**Reading Response Essay Sample**

Graduate student enrollment remains steadily high, but these students face many challenges on their path to a degree. Researchers have noted that graduate students experience anxiety and stress that may be connected to high attrition rates [1]. In the article "Student anxiety: Effects of a new graduate student orientation program," Hullinger and Hogan [2] examined the impact of an online orientation program on student anxiety. While this article produced significant results showing that an online orientation program potentially reduces the anxiety of new graduate students, the researchers could strengthen their research design in several ways.

\\

The main weakness in article 3 is a number of respondents. The primary target demographic is a college-age students from small private university in Ohio. However, the main strength of this article is a method for research – survey. Despite the number of respondents, researchers made a table including usage of their own created variables, like p-value, t-test

\\

Hullinger and Hogan [2] used a sample of 32 incoming graduate students at a Midwest regional state university to examine the impact of an online orientation program designed to connect new students with resources across the university. First, the researchers collected participants' demographic information, such as gender, age, program type, work experience, and the period since their previous degrees. Then, they used the State Trait Anxiety Inventory to measure anxiety before and after the orientation program. Using *t*-tests, the authors found that the participants experienced a significant anxiety reduction after completing the online orientation program.

The researchers [2] provided a promising research-based argumentation for handling the intricate issue of graduate student anxiety through administering an online orientation and, therefore, paved another possible way to a better academic environment for students. Similar attempts to address student anxiety are known in the research literature. They range from more conventional counselling by university services [3] to less implementable approaches, such as poetry therapy programs [4], music therapy [5], and even the consumption of Camellia sinensis tea [6]. One obvious advantage of the approach suggested by Hullinger and Hogan [2] compared to other existing options consists in its relative cost-effectiveness and time efficiency. For instance, poetry therapy may require hiring a professional or significant time for implementation. Specifically, [4] uses Mazza's poetry therapy practice model, and mastering the therapy requires effort [7]. On the contrary, the approach of an online orientation program could be cheap and useful for students as it would allow them to have important information at their fingertips, regardless of if they are on campus or not, and, thus, reduce anxiety.

Meanwhile, Hullinger and Hogan [2] proposed a questionable research procedure and, thus, arrived at contestable findings. First, the sample size seems small. Out of 802 incoming students who were invited to participate, only 32 students completed the pre- and post-anxiety inventory. From a statistical point of view, such a small sample could interfere with the results' validity [8]. Moreover, generalizing these findings to the larger graduate student population is difficult because of a small sample size and due to the fact that all participants in this study were recruited from a state university in the Midwest. While Hullinger and Hogan [2] stated that the study should be replicated with a larger population and at other schools, the authors did not discuss how these factors of their study were limitations. Research replicability is also unlikely since the researchers [2] did not provide the contents of the orientation program they used in their study. This omission seems critical because replicability is perceived as a cornerstone of academic transparency and an indication of high research culture [9], while [2] adds to the existing "reproducibility crisis" [10]. Consequently, this lack of details can hinder further research on this kind of orientation program to reduce anxiety.

In conclusion, Hullinger and Hogan [2] focused on a significant issue within higher education. One of the barriers graduate students face is anxiety, so an online orientation designed to reduce anxiety could be one useful tool to address this problem. Hullinger and Hogan [2] shared encouraging results of an online orientation program designed to connect incoming graduate students with university resources. However, this study did not adequately describe this orientation program so that future researchers can replicate this program in other samples. Furthermore, the small sample size and lack of diversity among participants limit the generalizability of these findings. Future research on online orientation programs with a clear description of the program among a larger, more diverse sample is necessary to provide evidence of the impact of online orientation programs.

**References**

[1] M. C. Poock, “Graduate Student Orientation: Assessing Need and Methods of Delivery.,” *J. Coll. Stud. Develop.*, vol. 43, 2002.

[2] M. Hullinger and R. L. Hogan, “Student anxiety: Effects of a new graduate student orientation program,” *Administrat. Issues J.*, vol. 4, pp. 27–34, 2014, doi: [10.5929/2014.4.2.3](https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.3).

[3] S. B. Oswalt and C. C. Riddock, “What to Do about Being Overwhelmed: Graduate Students, Stress and University Services,” *Coll. Stud. Aff. J.*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 24–44, 2007.

[4] J. H. Park, J. Y. Kim, and H. O. Kim, “Effects of a group poetry therapy program on stress, anxiety, ego-resilience, and psychological well-being of nursing students,” *Arch. Psychiatr. Nurs.*, vol. 41, pp. 144–152, 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnu.2022.07.027>.

[5] E. Hernandez-Ruiz, “Music to decrease anxiety in college students during the COVID-19 pandemic,” *Arts Psychother*, vol. 80, p. 101953, 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2022.101953>.

[6] M. Bakhriansyah, S. N. Sulaiman, and R. Fauzia, “The effect of Camellia sinensis tea on a decreased risk of anxiety for medical students at Universitas Lambung Mangkurat Indonesia,” *Clin. Epidemiol. Global Health*, vol. 17, p. 101114, 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2022.101114>.

[7] N. Mazza, *Poetry Therapy: Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2021. doi: [10.4324/9781003022640](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003022640).

[8] E. Hatch and A. Lazaraton, *The Research Manaual: Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics*. New York: Newbury House, 1991.

[9] B. Vachon *et al.*, “Changing research culture toward more use of replication research: a narrative review of barriers and strategies,” *J. Clin. Epidemiol.*, vol. 129, pp. 21–30, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2020.09.027>.

[10] S. L. K. Stewart *et al.*, “Reforms to improve reproducibility and quality must be coordinated across the research ecosystem: the view from the UKRN Local Network Leads,” *BMC Res. Notes*, vol. 15, no. 1, p. 58, Feb. 2022, doi: [10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-022-05949-w).

*Adapted from GLOBAL CAMPUS Writing Center, U Arizona.*