

UNLV professor conducting national study

Study concentrates on the relationship between self-belief and resulting performance

by William Holt
Staff Reporter

Many of our professors at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) do more than teach us in the classroom. As a part of their job, professors publish articles and books regularly, educating us beyond the classroom.

Tom Sexton, assistant professor in Counseling and Educational Psychology at UNLV, is currently doing an ongoing study about the relationship between our self-belief and our resulting performance.

Sexton, and co-author Bruce Tuckman, full professor in educational research at Florida State University (FSU), have been

learning about the performance of students. Their latest article, called "The Relationship Between Self-Beliefs and Self-Regulated Performance," was published in the "Journal of Social Behavior and Personality."

It deals with our general ability, something that always remains the same, and the degree of our self-expectation and self-belief. The concept is termed "self efficacy," the ability to produce an effect.

Sexton said, "If you look at a group with the same ability, you're going to have people with different performances and different beliefs about what they can do."

Sexton and Tuckman, for an entire semester, studied a class-

room to make an assessment about the self-efficacy of students.

Sexton noted, "Most of these types of studies are done in a laboratory, an artificial environment." Sexton and Tuckman performed their study in an actual classroom.

Sexton also added to his study "... the variable of time. This way, we can look at changing relationships of the variable (or the self-efficacy of the students)." The validity of Sexton's study is greatly strengthened by the "variable of time." Instead of observing for just a couple of weeks, he conducted his study observation for an entire semester.

Sexton and Tuckman found, "The students with high self-efficacy perform at higher rates. The

person who thinks he can do it, does a better job."

Sexton said that whether one believes he can achieve a certain goal is just as much the key as is his ability to achieve it.

Sexton found that there are generally high self-efficacy students, low self-efficacy students, and students in between.

"When you ask a high self-efficacy student what his goal is, you'll find that, later, the end result will be that he will have surpassed his original set goal," Sexton said. "On the other hand, low self-efficacy students will never even come close to their goals."

These high and low people have patterns, or habits that determine their performance. Self-

confidence is not as much the determinant as it is with the middle group. Sexton is more concerned with the middle group because this group can be helped with their self-efficacy by improving their self-confidence.

To do this, Sexton said, "You create opportunities for them to be successful. Gradually build up the opportunity level and success level, and you will improve their self-efficacy."

Sexton received his doctorate at Florida State University while under the advisement of Bruce Tuckman.

Tuckman has 11 books in his name and several articles. He is currently a full professor at FSU.



Yell Photo / Matt Dovel

Parking problem? - Even UNLV's brand new portable classrooms are having trouble finding a place to park. No relief in sight in the near future.

Activating military reserves could affect 187,000 collegians

(CPS) As many as 187,000 college students across the country had their fall term plans cast into doubt on Aug. 22, when President George Bush said he would soon call up military reservists to support and replace troops already sent to the Middle East.

If and when the call comes, the students would have to leave school abruptly, sometimes unsure if they will have a place when they return or if the tuition money they paid will be wasted.

Joe Hanley, spokesman for the U.S. Army Reserves, estimated that 61 percent of his group's 579,000 members are full or part-time college students.

The other branches of the military do not keep figures on how many of their reservists are students.

Colleges themselves typically don't know how many of their students are subject to the call-up.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait, its small but oil-rich neighbor, Aug. 2, life became uncertain for both students and their schools.

Soon after, President Bush sent 40,000 U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia to defend against a possible Iraqi invasion of that coun-

try. It was the first time reservists had been called to active duty since the Tet Offensive in Vietnam in 1968.

Originally Pentagon officials thought only 100,000 soldiers would be needed, but raised the figure to 250,000 a week later.

Although there is a federal law that protects the jobs of workers who are called to duty, there is no law protecting students, Hanley said.

To ease uncertainty among student reservists, Purdue University published a detailed letter assuring students they would get their fees refunded and earn a certain amount of credit, depending on when they withdraw.

"If any (students) were called up, we would do all we could to make their re-entry after serving their country as easy as possible," said Edward Macias, provost at Washington University in Missouri.

Meanwhile the student reservists and their families try to prepare for what may lie ahead.

Andy Wilson, a senior political science major at Purdue and a student reservist, "wouldn't hesitate at all if a call went out."

However, while Wilson would have no regrets about leaving school, he admitted it would be hard to leave Kathleen, his wife of a month and a half.

Being married "doesn't make it any easier," Wilson said.

Hazing

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According to the "Death by Hazing" flyer accompanying her lecture.

"Your fraternities and sororities were built on high morals and ideals of brother- and sisterhood. Your founders would hang their heads if they saw what you are doing to each other."

Thirty-five states have outlawed physical hazing by fraternities and sororities. Nevada is not one of these states. Eileen Stevens commended the Greek societies for their active participation and support of this lobby.

Even though many fraternities have discontinued physical hazing traditions with heavy drinking and strenuous activity bordering on physical abuse, Stevens warned against "mental hazing."

"Sleep deprivation, subversive activities, and put-downs are all forms of mental hazing that demean the individual and could lead to psychological damage, rather than physical damage," said Stevens.

"Even if something seems harmless and silly now, it will get out of hand futuristically. Especially if alcohol is a factor."

Stevens reminded the fraternities that "others are watching you." She said she believes that hazing among the fraternities not only injures the men involved, but blackens the image people have of the Greek system.

"Start new, positive traditions that involve the community. Act responsibly, and be accountable for your actions," Stevens advised.

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