

IMPACT OF TESTING IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Milaham S.B

Abstract

Tests are normally given to measure students' understanding of class materials. Taking test can be a stressful event for students, but there is no substitute for its preparation. This paper therefore outlines some challenges students usually faced in writing test. It also states some strategies students need to adopt in order to succeed in test taking.

Introduction

Test taking poses great challenges to both special and non special needs student in schools. During test taking, apprehension, cramming, sweating palms, rapid heart-beat, cotton/dry mouth, tiniest writing on pieces of paper, palm, arms, thighs and abbreviations/letters signifiers written on sight or on available materials allowed in or smuggled into the examination hall are among the physical anxiety and characteristic symptoms exhibiting by students during test taking. Special needs students who experience these feelings usually have difficulties concentrating on a task at hand and follow it through effectively. This is because anxiety has becomes the focus of the special needs students writing the test with the non special needs students in the test situation.

Crammy for Examination

Students who cram to take tests or spend sleepless nights in study sessions according to Shrum (2013) often heighten the pressures inherent in the test-taking. Proper paced planning and preparation for test taking increases students' familiarity with the material. It enhances their mastery of the test materials, and thus reduces anxiety in the test-taking situation. Schweitzer (2013) states that a planned and structured approach to test preparation helps students to establish learning and work style that help them in the world of performance, work and independent living which qualification, scheduling and application of skills are requirements.

Development of Skills

To be successful learners, students must develop prerequisite skills necessary for gaining of knowledge and its successful application. Mosley (1992) states that many skills are involved in learning and applying knowledge which include among others; reasoning, problem solving, predicting outcomes and its consequences. To succeed in school and in test taking, students must prepare in advance, use time wisely and effectively, use resource agencies such as library, museums, and government or non government organisations (NGO) offices as well as resource materials such as

encyclopaedia, dictionary and topic texts, periodicals, journals, newspapers/magazines etc. All these addresses in general term one important aim for skills development and application called methods for test preparation and test taking.

Plan to Study

Students should always plan to study in advance. Overnight cramming is never as effective as continued review and repetition. Familiarity with materials aids in recall and enhances success. Advance preparation allows for development of memory strategies and promotes self-confidence in the test situation.

Schedule Your Study

Students who planned to succeed must make a study schedule of their time. They must devote time each day for review of the day's class discussion for each subject taught that day. If no home work or assignment given students should always reread their notes or discuss class work with a friend. Thirty to forty- five minutes discussion on topics taught in class a day per-subject is usually all that is needed on a regular basis by students who want to succeed. In an advanced test, increase the amount of preparation, plan study sessions and analyze your study needs. This also means scanning the materials to determine how much must be covered. Make a list of specific areas to be studied. Estimate the time needed for the study. Enough time should be given to ensure mastery of each content area. Remember!, preparation and study begun on Monday for a test scheduled one or two weeks ahead.

Scan Test Materials before Attempting It

To start answering any given written test, scan the entire materials before supplying your answer. Resist the temptation of plunging blindly and hurriedly into answering the questions. The few minutes one spends reading over the entire questions before answering it is a time well spent. This helps to gauge the amount of time given to each question or section. It also gives the person taking the test an idea of which questions he can answer most easily. Howland (2010) notes that in writing test one should estimate the point value of each question or section. Don't get caught answering the 25th 1-point multiple-choice questions and leaving blank the three essays worth 25 points each.

Answer the Simple Question to You First

In writing test, students should attempt questions they know first. They should not feel that they must take a test in the exact order the questions are written. Spending too much time on any one question is a signal to failing the test. Put a mark next to the questions you are unsure of and return to them if time allows.

Be Logical in Your Presentation of Facts

Approach essay questions in a logical way. Read the questions first, and be sure you understand what is being asked. Write an outline or form a topic sentence with supporting details and conclusion. If time runs out before the entire essay is developed, partial credit may be given for the outlines and notes. Remember that compare-and-contrast questions are asking for both likeness and differences of the two not one or the other.

Use Techniques That Match Your Learning Style and Aid Retention

A topic survey techniques (reviewing the sub- topics, italicized words, maps, charts, and graphs) is often more effective than reading the entire topic at once. Outlining the sub-topic and making a composite note of class note from it can be helpful. Moon, Brighton, Jarvis & Hall (2007) states that to be successful in the test, students should make up questions they assume the teacher will ask and try answering them. This according to them is a good test-taking practice technique. Mapping a visual schema of how facts relate can help visual learners recall information. Creating study question on the front and corresponding answers on the back is another good study technique. Try to remember that the final preparation should match the actual way in which you will be tested. That means, if is to be an oral test, practice saying your answer aloud. If it is an essay test, practice answering related questions on it. If the test is a true-or-false or multiple choice formats, study the material in detail. While reading, pose and answer the study questions (if available), also answer similar questions that may be presented at the end of the topic or entire chapter.

Do the Things That Will Help You Be at Your Best

Imagine yourself taking the test. You can often reduce anxiety by using mental pictures (visual imagery) to imagine yourself preparing for and writing the test within the test environment. Howland (2010) states that to be successful in the test, the students should get a good night sleep. They should do something enjoyable and not test related after an intense study session. They should come with enough writing materials to the test venue and change them if need be during the test to reduce muscles fatigue. If allowed, they can bring thermos of their favourite beverage and some sucking candy. They can once a while get up and stretch, if permitted.

Test Instruction

Test instructions are the keys in any test. Students should always read test instructions before beginning to answer the questions. Failure to follow instructions will often results in doing the right thing the wrong way. Avoid using cursive writing in supplying requested information. Supply answers to the questions in the appropriate column or space as instructed.

Self Evaluate Your Performance

After writing a test the student should review his performance when the test result is returned. Anthony (2013) notes that subjects that build new skills on previously mastered skills, such as mathematics must be revisited with the aim of mastering the skills and steps used in getting the answer and which you did not use. The most important thing here is for one to look at his failure and successes. What question did was answered correctly or wrongly? Why? He should analyze what worked for him and what didn't, so that he can repeat successful strategies next time.

Conclusions

Remember that in most cases, successful performance on a test is as much a function of how well you have prepared and studied. Success is a measure of your mastery of the materials. If you consider a test as a tool to use as an active learner rather than concluding event to be forgotten the movement your answers are handed in, you can adapt same learning style for future mastery and success. No one wants to live in fear of taking tests, and you don't have to if you take matters into your own hands.

References

- Anthony, R. (2013). *Standardized testing programmes. Their effects on teachers and students.* University of Connecticut, USA
- Howland, J. (2010). *Effects of binge drinking on college students next day academic test taking performance and mood state.* University of Connecticut, USA
- Mosley, J. (1992). *Quality Circle Time in the Classroom.* Wishech Learning Disabilities Association Prentice Hall: New York.
- Moon, T. R, Brighton, C.M, Jarvis, J. M & Hall, C. J (2004). *State standardized testing programmes. Their effects on teachers and students.* The National Research Centre on the gifted and talented. University of Connecticut, USA
- Schweitzer, R. (2013). *Study tips in Silicon Valley.* Canada.
- Shrum, S. (2013). *Test preparation,* Veritas Prep. Canada