

**STUDY INVOLVEMENT  
AMONG  
COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**Free e-Book**

*By B. S. Sujendra Prakash*

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Students spend most of their waking life within an institution. How do they utilize their time? What do they expect from the institution? How do they gauge the role of a teacher? Do they have their kind of problems? What do they think about their studies? What kind of affinity do they have toward the subjects they study?

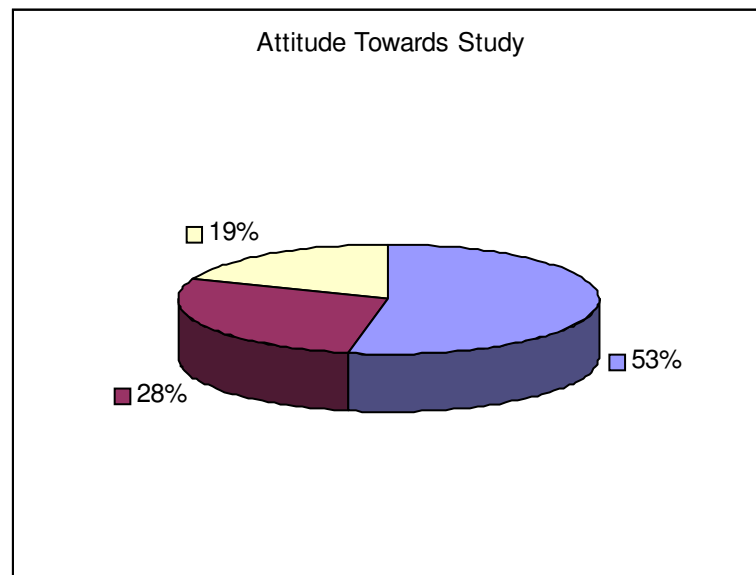
These and other questions are rarely asked and seldom answered by those who are apparently concerned about education. Educational psychologists identify several psychological and social factors contributing to the educational achievement of students. However, when factors like socio-economic status, geographical location, intelligence, personality characteristics, levels of aspiration, etc., are shared commonly by majority of the students, it is imperative to search for and analyze the *individual differences* among the students.

Each pupil joins an institution while being a host to certain unique experiences that cannot be easily bartered away with other students. Under such conditions any semblance of a commonality collates a handful of students as peer-mates. Consequently, one's feelings, thought processes and perceptions are modified and strengthened within the group he or she belongs. These internal aspects have a very important role to play in the effectiveness of the student in a given environment. Hence, there is a greater need to measure and understand the student as an individual than as a roll number studying in a particular course.

One important variable reflecting such internal processes and influencing the efficiency with which a student is capable of handling the stressors in the educational environment is his/her **involvement in studies.**

Study involvement has been found to be positively related to student achievement by several researchers like Eugene and Anderson. It is necessary to determine such involvement among students to understand and guide them better so that they can become mature citizens and are able to face the challenges of life.

Throughout the year the students struggle with the singular aim of doing well in the exams. It is interesting to know how they feel about the examination system. About 53% of the students believe that it matters a lot to know the subject very well. They disagree to engage in any unhealthy practices during the examinations. Contrarily about 28% feel that it is important to score good marks by any means possible. The others are undecided about their attitude towards study.

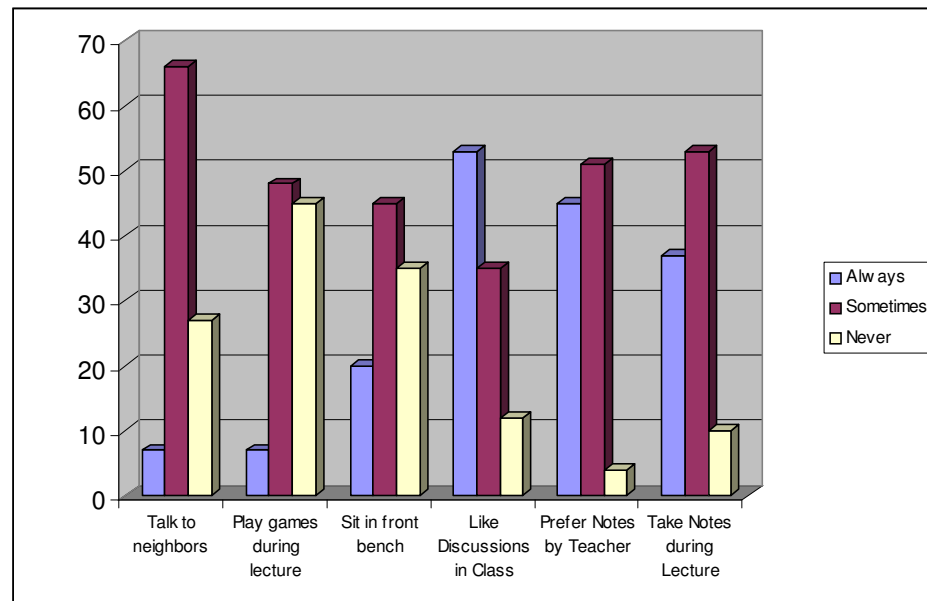


It is surprising that a similar distribution of students is present regarding whether the teacher in a class room should deviate from the syllabus or not. Around 53% of the students say yes, 19% are undecided, and the others prefer the teacher not to wander off in any manner as such. This underlies the need of the students to know more about the world around them. The role of the teacher has never been laid out as clearly as the following statements indicate.

- ✚ A teacher should be friendly (96%)
- ✚ Clarify all doubts (94%)
- ✚ Question the students in the class (79%)
- ✚ Give important questions (76%)
- ✚ Teach from the exam point of view alone (57%) and
- ✚ Tell too many jokes (54%).

Surprisingly, those who want jokes in plenty and those who do not want important questions have been found in the present study to score higher in the exams. Though an apparent contradiction is visible in the students' reports, they are screaming silently to communicate that they cannot ignore the exams but at the same time they need more information than they are presently receiving from their teachers. In addition, it has been found that the more one's movement toward higher education the greater is one's interest in studies.

If the students are so much geared towards knowledge, then what do they do in the class room?



About 27% of the students say they never talk to their neighbours during lecture as against around 7% who engage in this regularly. Probably the high scorers feel that they have very little to listen to in the class as it is these students who engage in side talk during a lecture. About 48% claim that they sometimes play games when the lecture is boring while 45% of the students refrain from such activity. Sitting in the front bench is a necessity for 20% but 35% of the students never would like to venture into the fore-front. The myth of the former being more capable of scoring high marks is exploded because it is the others who do well in the exams. About 12% are typical of receiving one-way information and do not like to engage in subject-related discussions in the class. However, majority of the students (53%) sometimes prefer such lively distractions. The high scorers are found among the other 35% who always like discussions. Unfortunately, the present educational system makes cowards out of students. This fact is obvious when only less than eight percent of them are always willing to ask questions in the class. The same system has also permeated in spoon-feeding where around 45% of the students prefer that the teacher gives them notes.

A meagre four percent seem to be self-sufficient where they would like to make notes by themselves. The solace is in the fact that 37% of the students note down points during the lecture unlike 10% of their friends who prefer to relax one way or the other.

What importance do students give to extra-curricular and co-curricular activities? Television and movies continue to occupy 88% of the students in their spare time though only half of them are very much glued to the screens. Fortunately, around 92% of the students realize the importance of browsing through newspapers and magazines. However, the content in which they are interested is not clearly known. Over 85% of the students are interested in sports and games, almost half of them very much and the others moderately. Most of these students engage in passive play rather than in active participation. Within the college environment where abundant opportunities for social interaction have been created, very few students make use of the facilities. A handful of students, that is, six percent show genuine interest in National Social Service and National Cadet Corps.

It is disheartening to notice that majority of the high scorers is not interested in such personality enhancement. The interest of the students grows stronger from literary activities (12%) to cultural activities (23%) almost proportionately. Participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities also increases as the students grow older but continue to stay below the average requirement.

Do the students know how to study?

*A small section of the students*

Do combined study - 20%

Do not read the same material over and again - 16%

Do not allot specific time for studying - 14%

Always start the study from the beginning - 14%

Study for long duration - 12% and

Lie down and study (11%).

*Most of the students*

Study only one or two subjects in a single sitting - 56%

Always restrict their studies to morning times - 52%

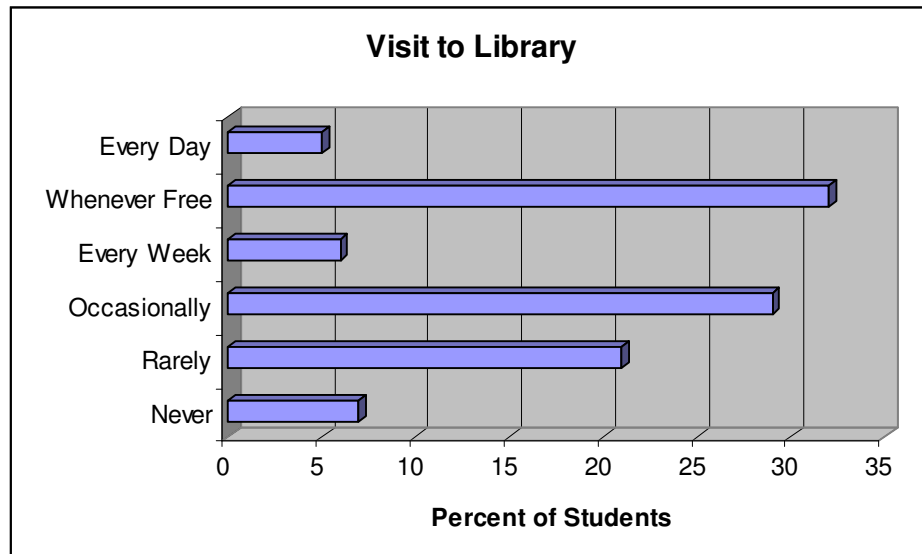
Do not eat or drink while studying - 50%

Do not read loudly while studying - 42% and

Sometimes learn the material by heart - 41%

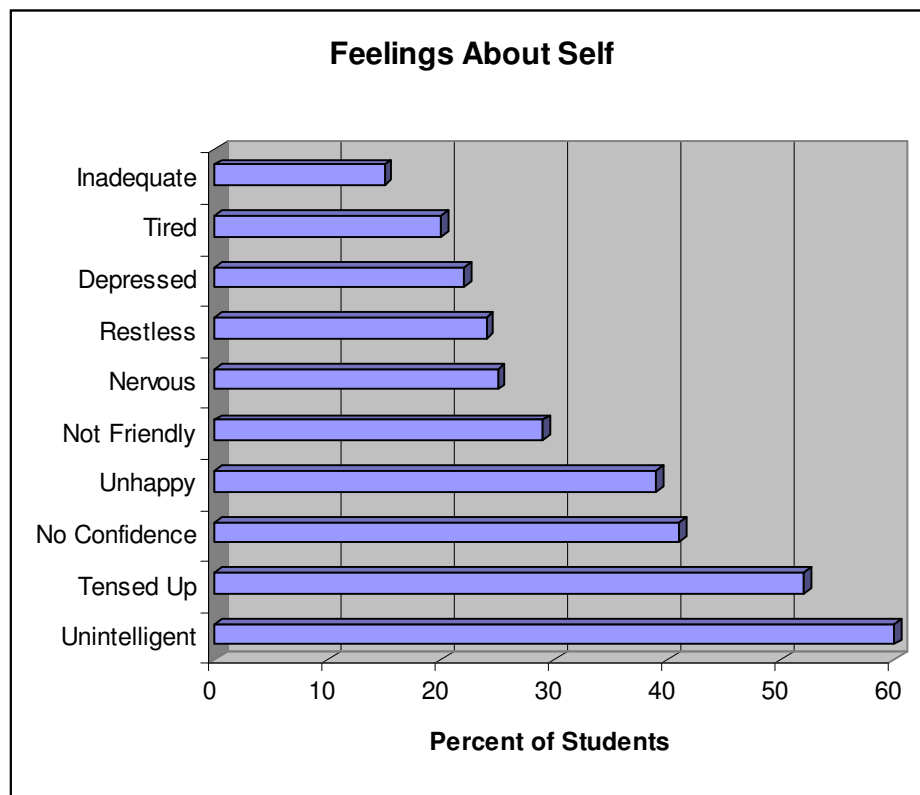
High scorers fall into the category of those who eat or drink while studying; study only one or two subjects in a sitting and do not do combined study. Students, in general, seem to know very little about the better ways to study. The major reason for such ignorance is specifically due to lack of specialized training they have in their school days. Proper study habits are found to be better among pre-university students than the degree and post-graduate students. It appears that such habits become slack as one proceeds toward higher education.

How often do students visit library? About seven percent of the students feel that there is no use in going to the library and hence abstains totally from the world of books. The library is visited rarely by 21%, occasionally by 29%, every week by 6%, whenever they are free by 32%, and every day by 5% of the students. Thus while 56.5% of the students are regular in their reading habits the others are reluctant to touch the books.



How do the students judge their speed of reading when they compare it with that of others? Almost 29% of them reported that their reading speed is slower when compared to their friends. On the other hand, about 23% claimed to have a better speed. However, it is the post-graduates who have better speed than the average expected of the students. A significant positive relationship has been established in the present study between speed reading and performance in the examinations. In other words high scorers read the study material faster than their friends.

One major factor that facilitates study involvement is the emotional balance the student possesses. Self-rating on several characteristics by the students revealed the following aspects. There were 60% who decided that they were not intelligent; 52% were tensed up; 41% had no confidence in themselves; 39% were unhappy; 29% reluctantly admitted that they were not friendly with others; 25% felt nervousness; 24% were restless; 22% had bouts of depression; 20% felt very tired despite their age; and finally 15% had a feeling of inadequacy.



It is quite disheartening to note that not all is well with the personal life of students. Adults rarely give importance to the turmoil going on in a young person's life. The future looks bleak unless such emotional problems are rectified. In addition, the earlier the intervention the better it is for the students. This study shows that the younger students accumulate greater emotional problems than their older counterparts: more problems are found in pre-university students. The consequence is seen in their academic performance. For example, the students who feel that they are not intelligent score significantly lower in the examinations.

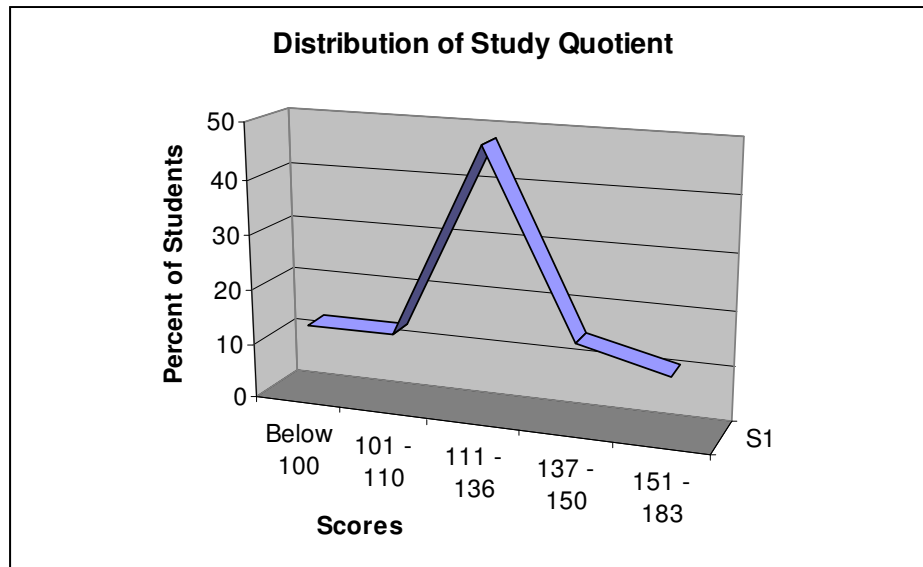
The major focus of a student's life is learning. The extent of learning determines the capacity to remember. Using inefficient ways of learning would lead to memory problems. Students have been found to have difficulty in remembering what is studied; what is read; what is seen and observed; how to give a speech or lecture; facts; numbers and dates; spellings; information in order; appointments and schedules; etc. Students had, on an average, at least four of these difficulties.

Around 18% had more than seven problems; 53% of the students had three to six problems; two or fewer problems were found in 28%; and only ten students (about 1%) reported none of these difficulties. Such problems need to be corrected if the society expects students to adopt a professional approach.

How do the students visualize their future? Do they have a positive attitude towards the subjects they are studying? How threatening does the world out there look for a student? Approximately 10% had absolutely no future plans; 45% were too sceptical about their future; 42% felt that the subjects they were studying would help them later in one way or the other; and only 3% were definite in their preferences. Most of the students liked the subjects they have chosen but not necessarily the syllabi. Some students wanted greater practical orientation in the curricular approach to study. A few had future plans either in terms of writing a competitive entrance examination for further studies or in applying for a lucrative job. A handful of pre-university students wanted to change their subjects of study and a few preferred to go into business.

The total score on this test yields a "**STUDY QUOTIENT**" along with the measures on ten areas. A detailed statistical analysis of these scores has revealed that the greater the quotient a student obtains the better his or her academic achievement in terms of marks in the examinations. In other words high scorers in the final exams have high study quotient and low scorers have low quotient. If one is able to know the quotient very much before the examination, then one can train oneself to improve his or her study involvement and thereby do much better in the examinations.

The present study has revealed that the range of quotient varied from as low as 66 to as high as 194. There are only 13% of the students below the average expected quotient of 100. Another 13% have scored between 101 and 110, whereas 48% have their quotients between 111 and 136. The top scorers who have quotients between 137 and 150 are 15%, and between 151 and 183 are about 11% excluding the highest scorer -- a female student from final B.Com who gets 194 and is exceptionally bright.



The average for the whole group of 765 pre-university and degree students is 123. While 353 pre-university students score an average of 118, the 412 degree students have a mean score of 127. Thus it appears that the latter are more involved in studies than the pre-university students. Though they are the minority the post-graduates show greater involvement with a mean of 138.

Further statistical analyses of the data revealed that the study quotient is capable of predicting a student's score in the examination provided he or she maintains very little change in involvement.

With reference to gender differences it has been found that the males are significantly better in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, emotional balance, study habits, library work, and the study quotient. On the other hand, girls are better than boys in class room behaviour and attitude towards study.

The overall impression that has been obtained from the present analyses is that the students in general are not totally against studying though they are not very sure of specific approaches to adopt while engaging in study.

Study involvement is present in the students but a clear understanding of what factors are involved in such an endeavour is noticeably absent. However, the students have a positive frame of mind towards their future and are willing to contribute their might in their own little ways.

**When the younger population wants to serve the society and when they show such eagerness to take over, it is imperative that the society in turn should try to do something for these students. As a first step let those who are concerned with education realize that the students need professional training in study involvement. Such a realization can lead to an insight into the students' problems and capabilities. Helping the students to overcome the problems and nurturing their capabilities can go a long way in the attempt to gear them up toward holistic education.**

Please send in your comments, suggestions, questions and clarifications to [supratherapy@yahoo.co.in](mailto:supratherapy@yahoo.co.in)

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- ✓ My parents are unhappy about me
- ✓ I am afraid of forgetting what I study
- ✓ I am not able to study for long duration
- ✓ I read the same material over and again
- ✓ Whenever I try to study, I am distracted
- ✓ I cannot remember information in detail
- ✓ I take a long time to read and understand
- ✓ I am unable to recall information whenever I want
- ✓ I know the answers well but I am not able to write them
- ✓ I understand when the teacher explains but I cannot recall afterwards
- ✓ I know I can do better but I don't know how to go about it
- ✓ I cannot keep unwanted thoughts away while studying
- ✓ I need to read every thing before I go to the exams
- ✓ I want to score good marks but I need guidance
- ✓ I do not have interest in a few subjects
- ✓ I get bored when I try to study
- ✓ I am very tired after studying
- ✓ I have memory problems

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At the same time a minimum amount of effort should be able to bring in an optimum level of performance in the student whenever there is a need to recall the information that is learnt.

**Students put in a lot of effort to understand and remember the study material. One reading is never enough and repeated studying makes them either tired or bored. A solution to these problems has been tried out scientifically through action research. Information processing depends upon how the information is coded, decoded, processed, stored, and retrieved.**

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7. Overcoming Exam Anxiety
8. Clipping Edges (Writing Ability)
9. Whose Life is it Anyway? (Career Planning)
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Bonus: **The Regulation of Consciousness in Information Processing**, a research article.



The last twenty five years of research has revealed that each student has about 35 problems on an average that are related to studying. As providers of education, it is our duty to make sure that these problems are tackled while the students are in school or college. Else, these problems magnify to undermine the efficacy of the future citizens of the world. Now that we are moving towards globalization, it is imperative that the students are trained to cope up with the increased need for competition.

We are presently observing a trend where most of the younger generation has very little employability. One of our researches conducted to find lacunae in the graduates passing out from the universities showed that only 12% of the skills necessary for employment were present. It is true that the job market is opening up but unless one is able to grow and prosper, it is difficult to modify the job into a career and move towards success.



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