

Possible Test-Taking Problems Students Might Have and What to Do About Them

Problems and Solutions	% of Students with This Problem
1. Spending too much time on difficult questions or not finishing the test. <i>Solution: Teach students to skip difficult questions and come back to them later; practice pacing themselves; practice making educated guesses; and practice skimming and scanning.</i>	
2. Not guessing. <i>Solution: Teach students how to make educated guesses and tell them that guessing is acceptable.</i>	
3. Not understanding directions or not listening to instructions. <i>Solution: Use the directions to take classroom quizzes; define words in the directions students might not know; give students longer and longer directions to follow.</i>	
4. Not using answer sheets correctly or not knowing how to fill in the bubbles on the answer sheet. <i>Solution: Practice using a similar answer sheet during instruction.</i>	
5. Not knowing how to organize test materials on the desk, how to handle a test booklet and separate answer sheet, or how to keep track of their place on the answer sheet. <i>Solution: Practice these skills during classroom quizzes or on simple questions just before the test. Show students how to mark their place with a pencil, eraser, or ruler.</i>	
6. Experiencing excessive nervousness and anxiety. <i>Solution: Let students know what to expect (content, length, etc.), what to bring, how to prepare physically, practice positive self-talk, and most importantly, involve students in classroom assessment during instruction so that they understand the learning targets.</i>	
7. Finishing too early, not checking over answers, or skipping too many questions. <i>Solution: Let students know it is acceptable to make educated guesses; give students a way to identify questions that they want to go back and check; have students practice using all of a given amount of time to check for skipped questions or questionable answers.</i>	
8. Exhibiting disruptive behaviors or sharing answers with others. <i>Solutions: Move students up front; space students out; sometimes have students practice working alone; provide test “barriers” on individual desks.</i>	
9. Showing up late for the test or not showing up at all. <i>Solution: Contact parents to identify the underlying problem.</i>	
10. Lacking motivation to try hard on the test; e.g., making designs on the answer sheet. <i>Solution: Build student confidence throughout the term by using assessment for learning strategies.</i>	
11. Needing to use the bathroom during testing. <i>Solution: Provide opportunities before the test. Make sure all students know in advance that the time to use the bathroom is before the test.</i>	