What Causes Student Stress?

**Change:** the shift from high school to University is a period that requires effective adapting to meet new demands. Sierpinska, Bobos, and Knipping (2007) show that high school students taking prerequisite University mathematics courses are upset by the fast pace of courses, inefficient learning strategies, and the need to change previously acquired ways of thinking.

**Frustration:** students feel blocked from balancing academic requirements and gaining work experience. Jibeen (2012) explains that low level of frustration tolerance (LFT) is a unique predictor of anxiety and depression in undergraduates. Specifically, endorsing achievement frustration: the belief that achieving high standards should never be blocked.

**Pressure:** expectations from yourself and others. Nicholson, Putwain, Connors, and Hornby-Atkinson (2013) show that undergraduate students who expect lecturers to be responsible for their own learning achieve lower end-of-semester grades.

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References


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Specific Sources of Stress

**Poor Time Management**: Henrietta (2012) shows that poor time management is the single largest contributor of stress in undergraduates. With change, pressure, and frustration, poor time management only exacerbates stress!

**Procrastination**: a specific stressor related to poor time management. As Klassen, Krawchuk, and Rajani (2008) indicate, procrastination is the intentional delay of a task in spite of the awareness of negative outcomes. For many undergraduates, the consequence is not being able to balance academics and work.

Specifically, Klassen et al. (2008) note that low self-efficacy strongly predicts procrastination and involves not believing in one’s ability to carry out actions to successfully complete a task.

**Stress-reduction Approaches**

**Change**: Bienati (2013) states that by offering stress-reduction techniques early in a student’s academic program, the stress of change can be significantly reduced. Don’t delay. Sign up for Ryerson’s workshops today!

**Frustration**: Bienati (2013) notes that group cognitive therapy in a University setting is an effective way of reducing stress by changing maladaptive beliefs and enhancing well-being. Don’t forget, Ryerson has counselling groups!

**Pressure**: Nicholson et al. (2013) show that students need to develop realistic expectations of independent study. Students who do not expect lecturers to be responsible for their academic success and who demonstrate academic confidence achieve higher marks. Undergraduates can raise academic confidence by expecting to be responsible for their own learning, by being confident in studying to achieve higher grades, and by regularly attending classes.

**Decreasing Procrastination to Improve Time Management**

Perrin et al. (2011) indicate that students who study by breaking up their work load throughout the week perform better on tests and quizzes! Instead of trying to study everything the night before the test, try to break up tasks into small pieces throughout the week. This will raise your self-efficacy. Klassen et al. (2008) show that students with stronger academic self-efficacy are less likely to procrastinate.

Mizrachi and Bates (2013) show some techniques that undergraduate students use to organize and manage time: using digital calendars to mark deadlines, writing small daily tasks in smart phones, studying on course websites, and using Facebook or Skype for video studying sessions.

The sooner in your academic program that you face your stress, the more time and self-efficacy you will have in balancing academics and gaining work experience. Take the steps toward your personal growth!

**Ryerson Workshops**

**RU Learning Success Groups**
VIC-B26, 285 Victoria Street
(416) 979-5000 ext. 7350
isc@ryerson.ca
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5PM

**The Writing Centre**
Writing Studio: Mondays 6-7:30PM
LIB 0272G
(416) 979-5000 ext. 7192
writingcentre@ryerson.ca

**Ryerson Counselling Groups**
Centre for Student Development and Counselling
Call (416) 979-5195 to schedule a pre-group interview or go to JOR 07C before the end of the first month of any semester. Types of groups include mindfulness meditation stress reduction groups, relationship labs, worrywart groups, family relationship groups, and lift the depression groups!