

Perspectives on Math Anxiety from the Nontraditional Student on the Community-College Level

John R. Lelko, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom

James Hirstein, University of Montana

Cornelius McKenna, Kishwaukee College

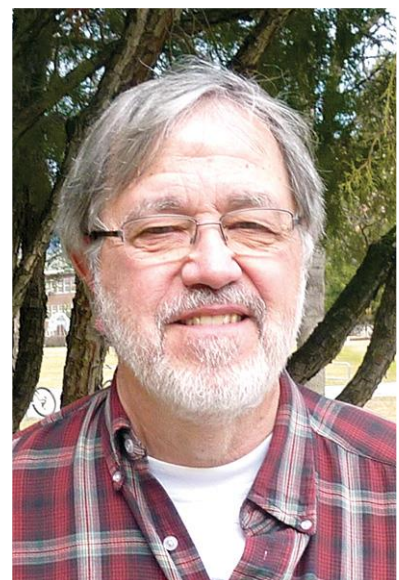
Abstract

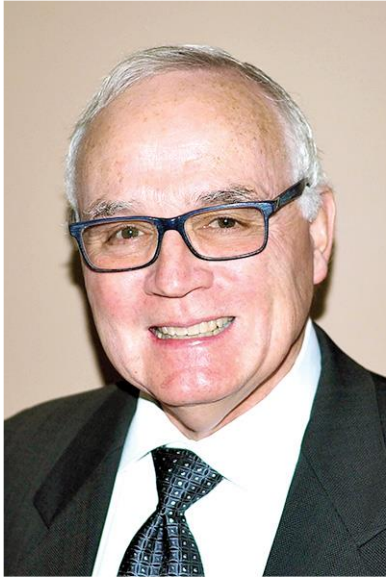
Mathematics anxiety has many dimensions. Investigations into the origins and perceptions of individuals with mathematics anxiety show it is layered. This article lays out what past research has to offer with respect to mathematics anxiety; both in general and with respect to the nontraditional student. Origins of the theory are posed from Lazarus (1974) and Tobias (1993). Other researchers suggest how mathematics anxiety can affect different ages, gender, effects on the biology of the brain. These topics are highlighted and the research is focused on the mathematically anxious, nontraditional student at the two-year college level. To gain the perspective of students coping with mathematics anxiety, participants from a two-year Northwestern community college helped to answer the questions regarding their personal origins with mathematics anxiety, how it specifically affects them, and what they believe can be done to help alleviate this worry in the classroom.



John R. Lelko holds a master's degree in statistics from Illinois State University and a master's degree in mathematics education from the University of Montana. He currently holds a position at Pierce College in Lakewood, WA. His interests are focused on student success in developmental mathematics courses and mathematics anxiety.

James "Jim" Hirstein holds a doctorate from University of Georgia, and has taught courses in mathematics education for 45 years. His interests are applied mathematics, learning theory, and mathematical assessment. He has given about 150 talks on mathematics teaching. He is currently the internal evaluator for an NSF project at the University of Montana encouraging mathematics majors to become teachers.





Cornelius McKenna EdD, is a retired mathematics instructor, Kishwaukee College, Malta, IL. He is a past recipient of the Illinois Mathematics Association of Community Colleges (IMACC) Award for Teaching Excellence.