher. If I can't please you...it bothers me! [laughter].

Clarence, on the other hand, did not take mistakes too seriously and did not seem to have serious need to please that seemed to plague Alyssa. He said, "I have flopped-- Not like a total failure; but having things not work out. It's not a big deal [laughing]. It's not a reflection on me."

Joshua was confident about student evaluation and felt that they provided him with good feedback that helped him to keep his courses dynamic.

[Student] evaluations that are critical are often the ones that I learn the most from but I do try to consider that I cannot always please everyone, and that there will be those students who do not appreciate my style. I don't mind being evaluated by my students, after all, they are my "audience" and they should know if they are getting the message that I am trying to give them. I can deal with constructive criticism and I think it is important for us to know what our students think of us.

Formal Training Instructional Methodology

Formal training in instructional methodology was a theme common to ten of the participants. Seven believed that college teaching is not just something that happens naturally. And, three of the participants believed that formal training in college teaching would be extremely helpful to individuals who might be struggling with anxiety in the

classroom. Conversely; however, a few also felt like the key component to not feeling anxious about teaching at the college level was expertise.

Clarence believed proficiency in one's field of study was a firm foundation that could support teaching without feelings of anxiety:

Some people get like a math and statistics mix or compromise their math degrees with an education mix—about half in either place. You can get all kinds of combinations. People split their stuff, or they mix it with statistics—like I said—or even business—any number of subjects. I didn't do that. You don't need a lot of education classes at our level. It's a different environment than K-12 is. K-12 teachers have to spend all their time with these kids for a much longer period of the day. I've got people who should be responsible for themselves and I see them an hour a day three times a week, so I don't think we need the training that is provided to teachers—which is a lot of instructional methodology stuff—well not so much instructional methodology, but learning development kind of things. That is very important, I guess, but it doesn't apply to college.

A follow up to this response was asked by the researcher. She asked, "So, college student development wouldn't be as important for you to know about?"

Clarence responded, "No. It's not like with kids."

Charlotte supposed her teaching experience and expertise in education was a great help to her:

I taught high school. I student taught. I have training in education. I went to a small college where I was always up in front of a group. For some people who

get just straight math degrees—well, they have never taught. Maybe they know their math well; but they don't always do well in the classroom

Helen indicated that expertise without training in college teaching had caused some of their part time instructors some problems in the classroom. She commented further:

A lot of adjuncts here are experts in their fields. We do a lot of trade programs and those instructors do not necessarily have any teaching experience. Things come up for them that cause problems for them in the area of teaching.

Lily, another faculty member closely involved with adjunct faculty had this to say about training in college teaching:

I supervise adjuncts. A lot of them—they don't know how to teach. They are experts in their subject or a trade but not in teaching. They start to not like teaching and they will quit on us. They quit because, well, it isn't enjoyable for them. I see this in trades teachers. Computer teachers also especially have trouble in this area. They can be very condescending to students...thinking they are superior because they know the lingo I guess. If they knew better how to teach some of those problems could be avoided and I think they could end up being fairly decent in the classroom. But, it is hard to invest a lot in them, I guess...just go out and get another one. You have to understand teaching and learning. I am working on my doctorate in educational leadership. That training has helped me to understand how important it is to learn about things. I know my subject matter but, it helps to have training in teaching and in learning—that is just as important

because you become a better teacher. Don't you think that better teachers might be less nervous? Anxious?

Luke hypothesized about training and mentoring for faculty:

I think college teachers need more training and more mentoring. New faculty should work with those who've been around awhile. Plus, I was at an important state meeting this past week and someone asked me, "why is it that a college teacher can teach college but not teach in the K-12 system? Well, there is this big convoluted answer; but, it got me to thinking that there are a lot of especially new teachers who do not have training in teaching methods. We need mentoring. We need training. We need to take new faculty under our wings...especially adjuncts who might come out of industry.

Connie related her thoughts on experimenting with new instructional methodologies:

Trying new things presents a real conundrum. And this is at every level—you talked about preparation, delivery in the classroom and at evaluation—every level. I know that you should do new things; but I have nurses to train for clinicals and for their board exams. We are under a lot of pressure for our students to pass their board exams on their first try. Recently, we had these trainings on principle-based learning. It seemed like a good fit for training our nurses. One of our instructors decided to implement this method in her classes. I was quite worried that this group of students would not have the background to do well in clinicals. She was worried too because we'd done it the same way for so long. Even though she was being innovative, it caused her to experience this underlying

stress about this group of students—about these classes. We've really watched this group carefully as they are now moving forward into their clinicals. Guess what? They seem to be doing just as well as any other group. So, we feel like we are on the right track. But it wasn't all luck. We worked closely with [an expert] in the methodology and he regularly came [and still comes] for consultations. So, we didn't just wing it. I guess that is what I am trying to say. Don't wing it and it will help your confidence when trying new things.

Helen believed that college teachers need help with their teaching; however, was dismayed that most seemed reluctant pursue training in instructional methodology.

College teachers need training ahead of time. We don't do this at the college level. It is like everyone is ashamed to do it or something. I just don't' get that.

Lily expressed concerns about college faculty who did not seem to understand non-traditional learners and students who have special needs.

We need more training in our students' unique needs. We have a lot of non-traditional students and we have students with special needs and disabilities. A lot of times I don't know what to do with them and it's like we can't get information about them...to help them, I mean...not to violate privacy.

Collaboration with Colleagues

Support from colleagues, especially for new instructors, adjunct faculty or when mastering new content, seemed important to eleven of the participants. Helen talked about her belief that more mentoring could be helpful and said the following:

We need to do more with mentoring. And we should have mentoring in the disciplines. Support can be helpful to new teachers.

Lily felt that coming together could avoid some of the isolation experienced by college faculty.

You know, there is this autonomous nature of college. Faculty and students are expected to be responsible for their own teaching and learning. Faculty are scattered to the four winds. Sometimes people are embarrassed to ask for help in finding resources. I think that can get so hard that some people just give up. If there were a common place where faculty could go for assistance and support—help and advice—I think that would be great.

Clarence spoke of the importance of rehearsal and commented on how important connection was when he was trying to tackle a higher level math class:

If you are nervous, collaborating with your fellow teachers can help to alleviate some of that. Practice and practice with your colleagues. Talking to each other can relieve some of the anxiety because you find out we all go through kind of the same thing. Three years ago, I taught the highest level course I ever taught. It was like a fifth level course in calculus. It was material that was beyond the scope of a lot of people. That was daily seeking help from others...daily working on the course material and getting them to help me with ideas. I really needed new methods for this material because I had a more mature audience. And, I was being stumped more and more often. I talked some to other teachers—ran my questions past them so that I was not fielding so many general questions in the

class. My colleagues gave me help and ideas and it helped me feel better about the way the class was going. I was never scared or anxious. I was more challenged.

I like that feeling.

Jude felt like perhaps adjunct instructors needed more association and inclusion:

Adjuncts often are not practiced instructors but are experts in their fields. A lot of times I find they are in this “state of discomfort”. They have no place to “be” and no place to really go for help if they need it. It would be nice if our adjuncts had some support and could be evaluated and receive feedback. We don’t do any of that here. Training could be good too.

Connection also meant getting involved. Involvement was an important component of teachers feeling confident about who they were and helped some to avoid anxiety. This involvement was primarily in unions, professional organizations and groups like faculty senate. Luke said, “I also get involved in things. I am a member of faculty senate. I am very involved and active in our union as well.”

Helen also supported faculty involvement in her school’s collective bargaining unit. In addition she talked about her college’s efforts to start a support center for the faculty:

I am very involved in the union. I would think that the union could provide some training and support for teachers who might struggle with this in their classrooms. We are going to start a faculty support center here at our college. This would be virtual support for teachers and also a mentoring program. Information about how to combat this could be provided to teachers.

Connection with other institutions also seemed to be something that thriving college instructors engaged in. Luke said that his supporting four-year university often did not sustain their efforts at the two-year school.

We struggle here with acceptance by [the four-year campus] that is over us. That means some feel a little less secure. We are almost like a college of [the 4 year school] rather than a separate entity—so we are part of them. Yet, they still think of us as a vo-tech or I've heard the term remedial school. That doesn't bother me a bit; but some people get offended.

Classroom Civility

Sixteen of the participants recognized the importance of classroom management and civility. Difficulties in the classroom caused everyone to feel anxious.

Clarence was keenly aware that his subject matter provoked anxiety for students and faculty as well:

Math can bring out the worst in people—you know? Here is the kind of stuff that happens to me: This one student who didn't do well on a test got really mad. He was upset. I told him at a certain point that he was disrupting the class. I didn't confront him directly. I didn't get angry at him. But, he got himself calmed down. My rule is to say something direct and firm and let them calm down. I might say, "this is inappropriate. Let's talk about this later. Do you need to take a leave for awhile 'til you calm down? Usually if I call them by name, that helps calm them down. I don't ever say shut-up; but I am firm. I have been yelled at. At that point, we've reached a point where things are out of hand and it's time for

the student to leave. I've never had a student refuse to leave, fortunately—or deck me. It can be frustrating not to get stuff. I can really understand where students are coming from. I've been mad at professors before—especially when they don't do a good job helping me learn the material. I didn't worry about problems with students—after they were handled, I mean. And, I didn't think about them the next time I went to class. I don't take it home with me either. I have colleagues who let the students get to them—even years later! They say things like, “That student really pissed me off.” When you say things like that it is troublesome. The best math teachers read their classes well enough to know the appropriate level to teach. They are flexible in how they present stuff.”

Charlotte indicted that instructors who were anxious may have problems dealing with student questions:

If some student asks me a question that is blowing my mind at the moment, I just tell them, “You know, I am going to have to think about that.” I mean, I didn't tell them I am a genius or anything, I'm human, man [laughing] and I'll come back to them. But, if I tell them I'm going to get back to them I always do it. I make sure of it. That is one thing I do know about teachers who are apprehensive. They say they will think about the question they can't get; but they don't come back with any explanation. They ignore it. They forget it. But the students don't forget it.”

Lily talked about incivility and its effect on her confidence in the classroom:

Everyone has bad days—teachers and students alike—it’s when one bad day becomes a series of bad days that you know you’ve got a problem. Dealing with incivilities in the classroom can really start to shake your confidence. When you have bad experiences with students—you start to dread that class.

Maria remembered feeling angry toward a disruptive student:

I had this situation with a student once. I remember that I was so angry at this student for messing up my class. I dreaded that class everyday. I didn’t even like preparing to go and teach that class. In fact, I didn’t even like thinking about that class—to be honest.

Alyssa felt apprehensive about cheating and grading presented her with some feelings of anxiety as well:

Cheating drives me crazy. I hate conflict and I hate having to deal with cheaters. Grading kind of affects me in a negative way too. I don’t like it when students challenge me on their grades—or on test questions. I try to be prepared for that.

Occasionally, students with special needs can cause anxiety. Luke recounted an experience with a student who had a severe disability and was not receiving support through the campus disabilities services office:

I’ve not had a lot of problems with this. Once I had a student with Asberger’s syndrome. He was very difficult to deal with and he would not get any help for his problem. He put a lot of stress on me and well, the whole class for that matter. I really tried to deal with it the best way I knew how but I sure hated that class. I

think now that came across...to the students, I mean. They probably knew I hated that guy and dreaded the class.

As he talked, Joshua realized that there were more classroom incivilities than he realized. But, he felt like his easy-going nature helped him not to be too bothered by these small incidents:

I don't really encounter too many problems. Students talking outside of the discussion or getting carried away with too many sidebars [is distracting]. Cell phones are a big annoyance. Once in awhile, you will find a student with a chip on their shoulder that will show some hostility or contempt towards you or the entire class. Students who try to monopolize a discussion are another distraction or annoyance. I guess that I have been pretty lucky, as I am sure that it does happen. If I had one, I would deal with it directly in the best manner that I know how.

Immediacy

Twelve participants talked about immediacy and healthy classroom dynamics.

Jude said:

Having fun allows me to build rapport with students and makes me more accessible. It makes me feel comfortable too. It helps me to cope. I have always been class clown—mostly because I was shy as a kid. Being funny got me good attention and it still does. Look at my shoes! [participant was wearing black high-top Converse tennis shoes with his suit]. I try to do things to draw attention to myself in a humorous non-threatening way. Sometimes I grow my hair out long.

I do things like that. I dress in Elizabethan costumes. I sing. I dance. I make my own credibility that way.

Maria, on the other hand, believed that individuals who were secure in their teaching understood about boundaries. Worrying too much about students or becoming personally involved with them, she thought, could leave faculty vulnerable and might be a source of apprehension in the classroom:

I try to be understanding of our students; but I also set appropriate boundaries.

You can't get emotionally involved with them and start to worry about them all the time. We have a lot of students lacking family support and they often become overwhelmed by the stress of college. Sometimes they glom on to you. They want to be friends. It is important to be patient and flexible and let them know you are there to help them with their studies, but getting personally involved-no.

Joshua's responses echoed those of Maria in that he also felt there should be boundaries with students:

I am not afraid to show my students that I have feelings. My passion and personality come out when I interact with them, regardless of where we are. It is important for me to get to know my students on a personal level, and I try to help them as much as I can in whatever way is necessary. I believe it is important for me to take an interest in all aspects of my student's lives, but of course, I have to remain detached to some degree. Because of all the demographics at this institution, many of my students are dealing with jobs, kids, relationships, health, etc. All of these factors affect how the students cope with what happens in the

classroom, so I think it is important to have some idea of what is going on in their lives and to let them know you care.

Jude also supported the idea of healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries with students:

I am wary of the student who is always indicating that I am just the greatest teacher and who starts to hang around all the time. Sometimes those students are overly needy and they almost—well, I want to say, try to manipulate you or something like that. My ego is big and I love to hear good things; but, that sends up some red flags for me.

Clarence felt like teachers who were not anxious in the classroom could handle being stumped by a student and would always be respectful:

I know what a good teacher does and what a good teacher doesn't do when they are stumped...a good teacher will handle things well...if they are stumped, I mean. If I don't know I can always find out about it. Bad math teachers never get back to the person. They never give the answer or acknowledge the person is right. They are arrogant about it. I don't do that. I get back to them if I don't know it.

Jude talked about being a “cooperator versus a competitor”:

I prefer to avoid getting into power struggles with students. If a student falls asleep in class, that doesn't bother me—his problem totally. If it is something disruptive, though, I am not afraid to step in and shut it down.

Reflective Practice

Twelve participants spoke about the importance of philosophizing and being reflective about teaching. Understanding one's own personal philosophies and spending time revisiting them was a common theme. Joshua seemed very clear about his ideas about teaching and learning:

I subscribe to the philosophy that those who never really grow up are more readily adaptive to difficult situations. I remain steadfastly fascinated by this world and the humans who populate it. Just observing life is what I do. Oh, the art of teaching! If I could use a Latin phrase, it would be "Sui generis", one of a kind, but I don't mean that in an egomaniacal way. I just do things differently. I have not spent a lot of time in the classrooms of my colleagues, but I am sure they are just as good or more likely better at what they do than I might be. I have managed to cultivate my own style which incorporates the subjects that I teach with my personality, good thing I don't teach calculus (laughs). I bet that I could find a way to make that interesting if I had to.

Joshua continued in an attempt to clarify his role:

The teacher role is to facilitate student learning and thinking. To help my students in the lifelong learning process and to help them develop further interests in the subjects that I teach, i.e., critical thinking, and being willing to explore ideas contrary to ones own beliefs, etc.

Charlotte also had some insights into philosophizing:

Think about who you are. The more I think about it, I think I might tell new teachers to take time to look back at their teachers. Think about the ones they were most comfortable with. Try to use those teachers as a model. You know, I try to teach like the best teachers I ever had.

Elizabeth understood her beliefs about students entering her classes:

Students need to come to your classes well prepared with the proper prerequisites. We are establishing appropriate math prerequisites for our chemistry. It has made teaching so much easier. It has taken a lot off my shoulders. I really think that could contribute to a teacher's level of apprehension in the classroom.

Participants' Coping Strategies

Jude spoke about some tactics that he used to overcome anxiety early in his career:

In college, in a speech class, I was a wreck. I hated it. In graduate school, as I TA [teaching assistant] my first quarter teaching I can remember sitting on this table in front of the room, trying to look cool and my legs just swinging back and forth. A student said it was distracting and also told me I didn't look up at the class much but looked at my teaching notes. I took that advice to heart and started to stand up and walk around. I just pretended I was brave—you know? I got involved in Toastmasters. I started to tell myself every day that I didn't care what others thought of me. I worked hard to let that go. I got stronger from there. But, I must tell you, I consciously had to work on it.

Annabelle was the only participant who had never experienced apprehension in the classroom and did not know of any colleagues who may have struggled with the phenomenon. She stated:

I have never had this [teaching anxiety]. I think anyone who gets something like that should not be a teacher. Why would they bother? If they aren't able to get up in front of people, forget it.

Jude said this about coping with the apprehension that accompanied grading:

I am definitely too soft on the grading. I understand the effect of the grade on the student and I don't want to shake their confidence in themselves. I especially sweat over those who are real borderline. I do use rubrics, though and that has helped me with my grading.

Joshua pointed to enthusiasm and the assumption of a humorous and fun-loving persona as a way to work through some of his feelings of nervousness and apprehension:

[Teaching] is a euphoric feeling, a natural high for me. I love it, and showing my enthusiasm and passion enables me to reach my students and hopefully, it helps them to learn. I like to use humor whenever I can, it allows me to get to know my audience and maintain control over the classroom by creating a relaxed learning environment. With regard to "performance", I could quote Shakespeare by saying, "the play's the thing". I perform for every class, and the subject is the play and I act like I am enjoying myself, because I am. I get an emotional surge from teaching because I think that teaching is rewarding and fun.

After Charlotte had shared her story of a teaching assistant who she felt had really struggled with teaching anxiety, I asked her if this person was still teaching. She indicated that he was not and further explained how she felt he could have enjoyed a productive teaching career with some formal training and support. She said:

After that TA left, ironically, they actually created a program in the math department. They now pair new people with others who have taught and have good evaluations. I think it was just a coincidence, although this guy couldn't have got good evals [evaluations from students]. That is doubly sad. Maybe he could've benefited from something like that and kept on teaching.

Elizabeth pointed out that working with colleagues alleviated some anxiety that she had in regard to evaluating her students:

I had my science students doing these papers. When it came time to grade them—the first year—I had no idea where to start. I went to an English teacher and she told me about rubrics. When I started using the rubric for the papers, I was much less anxious about grading. I have worked hard to refine rubrics for my written work and I would not teach without them.

Charlotte's thoughts on confidence and how that had helped her cope came through when she said:

You don't want students to sense that you are not confident—especially in math, because people are anxious about math. They have a lot of apprehension about the math and if they feel you are not confident and they can't get comfortable, that isn't too good. You have to come into the classroom with confidence. You have

to relay that to your students. If you don't have confidence in yourself, it shows and the students don't respect that.

Connie had this to say about tactics she used to help her with the anxiety that resulted from dealing with discourteousness:

Disrespectful students can be troublesome. Leaving early and being rude, etc...I've not had too much trouble with that myself; but, a few of my co-workers have struggled in this area. What I do is make it really clear what I expect—from the very beginning. I put it in my syllabus. Some of my co-workers started to do this too and since we are a program, we are thinking about all doing this—making it uniform. It seems to really help. Then, if you have problems, everyone knows the course of action that should be taken. There is no guess work. I think that really takes the edge of situations along these lines.

Connie commented that she felt well supported in the area of formal training and professional development. This was true for her institution as well as her professional organizations. Her faculty was also encouraged to pursue further education that combined their field of expertise with education:

We have a center for excellence in teaching. They are very creative and innovative and offer us lots of trainings and support. We do lots of trainings about all kinds of things. We just had one on how to be better advisors and there was another one on instructional design and how to evaluate our students in creative ways. Some of the instructors here have been working on their masters

degrees in nursing education. We also have some good training available through the National League for Nursing.

Clarence had some thoughts about how spending time being insightful had helped him feel more self-assured:

I've learned to go to them [students] more often for feedback. Much more than I did as a new teacher. After you get more experience you learn how to interact with your class more—rather than just lecture. It comes with practice, as you get more experience and talk to your fellow teachers and work your way through the things that flopped—like we talked about before.

Joshua indicated that although he did not know all the answers, he never would be rude or condescending to students who might know things he did not:

I have [been asked questions I do not know] many times in my life, relating back to my time in politics. It [politics] relates a lot to teaching. We can't be expected to have a textbook full of facts in our heads all the time, and I am not embarrassed to say that I don't have an answer. I sometimes will turn this kind of a situation into an assignment and have the entire class research the answer. I don't consider it a blow to my ego, after all, as James Thurber once said, "It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers."

Table 1. Confirmation of Themes - Sources and Effects of Teaching Anxiety

<u>Category</u>	<u>Participants Confirming</u>
Preparation	15
Confidence	13
Instructional Methodology	10
Collaboration with Colleagues	11
Classroom Incivility	16
Immediacy	12
<u>Reflective Practice</u>	<u>12</u>

Two Special Situations

Virginia and Olivia were two participants who, in addition to contributing to the study by consenting to an interview, presented with some out of the ordinary circumstances. Virginia shared that she experienced a diagnosed anxiety disorder and was on medication to help her to deal with panic attacks. Olivia endured what she characterized as severe stage fright and performance anxiety and yet taught college as an adjunct instructor. She was not on medication; however, over the years had dealt with her performance anxiety during a variety of counseling sessions and self-administrable procedures. In fact, Olivia's primary career was that of a mental health counselor and she indicated that she was constantly working her fretfulness.

Talking to both Virginia and Olivia about their situations helped me better understand teaching anxiety from the perspective of someone who experienced an anxiety disorder and performance anxiety respectively. I wondered what kind of

perceptions of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety that they might have. Would they think differently about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety? More specifically, I was curious as to how someone who was generally anxious and someone who experienced performance anxiety could actually perform in the classroom in front of a group of people?

When asked about apprehension in relation to her teaching, Virginia had this to say:

[Laughter] You know, I guess it does seem funny...someone who is anxious being a teacher and getting up in front of people all the time. But, teaching isn't what *makes* me anxious. And, people don't *make* me anxious. I am a people person and an extravert. Does that make sense? If it were *causing* my anxiety, I really honestly couldn't do it day after day, I'm afraid. I am just generally anxious—it is in my nature and my brain chemistry—my personality. It is a medical condition that I have. I worry a lot. I usually think the worst. I am impulsive. I sometimes have problems focusing my attention on things and I get panic attacks sometimes. My panic attacks usually come out of the blue and I've never had one at work or in class. And my work doesn't trigger them. That doesn't have to do with my work in the classroom. So, with what you've said about this teaching anxiety, I must say that I don't get nervous about teaching or about getting ready to teach a class.

When asked what about teaching caused apprehension for her, Virginia responded:

Well, I am most worried when I am not ready for or when I don't have things graded for students. If I go into class and feel like I have to wing it, then that is not good for me. But, you know, on the other hand, sometimes those are the best days –if it goes well [Laughter].

Olivia commented about her experiences in the classroom:

The thing that helps me the most is good planning and preparation. If I can structure things so that I know what will happen, I am very happy. Now, I realize that is not always possible. Like, if you were to come in and observe me and just drop in, well, that would be hard. If I knew you were coming, I'd be anxious; but, I would know you and know you were going to be there and be OK. Really, there isn't anything I can think of that a student could do that would really cause me problems. I don't like it when they are, you know, rude...or if I think they aren't interested or don't like the class or something like that.

When probed for more information on how she counteracted her apprehension,

Olivia further illustrated:

As I said, I am organized and I use very detailed lecture notes that I could even read if things got bad. So far, I've never had to read a lecture note, but, if I have them, I feel very secure. I also make sure that I tell myself before class that it will be a good one. I tell myself that and I feel better. I use a lot of what you might call self-affirming statements. I really do. And, they help me. I do that automatically and don't even realize I do it. That helps me to always remember to

tap into my confidence. I think I am a confident person in general; I just do get a little stressed without planning and structure.

Unexpected Results

Five of the seventeen, or 29 percent of the participants refused to allow their interviews to be audio-tape recorded. Some of the comments made regarding taping follow below. To assure that no identifying information be suggested not even pseudonyms will be listed for the participants who chose not to be audio-taped.

I don't like the way I sound on a tape. Plus- I won't feel good knowing there is some tape of me out there somewhere talking to a stranger about my teaching. I don't know...I just don't feel good about that – you know? Once something is on tape, even though I know you'll protect my privacy—I just feel like that it could come back to haunt me.

Another participant said, “Look, I just met you [laughter]. I have to get to know you a little better first [Laughter]. Seriously, though, if it's OK, I prefer not to be taped.”

A third indicated that he did not even like tape recorders in class.

Tape recorders make me nervous. They make me feel like I am being monitored. I don't like the idea of students having tapes of my classes. Do they make fun of me? [Laughter] I just don't know. No tape, please. Can you just take notes or whatever?

Another subject asked, “Oh, do I have to be taped? If I have to be taped I don't really want to do this.”

One of the interviews was very different from all of the others. This participant's interview lasted only fifteen minutes. She informed the researcher that under no circumstances did she believe that an anxious college instructor should be teaching. She had never experienced any apprehension in the classroom and denied having bad days. She did not know of any colleagues who had experienced apprehension in the classroom either. The researcher asked for clarification, "You've not had a bad day in the classroom?" Her response to the probe:

No. I have not. I have never had a bad day—from the time I was a TA (graduate teaching assistant) at [Major U.S. University] to now. None [sic] unless I was sick or something like that or didn't sleep well.

Bernstein (1983) proposed that shame and denial might play a significant role in fostering teaching anxiety. The rationale is that college instructors, experts in their disciplines, should not struggle in the classroom. For this reason, it is proposed that many college faculty members never seek support or assistance for teaching anxiety. The behavior and comments noted in relation to the tape recording of the interviews in this particular study suggest that perhaps some of these participants were either in denial or felt some degree of shame in relation to teaching anxiety. At the very least, the disproportionate number of refusals to be taped might imply some level of discomfort with a college instructor experiencing apprehension in the classroom.

Summary of Answers to the Research Questions

Central Research Question

The aim of this study was to explore two-year college faculty members' perceptions regarding the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. The central research question proposed was: What do two-year college faculty members perceive as the sources and effects of teaching anxiety? Three subquestions further illuminated the course of the investigation.

Subquestion 1

How do participants describe their own or their colleagues' experiences with teaching anxiety? All of the participants had some awareness of the phenomenon of teaching anxiety and 16 of them related anecdotal information regarding incidents of personal and/or colleague experiences with teaching anxiety. One indicated that she felt that a college teacher with teaching anxiety should not teach. The sources of teaching anxiety were described as a lack of preparation; a low level of confidence; a lack of formal training in instructional methodology; feeling disconnected; unhealthy classroom dynamics and incivility, and a lack of time to devote to reflective practice. Descriptions are summarized below:

Lack of Preparation

- Inadequate time spent preparing for class
- Not feeling well prepared for class
- No rehearsal of course delivery
- Disorganization
- Uncertainty – not knowing an answer to a student's question

- Poor planning
- Being “stumped”
- Teaching outside of one’s area of expertise

Confidence

- Experimentation with new methodology
- Personal shyness
- Class size – large or small classes create anxiety
- Preference working individually with students
- Student evaluation of teaching
- Professional evaluation of teaching
- Meeting a class for the first time
- Difficulties with public speaking

Formal Training in Instructional Methodology

- Evaluating student work
- Teaching a new class for the first time
- Teaching at the college level for the first time
- Lack of understanding of student differences
- No understanding of the best way to present certain topics
- Lack of formal training in instructional methodology
- Expertise not balanced with formal training in instructional methodology
- Lack of time to increase knowledge and/or update in discipline area
- Limited access to the literature on college teaching and learning
- No program/center to support excellence in college teaching and learning

Feeling Disconnected

- No sense of community within departments or disciplines
- Approaching colleagues with questions about teaching
- Few occasions to meet with colleagues to discuss discipline specific issues
- Infrequent opportunities to process classroom issues with colleagues
- Limited chances to discuss teaching and learning with colleagues
- No mentoring for new faculty members
- Infrequent casual interactions with colleagues
- Not feeling respected by four-year colleagues
- Too much autonomy – faculty responsible for their own teaching and learning
- Few opportunities to work in partnership with colleagues from other institutions

Classroom Dynamics and Incivility

- Getting to know new students during the first few weeks of class
- Not making expectations clear to students
- Not understanding the demographics of the student body
- Dealings with students with disabilities and special needs
- No sense of fun in the classroom
- Classroom does not feel safe
- Negative attitude toward students
- Perceived disrespect from students
- Students feeling anxiety about the subject matter (i.e. math anxiety)
- Students not having a positive attitude toward the subject matter
- Discipline problems at the college level

The Reflective Practitioner

- No time to philosophize or reflect about teaching
- Separation of teacher from subject matter
- Inability to be reflective about teaching

Subquestion 2

What do the participants understand about both the immediate and long-term effects of teaching anxiety? Descriptions of participants' understandings of effects of teaching anxiety are summarized below:

Immediate Effects

- Dread of the class as class time approaches
- Frequent absences or missed classes
- Rumination about course material
- Frequent worry about teaching mechanics
- First-day jitters
- Trepidation in dealing with students with special needs
- Lack of confidence in ability to evaluate students' work
- Falling behind on grading
- Apprehension standing in front of the classroom

- Worry about certain questions being asked by students
- Difficulty deviating from the schedule or plan
- Fear of being stumped by students
- Worry about making mistakes
- Fear of professional and/or student evaluation
- Feeling stupid
- Quitting teaching
- Apprehension about being liked or accepted by students
- Concern that students do not like the class or subject matter
- Nervousness about initiating conversations about teaching and problems in the classroom
- Embarrassed to ask questions about teaching

Long-Term Effects

- Lack of motivation to prepare for class
- Leaving the teaching profession – for other professions or jobs in administration
- Health Problems – high blood pressure
- Mental health disorders – depression, addiction, anxiety disorders
- Deterioration of self-esteem
- Family problems
- Feeling disheartened
- Difficulties sleeping – dreaming about teaching and nightmares about teaching
- Concern that students might accuse the instructor of discrimination
- Worry about student complaints
- Formation of a special teaching persona – not comfortable being oneself when teaching
- Avoidance of students
- Avoidance of experimenting with new instructional methodology
- Detachment from students
- Detachment from colleagues
- Failure to become involved with professional associations and/or unions, etc. - apathy
- Disconnection from other institutions or community organizations
- Feeling superior to students
- Displays of condescension – to students and colleagues
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with students
- Inability to accept constructive feedback from students or colleagues

Subquestion 3

How do participants cope with teaching anxiety if they experience (d) it? Responses regarding coping strategies were imbedded in the comments of all 17 participants of the study. The reader may have noted the entrenchment of comments about coping strategies as he or she perused the summary of the themes identified. In this section, I will summarize the more palpable methods of coping with teaching anxiety that were cited by the participants. They parallel the common themes that emerged from the data gathered and are summarized as follows:

Preparing for Class

- Prepare for lectures and presentations
- Rehearse lectures and presentations
- Use Power Point presentations for organization
- Organize course lectures and presentations- include logistics in notes
- Think through complicated problems ahead of time
- Strategize about potential problems ahead of time

Confidence

- Participate in Toastmasters – Public Speaking Clubs
- Visualize Success
- Exude Confidence
- Act like a teacher
- Recognize anxiety in students
- Establish regular schedule of student feedback
- Realize there is no way to know everything

Formal Training in Instructional Methodology

- Train in new methodology before implementation
- Use college center for teaching excellence – if available
- Seek assistance when developing new courses
- Participate in training opportunities
- Train in the area of student development
- Read about college teaching

Feeling Disconnected

- Ask questions of colleagues – in and out of discipline
- Participate in community building activities in and out of department
- Participate in mentoring programs
- Network with colleagues from other institutions
- Welcome new colleagues and assist as necessary

Classroom Dynamics and Incivility

- Work to establish appropriate boundaries with students
- Get back to students when they ask questions
- Clarify expectations with students
- Seek training on students with exceptionalities
- Use humor and have fun in the classroom – as appropriate
- Create a positive, safe atmosphere
- Deal with student anxiety about subject matter (i.e. math)
- Be proactive with disruptions and incivility

The Reflective Practitioner

- Spend time thinking about teaching
- Seek training on different philosophical theory
- Talk about teaching
- Keep journal
- Accept feedback from students

Significance of the Results

This study is particularly relevant because it contributes to the foundational knowledge of teaching anxiety among two year college faculty by allowing them to reflect upon their perceptions about the origins of its sources and effects. In addition, the data have suggested a grounded theory about those origins with a resulting conceptual model. Since no qualitative studies addressing individual faculty members' experiences with teaching anxiety were located; these data can contribute by presenting a basis for

further research into the phenomenon. Most importantly, it appears that teaching anxiety is something that can be taken in hand and that coping strategies might be devised to help college educators resolve it. The resultant conceptual model presented in chapter five serves as a foundation for further studies.

Conclusion

During the course of the data analyses, supported ideas about numerous common themes emerged as theory was grounded about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. The results of this study allow for a more in-depth picture of participants' understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety and led to the development of a conceptual model. In the following chapter, implications for this study will be discussed in further detail and a summary of the answers to the research questions will be reviewed. Moreover, the conceptual model of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety based upon the emergent themes will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Teaching anxiety exists for some college faculty members (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Fish & Fraser, 2001; Gardner & Leak, 1994, Bernstein, 1983). Fish and Fraser (2001) found that even veteran college faculty with prestigious teaching awards to their credit sometimes felt uneasy while teaching. If this uneasiness becomes persistent, it can manifest as a specific form of anxiety identified as teaching anxiety. Teaching anxiety poses a threat to college teaching effectiveness by causing a myriad of difficulties in the classroom (Bernstein, 1983). Despite this, no studies were found analyzing the depth of understanding college faculty have regarding its sources, effects and coping strategies. Furthermore, research indicated that teaching anxiety is not the type of instructional methodology oriented issue for which most college faculty members sought support or assistance—even if it came from a mentor or trusted colleague (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2002; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983).

Because of its potential threat to teaching careers, college faculty members require in-depth understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. Moreover, there is a call for a conceptual model to further illuminate those sources and effects. In an effort to suggest theory, this study employed the grounded theory tradition of qualitative inquiry as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The participants' responses to one-on-one semi-structured interview questions regarding their perceptions of the sources and

effects of teaching anxiety were coded and categorized. As a result, a foundational conceptual model emerged.

This chapter interprets the results based upon a summary of the findings and relates them to the research questions by securing them to the original review of the relevant literature. This is accomplished through an exploration of the themes that emerged from the original data gathered. Conclusions are presented and implications suggested regarding the results. Significance, weaknesses in the data and recommendations for further research conclude the chapter.

Participants' Awareness of Teaching Anxiety

As reported in the previous chapter, all of the 17 participants in this study possessed an awareness of teaching anxiety—either as a term or a phenomenon. Every one of the sixteen participants who related anecdotal information acknowledging teaching anxiety in themselves or a colleague assumed that teaching anxiety was situational in nature and inherent to teaching college classes. In other words, as originally proposed by Gardner and Leak (1994) teaching anxiety was not believed to be a personality trait. Rather, it was a state that might well be resolved through awareness and the use of self-administrable coping strategies. Moreover, these participants remembered coping strategies that had either worked for them or for a colleague. And, they actively brainstormed ideas they thought might be helpful in overcoming teaching anxiety.

In addition to affirming that teaching anxiety had caused them to feel increased levels of tension at some point in their careers, statements by all but one of the

participants of this study indicated teaching anxiety could be an antecedent to occupational stress. They perceived a constant state of apprehension could, over time, lead to a variety of difficulties. Alyssa even supposed that an episode of situational teaching anxiety had contributed to her diagnosis of high blood pressure during a semester when she was struggling with two of her classes. Lewallen, Crane, Letvak, Jones and Hu (2003, p. 258) had this to say about the inevitability of stress for college faculty:

...[s]tress is inherent in the faculty role, for those new to the academy and even for those experienced faculty who are assuming a new position. Although stress is individualized, situational, and often self-imposed, many factors contribute.

Experience in the classroom seemed to be a contributing factor to teaching anxiety. Seven participants indicated they often felt teaching anxiety was stronger earlier on in their careers. As Fish and Fraser (2001) discovered in a survey of university faculty in Australia, senior faculty reported less teaching anxiety and coping strategies suggested were geared toward the new faculty members. Mentoring was also reported as a way for confident faculty to collaborate with novice faculty who were perceived as more vulnerable to teaching anxiety (Fish & Fraser, 2001). One concern was expressed in regard to mentoring a faculty member who might be experiencing teaching anxiety. Fish and Fraser (2001) found that individuals experiencing teaching anxiety often did not want to talk about their experiences for fear that they would be “found out”. Bobrick (1999, p. 1) used that very phrase when she shared the following thoughts about teaching anxiety:

It is more than dread of the new academic year, more than the realization that a summer of research and relaxation is over. It is the fear felt by professors old and young that they cannot teach, and that this time they will be found out. Some never experience the anxiety, some just claim they don't. Some have it only at the beginning of their careers. Some, no matter how distinguished, suffer throughout their working lives.

Discussion of the Common Themes

Preparation

Preparing a college course involves creating a foundation based upon the course objectives. In an effective course, all effort and student work should originate from that base (McKeachie, 2006). The intensity of the preparation and planning phase is determined by the course; the needs of the students; the level of knowledge of the instructor; the teaching methodologies used, and his or her individual philosophy of teaching and learning (McKeachie, 2006). Typically, however, preparation to deliver a college course takes a great deal of time and attention. This is especially true if the course is being taught for the first time (McKeachie, 2006).

The 15 participants in this study who perceived themselves as well prepared to teach appeared to display the most self-assurance about their teaching. Preparation also offered the participants the most security in what they were doing in the classroom. Auerbach (1981, p. 108) actually urged public speakers to *over* prepare and had this to

say, “Anyone who is unsure of the material would be nervous. The more confidence you have in your presentation the more confidence you will have in yourself.”

When Ameen, Guffey and Jackson (2002, p. 19) asked accounting professors what made them feel confident in the classroom, the number one response was, “being prepared and having a strong grasp of the material.”

Conversely, because of time constraints and the interference of other duties, course preparation was also a significant cause of pressure for ten of the participants in this study. One indicated that early in her teaching career, she had written out the lecture notes verbatim including prompts to walk around the room; to turn on the overhead projector, and to initiate certain questions and activities during the class period. This clearly took a great deal of time and energy and she reported she often felt overwhelmed because of her over-attention to the details of each class.

This sentiment was supported by a study by Magnuson (2002, p. 313), who determined that “course design and preparation was cited as a source of stress for college teachers.” Fish and Fraser (2001) suggested this sort of stress was caused by the ever-increasing burden of non-teaching related duties that bombard college faculty on a regular basis. This particular stressor would be identified as a workload issue and the operational definition of teaching anxiety used for the purpose of this study excludes the stresses of workload. However, since it was perceived by four of the participants’ in this study as something that affected their ability to adequately prepare, it is worth mentioning here as an influence upon the experience of teaching anxiety. In other words, it appears that both under and over preparation contribute to teaching anxiety.

Osborn and Osborn (2005) implied that establishing credibility is one of the most critical factors leading to a successful public presentation. Inadequately prepared college instructors can be viewed by their students as uncaring and their credibility is often doubted. If what Bernstein (1983) proposed is true, then negative student perceptions result in an atmosphere subconsciously perceived by the instructor as unfriendly—perhaps even hostile. These subconscious perceptions would then contribute to the negative teaching persona that perpetuates teaching anxiety (Bernstein, 1983).

Confidence

Panayiotou and Vrana (2004, p.172) proposed, “If one perceives that one has the ability to meet a behavioral goal, one is likely to put forth the effort to succeed.” The assertion that conscious efforts toward building confidence produce results is well-supported in the literature. Viscott (1996, p. 73) defined confidence as “... [the] belief that you will survive being afraid.” He expanded further by indicating that individuals who lack confidence spend a good majority of their time expecting the worst, or being anxious. Ironically, their anxiety diverts them from thinking about things that really should concern them. He suggested the following ways to deal with anxiety:

- Admit and understand your self-doubts.
- Make a plan
- Initiate that plan
- Do the very thing you fear.
- Expect to be afraid as you do it.

- Do it anyway.
- Keep it going.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) proposed something he described as the state of flow.

“Flow is experienced when people perceive opportunities for action as being evenly matched by their capabilities” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 50). Ideally, then, we perceive neither a state of over-stimulation nor of monotony. Csikszentmihalyi (1975, p. 52) said that individuals can move from anxiety back to flow by “decreasing challenges and/or increasing skills.” This has to be done through an objective redistribution of one’s surroundings.

Just as with preparation; however, too much confidence could be problematic and perhaps be a source of teaching anxiety. Panitz and Panitz (2004, p. 3) believed that some college teachers have over-inflated egos and a need for attention and control. These individuals might feel threatened in the classroom and have more symptoms of teaching anxiety. They put it this way:

Many teachers are wrapped up in their own self importance and enjoy being the center of attention. The class is their stage and it provides them with an opportunity to show off their knowledge and expertise...The egotistical side of teaching must be overcome...

Self-focus was also studied by Kashdam and Roberts (2004). They reported that the more focused on oneself a person is in any given social situation; the more sensitive he will be to negative feedback. In other words, self-focused individuals will center upon

indicators of rejection such as off-putting glances or eye rolls. They tend not to see the good side of experiences and people (Kashdan & Roberts, 2004).

Formal Training in Instructional Methodology

Charlotte had previous experience as a K-12 teacher and had received extensive formal training in instructional methodology. In addition, her master's degree was in math education, so there was further emphasis upon teaching mathematics. Clarence believed that math degrees "compromised" by education courses were a significant problem. It might be interesting to note that Clarence and Charlotte taught in the same math department and often debated this issue.

Although they are experts in their disciplines, neither four- or two-year college teachers receive much formal training in instructional methodology. Remember that Elizabeth was struggling with the evaluation of her students' final written research problems and went to her English faculty colleagues for assistance. They acquainted her with about rubrics. McKeachie (2006) proposed rubrics that provide grading standards facilitate student understanding of requirements and also provide instructors with solid grading criterion that lead to better evaluation of student work. Had Elizabeth known this, she could have avoided two years of struggle and tension around the evaluation of her students' final projects. The use of rubrics is fairly basic and would have most likely been presented to her in a beginning assessment workshop or education course.

This lack of training is contrary to K-12 faculty who undergo significant preparation and training for teaching. Fish and Fraser (2001) reported an increased public demand for effectiveness in public higher education. And, for this reason, it has become

popular to create the appearance that faculty promotion and tenure is based upon excellence in teaching. In reality, however, this is not necessarily the case. This is due in large part to the notion that teaching is not considered a scholarly pursuit akin to research and service (Boyer, 1990). In a Canadian study on college teaching excellence, Samad, Fraser, Fish and Fraser (1991) stated that universally, the majority of universities do not provide the necessary support and formal training in college teaching that is necessary.

Gardner and Leak (1994) surmised that college faculty members are actually more susceptible to occupational stress because they lack the appropriate level of formal preparation for teaching. And, in fact, they believed that this was one of the sources of teaching anxiety in large part because of the increasing demands for accountability of college faculty. Oppenheimer (2004, p. 7) commented that "...scholars tend to assume that it is their scholarship that matters, and that fine teaching will flow necessarily from their knowledge of the subject matter." Seldin (1993) supports this with his assertion that college faculty assume good teaching skills materialize and that good teachers are "born and not made".

Boice (1991) determined that participation in training in instructional methodology had a positive effect on college faculty members' level of self-assurance as well as their ability to manage their time efficiently. As confirmation of that finding, five faculty members in this study talked about how implementing new methodology was very stressful. That being said, it appears that learning new methodologies well alleviates some of the fear associated with change. Lewallen, Crane, Letvak, Jones and Hu (2003, p. 258) addressed this in relation to stress and anxiety:

The myriad of changes now taking place within academic settings also contribute to new faculty stress. One significant change is the shift away from the lecture method of imparting information. Faculty are challenged to alter their traditional views and methods of education in order to incorporate new teaching methodologies. In addition, faculty are expected to adapt their teaching and communication to an interactive, technological approach.

Collaboration with Colleagues

It seemed critical for college faculty to connect with one another and yet there was trepidation about reaching out to colleagues and still being considered a competent teacher. In his study of how novice instructors developed into effective teachers, Boice (1991) concluded that new faculty did not feel well supported by existing faculty in their academic departments. Magnuson (2002, p. 314) also noted that college faculty, especially neophytes often felt disconnected and rarely "...feel safe sharing true feelings for fear of [the] perception I can't handle it [teaching]."

Boice (1991) found the last thing that experienced faculty members talked to new faculty members about was teaching. They were more likely to grumble about administration or engage in chitchat about campus goings-on than offer help with syllabi or course preparation. Experienced faculty simply presumed the new faculty knew what to do in the classroom. Conversely, the new faculty reported they felt wary asking the senior instructors for guidance about their work in the classroom.

Research by Paulsen and Feldman (1995) indicated that campuses that encouraged college teaching excellence were those more likely to provide chances for

faculty members to talk specifically about teaching. Time spent with colleagues and peers discussing college teaching was rated top priority by 88 faculty members at six major universities. More specifically, three major advantages were afforded institutions that concentrated on college teaching. Those advantages were (Paulsen & Feldman, 1995, p. 691):

- improvement of teaching ability;
- increased intellectual stimulation, and
- reduction in the degree of isolation associated with traditional teaching.

Interestingly, in the Paulsen and Feldman (1995) study, when new faculty were questioned further as to how they felt the more experienced teachers could be of more help, they did not think there was much that could be done to help them. In other words, they believed the only way they could become good teachers was to get in the classroom and get the experience under their belts.

Lewallen, Crane, Letvak, Jones and Hu (2003, p. 258) explained the importance of relationships—especially to new faculty:

...The failure to identify the individual needs of new faculty members can also contribute to stress. These may include the need to form relationships, understand the organizational culture, and have a “safe harbor,” or place to share their stressors with others.

Classroom Civility

Classroom incivilities have been thoroughly explored in relation to teaching at the K-12 level, however, little research has been conducted in relation to classroom

disturbances in higher education (Boice, 1996). Just as with teaching anxiety, classroom incivilities are too often denied because at the college level, capable faculty should not have problems with “turmoil” in their classrooms (Boice, 1996). This was illustrated by Avery’s poignant admission that he felt uneasy around female students because of two recent classroom incivilities he had experienced. The incivilities had resulted in student complaints and he indicated these experiences had been quite disappointing to him. He believed that these incidents were on his mind when interacting with female students who might enroll in his typically male dominated courses. In addition, he felt they contributed to what he understood to be teaching anxiety. He indicated that he was extremely relieved to know that his feelings of apprehension were “normal” as he had never shared them until he had participated in this study.

Conversely, when incivility does manifest, it is most often reported as *student* incivility or misbehavior. This view places no responsibility for the origins of classroom incivility with the instructor. In the essay, *Barbarians at the Door*, Bartlett (1993) explained the root of the kinds of classroom incivilities he was observing by describing the changes he was seeing in what he termed the modern college student:

Caught in this web of laxity, indiscriminateness, and materialism, the young, by the time they are ready to enter college, have established within themselves a mental fixity born of fear and resentment of authority, and in its conformist rigidity and intellectual lassitude. The result is the high-tech barbarian: rude, without sympathy for culture, crude in his tastes, raucous in his behavior, enthralled by the

loud pulse of his music and devoted to the accumulation of megabucks and the amassment of the shining baubles of tawdry affluence (p. 308).

Bartlett's (1993) mocking tone is pessimistic and mean-spirited. He offers no hope or solutions. According to Boice (1996), a more appropriate approach to the problem was for researchers to determine causes of classroom incivility that examined all the angles—and all the contributors. A five-year study of students at a large research university identified and ranked the biggest contributors to classroom incivilities ensued and important contributors were recognized. Some of these contributors lie with the student, others with the teacher. They have been documented by Boice (1996, p. 347) as:

1. teachers displaying aloof, distancing mannerisms;
2. teachers discouraging student involvement with fast-paced lectures;
3. students' noisiness and indifference;
4. students coming late and leaving early;
5. students' sarcastic remarks/gestures.

Further correlates were found to be inattentiveness on the part of students; a low frequency of note-taking; a lack of ardor on the part of the instructor; and the instructor being perceived as unwilling to help students (Boice, 1996). The more overt manifestation of all of this might become lectures that moved along at a frenzied pace and students who are lost and overwhelmed. This can lead to students viewing their teacher as ineffectual while teachers see their students as unintelligent or dim-witted.

Classroom incivilities are best handled preventatively versus retroactively (Boice, 1996). In other words, effective college teachers will not allow classroom incivilities to

take root. They are aware of their own teaching behaviors and understand what behaviors to watch for in their students. Most savvy college instructors know that it only takes one “toxic” student to ruin an entire class. Kearney and Plax (1992) proposed there are five to six students in the average college classroom that will resist doing what the instructor asks of them. It is important to note here that Kearney and Plax (1992) also proposed that not all resistance is a bad thing. Sometimes, a certain amount of it is necessary for learning to occur. It is often helpful, for instance, to have a student who will press for answers. Some college instructors do not agree however, and would label such pressing by students as insolence or disrespect.

Instructors experiencing anxiety as a result of incivility can take heart. Boice (1996) proposed that civility in the classroom can be advanced through concentrated efforts on the part of the instructor. As suggested earlier, avoiding incivility provides the best foundation. This can be done through the manifestation of certain “teacher behaviors” (Boice, 1996, p. 367) that radiate openness and encourage involvement. These classroom immediacies allow students to become drawn in and focus on the task at hand-learning (Boice, 1996).

Immediacy

Relationships with students were reported as primary in providing satisfaction and reward to the participants. When they spoke of positive teaching experiences all but one of the participants indicated that it was positive student interaction that added “the delight” to their teaching careers. Immediacy is defined as “...that communication which enhances closeness to another. “Immediacy behaviors reflect a positive attitude on

the part of the sender toward the receiver” (Meharabian, 1969, 214). Immediacy behaviors indicate that a person is accessible. For example, when someone leans forward, makes eye contact, and places herself in close proximity with another, it signals interest and garners trust and intimacy. Conversely, if someone leans back, averts eye contact and attempts to remove herself from the physical space, it signals disinterest and a sense of reserve. Knowing this, it would make sense that immediacy behaviors would be important in promoting excellence in teaching and learning (Sanders & Wiseman, 1990).

Immediacy and the use of prosocial motivators have been determined to be two important factors in the decision of students to resist or comply (Kearney & Plax, 1992). Immediacy, or “...the extent to which the teacher gives off verbal and nonverbal signals of warmth, friendliness and liking (e.g., forward leans, smiles, purposeful gestures and eye contact)...(p. 89)” has been proven to diffuse student incivility in teaching laboratories. Prosocial motivators “...(e.g., “Do you understand?” and “You can do better.”)... (Kearney & Plax, 1992, p. 89) also helped the students to perceive their instructors as those who cared about them and their success. This also increased compliance and decreased the frequency of incivility in the lab setting (Kearney & Plax, 1992). These are all skills that can be taught to teachers—and have been taught to K-12 teachers for years (Boice, 1996).

Reflective Practice

Since teaching is such a demanding profession, educators who do not have an idea of where their philosophical foundations lie can easily become anxious and

discouraged (Eison, 1990). Many do not understand the philosophical approaches or even where to begin the process (Beder, 1989). In addition, most busy educators feel like philosophizing is a waste of precious time and energy or may not be aware of the basic philosophical approaches to college teaching (Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Reflecting on teaching and learning was a luxury for all of the participants in this study. Eison (1990) suggested that the first step in any efforts toward self-confidence in the classroom begin with a philosophical exploration of one's motives. Merriam and Brockett (1997) indicated that it is imperative for educators to philosophize about teaching. Clarifying individual philosophy facilitates decision making and supports more creative and effective communication. Once an individual understands her philosophical roots she becomes more articulate in general (Merriam & Brockett, 1997).

Interrelatedness of the Common Themes

The themes that emerged from the categories identified during the various stages of analysis appeared reciprocal rather than hierarchical in nature. For example, the concepts emerged as sources *and/or* effects of teaching anxiety. Furthermore, the themes themselves, stated in the affirmative, could be used as coping strategies for teaching anxiety. Consequently, teaching anxiety could be a result of or alleviated by amount of preparation; level of confidence; level of formal training in instructional methodology; connection with colleagues; classroom civility; immediacy, and/or ability to be a reflective practitioner.

Confidence, for instance, eluded participants in this study who were under-prepared for class or who did not feel they had adequate formal training in instructional methodology. Reciprocally, those without the ability to reflect upon their teaching struggled with confidence. Participants who felt disconnected from their colleagues had issues with classroom civility and those with a lack of training experienced more problems with classroom dynamics. That being said, in relation to coping with teaching anxiety, one component may require particular focus. Case in point, an instructor who lacks confidence may see improvement in all areas of his teaching if he recognizes and works on his level of preparation. This cycle of impact can be applied to each of the concepts in countless combination.

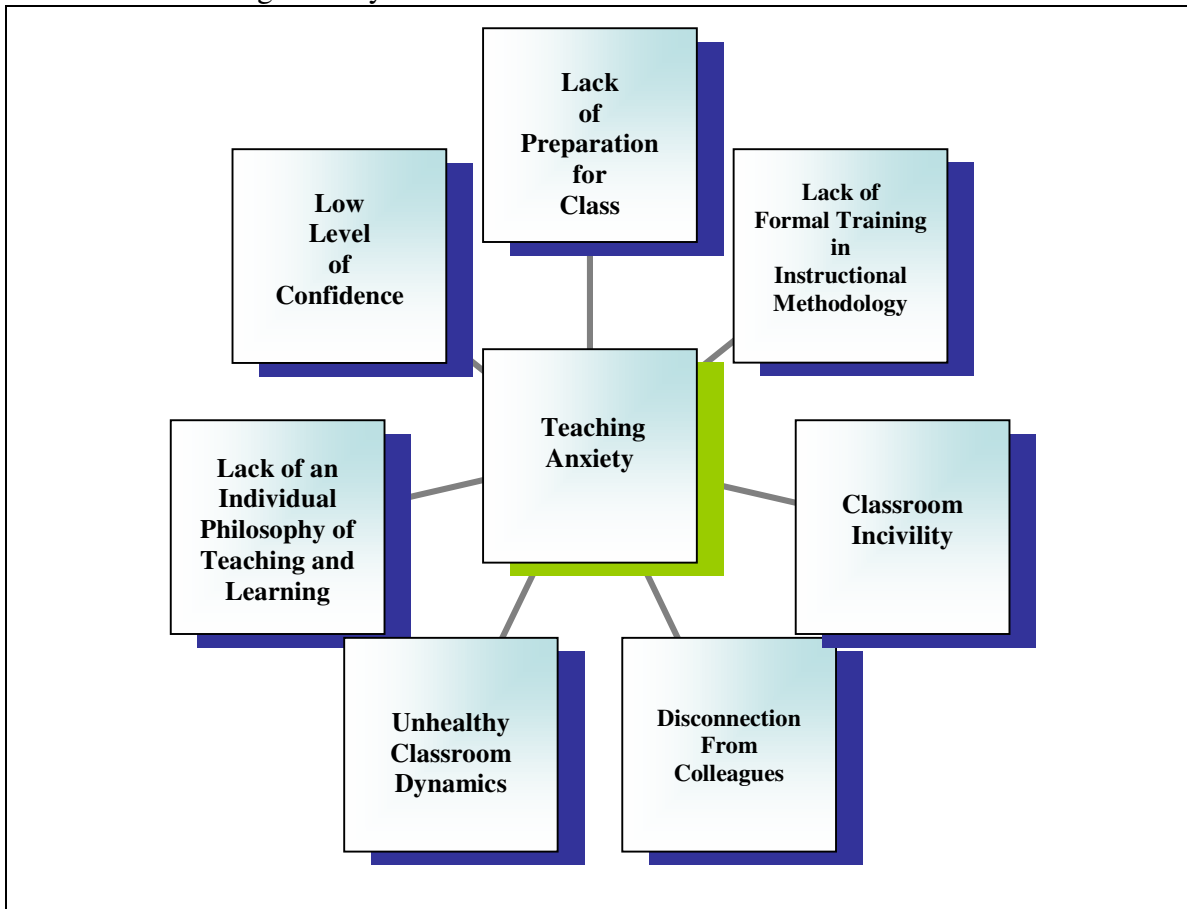
A Conceptual Model of Interrelated Perceptions Concerning
the Sources and Effects of Teaching Anxiety

Nearly every conceivable strategy to cope with anxiety disorders, public speaking anxiety, and stage fright has been tried and hundreds of studies relating to the resolution of these problems have been published (Auerbach, 1981). These strategies range from the basic self-administrable such as skills training, meditation and relaxation to the more esoteric such as psychological immunology, flooding, reactive inhibition, internal feedback and even hypnotism (Auerbach, 1981, p. 106).

The practicality of this study became apparent when, in answer to the central research question, the seven common themes identified through the coding process were incorporated to create a conceptual model illustrating the sources and effects of teaching anxiety (see figure 3). The model presented thematically-based functional dynamic

concepts to support the perspectives of the participants in this study. The circular structure to the model indicates that none of the themes are hierarchically more significant than any of the others.

Figure 3. Conceptual Model – Interrelated Perceptions Concerning the Sources and Effects of Teaching Anxiety



At this juncture, it might be helpful to provide an example of how the conceptual model might actually be used by a college faculty member experiencing teaching anxiety. Let us imagine the following scenario: After attending a brown-bag informational session on teaching anxiety, an instructor realizes that she is struggling somewhat in the

classroom. After reflecting upon student feedback in regard to her most recent evaluations, she uses the conceptual model and determines that she is not spending enough time preparing for the class. She realizes that she may need some assistance and seeks out a colleague who then refers her to the college's center for teaching excellence. There, they provide her with some resources and she attends a mini-workshop on effective teaching practices that focuses on course preparation. In addition, they connect her to a mentor in another department who shares supplementary information on effective course preparation and gives her some suggestions on how to build and deliver coursework more efficiently. This colleague also helps her with her course assessment and evaluation. Over time, she notices that she is feeling better while she is in front of the classroom. And, it seems to her that the students are responding more appropriately as well.

The above example illustrates how the model could be used to help instructors to identify problem areas and generate coping strategies. Theoretically this would allow them to, on their own, develop resistance to teaching anxiety. Ideally, it would help to avoid the type of stressors that might lead to discouragement and ultimately to their choice to leave the teaching profession altogether. Or, it could help to eliminate some of the problems that come with the experience of teaching anxiety altogether. In this way, the model appears to be a potentially valuable instrument that instructors could utilize to develop and grow in their teaching careers.

Evidence of Denial of Teaching Anxiety

Bernstein (1983) proposed that some college faculty deny the existence of teaching anxiety. For the purposes of this study denial is defined as an ego defense mechanism subconsciously invoked to protect individuals from the anxiety that might manifest in response to the reality of their situation(s) (Engler, 2006). Experts have proposed that college teachers do not feel comfortable acknowledging feelings of apprehension in the classroom because it is perceived that college teachers who are experts in their discipline should not experience such feelings. (Ameen, Guffey & Jackson, 2001; Gardner & Leak, 1994; Bernstein, 1983). This denial would also contradict any efforts to seek out assistance for teaching anxiety if it were acknowledged (Bernstein, 1983).

If denial occurs subconsciously, then how is it recognized? The literature review indicated that there was no operational definition of denial in existence at the time of the study (Ortega & Alegria, 2005). No diagnostic criterion exists for denial as it is not identified as a mental disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). So, how might a researcher recognize such a phenomenon? The answer to this question lies in non-verbal behavior and projectional indicators such as slips-of-the-tongue (Ortega & Alegria, 2005).

Eye behavior, gestures, postures and voice all combine to formulate an individual's verbal message and establish credibility (Leathers, 1997). In particular, human beings communicate assurance thorough their eyes. In western cultures...failure to sustain eye contact is the most damaging thing you can do nonverbally if you are

particularly concerned about being perceived as confident (Leathers, 1997, 247). In addition to the eye region, body posture is a key non-verbal indicator. Off-putting postures such as folding the arms over the chest; crossing the legs; strain, or leaning away from someone indicate reserve or lack of interest. Gestures that are open and receptive usually are made away from the body and do not involve crossing the arms and legs. Restlessness is an indication of defensiveness (Leathers, 1997).

Two participants (pseudonyms will not be revealed in an effort to avoid exposing any identifying information) who exhibited negative non-verbal behavior in response to the initial interview questions regarding teaching anxiety could have been projecting denial. However, since there is no operational definition and no means of identifying denial, even rooting denial in nonverbal behavior and projectional indicators is purely speculative.

The first of these participants mentioned that she had a phobia of public speaking but declined to expand when probed for more information. Phobia was her word. She was quite adamant about not speaking to public groups – ever. She said that was comfortable in the classroom but not in public in front of strangers. She also declined to talk about an experience of a colleague she felt had suffered teaching anxiety. She was willing to acknowledge her awareness of the colleague's episode; however, she indicated she was concerned for that individual's privacy and did not want to expound. This concern was honored and the researcher did not pursue the matter any further.

The second participant indicated she believed college teachers who were anxious should simply quit teaching find another career. She was adamant about this conviction

and her interview lasted only 15 minutes. She said that she had never experienced a bad day in the classroom and did not know of any colleagues who had suffered from apprehension in the classroom.

Limitations of the Results

Seventeen two-year college faculty members at colleges of technology in the state of Montana participated in this study over a 6-9 month period of time. I chose two-year faculty because they spend the majority of their time in front of students and preparing for classes. In addition, the college of technology instructors presented a homogenous and relatively accessible group of prospective participants for this study.

Conducting one-on-one partially structured interviews allowed me to gather data. At the outset of the study, I made two initial assumptions. First, I trusted that the participants would be open about their perceptions about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety among two-year college faculty. Second, I believed that a conceptual model would develop as I explored the common themes garnered from the data. The suggested theory should be qualified by those assumptions, the research setting, and the methodology used. In other words, the theory did not imitate the distribution of two year college faculty in the United States. And, the inclusion of a more diverse group of two-year faculty may have provided richer data and perhaps even resulted in a completely different set of themes.

Travel was required to gain access into the field of research. This travel required a great deal of financial resources and time. Because of this, there were limits to how

much time could be spent traveling to secure data. There was one particular institution that was not included in the study because there were not enough participants to warrant a trip to that campus. For that reason, it was not accessed. Along those same lines, there were many potential participants who could not be secured. I can not speculate as to their reasons for not participating. Nor can I speculate as to their perceptions about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety. This would be especially true in the area of denial of teaching anxiety as first proposed by Bernstein (1983).

I would have liked to have enhanced the data through detailed one-on-one interviews with trusted colleagues with whom I had established relationships. Since I wanted to gather the most valid data within the timeframes allotted, I did not pursue this group of participants. Doing so might have resulted in slightly different results.

I did take time to establish rapport with each participant and felt that they had trust in me. I accepted the responses of the participants as truthful; however, it is imperative to remember that the results include only those perceptions the participants were willing to share. There were times when I perceived that non-verbal indicators did not coincide with verbal responses. Since I am a clinical counselor, I had to maintain my positionality and work hard not to analyze participants' responses, but accept them as stated.

Areas for Further Research and Recommendations

Cohn (1979) indicated that the first step in dealing with anxiety is to recognize and label it as such. Theoretically, if an individual faculty member was to understand and

identify teaching anxiety as such, he or she might choose to work toward its resolution using a series of self-administrable coping strategies. This could be done with no professional intervention. This might significantly contribute to the overall effectiveness of two-year college faculty and lead to more fulfilling teaching careers. Auerbach (1981) determined that self-administrable coping strategies worked best for stage fright. Since the literature has established that college teachers do not appear comfortable reaching out to colleagues for help, I believe that this will be the case with teaching anxiety as well. Keeping this in mind could lead to coping strategies that might be presented to college faculty members for their own personal use. These coping strategies could be based upon further individual study of each of the concepts in the model.

Even though it is believed that teaching anxiety is a state versus a personality trait, Mearns and Cain (2003) proposed that there is a gap in the research on the personality characteristics of individual teachers and the relationship of those characteristics with the ability to cope with occupational stress. Further research into the individual personality traits of teachers who experience teaching anxiety could provide great insight into assisting educators and helping them to cope with teaching anxiety proactively.

Fish and Fraser (2001) determined that female faculty experienced more teaching anxiety than did the male faculty. Blix, Cruise, Mitchell and Blix (1994) suggested that there were little existing data on the experience of stress and anxiety in the classroom for female college faculty. Furthermore, it could be that female college instructors require

different types of coping strategies than do males. This should be investigated more thoroughly.

It is important to consider the effects of teaching anxiety on the learner. Understanding how an instructor who experiences teaching anxiety affects his or her students would be an important area to investigate further. Perhaps, as suggested by Bernstein (1983), teaching anxiety affects student-teacher interactions and learning outcomes. Examining teaching anxiety from this angle could contribute further to a better understanding of its sources and effects and how it might be elevated.

Since it may be easier to identify teaching anxiety in a colleague than in oneself; those evaluating teaching effectiveness could also develop programs to assist faculty experiencing teaching anxiety. More could be done to inform faculty of teaching anxiety and its effects on teaching and learning. For example, at the University of Queensland in Australia, the Teaching and Educational Development Institute produced a brochure on coping with teaching anxiety. This brochure was designed primarily for use by newly hired college faculty members. It begins by assuring the faculty member that apprehension on the part of a college teacher is normal. And, it offers several “strategies to overcome nerves” as well as providing “other sources of assistance” on and off their campus. It even offers readings that the instructor can request for further information (University of Queensland, n.d., p. 1). Resources like these, which do not exist in great numbers, could be developed to assist instructors as new hires.

The speculation that denial and shame are associated with teaching anxiety is an additional area that deserves further attention and study. Since individuals are not

consciously aware of denial, it characteristically manifests in non-verbal behaviors or slips of the tongue (Engler, 2006). Denial would not be communicated consciously during the course of a conversation and if confronted about denial, an individual would refute its existence, most likely becoming defensive. So, it would make sense that if an individual were in denial, she would present with palpable non-verbal indicators during a verbal exchange. Leathers (1997, p. 245) reported, “The impact of individuals’ communicative behaviors/cues has been proved to be greater than the impact of their verbal communication in many different interpersonal contexts.”

Conclusion

This study attempted to suggest grounded theory about the sources and effects of teaching anxiety through an exploration of two year college faculty members’ perceptions. Data were acquired through one-on-one interviews with 17 participants. As a result, a conceptual foundational model was discovered through the coding process. The seven component model was based upon the themes identified during the course of the research and might be utilized to provide a foundation for the future development of self-administrable coping strategies for college faculty who experience teaching anxiety. Lack of preparation for class; low level of confidence; lack of formal training in instructional methodology; feeling disconnected from colleagues; classroom incivility, and unhealthy classroom dynamics were the components of the model.

Since experts believe that performance anxiety and stage fright can be resolved most effectively using self-administrable coping strategies, it appears that teaching

anxiety could be handled in the same manner (Conroy & Metzler, 2004; Auerbach, 1981). Using the conceptual model proposed in this study, such strategies could be developed and presented to college faculty in a variety of forums.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Number _____

Date of Interview _____ Time of Interview _____

Subject Name _____

Institution _____

Ask: You have read and signed the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please share a little background information with me...

How many years of experience do you have in higher education?

May I ask your age? _____

_____ M _____ F

What do you teach?

Tell me about your educational background...

Are you tenured? _____Y _____N

When was your last promotion?

How many years have you served in your current position?

In the classroom...we all have our good days and bad days. I am interested in hearing about your experiences with apprehension in relation to preparing for and/or teaching your classes.

To what degree do you currently—or have you ever-- experienced uneasiness in relation to preparing for and/or teaching classes?

IF SUBJECT HAS NOT EXPERIENCED THIS PHENOMENON...

Since you have never experienced this yourself—then, how might you feel about a colleague who experiences this?

(Then skip to questions about colleagues)

IF SUBJECT HAS EXPERIENCED THIS PHENOMENON....

Can you describe what happens/happened? (awkwardness, discomfort, apprehension, uneasiness, nervousness, anxiety) For example...

- How often does/did this occur?
- When does/did it happen – what setting--circumstances?
- How severe is/was it?
- Is there anything specific that contributes/contributed to these feelings (i.e. evaluation, not being prepared, student incivilities, etc.)?

Tell me about how you think this uneasiness affects/affected your experience in the classroom? For instance...

- Does/did it upset you?
- Why-why not?

In your opinion, from where did these feelings originate?

Can you describe what you do/have done to cope with these feelings when they hit you?

What things do you do or have you done in the past that have helped you to feel confident as you prepare for and teach classes?

How do you see apprehension affecting your overall teaching career?

COLLEAGUE QUESTIONS

Have you ever heard any of your colleagues talk about this or do you know anyone else who currently experiences or who has previously experienced apprehension as they prepare for and/or teach classes?

- If so, how did that affect their experience in the classroom?

- Was that person able to cope with his/her discomfort? How?
- How did you/do you feel about this person/these people?

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FOR
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Consent to Participate

Title of Research Study: Teaching Anxiety: A Grounded Theory of Self-Administrable Coping Strategies for Two-Year College Faculty

Teaching anxiety is a specific type of anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities. The purpose of this study is to explore two-year college faculty understanding of teaching anxiety.

My goal is to learn from you. You may choose not to participate; however, if you are interested in participating, I will collect data by conducting an in-depth face-to-face interview with you. This interview may last from 45 minutes to two hours. The specific focus of the interview will be your understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety and its coping strategies. You may choose not to answer any question that might make you uncomfortable and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will do everything possible to protect your identity. For instance, your ideas and direct quotes will not be attributed to you by name. I will be using a pseudonym to assure that your privacy is protected and in all my notes and transcripts you will be identified by number. I may contact you after the interview to have you clarify information that you originally provided. Individuals having access to my notes and transcripts are me, the researcher, and my advisor, Dr. Betsy Palmer at MSU-Bozeman. Final results of the study will be presented to my committee in the form of my doctoral dissertation.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the study—either before participating or at any point during the study. I would enjoy sharing my findings with you after the research is completed. Again, your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant will only be known to me and to my advisor. I will be happy to provide you with any additional information about teaching anxiety that you may be interested in receiving.

The expected benefits associated with your participation in this study are the increase in knowledge on this topic and the opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study.

There are no serious risks associated with this study; however, I understand that talking about teaching anxiety may be embarrassing or uncomfortable. As I stated above, you are not required to answer any questions that might make you uncomfortable.

If you would like further information about the rights of human research subjects, please contact Sheila Hoffler, Director of Compliance, Budget and Special Projects at the Office of the Vice President for Research and Development at University of Montana – Missoula. Her phone number is: (406) 243-4762 or e-mail: Sheila.Hoffland@mso.umt.edu.

Do you give permission to have the interview recorded for transcription purposes only? These tapes will be available only to me and my advisor. After the study, the tapes will be destroyed.

_____ Yes, I consent to be tape recorded _____ No, you may not tape record our interview.

I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconveniences and risks of this study. I agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I may later refuse participation in this research and that I may withdraw from the research at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Heidi L. Pasek
Researcher

(406) 771-4397

hpasek@msugf.edu

APPENDIX C

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FOR
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Consent to Participate

Title of Research Study: Teaching Anxiety: A Grounded Theory of Self-Administrable Coping Strategies for Two-Year College Faculty

Teaching anxiety is a specific type of anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities. The purpose of this study is to explore two-year college faculty understanding of teaching anxiety.

My goal is to learn from you. You may choose not to participate; however, if you are interested in participating, I will collect data by conducting an in-depth face-to-face interview with you. This interview may last from 45 minutes to two hours. The specific focus of the interview will be your understanding of the sources and effects of teaching anxiety and its coping strategies. You may choose not to answer any question that might make you uncomfortable and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I will do everything possible to protect your identity. For instance, your ideas and direct quotes will not be attributed to you by name. I will be using a pseudonym to assure that your privacy is protected and in all my notes and transcripts you will be identified by number. I may contact you after the interview to have you clarify information that you originally provided. Individuals having access to my notes and transcripts are me, the researcher, and my advisor, Dr. Betsy Palmer at MSU-Bozeman. Final results of the study will be presented to my committee in the form of my doctoral dissertation.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the study—either before participating or at any point during the study. I would enjoy sharing my findings with you after the research is completed. Again, your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant will only be known to me and to my advisor. I will be happy to provide you with any additional information about teaching anxiety that you may be interested in receiving.

The expected benefits associated with your participation in this study are the increase in knowledge on this topic and the opportunity to participate in a qualitative research study.

There are no serious risks associated with this study; however, I understand that talking about teaching anxiety may be embarrassing or uncomfortable. As I stated above, you are not required to answer any questions that might make you uncomfortable. Montana State University cannot be held responsible for any risks, inconvenience, discomfort or further management of said risk, inconvenience or discomfort that may occur as a result of your participation in this project.

If you would like further information about the rights of human research subjects, please contact Mark Quinn, Chair of the Montana State University Institutional Review Board, at (406) 994-5721.

Do you give permission to have the interview recorded for transcription purposes only? These tapes will be available only to me and my advisor. After the study, the tapes will be destroyed.

_____ Yes, I consent to be tape recorded

_____ No, you may not tape record our interview.

I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconveniences and risks of this study. I agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I may later refuse participation in this research and that I may withdraw from the research at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signature of Participant

Date

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