



Help for Students with Test Anxiety

Strategies from the MBU
Academic Resource Center

MBU MARY BALDWIN
UNIVERSITY

Performance Anxiety

- The Anxiety and Depression Association of America officially recognizes test anxiety as a type of performance anxiety.
- Characterized by extreme nervousness about taking a test, it can result in headache, nausea, dizziness, and feelings of helplessness.

Test Preparation

- Students may experience test anxiety even if they have prepared well for a test.
- They may freeze up or draw a blank when the test is put in front of them.
- With standardized tests, the symptoms may increase, as the stakes are often higher.

How Can Teachers Help?

- Before the test, ask students to identify their fears. Intense anxiety about grades may be related to the student's culture, age, or prior experience with testing.
- Knowing the source of the fear may help teachers find ways to alleviate it.

Keep Tests in Perspective

- Remember that no single test can decide your academic career – even standardized tests can be taken more than once.
- Remember that no single test can determine your intelligence, worthiness, or potential for future success.

Focus on the Positives

- Recall positive experiences you've had with tests. How did you prepare? How did you feel after the test?
- Visualize making a good grade on the test. What would that look like? How would you feel before and after the test?

Teachers: Create a Review Plan

- Encourage thorough preparation to reduce test anxiety and improve performance.
- Allocate class time to review concepts, problems, facts, or ideas.
- Allow students to practice in the testing mode: pen and paper, online, Scantron, etc.

Test-Taking Strategies

- Make sure you understand all directions by reading each question carefully and completely before answering.
- Manage your time by quickly reading over the test and answering questions you're sure of before moving on to more difficult ones.

What About “First Instincts”?

- Reviewing answers as time permits is essential.
- Despite popular opinion, research shows that the first or “gut” response is not necessarily correct.
- Compare the test scenario to a real life decision – people often change their minds and make better choices later.
- After completing the test, you may discover answers to questions given within other questions, and you can revise your original answers.

Use Student Support Services

- Take advantage of available academic resources beyond student / teacher conferences.
- By taking part in study groups, and working with a subject tutor or the Writing Center, students can decrease test anxiety and possibly improve test scores.



Testing Accommodations

- If you have been diagnosed with anxiety or other learning difficulties, contact Dr. Jenny Joczik, Accessibility Services Coordinator:
vjoczik@marybaldwin.edu, x7250
- You may be eligible for a low-distraction testing area, extended time for test taking, or other appropriate accommodations.

Visit the Center for Student Success

For more information, contact Dr.
Jenny Joczik, Director, Academic
Resource Center:

Office 116A, MBU Center for
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