

## **Test Anxiety: Classroom Tips**

There is some good news here: most students can master test-anxiety and improve their performance on exams by following a basic plan: develop good study habits, take advantage of effective techniques to memorize content, take steps to relax during the test, and use smart test-taking strategies.

### **Steps in Implementing This Intervention:**

**Step 1:** Introduce Testing Goals. Write the following headings on the board:

- Goal 1: Practice Effective Study Habits
- Goal 2: Memorize Content
- Goal 3: Stay Calm During Tests
- Goal 4: Use Effective Strategies When Taking the Test

Tell the class that you want to find out what techniques that they have found to be effective when preparing for or taking tests. Introduce each of the four headings on the board with a brief comment about how important that concept is for doing well on tests. When introducing the concept 'memorizing content', for example, you might tell the class, "A major reason that schools give tests is to see if students can recall information, ideas, and concepts that were taught. So committing information to memory is an important part of learning."

**Step 2:** Write Down Student Test Preparation Ideas. For each of the headings, have the students generate as many ideas as they can for accomplishing that goal. Write student responses on the board. Give students several minutes to read through all of the ideas. For each goal, instruct students to write down the top 2-3 ideas that they think would work best for them.

**Step 3:** Have Students Write Their Own 'Test-Readiness Plan'. As a homework assignment, direct each student to write up his or her own personalized 'Test Readiness Plan'. The plan should be

organized according to the four goals posted on the board. Under each goal on their plan, students should include 4-5 ideas that they think are most likely to work for them. Instruct students to save this plan for future reference.

**Step 4:** Encourage Students to Try Out Skills. As the next quiz or test in your course approaches, remind students to use the elements of their personal Test Readiness Plan. After the test, ask students to share what strategies they found to be most effective when getting ready for and while taking the test.

### **References**

- Boyd, R.T.C. (1988). Improving your test-taking skills. ERIC Digest Number 101. Retrieved 9 May 02 from: <http://ericae.net/edo/ed302558.htm>
- Hayes, J.R., (1989). The complete problem solver. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hopper, C. (1998). Practicing college study skills. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.