

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING EXAMS

A resource for all educators



Curated by



Ways to enjoy teaching an exam session

1. Deflate the pressure of the exam

There's no way to stop students from feeling stressed about an upcoming exam, so the best strategy in the classroom is to prepare them. Outside the classroom, encourage students to take a break and not leave everything until the last minute.

2. Ready your repertoire

All teachers have a few tricks up their sleeves. A bank of activities that they know are effective and enjoyable. This also applies to exam courses just because your students are studying for an exam, it doesn't mean you can not have fun in class.

Whatever your favourite classroom activities are, try them out. Just remember to give them an element of what your student's exams will look like.

3. Delegate task creation

Find ways for your students to take part in teaching activities. Asking students to create their exam tasks is an excellent way for them to exercise autonomy and learn more about the test format.

Allow students to find their texts and create comprehension questions to go with it. Alternatively, they could turn it into the use of English exercise by removing words from the text and having their partners try and complete the gaps.

If you're struggling to find interesting or relevant photos for the speaking paper, get students to bring in their pictures or use the ones they have on their phones. Once they know how the exam works, they can even try creating their questions to go with them.

4. Monitor progress

Source tutorials that will enable students to feel comfortable sharing their feelings with the teacher about how they are progressing. Try to get them to write down three things they like about the course and one thing they think could be better.

You can use this in your 1-to-1 tutorials or use it to spark a group discussion. There's a good chance they'll all say similar things, and it will allow you to do more of what they love and also to address any doubts they have.

5. Manage exam practice

Don't overload students with exam tasks, especially at the start of the school year. Many students won't, in the beginning, stages of the course, be prepared for these tasks. Failing or getting bad scores early on can be demotivating and can impact their confidence long term. Like taking sips of hot coffee, exam practice should be administered in small doses, with frequency increasing as the exam approaches.

6. Mark writing efficiently

Instead of marking each mistake on every piece of writing, identify common repeated errors and focus on those as a whole class. Not only will this lead to better results for students, but it significantly reduces marking time, too.

Along with this strategy, having a clear system that your students understand is also highly effective for saving time and reducing stress. Create a checklist they can use to assess their own work before submitting it, or create a code you can use so they can easily identify what your feedback relates to (grammar, vocabulary, register, etc.).

Remember to give feedback on things they do well, and always allow them to submit a final draft with your feedback taken into account.

Enjoyment is contagious

The more we as educators enjoy the work that we do. The easier it is for our students to enjoy the lessons and the easier it is for them to learn.

Source: 2022

