

ANXIETY
and
ITS ALLEVIATION IN SCHOOL

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My thesis, *Anxiety and Its Alleviation in School*, is a field study emphasizing the development of generalizations from comprehensive data. *Anxiety and Its Alleviation in School* is first an exploration into the meaning and connotation of the term anxiety. The word anxiety is used by many different people to explain and define a rather wide range of phenomena. I defined this term by quoting from many different sources until I felt that I had covered material enough to create a broad sensitivity about the semantic and professional concept of the word.

My exploration brings out the importance of anxiety in the learning process. Intense anxiety causes disorganization of mental processes and, thereby, distorts perception; whereas, complete lack of anxiety results in apathy. Also, anxiety is thought to be conducive to learning simple tasks, but inhibitive to the learning of more complex and abstract problems.

When high-anxiety and low-anxiety children perform equally well on a given task, and an additional stress is added, the highly anxious child's behavior is notably changed, while the child who is at ease with himself is relatively unaffected.

I believe, and try to bring out in this paper, that the knowledge of the meaning of anxiety and its effect on the children in school, is of vital importance to educators.

If we know the causes and effects of this force within a classroom, we can manipulate conditions and materials with new understanding of their impact and worth.

Tone of voice, availability of creative materials, physical conditions, type of task, learning theory, and the interpretation of all these as they affect the children, will be influenced by the knowledge of the meaning of anxiety, its effect on learning, and available means of coping with it.

Realizing that certain conditions causing anxiety may be manipulated by the school to facilitate the learning process, I have offered concrete suggestions (supported and explained by the information in the paper) as to how to lessen stress in (a) a testing situation, (b) in a social situation, (c) in a learning situation, and, (d) in and by an evaluation process.