

**REDUCING PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENTS: THE EFFECTS OF A COMBINATION ANXIETY REDUCTION
TECHNIQUE ON TRAIT AND STATE ANXIETY**

by

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of a treatment for communication apprehension (CA) was examined in this study. Trait and state anxiety were examined by using community college students enrolled in four sections of a required basic speech communication course. The sample size consisted of 81 students, ranging in ages 17-82. Each student was asked to complete a trait anxiety measure (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-24) during the second class meeting (pre-test) and again on the last day of class (post-test). For the state anxiety measure, students were asked to complete the Speaker Anxiety (SA) Scale immediately after delivering an informative speech at the end of the semester. Two classes served as the treatment group, receiving a 15-minute combination anxiety reduction technique and two classes served as the control group, receiving no treatment.

A significant interaction was found in physiological activation, an important direct manifestation of state anxiety commonly experienced as irregular heart beat, dry mouth, sweaty palms, and feelings of exhaustion. The findings showed that the students in the control group who spoke in the second week had higher anxieties than did the other students.

A dividend of this investigation was the result that supported frequent anecdotal reports from past speech students; namely, that at the conclusion of the basic speech course, students in this study reported a reduction in trait anxiety. Of the other comparisons made, race and maternal encouragement were shown as major influences for the trait of communication apprehension.

Future research should use larger samples of community college students and focus on state anxiety with trait anxiety as a monitor for stability. Treatments might also be expanded to weekly sessions during a major portion of one semester.