

Student Study Stress

By Lauren Djakovac

A friendly reminder to parents: it's that time of year again where exams & final assignment deadlines are fast approaching. A time which, for senior students, commonly involves rising stress levels, feeling run-down, and anxiety, as they try to do too much; juggling study, sport, family, friends, part-time work and other extracurricular activities.

This can affect their health - both physically and mentally. Struggling to cope with the pressure can leave students angry, irritable, with disturbed sleep or sleep deprivation, increased hunger or lack of appetite, headaches, stomach aches, high blood pressure, eye strain, muscular tension, as well as many other problems.

Even with assistance from teachers, parents and their friends, the stress experienced by students can be significant,

leading to some students spending more time and energy worrying about the exam or assignment than actually preparing for and completing it.

In 2007, research conducted by the University of Melbourne and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) reported that:

One third of Australian students are stressed and struggling to cope with the pressures of school and having to live up to parental expectations, and

Two out of 10 primary and secondary school students said they had felt depressed and hopeless to the extent that they stopped doing their school work, seeing friends or competing in sport.

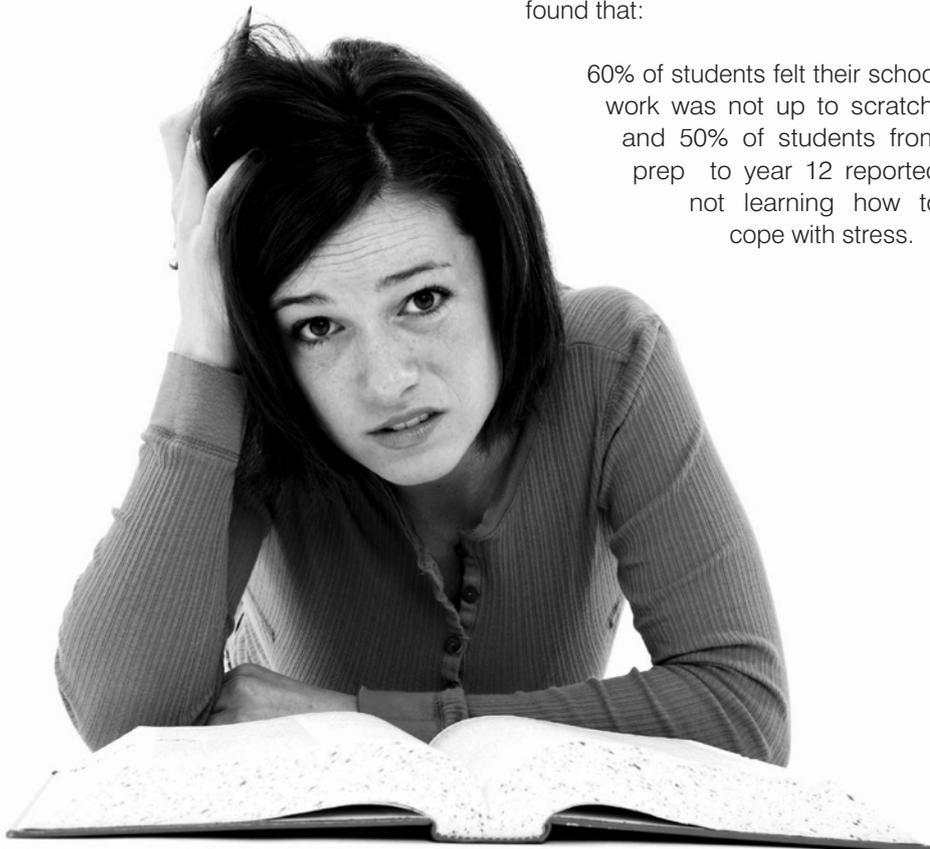
Commissioned by the Australian Scholarships Group, the four-year study of 10,000 students and their teachers, from 81 schools across the nation, also found that:

60% of students felt their school work was not up to scratch, and 50% of students from prep to year 12 reported not learning how to cope with stress.

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Tips for parents to help students combat study related stress:

- Be aware of their exam timetable - know when the tests are coming up and talk about them well before the day.
- Encourage early revision of work for assignments and exams - put together a revision timetable and reward your child for doing it.
- Help with the practice. One easy way is to turn information in your students' notes into questions, and have them explain the answer to you - or better still, write the answer, and then check to see you understand the answer he/she has written.
- Be supportive the night before. Ensure your child gets enough sleep and they feel prepared. Being nervous is natural. Most people experience 'blank minds' before exams but when they sit down and read the questions they trust their brains to leap into gear and find the answers needed. ■



[ICS Australia (formerly Improved Communication Skills), 2009]