

The Importance of Preparation in Alleviating Learners' Test Anxiety

أهمية التحضير في تخفيف توتر المتعلمين من الاختبارات

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Abstract:

Test-taking has always been an integral part of all educational systems that students have to deal with. Anxiety that test-takers experience, either before or during tests, engenders stressful moments that deprive students from showing their real potential and hence impairs their academic achievements. This research paper is conducted following the desktop method which involves the use of pervious researches here data is collected, summarized and collated. The aim of the present research paper is to acquaint students with the different types of preparation and to clear up students' misunderstanding concerning the significance of test scores and the different purposes for which they can be used. The research aims also at equipping students with ways and strategies that help minimize or at least curb the harmful effects of anxiety on students' performance. The research revealed that test anxiety stems from students' unpreparedness or inadequate preparation. The research also revealed that both test questions and tests' layout trigger and contribute to anxiety, it also showed that students lack strategies that aid overcome anxiety and its effects.

Key words: Test Anxiety; Academic Performance; Impair; Deprive; Effects

المخلص:

لطالما كان إجراء الاختبارات جزءاً لا يتجزأ من جميع الأنظمة التعليمية التي يتعين على الطلاب التعامل معها. القلق الذي يعاني منه المتقدمون للاختبار، سواء قبل الاختبارات أو أثناءها، يولد لحظات مرهقة تحرم الطلاب من إظهار إمكاناتهم الحقيقية، وبالتالي تضعف إنجازاتهم الأكاديمية. تم إنجاز هذا البحث بإتباع أسلوب سطح المكتب الذي يتضمن استخدام الأبحاث السابقة، حيث يتم جمع البيانات وتلخيصها ومقارنتها. الهدف من هذا البحث هو تعريف الطلاب بأنواع الإعدادات المختلفة والتخلص من سوء فهم الطلاب فيما يتعلق بأهمية درجات الاختبار والأعراض المختلفة التي يمكن استخدامها من أجلها. يهدف البحث أيضاً إلى تزويد الطلاب بالطرق والاستراتيجيات التي تساعد في الحد أو على الأقل التقليل من الآثار الضارة للقلق على أداء الطلاب. كشف البحث أن قلق الامتحانات ينبع من عدم استعداد الطلاب أو عدم استعدادهم بشكل كافٍ. خلص البحث إلى أن كلا أسئلة الاختبار وتصميم الاختبارات تثير القلق وتساهم فيه. أظهر البحث أيضاً أن الطلاب يفتقرون إلى الاستراتيجيات التي تساعد في التغلب على القلق وآثاره.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قلق الاختبار؛ الأداء الأكاديمي؛ ضعف؛ حرمان؛ آثار.

Introduction

Today we are living in a world that is constantly changing because of the great leaps in human ingenuity that transformed it in ways that no one did expect. It would be very hard to imagine life today without computers, cars and cell phones, but humanity has paid dearly as life has become demanding and the world too competitive. Education is no exception as parents rush to enroll their kids in kindergartens and place undue stress on them. Zollar and Ben-chain (1990) stated that, “The era in which we live is a test-conscious age in which the lives of many people are not only greatly influenced, but are also determined by their test performance”. Exams and test scores constitute, in all educational systems, an unavoidable part that determines students’ success or failure. Most students admit that they study harder once exams are announced as they reflect how well they have understood the material of a particular course. However, for students taking exams is often considered as a threat under which they occasionally collapse since they make them fearful, nervous and even ill. Some students experience stress and anxiety that impact them and hence impose serious limitations on their performance. Test anxiety slows and leads, at least, to a decline in performance which can hamper the career of the affected learners.” Students’ underachievement in tests can be attributed to anxiety, poor and inadequate preparation or to their incomprehension of the importance of exams and their results in their academic careers. The aim of this paper is threefold: First, to familiarize the students with the types of preparation namely the physical, emotional and review preparation. Second clearing up students’ misunderstanding concerning the results of exams and the different purposes for which they can be used. Third, equip students with coping strategies and some useful tips that help overcome test anxiety.

1. How to Prepare Tests and Exams

Exams are not designed to assess students’ knowledge related to specific subjects only, but also to test their mental discipline and emotional stability. Students who perform poorly in exams attribute their underachievement to exams’ difficulty or to other reasons on which they have no control. This may be a psychological excuse, or a subconscious way to avoid personal responsibility. According to Richard Yorkey, C. (1970) optimizing performance and lowering test anxiety can be achievable through the following types of preparation.

1.1 Physical Preparation: Being healthy before exams is a paramount factor in determining success. Students who intend to take exams should have no reason to cram their heads with related information because this will be completely pointless. Equally important, it is much wiser to get a good night’s sleep than staying till the early morning trying to catch up the work you did not do in the opportune time. Avoiding fatigue and putting enormous strain on oneself and body must be observed by students. Students

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need to relax, eat regularly, go to bed early so as to get their usual amount of sleep. The most effective kind of preparation students should do is to review quickly and in a summarily way what has been viewed during the days preceding the exam.

1.2 Emotional Preparation: Students' state of mind is as important as their bodies and this implies that their minds must be in good state of health. Experiencing emotional block or mental blackout is enough for students to know that they should reconsider their study habits. Sufficient time to review the targeted material will help you face tensions and regrets that result from the belief that there must be something else I must have missed or fail to consider. Since it is too late to do anything else, students are advised to relax immediately before the exams and avoid worrying, arguing with classmates about details and especially trying to learn or memorize something in the last minute. It is understandable that students become nervous and tense and can feel a bit anxious, but there must be ways to overcome these feeling as they may interfere with the ability to perform well in an exam situation. Students need to be confident that they have done best and know what it takes to ensure good results. Realizing that taking tests resembles to a great extent the situations we undergo in our daily lives helps us change and adjust ourselves to new situations and may help also in getting rid of stress and anxiety before taking exams.

1.3 Review Preparation: Once the exams are announced, most students panic and start worrying and experience tense anxiety. This a something natural because test anxiety is a kind of performance anxiety that gives rise to fear of failure which in its turn interferes with someone's abilities to perform well in tests they will take. To ensure a good review preparation, students should start as early as possible planning their time and arranging their schedules in order to have sufficient time to keep up with their usual and regular studies. They are also required to extend their usual time of revision by adding hours here and there in a careful way. Revising for long periods of time can result in tiredness, so students are counseled to take breaks where and when necessary and divide their review reparation to several short periods because this will yield good results.

Reviewing should not be mistaken with reading or learning specific materials as facts, courses and events at the last minute. When a material is reviewed appropriately, students need only to look through it organize, summarize ,and divide it into meaningful patterns and try to find relations that hold the different parts together so as to facilitate the process of storing and retrieving. Reviewing material that students understood is a waste of time; instead they should concentrate their efforts and attention on the materials they are not sure of. Relating the reviewed information to the one they already know, solving problems and answering likely question are ways among others that secure successful review reparation.

Since tests and exams reflect how well students have understood a given course, students are asked to study in ways they expect to take the exam. In other words, students need to know and anticipate the kind of questions they may be asked and hence can answer them appropriately. For example, if students expect their teacher to ask them to identify the main historical events, places and influential personalities, here they need to concentrate carefully on factual materials. Simply put, students ought to review the material exactly in the same way they intend to use it because this will render reviewing more meaningful and effective.

After having reviewed the material in question in a regular and brief ways at different intervals during the days preceding the exam, students can review quickly the material the night before the exam and go to bed relaxed and confident that they will perform well. A vast majority of students may feel the need to go over a particular material when they wake in the morning. Needless to do so, because it is too late to learn something new and all the efforts and time students may do and spend be a fruitless endeavor. The best thing students can do is to enter the exam room ready to start, sure that they are well prepared and confident that they will do their best to ensure good results.

2. Why Taking Exams

It is true that test scores determine to a great extent students' failure or success in particular subjects, but for teachers test results mirror students' readiness and understanding regarding the subjects they teach. To put it otherwise, test results show how well students have done. This purpose seems obvious, but its application is often misunderstood and needs to be clarified for students and teachers as well. The results of tests and exams must be used for the following purposes:

The first purpose for which exams are taken is to serve as incentives that incite students to study regularly because nearly all students start reviewing lesson when the exams are scheduled. Exams should be also considered as good reasons or stimulants that motivate students to take reviewing seriously so as to ensure good scores in exams. These latter can also be used by students as opportunities to revise constantly and in a regular manner their materials and not to see them for the first time when they know that exams have been planned.

Second, results of exams are used as means of measurement of how well students have done, how much they have mastered and where they need to make more efforts. This implies that they must look over their exam when returned to them, analyze it, identify their mistakes and check their answers and not to look at the grades and react accordingly then throw or give the paper back to the teacher. Exam results serve as an occasion that must be seized by students because they enable them to identify their areas of strength and weakness and allow them as well to reconsider their reviewing habits.

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Finally, exam scores are used in order to determine exactly students' final grades in their respective subjects. Very often teachers have some knowledge about their students, but they need to test them so as to be fair. There are moments when students who usually do well in the classroom perform poorly in exams. Here they need to remain confident, because they will have the chance to prove that they can do better as teachers use exam scores for other purposes. Exam scores are used to individualize instruction to the needs of students. They use them also to identify the topics which prove to be difficult or not easy to grasp and to plan for re-teaching. They can also use them to improve curriculum and alter the teaching methods and classroom practices in ways that match with students' abilities, level of maturity and even areas of interest.

3. How to Take an Exam

Although the natures of exams differ and the types of questions may be unfamiliar to students, there are certain points that students must consider when taking exams. It is usually important to look over the whole exam or test before attempting to write anything. It is equally important to understand the directions to ensure answers are correct. Students fail to consider directions and start answering only to discover that their answers are either irrelevant or have very little to do with the direction the teachers want them to take into account. When students have a choice of questions, here it is preferable to consider every single question then choose the one in which you are likely to answer confidently.

In essay-type question, students must make sure to answer the question. This seems obvious, but over the years, students who answered possible questions or have practiced on old exams may not be able to fight the temptation of writing what they have prepared or practiced and fail to observe the real directions. This leads to poor exam scores and makes the students feel frustrated and under confident in such type of questions. Many students think that the more information they include in an exam paper the best scores they will get. This behavior can be easily understood because those who write most simply know more compared to those who are not sure of the answer. This category of students includes as much information as they could, hoping that teachers will find relevant pieces of information. These students lost of their sight that this type of practice is easily identified by teachers. Sticking to the most relevant ideas or information, present them precisely and concisely is the best strategy that students need to adapt.

Haste, pressure must be avoided when taking exams as they usually result in low test scores. Working steadily and managing rationally ones efforts is the key to success when taking exams. Students need not lose sight of the time allotted to the exam or test as this may engender more problems especially when students discover that they must write or solve more problems, but the time does not allow them to do so. In such cases students will find difficulties as what to include or omit and this necessarily affects

negatively their performance. Students must organize their answers and write legibly so as not to leave room for doubt as to what they mean. When students finish early, they should seize the remaining time to look over their answers carefully because a forgotten “negation”, a wrong “verb” or a misuse of a “full stop” can make a huge difference in deciding about a test result. Students who finish early and leave the room so as to attract their classmates’ attention, discover careless mistakes or parts of answers that they forgot to copy on their exam papers.

4. Test Anxiety

Anxiety is a phenomenon that people frequently experience in their daily life. Test anxiety among students before and during exams is no exception. This issue that attracted researchers’ attention as more and more students become worried and experience tense feelings that impair and even compromise their performance. Before talking about the causes which are at the origin of anxiety and the effects it may have on students’ achievement, it is preferable to define anxiety itself. Test anxiety has been defined as a set of phenomenological, physiological and behavioral responses that accompany concern about negative consequences or failure on an exam situation or similar evaluative situations (Zeidner, (1998)). Rochman, (2004) is of the same view as Zeidner when he described anxiety as a tense, unsettling anticipation of a threatening but vague event, a feeling of uneasy suspense. It is true that all students encounter anxiety, but at varying degrees. Little anxiety can be helpful as it incites the students to concentrate and use all their potential to perform well. Excessive anxiety, however, poses serious limitations on performance. Students who experience anxiety do not worry about the possibilities of failure, embarrassment and social rejection, when not in or anticipating an evaluative situation. The possibilities aforementioned become active when the same learners find themselves in evaluative situation.

4.1 Anxiety: A state or a trait?: When a student feels anxious as a result of a particular situation or event such as tests, oral performances, interviews, assignments ...etc, this reaction is referred to as situational or state anxiety. Anxiety seems at the beginning as transitory episodes of fear in a situation where students have to perform in relation to questions or once pointed at by teachers. At this stage, anxiety is simply a passive state. Overtime, for all students, anxiety tends to diminish due to their familiarity with exams but if it keeps occurring at regular intervals here, it becomes a trait rather than a state. The trait can last for a while then disappears, but there are cases where anxiety becomes a lasting trait and eventually its implications on the learning and performing process become pervasive.

4.2 Causes of Test Anxiety: The causes that lead to test anxiety are numerous and of different natures. According to Mealey & Host, (1992), the root of test anxiety lies in students’ poor preparation. Some students have difficulties in organizing and processing

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information and thus experience anxiety before or when taking exams. Others, however, use less effective study habits which engender feelings of anxiety and hold habitual and irrelevant thought that give rise to anxiety. For Mealey & Host, anxious students are of three types. The first type comprises students who do not have adequate study and test-preparation strategies, realize this, know they are not well prepared for testing situations and are worried. The second category includes students who have adequate strategies in their repertoire and use them but become distracted during exams. The third kind contains students who mistakenly believe they have adequate strategies, do poorly on tests and anxiously wonder why.

The results of the study of Gaudry and Spielberg (1971) showed that high-anxious subjects performed better than low-anxious subjects on simple tasks but performed more poorly than low-anxious subjects on complex tasks. Sarason, (1980), seems to share the same view. He believes that learners become worried for the following reasons. First, some doubt their capacities or think they may not do well. When a test is perceived as difficult this in itself may result in anxiety that will impact learners' achievement. There is considerable evidence that the performance of highly test anxious students on complex tasks is deleteriously affected by evaluational stressors. The less complex the task, the weaker its effect is.

Fear of getting bad marks is another factor responsible for anxiety before or when learners are taking exams. Young, (1990), mentioned other causes that give rise to anxiety students experience once in situation of evaluation. Test validity is perceived as a contributing factor that leads to anxiety. For Young (1991), students experience anxiety if the test involves content that was not taught in class. Equally important, when students believe that the test does not measure what it is supposed to measure and does not place the appropriate meaning on test results it will inevitably lead to anxiety.

The time allotted to tests can sometimes engender anxiety. According to Ohata (2005), learners sometimes felt pressured to think that they have to organize their ideas in a short period of time. When students think that the test time does not suffice them to go over all the questions or show their mastery of a particular material, this may result in stressful moments. The same thing can be said about the length of a test. Most students react in a negative way to long tests because they will start wondering about what to include in order to meet the teachers' expectations. Some may face problems related to their inaptitude in deciding about the information which is the most or the least important and consequently they start feeling anxious.

Test format can be another cause that makes learners anxious. The layout of questions on a test can be problematic for students. When students are not acquainted with particular type of questions such as multiple choice questions or essay questions they may experience anxiety which will compromise their performance. In the same

regard, the ambiguity of test instructions sometimes confuses students. When students are unable to make sense of what is expected from them because of ambiguous instructions, they will experience a feeling of loss which in its turn causes queasy feeling that necessarily leads to anxiety.

The testing environment can in various ways lead to stressful moments especially when exams are taken in overcrowded noisy places. When students take exams in very hot, cold, or not enough lighted places this contributes to anxiety even if they are not highly- anxious individuals. Invigilators can sometimes make students feel anxious especially when they are unable maintain order and discipline.

Past experiences that students had gone through are likely to produce anxiety. Students who have failed when taking exams due to their anxiety history may start worrying once in the same conditions. They may doubt their capacities and unconsciously connect their self-esteem and self-worth to their test scores and by so doing they put a pressure on themselves that can cause severe test anxiety.

When and how anxiety interferes with test performance is still debatable, but what is noticeable, is that it interferes either at test time or at study time. Test anxious individuals divide their attention between task relevant activities and preoccupation with worry and self- criticism. With less attention available for task-oriented efforts their performance is greatly depressed.

4.3 The Physical and Emotional Effects of Test Anxiety: Test anxiety manifests itself through certain physical signs. Learners who experience test anxiety become noticeable as they start sweating in an excessive way. Some of them may become short of breath and even faint. Some may have terrible headaches and in certain cases they start vomiting. In rare cases, students may gain weight. The emotional effects of test anxiety may vary from students to another. Some start worrying and experience self-doubt. Test anxiety may result stress and make students feel depressed. Fearful feelings are also very frequent and they usually lead to mental shutdown.

4.4 Effects of Test Anxiety on Students' performance: In order to understand in what ways test anxiety affects students' performance, it seems compulsory to take into consideration the study of Liebert & Morris (1967). These researchers analyzed the responses of students to Sarason & Mandler's questionnaire (Sarason & Mandler, 1952). The results revealed that test anxiety consisted of two major components. The first component was emotionally which was related to the physical reactions to test situations, such as nervousness, sweating, constantly looking at the clock, pencil tapping and so on. The second factor was worry which comprises the psychological or cognitive aspect of test anxiety. "Worry relates primarily to cognitive concern(s) about the consequences of failure." Liebert & Mandler (1967)

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Students' actual level of test anxiety cannot be directly measured or examined. The only thing that could be observed is the students' manifestation of test anxiety in the form of emotionally responses mentioned earlier. In a group of high school students, Morris and Liebert found that the factor of worry had a stronger negative relationship with performance outcomes than emotionality. This is a clear indication that cognitions and thoughts about the evaluative situation have the greatest impact upon performance under such conditions. Naveh- Benjamin et al (1987) have found that when compared with less anxious students, highly test-anxious students have difficulties in organizing material to be learned. As several research studies have noted, highly test-anxious students have less effective study skills compared to their low anxious classmates (Culler and Holahan, 1980). This view is also supported by Hembree (1988), who suggested that the lack of effective study skills contributes to poor performance under evaluative conditions, which in turn leads to intensifying feelings of anxiety when it comes to performing in subsequent examinations.

At this point, it important to refer to Zeidner's (1988) view about this problem. He is of the opinion that the state of anxiety cannot stem only from lack of work or inadequate preparation, since even meticulous and highly motivated students suffer from anxiety incapacitating impacts. He stated that academic performance depends on the information processing habits that directly control learning and comprehension of classroom material, such as attention, working memory and long memory retrieval, processes that may be influenced by personality factors such as test anxiety.

A lot of students struggle with test anxiety and its academic impacts. Studies have shown that test anxiety is at the origin of poor performance. Everson & Millsap, (1991) maintained that, "Test anxiety and other deficits related to test anxiety interfere with academic performance." Test scores place undue or excessive stress on students and impact their performance. This is most noticeable when scores are tied to important issues or outcomes such as graduation and funding. Paul and Erikson (1964) tested the effects of anxiety by giving a group of first-year girl students a traditional examination on their course. The students were aware that the marks of this test would count on their final grades. Immediately after the test they were asked to fill in a test anxiety questionnaire and were given a parallel form of the examination they had previously taken but this time it was emphasized that the marks would not be taken into count towards their grades. When the results were analyzed, it was found that highly anxious students did better on the non- stressful examination whereas low-anxiety students performed better in the traditional conditions. Some tests and examinations trigger and increase anxiety that gives rise to uncertainty and unfairness especially when students are deprived from demonstrating their true potential. To put it otherwise, students who

learn and show their academic proficiency in different ways are denied the right to be different especially when teachers impose on them particular patterns of answers.

Ideally tests are designed to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to learn or know the degree or the level to which students have learned a particular material. They are also designed to check students overall progress, but some teachers ignore this because for them tests measure achievement against goals rather than measuring progress. This fact causes anxiety that obstructs the performance of a lot of students. Tests scores provoke anxiety especially when deemed by teachers as means for comparison and as opportunities to show students' growth. This, in turn, leads to lower expectations and lowers as well the levels of students' achievements.

4.5 How to Overcome Test Anxiety?: Anxiety is a part of school life that teachers and students need to take seriously and work cooperatively so as to find ways and strategies that may help overcome its academic impacts. Unlike students, who may not be aware that they are experiencing, teachers are usually the first to respond to this issue because for them the symptoms are easily recognized. It is true that there is no magic formula that can eradicate anxiety, but setting it as a common goal can make test a less anxious experience that students must go through.

Teachers interactions with students can help prevent anxiety. The first thing teachers are advised to do is to get rid of the belief that study skills need not to be taught in an explicit way because they are innate. This is not true since students need clear instructions about how to learn, review, store and retrieve information. Creating good study habits helps to a great extent minimize stress and anxiety. When taking exams, teachers can advise their students, for example, to start with easy questions first. They can as well show them how to identify the key words, organize their knowledge and ranking it from the most to the least important one in relation to what they are required to do.

Designing test can reduce anxiety. For instance, a crowded page of items that students must cover will necessarily trigger anxiety. In this context, teachers are asked to give the physical design of tests great importance. Asking the appropriate questions or including those which allow students to show what they know in different ways is more helpful than insisting on recall and memorization questions. Encouraging the mastery of skills in addition to rewarding students' efforts in the classroom must be a priority compared to test scores. Though little can be done by teachers concerning the place of the tests, still creating a suitable and relaxed atmosphere for students when taking tests may contribute enormously to eliminate anxiety.

Having a complete control over test taking anxiety is an unattainable goal, but learning new study skills and equipping oneself with adequate strategies may help a lot in having the best chances of scoring well in tests and exams. Good preparation can be

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guaranteed provided that students start in the opportune time reviewing for exams. New study skills can be adopted especially when those we have been acquainted with are no more effective. Joining groups and asking students who have regular and more efficacious habits leads necessarily to better test scores. Accepting little anxiety is a good thing because when not nervous or anxious, students will not feel motivated to do their best. The same thing can be said about obstacles. Expecting roadblocks along the way is a common occurrence in tests, so students need to know that obstacles, difficult and challenging test constitute a part of school life they must know how to deal with.

Like athletes, students should focus, remain confident and visualize themselves scoring well. While taking an exam, students should imagine themselves feeling confident, doing well as this helps lessen anxiety. Avoiding negative thought and watching self-talk can make students less anxious. So, instead of "I should have studied more.", "I am well prepared and I can do quite well." Replacing negative thoughts with positive ones will produce good effects that reduce anxiety. Relaxation strategies like deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation before and during exams are needed as they help get rid of the anxiety that accompanies test taking.

5. Recommendations

After having dealt with the nature of test anxiety and its effects on learners, we came up with the following recommendations:

5.1 To the Teachers:

- Teachers are urged to play more effective roles in relation to test anxiety by being well-versed and familiar with its different signs because it is a real thing that a great number of students suffer from.
- Teaching effective study strategies and preparing students for taking tests is a good way to minimize anxiety.
- Teacher should teach strategies to cope with the demands and organization of their studies at a very early age to prevent test anxiety and its influence on their academic performance. Strategies such as breaking tasks down, searching for cues, the use of the process of elimination are just a few examples of many other ways to decrease anxiety and improve achievement.
- When preparing tests, teachers need to consider two important things. First, the layout of tests by trying to avoid the inclusion of many long questions. By doing so they will trigger anxiety as students will soon become worried and anxious by the sight of the physical layout of their test. Second, teachers are advised to vary their questions to enable students to answer in ways that allow them to show understanding or mastery of particular subjects in their own preferences.
- Teachers are also urged to allot enough time for students to organize their ideas when taking exams as this constitutes an important criterion that helps prevent anxiety.

- Teachers should make their students knowledgeable about the significance of test scores and their importance in decision taking in regard to teaching and learning.
- Teachers are recommended to inform their students that test scores can help in deciding when to schedule re-teaching sessions by focusing on areas that students did not grasp well, or through varying their ways of teaching so as to match with the students' different styles of learning.

5.2 To the Students:

- Students can make tests and exams less anxious moments through learning new and healthy study and review habits by revising in regularly and effective ways the material in question. This can be achievable by setting realistic goals and avoiding rushing things in the last moments because this is completely pointless.
- Students are advised to prepare themselves emotionally. They should admit that little anxiety is sometimes useful as it activates their faculties and this allows them to perform better when taking exams. On the other hand, students are advised to avoid excessive anxiety as it interferes negatively with their academic performance.
- They should also have some control on their emotions because it is needless to panic when about to take exams since it is somehow late to do so. It is preferable to believe in oneself capacities and be pragmatic.
- Students are required to plan carefully their time and adjust their schedules so as to have sufficient time to review all the materials.
- They are also required to prolong their habitual time by adding minutes or hours taking into account their own capacities and pace into consideration.
- Reviewing should in no way be misperceived by students with reading a particular material for the first time or in the last moments, since this is just a waste of time and energy. Students should know that a good review preparation is the result of regular and constant effort over a specific period of time prior to the exams or tests.

5.3 To the Administrative Staff:

- The administrative staff is required to organize special meetings with teachers and students to talk over anxiety and its effects on academic achievement. During these meetings, which can be held monthly or when need be, ideas, experiences and expertise will be exchanged among participants so as to help them deal with the common problems related to test anxiety.
- The administrative staff is called to work in collaboration with teachers by planning exams taking into account the specificities of every subject such as the timing, time allotted and the place of the exam. These three factors and of course other elements can considerably minimize test anxiety and help students perform better.
- Guidance and counseling meetings should be an integral part of the schooling system as they may help curb the effects of test anxiety.

Conclusion

Considering the fact that test anxiety is complex and problematic area that affects a considerable number of students and impairs their academic performance, it is necessary to determine the problem and provide the necessary recommendations on the possible ways of reducing or curbing its detrimental outcomes that would be helpful to both students and teachers. In order to attain the aforementioned objectives, all active members, such as teachers, students, and administrative staff are invited to roll up their sleeves and collaborate effectively to make tests and exams less anxious and stressful.

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