


Building confidence & managing stress in exam classes

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Session Overview

Teaching exam classes Exploring stress Ways of managing stress

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Why do learners still sit exams in 2022?

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Exams – For

- International Language Exams open doors
- Evaluate students' performance
- Develop exam taking skills */life skills*
- Enable students to develop useful learning strategies
- Many items are actually quite useful
- Keep the school system accountable
- Give students a clear goal

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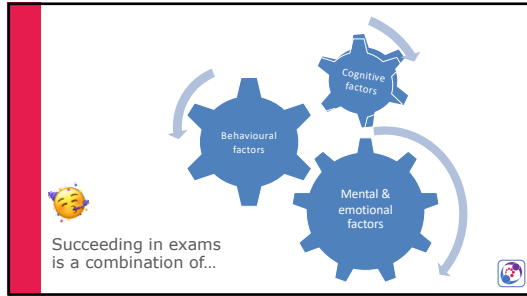
Exams – Against

- Some items are not directly useful or relevant to learners
- Some exams don't just test the students' level of English
- Negative washback
- Exams can cause stress and students might underperform
- Exams can affect a student's life

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Exams are **a major part** of a our lives whether we, or our students, like it or not...

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What do you think?

1. Stress is a positive sensation.
2. Stress is a negative sensation.

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Stress is our **body's response** to a stimulus that our environment offers us, and as such it is not positive or negative...

Boniewicz & Tunariu, 2019

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What kind of **stress responses** have you noticed?

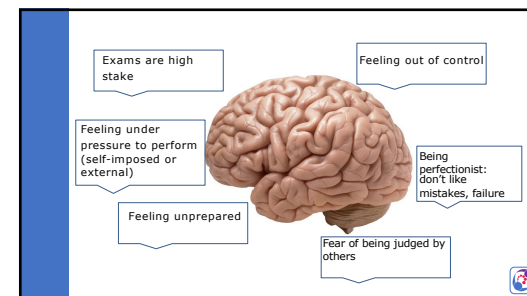
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Cognitive symptoms	Physiological symptoms	Behavioural symptoms
Lack of focus/ concentration	Headaches	Refusal/ lack of attendance
Forgetfulness	Butterflies/ stomach aches/ nausea	Disruptive behaviour / anger
Inability to make decisions	Dry mouth/ rapid heartbeat	Trouble making friendships
Catastrophic thinking	Sweatiness/ blushing	Trouble maintain friendships
Self-doubt/ negative self talk	Muscle tension	Inability to relax
	Insomnia/ fatigue	Indifference
	Shaking/ dizziness	

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Why do exams **trigger** a stress response?

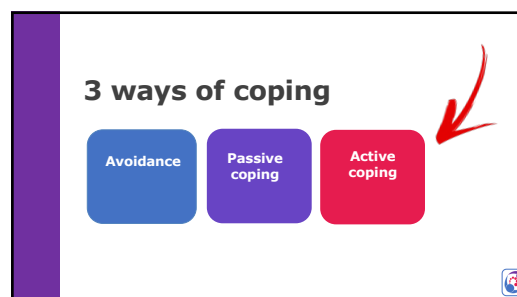
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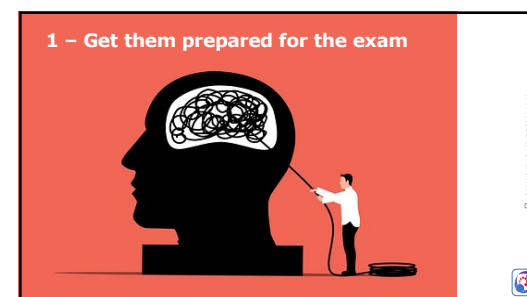
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So, the question is, **how** can **we** best help our learners prepare?

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- Explain **what** knowledge & skills are key for the exam
- Develop students' **test familiarity**
- Explore helpful **strategies**
- Activate students' **thinking skills**
- Explain the **evaluation criteria**
- Create **good learning habits**
- Analyse **model texts & answers**
- **Practise** strategies
- Enable learners to **cope** with exam stress & anxiety

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2- Develop Social Emotional Skills

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Self Awareness

The ability to **recognise one's own emotions**, thoughts, strengths and limitations. For example, having confidence and optimism.

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Spot the signs

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Cognitive signs
 Are you find it hard to focus on what you are doing?
 Do you tend to forget more things?
 Do you find decision making hard?

Physical signs
 Are you losing sleep?
 Do you have headaches?
 Do you feel tense?

Emotional & behavioural signs
 Do you easily feel/act emotional?
 Do you find it hard to 'turn off'?
 Are you using unhelpful thinking?

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MOOD METER

Name it to tame it!
 Dan Siegel

<https://www.ycei.org/>

I feel ... what can I do to feel more ... ?

FRANDED	FURIOUS	FRENZIED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED	FRUSTRATED
LIVID	WRATHFUL	BEROUBED	RESTLESS	HYPERT	DISSIDENT	INTOXICATED	FLATLINED	THIRILLED		
FLOUNDERING	APATHETIC	WORRIED	WONDERED	EMBARRASSED	LIVELY	OPTIMISTIC				
DEFENSIVE	FRANKLED	WORRY	FEARED	PLEASANT	SUREFUL	PROUD	TRULIFUL			
DISAPPOINTED	DISMAYED	GLUM	ASHAMED	BLISSFUL	IN EASE	CONFIDENT	FULFILLED			
MISLITIFIED	WALKAWAY	MOPEY	HEARTBROKEN	HUMBLED	SECURE	CHILL	GRATIFIED			
PARANOID	EXCLUDED	TIMID	DRAINED	CALM	INTOXICATED	RELINQUISHED	CONFIDENT			
HALFONE	DOWN	BORED	TUNED	RELIEVED	RESTFUL	TRANQUIL	SERENE			

↑ HIGH ENERGY AWARENESS
 ↓ LOW ENERGY AWARENESS

← NEGATIVE → POSITIVE →

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Self Management

The ability to regulate and manage emotions, thoughts and behaviours in different situations. This includes **managing stress**.

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Compass Talk

- What do you **need** to know to help you prepare for the exam?
- What do you find **exciting** about the opportunities the exams may offer you?
- What **worries** you about your upcoming exam?
- What **steps** can you take to prepare yourself?

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Checking in

- Do I know how to spot when I'm stressed?
- Can I think of ways to relax and destress?
- Do I know what I want or need to achieve in my exams?
- Do I have a revision plan that will work for me?
- Do I know where to get help and advice about revising?
- Am I keeping things in perspective?
- Do I get enough **sleep**, fun and relaxation?

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Manage the mind

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Various sources to find ideas to calm the mind







- <https://the10minutemind.com/>
- <https://actionforhappiness.org/>
- <https://mindfulinschools.nz/>
- <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/resources.html>
- Calm App
- Headspace App
- Insight timer App

3-3-3
 -Name 3 things you can see
 -Identify 3 things you can hear
 -Move/touch 3 body parts

4-7-8
 -Breathe in for 4
 -Hold for 7
 -Exhale for 8

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Thinking traps...

All or nothing thinking  Sometimes called black and white thinking If I'm not perfect I have failed Either I do it right or not at all	Over-generalizing  Seeing a pattern based upon a single event or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw "I'm not perfect" "I'm not good" "I'm not smart"
Jumping to conclusions  There are two key types of jumping to conclusions: Mind reading (imagining we know what others are thinking) Fortune telling (predicting the future) 2 + 2 = 5	Magnification (catastrophizing) or minimization  Blowing things out of proportion Catastrophizing or exaggerating the importance of something to make it seem less important
Emotional reasoning  Assuming that because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true I feel embarrassed so I must be	should  Using critical words like "should," "must," or "ought" can make us feel guilty or like we have already failed If we apply "should" to other people, the result is often frustration

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SITS or SATS?

Stress inducing thoughts **Stress alleviating thoughts**

A. Either I do it right or not at all!

B. If my score is lower than my friend I must be stupid

C. I'm not perfect I have failed

3. I can just give it a go and see how much I do know!

1. I can ask my friend for feedback and keep learning

2. I have done what I could for now and can try again

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3- Taking positive action



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Positive Reflections



- One success I had this week...
- Two mistakes I've learned from this week...
- Three things I now confidently remember...
- Four things I've learnt this week...
- Five things I'm grateful for...

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Anchoring



- Choose an emotional state you want more of
- Remember a time/ place you experienced this
- Choose a unique anchor
- Remember what you saw, heard, felt
- Establish your anchor
- Reinforce it

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Self-management in our students starts with how well **we** can identify and reduce our own stressors. How well **we** can stay calm.... We can't give them, what we can't give to **ourselves...**

Shanley, 2016

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Bedtime reading...



The slide features three book covers. The first is 'Teacher Wellbeing' by Carol Vorderman, with a purple and blue cover. The second is 'Mindset: How You Can Fulfill Your Potential' by Carol Dweck, with a blue cover featuring a silhouette of a head. The third is 'The Exam Skills Handbook' by Stella Cottrell, with a red cover. At the bottom right, there are logos for 'Education Scotland' and a circular logo with a person icon.

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Thank you for your active participation!

PRACTICE DOESN'T MAKE PERFECT; PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT.



The slide is split into two vertical panels. The left panel is white and contains the text 'Thank you for your active participation!' and the Teacher Train logo with the website 'www.teachertrain.org'. The right panel is black and contains the quote 'PRACTICE DOESN'T MAKE PERFECT; PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT.' in multi-colored capital letters.

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