

Psychological Counseling in Modern Times

Is there anything new under the sun?

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The best time of our lives...



Still the best time of their lives, but...



Everlasting topics to deal with as a student

Separation from parents/family

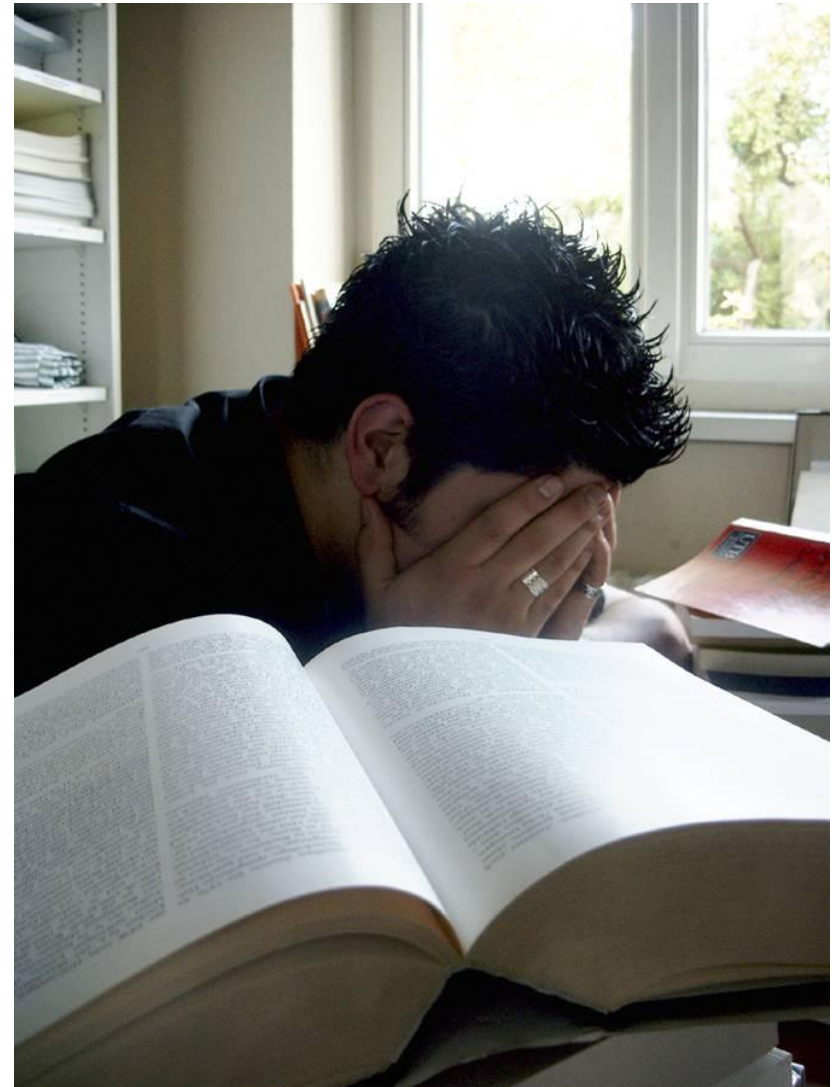
Questions of
purpose/orientation

Relationships

work – study – private life

Finances

Identity developmentt



Flexibility

Developmental dynamics

Professional and social perspectives

Free time

Psychosocial moratorium



Trends

Growing prevalence of mental illness among young people

More stress due to BA/MA reform?

Identity issues

Growing prevalence of mental illness among young people

Any disorder	%
Population USA 2005	32,4
Population EU 2004	35,0
Adolescents EU	15-20%
Students USA 2008	15%
Students Germany 2006	11%

Depression	
Students USA 1938	1% in MMPI
Students USA 2007	6% in MMPI
Students USA 2002	10% diagnosed
Students USA 2002	38% feeling depressed
Students USA 2004	45% feeling depressed
Students Germany 2007	16 – 23 %
Students Poland 2008	34%
Students Bulgaria 2008	39%



STRESS

Students Sweden
2007 52% stressed

Students Sweden
2010 70% stressed

Students Austria
2009 61% stressed

Students USA
2008 85% stressed



GB – 2005 Psychological Counselling

- Increase 2000-2004: 20% (survey of 18 universities)
Bristol 29%, Leeds 59%, Southampton 69%
- More severe problems: U Cambridge 2004
43 suicidal, 56 bulimia/anorexia, 70 self-harm
- Misery of debt and poverty (rising fees)
- *„...one of four students will experience some form of mental distress during their time at university...mental health is no longer a minority issue..“*

A screenshot of a Times Online article. The page features the 'TIMES ONLINE' logo in the top left, a 'PRINT THIS ARTICLE' link in the top right, and a 'CLICK HERE TO PRINT' link with a printer icon on the left. The article is dated 'September 16, 2005' and is titled 'Student depression is costing £30m' by Patrick Foster. The text states that British universities spend £30 million a year on counselling for students with mental health problems. A large blue rectangular area on the right side of the page is partially obscured by a white scribble.

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The Times September 16, 2005

Student depression is costing £30m

BY PATRICK FOSTER

BRITISH universities spend £30 million a year to provide counselling for students with mental health problems.

USA

National Survey of Counseling Center Directors 2008-2009

- Stabilization 2006-2009: 10,4% of the student population seek help
 - Depression
 - Stress/anxiety disorders
 - Relationship issues
 - Alcohol and drug use
 - Eating disorders
 - ADS/ADHS

- More severe problems: „The number of students with severe psychological problems is a growing concern on the campuses“
(6 suicides at Cornell in 6 months 2009/2010; **2008 WHO report: 50% of the students contemplated suicide vs. 15% in general population**; massacre at Virginia Tech., Alabama 2007)

- Not to mention China...

Increase in students coming into college with pre-existing mental health issues

More students seeking help in Counseling Centers are socially isolated

Neuroenhancement: Common in extremely competitive colleges

More stress due to BA/MA reform?

Germany before BA/MA

16% feared already in the 1st semester to have chosen the wrong field of study

42% afraid of not being up to the demands of studying

55% fear of failure in examinations

20% drop outs; UAS 22%, (USA 20%)

27% temporarily massively impaired by stresses and strains

13% in need of counselling over a longer time

11% mentally ill

5% in therapy

Changes after BA/MA implementation

Loss of freedom, especially in the first semesters

Structured study plans reveal lack of study skills from the outset

Pressure for good study results as a permanent burden

Bulimic learning instead of deep-structure learning

Workload experienced subjectively as too high

Financial pressure

Difficulties combining studying with job/childcare

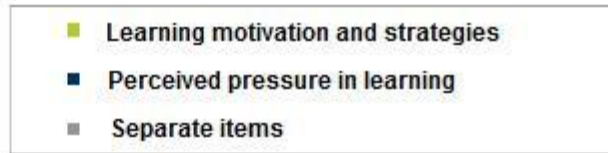
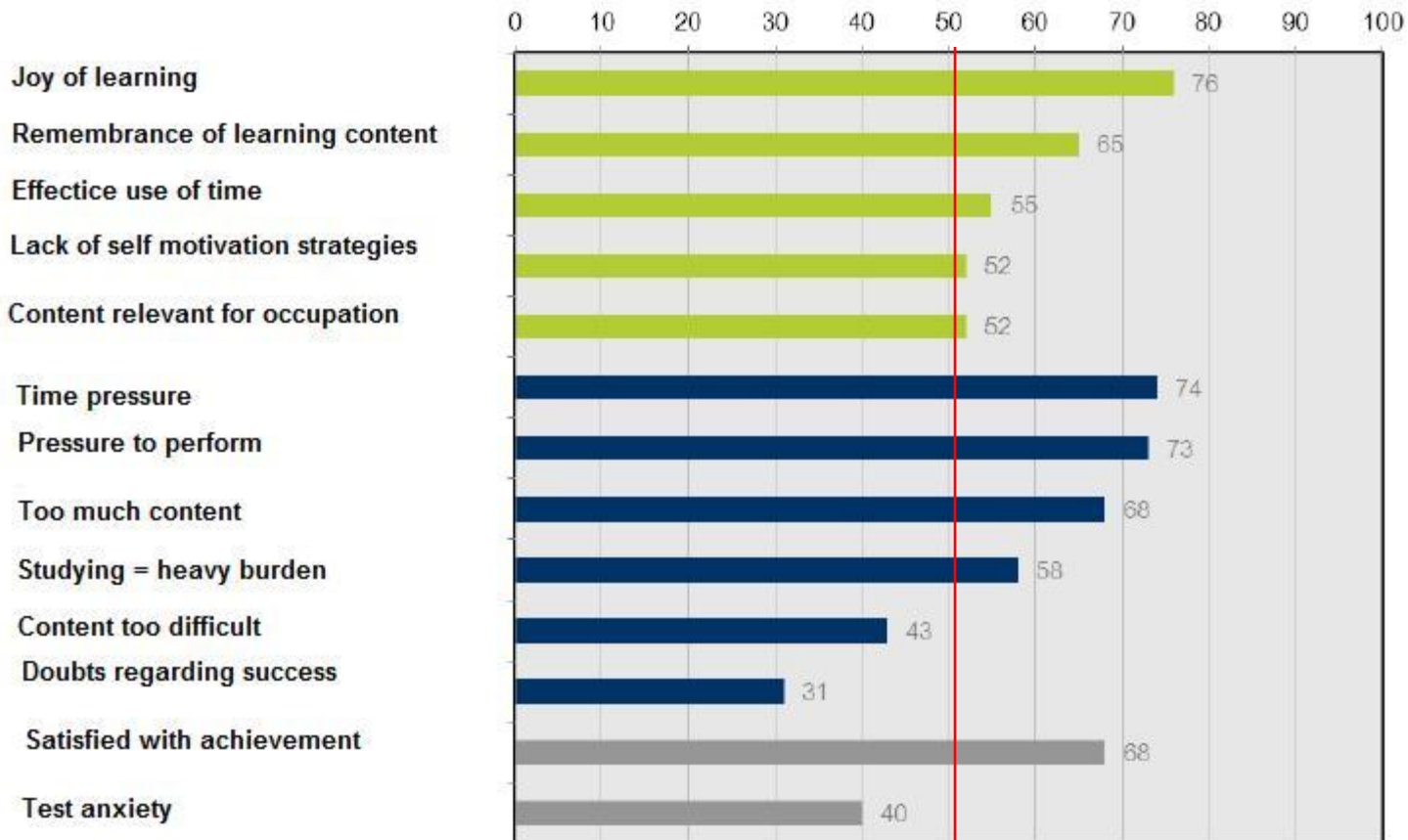
Pressure for success out of admission barriers for MA studies (85% want to pursue a master degree, so far 75% did)

Professional standing of BA degree doubtful



Evaluation of learning experiences

Percentage of positive answers

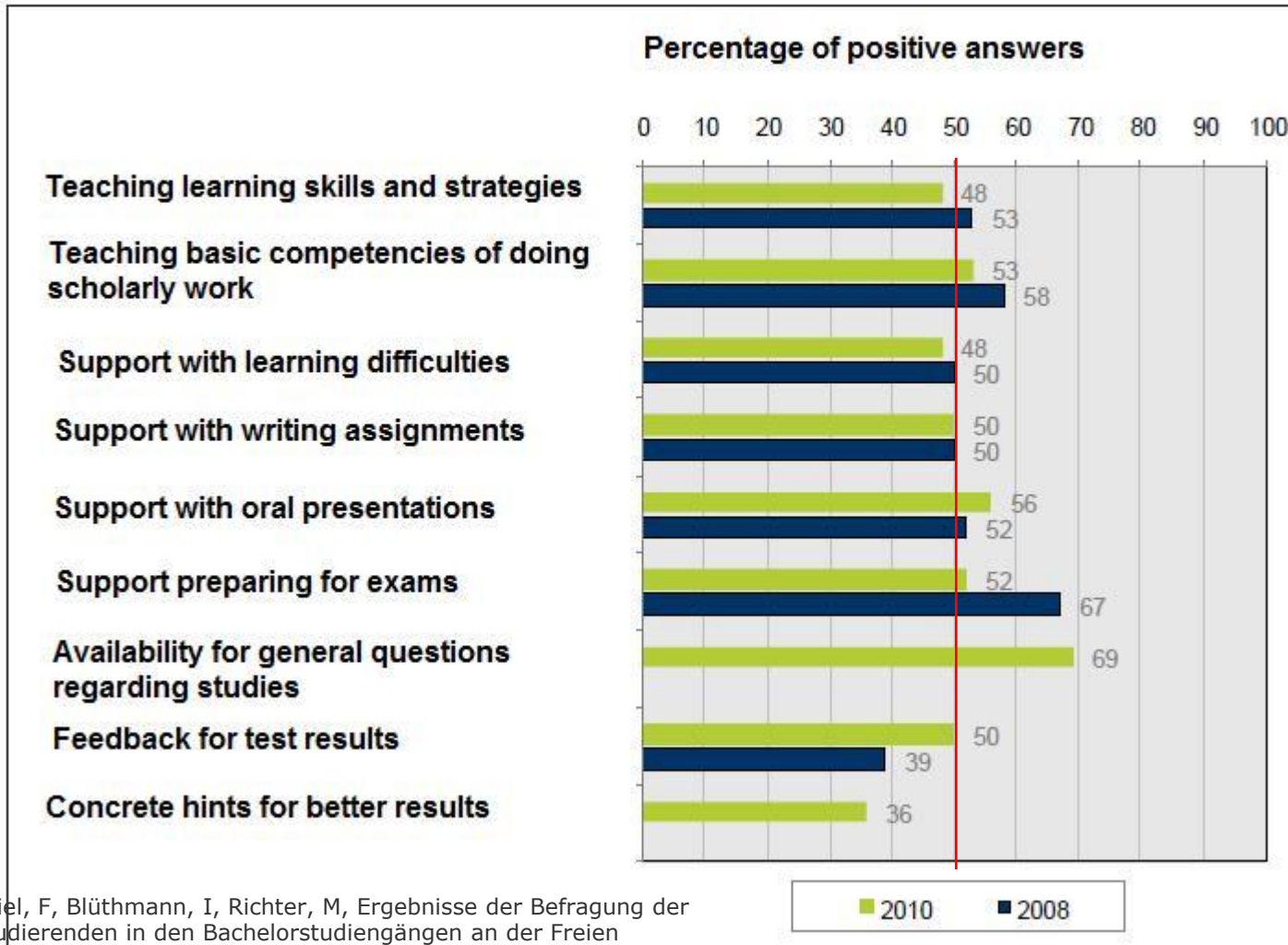


Thiel, F., Blüthmann, I., Richter, M., Ergebnisse der Befragung der Studierenden in den Bachelor Studiengängen an der Freien Universität Berlin, Sommersemester 2010, S. 59



Evaluation Learning Support, comparison

2008 - 2010



Thiel, F, Blüthmann, I, Richter, M, Ergebnisse der Befragung der Studierenden in den Bachelorstudiengängen an der Freien Universität Berlin, Sommersemester 2010, S. 35

Changes in Psychological Counselling

Increase in demand: 20%

More clients in early stages

More stress and anxiety (partly deliberately fostered by academic staff)

More passive attitudes (time management courses)

More hope for straight tips (instead of self-reflexion)

High compliance

Less concern with identity issues

Identity development issues

Developmental task of postadolescence

Generating/maintaining a congruent identity feeling
by:

- „Preliminary irreversible“ choices (profession, relationship)

Connected with

- Crises (anxiety and self-doubt)
- Coping positively with crises =

builds self-efficacy and self esteem

temporarily a challenge for achievement

Developmental task of postadolescence

Positive development

- Goal attendance
- Personal Growth
- Flexible identity conceptions with adequate ego-strength and frustration tolerance

Negative development

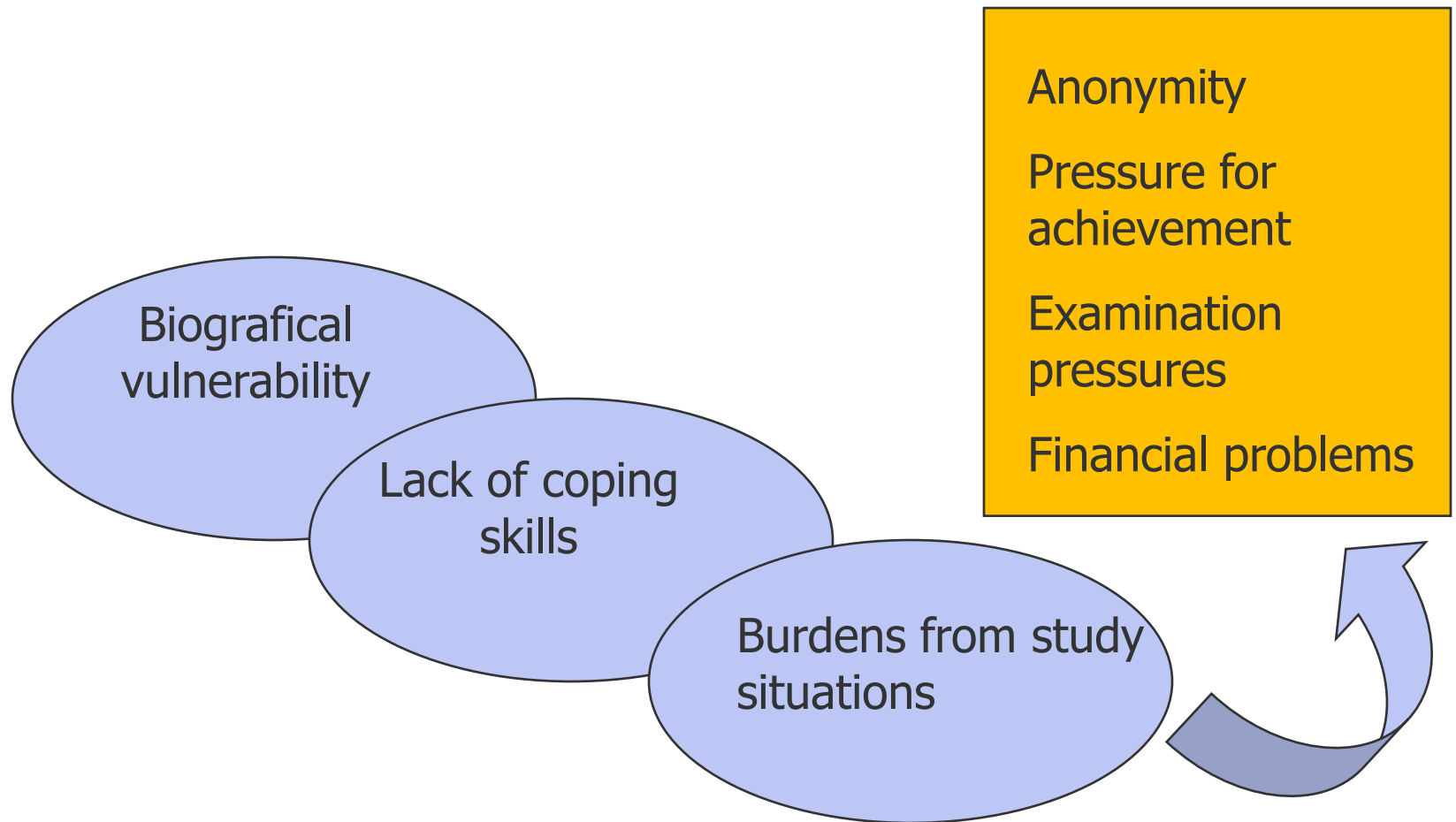
- Shortened identity development
- Pseudo- identity
- Identity diffusion

e.g. MMPI factor hypomania – measure of anxiety and unrealistic optimism, increase among students in the US from 5% 1938 to 31% 2007)



Developmental task of postadolescence

Negative development



Open questions

- Have European universities supported the introduction of the Bologna Process and the concept of lifelong learning through student-centred support services?
- Has Bologna changed the provision of student services in the past decade?

Or is the Trends V definition of key issue still valid:

“The value of student support services needs to be better recognised, supported and developed in the interests of all students. In particular guidance and counselling services play a key role in widening access, improving completion rates and in preparing students for the labour market”

EUA Trend report 2010

91% HE institutions offer
academic orientation services

83% offer career guidance

66% offer psychological
counseling

since 2007 11% growth
in Psychological Counseling

What to do?

Developing a mental health and learning support policy

training and awareness raising strategies

promoting student mental health issues

supporting students with mental health difficulties

supporting staff

What to do?

Expanding beyond traditional Counseling and Psychological Services

Networking with other Student Service/Support agencies, university administration, program and curricula developers etc.

implement stress-management/stress reduction courses

credit-points for participating students

engage in team-teaching with faculty

integrate counseling aspects in teaching

integrate counseling aspects into training of faculty

What to do?

Expanding Counseling and Psychological Services

to international students (the challenge of time management courses ...)

to low achieving students (more prone to depression)

to students in risk groups (age 30-34: 3% , 6% female in Germany on antidepressants)

to non-traditional learners



Thank you for your time and attention!

Questions? Comments?
SEND EMAIL

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