



Lessening Exam Anxiety

Many students arrive at exams in a state of mild anxiety, which grows until the teacher tells them to turn over their papers and begin. The first question looks familiar but they don't remember exactly how to do it, so they move on to the second, promising themselves, "I'll come back to the first question as soon as I remember." Education expert Nick Whitehead of Oxford Learning says, "the real problem is that students freeze when they ask their memory to recall information that they've learned and filed incorrectly. The secret to overcoming freezing is shifting from a passive mindset (I'll just sit here and wait for the teacher to teach me) to an active process of questioning, summarizing and integrating information." Whitehead offers the following five steps for active learning:

1. **Study notes:** Spend 10 minutes per subject every night and summarize the day's lessons into study notes. Break the information down into Main Idea, Supporting Details and Sub Details.
2. **Review:** Review your study notes 48 hours later. Don't memorize; just make sure you understand what they mean.
3. **Keep Track:** Track your assignments, tests, homework and personal information.
4. **Learn about yourself:** What things distract you? Noise? Movement? Crowds? When you discover what makes it hard for you to pay attention, change your environment.
5. **Set long-range goals:** Keep your eye on your long-range goals and dreams. Stop expecting school to entertain you and stop blaming school for not meeting all your expectations. You'll begin to feel more control and power over your life.