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June 1st to July 31st, 2023

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COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO CREATING EFFECTIVE TESTS FOR STUDENTS

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FORMATS & TOOLKIT

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STUDENT ADVICE

Beat Exam Stress with
These 5 Proven Strategies

ADVANCING EDUCATION


The Promises & Challenges of
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INTERVIEW WITH THE EXECUTIVE HEAD OF

MARYMOUNT
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FROM THE EDITORS **LOOK WITH IN TO STREAMLINE YOUR PROCESSES**

JONATHAN ZHANG

Embrace the future of education in our latest edition. We've curated insights and strategies for educators, students, and institutions. From creating influential test papers to open-book exam challenges, our articles provide a broad view of education. Dive into innovative exam formats, value parental involvement, and find inspiration in our interview with Ms. Sarah Gallagher, Executive Head of Marymount International School Rome. Discover stress management strategies, explore open-book exam pros and cons, and elevate global educational standards. Join us on this enlightening journey to explore, learn, and celebrate the transformative power of knowledge.

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ARTICLE 01

COMPLETE GUIDE ON HOW TO CREATE EFFECTIVE TEST PAPERS FOR STUDENTS

WRITTEN BY: LORI GASKIN, PEER EVALUATOR – SPAIN REGION

Creating a test is one of the most challenging tasks confronting an instructor. Unfortunately, many of us have had little, if any, preparation in writing tests.

Well constructed tests motivate students and reinforce learning. These tests enable teachers to assess the students mastery of the course objectives. These Tests also provide feedback on teaching, often showing what was or was not communicated clearly. While always demanding, test writing may be made easier by considering the following suggestions for general test construction.

GENERAL TIPS ABOUT TESTING

✓ Length of Test

In theory, the more items a test has, the more reliable it is. On a short test a few wrong answers can have a great effect on the overall results. On a long test, a few wrong answers will not influence the results as much. A long test does have drawbacks. If a test is too long, and particularly if students are doing the same kind of item over and over, they may get tired and not respond accurately or seriously. If a test needs to be lengthy, divide it into sections with different kinds of tasks, to maintain the student's interest.

✓ Test Frequently

Frequent testing helps students to avoid getting behind, provides instructors with multiple sources of information to use in computing the final course grade (thus minimizing the effect of “bad days”), and gives students regular feedback. It is important to test various topics in proportion to the emphasis given in class. Students will expect this practice and will study with this expectation.

✓ Clear, Concise Instructions

It is necessary to give clear, concise instructions. It is useful to provide an example of a worked problem, which helps the students understand exactly what is necessary. What seems to be clear to the writer may be unclear to someone else.

✓ Mix It Up!

It is often advantageous to mix types of items (multiple choice, true–false, essay) on a written exam or to mix types of exams (a performance component with a written component). Weaknesses connected with one kind of item or component or in students' test taking skills will be minimized.

✓ Test Early

It is helpful for instructors to test early in the term and consider discounting the first test if results are poor. Students often need a practice test to understand the format each instructor uses and anticipate the best way to prepare for and take particular tests.

✔ Check For Accuracy

Instructors should be cautious about using tests written by others. Often, items developed by a previous instructor, a textbook publisher, etc., can save a lot of time, but they should be checked for accuracy and appropriateness in the given course.

✔ Proofread Exams

On written exams, it is important to proofread exams carefully and, when possible, have another person proofread them. Tiny mistakes, such as incorrect numbering the responses, can cause big problems later. Collation should also be checked carefully, since missing pages can cause a great deal of trouble.

A well-designed test empowers students to excel and learn. Employ diverse question types, ensure clarity, and align with objectives for optimal outcomes.

✔ One Wrong Answer

Generally, on either a written or performance test, it is wise to avoid having separate items or tasks depend upon answers or skills required in previous items or tasks. A student's initial mistake will be perpetuated over the course of succeeding items or tasks, penalizing the student repeatedly for one error.

✔ Special Considerations

It is important to anticipate special considerations that learning disabled students or non-native speakers may need. The instructor needs to anticipate special needs in advance and decide whether or not students will be allowed the use of dictionaries, extra time, separate testing sites, or other special conditions.

✔ A Little Humor

Instructors have found that using a little humor or placing less difficult items or tasks at the beginning of an exam can help students with test anxiety to reduce their preliminary tension and thus provide a more accurate demonstration of their progress.

WHEN TO USE ESSAY OR OBJECTIVE TESTS

Essay tests are appropriate when:

- ▶ The group to be tested is small & the test is not to be reused.
- ▶ You wish to encourage and reward the development of student skill in writing.
- ▶ You are more interested in exploring the student's attitudes than in measuring his/her achievements.

Objective tests are appropriate when:

- ▶ The group to be tested is large and the test may be reused.
- ▶ Highly reliable scores must be obtained as efficiently as possible. impartiality of evaluation, fairness, and freedom from possible test scoring influences are essential.

Use both simultaneously to achieve efficient results

Either essay or objective tests can be used to:

- ▶ Measure almost any important educational achievement that a written test can measure.
- ▶ Test understanding & ability to apply principles.
- ▶ Test ability to think critically.
- ▶ Test ability to solve problems.

Conventional wisdom accurately portrays short answer and essay examinations as the easiest to write and the most difficult to grade, particularly if they are graded well.

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL QUALITY OF A TEST*

1. Cognitive Complexity

<p>Knowledge</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Recognizing and recalling information, including dates, events, persons, places, terms, definitions, facts, principles, theories, methods and procedure.</p>	<p><i>Who invented the ...? What is meant by ...? Where is the?</i></p>
<p>Comprehension</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Understanding the meaning of information, including restating (in own word); translating from one form to another; or interpreting, explaining and summarizing.</p>	<p><i>Restate in your words? Convert fractions into? List three reasons for?</i></p>
<p>Application</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Applying general rules, methods or principles to a new situation, including classifying something as a specific example of a general principle of using a formula to solve a problem.</p>	<p><i>How is ... an example of...? How is ... related to...? Why is ... significant ?</i></p>
<p>Analysis</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Identifying the organization and patterns within a system by identifying its component parts and the relationships among the companions.</p>	<p><i>What are the parts of...? Classify ... according to ... Outline/diagram ...</i></p>
<p>Synthesis</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Discovering/creating new connections, generalizations, patterns or perspectives; combining ideas to form a new whole perspective.</p>	<p><i>What would you infer from...? What ideas can you add to ...? How would you create a ...?</i></p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p><i>Sample question frames</i></p>
<p>Using evidence and reasoned argument to judge how well a proposal would accomplish a particular purpose; resolving controversies or differences of opinion.</p>	<p><i>Do you agree....? How would you decide...? What priority would you give..?</i></p>

2. Content Quality Standard

Several critical questions arise regarding the content quality of the test. What are the test specifications? What skills do they indicate will be tested? How many questions and areas will be covered? How many sections will there be? What formats will be used for testing? If an instructor has predominantly focused on the War of 1812 in class sessions and activities, this emphasis should be evident in the test. A test that encompasses a broader time frame might be considered unfair by students, even if the instructor has informed them that they are responsible for material not discussed in class. Students tend to align more with instructors' implied values than their stated ones.

3. Meaningfulness

To Achieve Meaningfulness... "In my opinion, students should not be compelled to speculate about test content or attempt to anticipate the teacher's expectations. Research indicates that less capable students are disproportionately penalized when they fail to discern the test requirements. More adept students seem to have an intuition for the teacher's intentions, but those who need assistance the most may struggle even more if they have to guess what to study. The straightforward solution to this issue is to provide students with specific

study questions and then base the test on those questions. This approach is occasionally criticized as 'teaching to the test,' assuming that offering study questions encourages a superficial approach. However, this is true only if there are very few study questions. If a teacher furnishes questions encompassing all significant concepts in an assignment, teaching the test becomes tantamount to teaching the course."

4. Language Appropriateness Standard

Test items should be formulated in clear, straightforward language, devoid of irrelevant content and extraneous hints. Furthermore, test items should be devoid of biases related to race, ethnicity, and gender. Beyond these criteria, students' language backgrounds can influence their performance on tests. The vocabulary (uncommon usage; non-literal usage) and the syntax of the test (atypical parts of speech; complex structures) might pose linguistic barriers. Modifications for students with limited English proficiency may encompass: assessments in their native language; alterations in vocabulary; adjustments to linguistic complexity; inclusion of visual aids; utilization of glossaries in the native language; use of English glossaries; linguistic simplification of test directions; and additional exemplar items/tasks.

5. Transfer & Conception

Presentations, scenarios, projects, and portfolios introduce dimensions to assessment that traditional testing cannot. Authentic and performance assessments enable teachers to draw valid conclusions about achievement more effectively. These conclusions may inform decisions about instructional placement, formative evaluation, and diagnostics. Well-constructed tests, whether objective or performance-based, empower teachers to discern the next steps in teaching. Teachers can also monitor a student's learning while instruction is ongoing and adjust the instructional program as necessary.

6. Fairness

Here are several fundamental principles of fairness: test questions should align with unit objectives; expectations should be clear to students; each test item should present a well-defined task; no item should facilitate answering another; sufficient time for test completion should be provided; and points should be allocated before test administration. Constructive grading requires instructors to

provide feedback (written and/or oral) that assists students in understanding their accomplishments and areas for improvement as indicated by the test. This feedback could encompass: affirming comments on a test or paper that convey respect for the student's attempts; commendation for achieved tasks and suggestions for enhancing performance.

Five hundred secondary and postsecondary students were surveyed for suggestions on how an instructor can grade fairly and accurately.

Here are the top 10 responses.

1. Consider grading based only on mastery of material and not on personalities or perceived effort.
2. Do not over emphasize grades. Emphasize learning over grades.
3. Keep students informed of their progress throughout the term.
4. Clearly state grading policies and procedures in the syllabus and review them with the class during orientation.
5. Avoid modifying policies during the term.
6. Provide plenty of opportunities for assessment. This will avoid unnecessary pressure from students.
7. Provide some choice in format or topic when assigning work.
8. Keep accurate records of grades. Record numerical grades, rather than letter grades, when possible.
9. Consider allowing rewrites on papers.
10. If many students do poorly on an exam, schedule an exam for the following week to retest the class.



7. Reliability

The fundamental purpose of testing is to promote learning. A well-designed test includes items that are not easily guessed without proper study. It is possible to devise various test questions that cannot be guessed readily, thereby necessitating students to comprehend essential factual material. Multiple-choice questions are often criticized as "multiple guess" queries. The remedy for this concern is to fashion multiple-choice items in a way that students with adequate knowledge of the subject are more likely to select the correct option, while those with lesser knowledge are more likely to choose an incorrect one

GENERAL TEST TAKING TIPS TEACHERS CAN GIVE TO STUDENTS



1. Advise students to review the entire test before starting. This helps them determine sections that are quick and easy, and those needing more time and thought.

2. Encourage students to underline vital words in directions, like list, discuss, define, etc.

3. Instruct students to tackle easy questions first when taking a test.

4. Advise students to remain calm. Being pressurized can vanish everything from their brain.

5. Recommend students to mark questions left blank with a checkmark for later completion.

6. Prompt students to hold onto their test until a thorough review is done. Ensure each task is completed, and answers match their intentions.



Lori Gaskin, Chair

PEER EVALUATOR – SPAIN REGION

Dr. Lori Gaskin, serving since 2016, holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Nevada, an M.A. in Geography, and a B.A. in Geography from the University of California, Los Angeles. Previously Superintendent/President of Santa Barbara City College, she also led West Valley College and Lake Tahoe Community College. Her career began as faculty at Barstow College, and she possesses expertise in planning and fiscal oversight.

ARTICLE 02

UNLOCKING EXAM EXCELLENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

WRITTEN BY: DR. ERIKA LACRO

Preparing students effectively for exams is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a strategic and comprehensive approach. Educational institutes play a pivotal role in shaping students' exam readiness by providing the right resources, guidance, and support. Let's delve deeper into how institutes can create an optimal exam preparation environment, accompanied by real case studies from notable educational institutions.

1. Curriculum Alignment

Ensuring alignment between the curriculum and exam content is paramount. Clear communication about exam expectations, topics, and weightage enables students to focus their preparation. A case in point is **Harvard University**, which provides students with detailed syllabi and course guides that outline learning objectives and assessment methods, helping students streamline their study efforts.



2. Early Awareness

Timely notification of upcoming exams allows students to plan and organize their study schedules efficiently. The University of California, Berkeley, exemplifies this by publishing exam schedules at the beginning of each semester. This practice helps students manage their time and allocate study hours effectively.

3. Diverse Study Material

Access to a diverse range of study materials enhances students' exam readiness. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) offers OpenCourseWare, providing free online access to course materials, lecture notes, and exams. This initiative ensures that students have ample resources to supplement their preparation.



4. Effective Study Techniques

Institutes can empower students with effective study techniques tailored to their learning styles. Active learning methods such as concept mapping, peer teaching, and problem-solving promote deeper understanding and long-term retention. Encouraging regular revision, practice tests, and spaced learning intervals optimize memory consolidation.

A prime illustration of this tailored approach to study techniques can be witnessed at Stanford University. Renowned for its innovative educational practices, **Stanford integrates** a variety of active learning methods to enhance students' exam readiness.

In courses like "Introduction to Computer Science," Stanford incorporates **concept mapping exercises**, where students visually represent complex programming concepts and their interrelations. This hands-on approach not only aids in comprehension but also encourages critical thinking and creativity, essential skills for exam success.

Peer teaching is another valuable technique employed by Stanford. In collaborative projects, students assume the role of educators, explaining concepts to their peers. This practice not only reinforces their own understanding but also enhances communication skills and fosters a supportive learning community.



Problem-solving forms a cornerstone of Stanford's exam preparation strategy. The university designs problem-based assignments and case studies that challenge students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This approach cultivates analytical thinking, hones decision-making skills, and equips students to excel in exam scenarios that require practical application.

Stanford's commitment to optimizing memory consolidation is evident in its approach to revision. The university encourages students to engage in **regular review sessions**, where they revisit and summarize key concepts at spaced intervals. This technique leverages the spacing effect, a



cognitive phenomenon that enhances long-term retention by strategically distributing study sessions over time.

By adopting a blend of active learning techniques, concept mapping, peer teaching, and strategic revision, Stanford University aligns its study strategies with diverse learning styles, catering to students' individual strengths and preferences. This comprehensive approach not only enhances students' grasp of subject matter but also equips them with versatile skills that are invaluable in exam settings.



5. Regular Assessments

Incorporating regular formative assessments and quizzes throughout the academic term aids in continuous learning and progress tracking. Stanford University integrates online quizzes and weekly problem sets into their courses, allowing students to assess their understanding and adjust their study focus accordingly.

6. Mock Exams

Simulating exam conditions through mock exams is essential for reducing anxiety and enhancing familiarity with the test format. Yale University conducts mock midterm and final exams, providing students with the opportunity to practice under timed conditions and gain valuable experience.

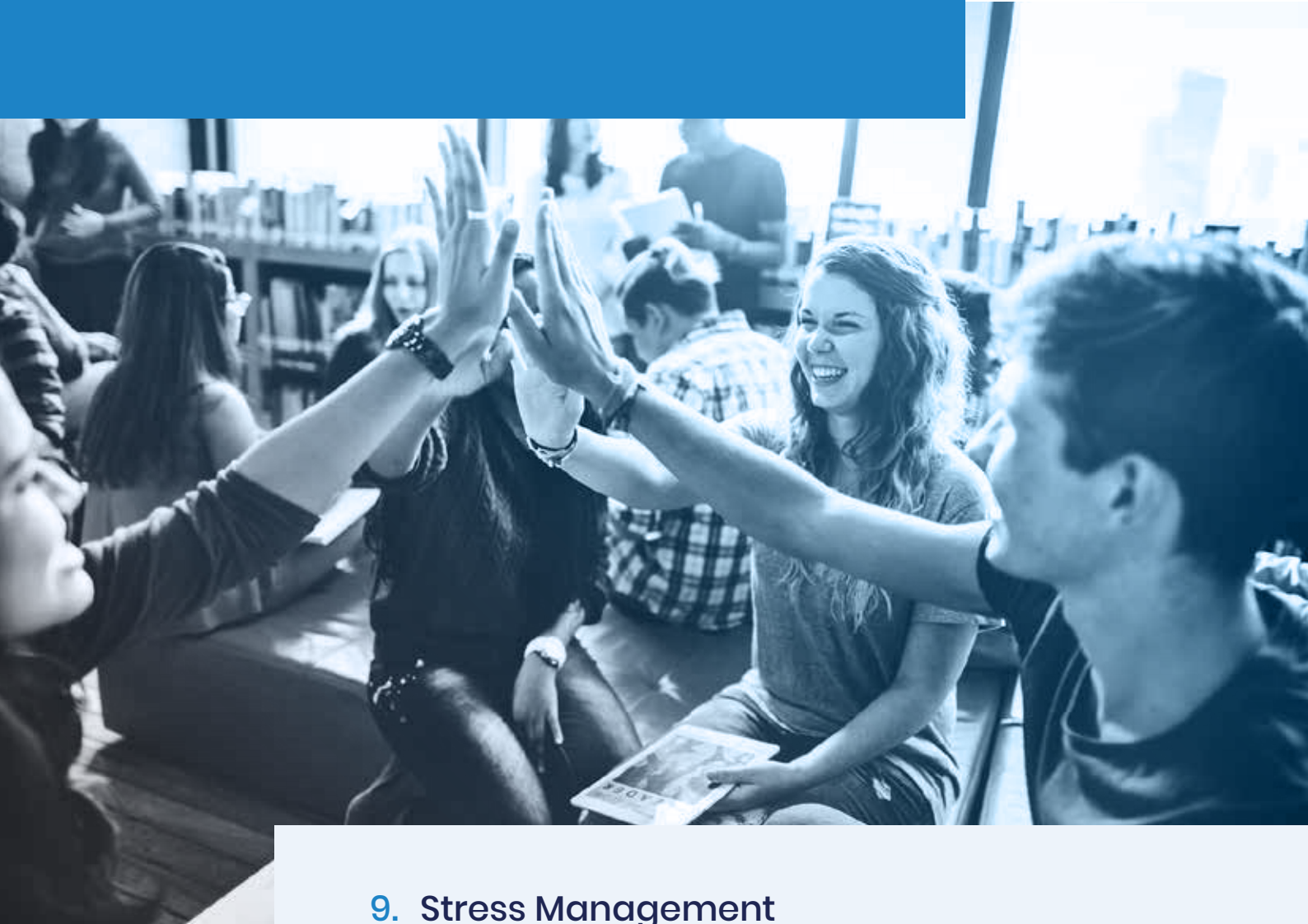
7. Personalized Support

Assigning mentors or academic advisors to guide students offers personalized guidance. University College London (UCL) has a Personal Tutoring system that provides students with individual support, academic advice, and study tips, fostering a sense of mentorship.



8. Time Management

Teaching students effective time management techniques equips them to balance study hours and other commitments. The University of Oxford conducts time management workshops that help students prioritize tasks, allocate study hours, and create efficient schedules.



9. Stress Management

Exam-related stress can hinder performance and well-being. Institutes can integrate mindfulness practices, relaxation techniques, and stress management workshops into their curriculum. These tools equip students with the emotional resilience needed to tackle exams with a clear and focused mindset. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), offers mindfulness workshops that teach students relaxation and stress reduction techniques, ensuring a holistic approach to exam preparation.

10. Holistic Health and Well-being

Physical and mental well-being play a crucial role in preparing students for exams. Institutes should prioritize promoting a healthy lifestyle encompassing balanced nutrition, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep. Additionally, offering counseling services and establishing support networks create vital avenues for students to address emotional concerns and maintain optimal well-being.



A real-life example of this holistic approach can be observed at the University of California, Berkeley. The university's "Be Well at Berkeley" initiative focuses on students' overall wellness, emphasizing the importance of a balanced lifestyle for academic success. Through this program, Berkeley offers a wide range of wellness resources, including fitness classes, mental health workshops, nutrition guidance, and counseling services. Students can access these resources to address both physical and emotional aspects of their well-being.

Institutes that emulate Berkeley's example demonstrate a proactive stance in nurturing students' holistic health, ultimately enhancing their overall exam readiness and overall well-being. By integrating wellness programs, counseling services, and support networks, institutes empower students to navigate the challenges of exam preparation with resilience and a balanced approach.



13. Parental Involvement

Engaging parents in the exam preparation process creates a strong support system. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) hosts information sessions for parents to understand the university's assessment methods and offer guidance to their children.

11. Access to Teachers

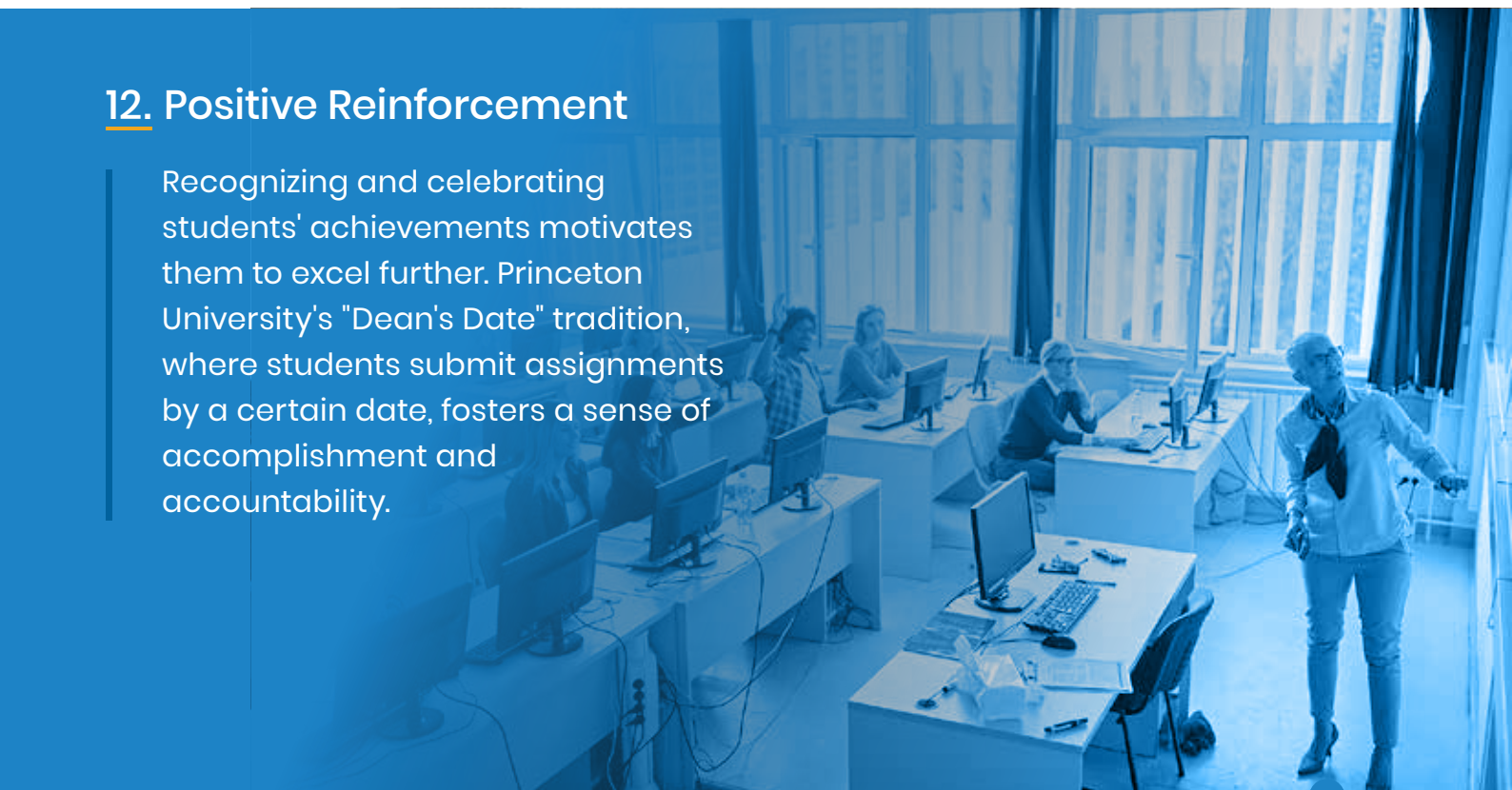
Ensuring easy access to teachers for doubt clarification enhances students' confidence and understanding. The University of Michigan provides virtual office hours, enabling students to interact with professors and seek guidance outside of regular class time.

14. Post-Exam Reflection

Encouraging students to reflect on their exam performance promotes self-awareness and continuous improvement. Oxford Brookes University incorporates reflective learning activities into their curriculum, enabling students to analyze their strengths and areas for growth.

12. Positive Reinforcement

Recognizing and celebrating students' achievements motivates them to excel further. Princeton University's "Dean's Date" tradition, where students submit assignments by a certain date, fosters a sense of accomplishment and accountability.



END WORD:

Educational institutes around the world are implementing these strategies to enhance exam preparation and facilitate students' success. By aligning curricula, providing resources, teaching study techniques, and fostering a supportive environment, institutes empower students to approach exams with confidence and achieve academic excellence. These case studies underscore the effectiveness of these approaches and highlight the impact they have on students' overall learning experience.

In conclusion, preparing students for exams requires a collaborative effort between educational institutes, students, & parents. By adopting a multifaceted approach that addresses academic, emotional, and practical aspects of exam preparation, institutes create an environment conducive to success. The real-life examples presented here demonstrate that with thoughtful planning and dedicated efforts, institutes can truly unlock exam excellence and empower students to reach their full potential.



Dr. Erika Lacro

PEER EVALUATOR – GERMANY

Dr Erika since 2019, is UH's Vice President for Community Colleges, overseeing seven colleges. With UH since 2002, she was Honolulu Community College's first woman Chancellor, served at UH Mānoa School of Travel Industry Management, and Hawai'i's largest resort. Holding a Ph.D. in Communication and Information Sciences, M.S. in Travel Industry Management, and B.S. in Travel Industry Management, all from UH Mānoa, she's active nationally in Achieving the Dream and more, and internationally in Community Colleges for International Development.

ARTICLE 03

EXPLORING INNOVATIVE EXAM FORMATS AND ASSESSMENTS

WRITTEN BY: **KATHLEEN F. BURKE**

Traditional exam formats have long been the cornerstone of education, evaluating students' knowledge through written tests and essays. However, the ever-evolving landscape of education demands a fresh perspective on assessments. This article delves into the realm of innovative exam formats and assessments that not only foster creative thinking but also provide a more comprehensive measure of students' abilities.

1. Project-Based Assessments

Project-based assessments challenge students to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios. Instead of conventional exams, students work on projects that require research, critical analysis, problem-solving, and presentation skills. For instance, in a biology course, students could design and conduct their own experiments, showcasing their understanding of scientific principles.

Example:

At Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), project-based assessments have taken center stage. In engineering courses, students collaborate on real-world projects, designing prototypes and solutions. This approach fosters hands-on application of theoretical knowledge, promoting critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

2. Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio assessment compiles students' work over a period, showcasing their progress and growth. This approach highlights the journey of learning rather than focusing solely on a single exam performance. Students curate a collection of their best work, reflective essays, and projects that demonstrate a holistic understanding of the subject.

Example:

Harvard University's Graduate School of Education employs portfolio assessment in teacher training programs. Aspiring educators compile portfolios showcasing lesson plans, classroom observations, and reflective essays. This comprehensive documentation demonstrates their growth, teaching philosophy, and ability to adapt strategies to diverse learners.



Example:

Stanford University's d.school (Hasso Plattner Institute of Design) adopts collaborative assessments. In design thinking courses, students work in teams to address complex challenges, combining diverse perspectives and expertise. This approach nurtures interpersonal skills, empathy, and iterative problem-solving.

3. Collaborative Assessments

Collaborative assessments encourage teamwork and interpersonal skills. Students collaborate on projects, discussions, or presentations, demonstrating their ability to communicate, delegate tasks, and synergize efforts. This format prepares them for real-world situations where collaboration is essential.

4. Performance Based Assessments

Performance-based assessments assess skills that extend beyond memorization. For instance, in language courses, students engage in real-life conversations, role plays, or presentations to demonstrate their speaking and listening abilities. These assessments mirror practical language use in authentic contexts.

Example:

Curtin University, Australia, incorporates performance-based assessments in its music programs. Students stage live performances, showcasing mastery of instruments and techniques. This real-time demonstration evaluates their artistic expression, stage presence, and adaptability under pressure.

5. Gamified Assessments

Gamification infuses elements of games into assessments, making learning engaging and interactive. Students solve puzzles, complete quests, or participate in simulations that test their knowledge and critical thinking. This approach taps into students' intrinsic motivation and enhances their retention.

Example:

McGill University's Faculty of Medicine employs gamified assessments in anatomy courses. Virtual reality platforms immerse students in interactive anatomy lessons, challenging them to identify structures and solve medical cases. Gamification enhances engagement, making learning enjoyable and effective.

Example:

The University of Cambridge, renowned for its rigorous examinations, integrates open-book assessments. In law courses, students access legal resources during exams, focusing on applying statutes to complex scenarios. This approach measures analytical skills and legal reasoning rather than rote memorization.

6. Open-Book Exams

Open-book exams focus on application and analysis rather than memorization. Students are allowed access to resources during the exam, encouraging them to think critically, synthesize information, and apply concepts to solve complex problems.



7. Interactive Assessments

Interactive assessments leverage technology to create dynamic learning experiences. Online platforms offer interactive simulations, virtual labs, and multimedia presentations that assess students' understanding through hands-on engagement.

Example:

Imperial College London introduces interactive assessments in science disciplines. Students explore virtual labs, conducting experiments and analyzing data. This dynamic approach nurtures research skills, data interpretation, and adaptability to technological advancements.

8. Scenario-Based Assessments

Scenario-based assessments present students with real-life scenarios where they must make informed decisions. This format evaluates their ability to analyze situations, consider consequences, and formulate solutions. It is particularly relevant in fields like business, ethics, and social sciences.

Example:

Singapore Management University embraces scenario-based assessments in business ethics courses. Students analyze ethical dilemmas and develop solutions for real-world corporate challenges. This method hones ethical decision-making, critical analysis, and effective communication.



9. Oral Assessments

Oral assessments emphasize verbal communication and presentation skills. Students explain concepts, answer questions, or engage in debates, showcasing their ability to articulate ideas & respond effectively.

Example:

University of Oxford incorporates oral assessments in modern languages. Students engage in conversations with native speakers, showcasing their linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness. Oral assessments assess spoken communication, comprehension, and cultural sensitivity.

10. Self-Assessment & Reflection

Self-assessment encourages students to evaluate their own learning progress, identifying strengths & areas for improvement. Incorporating reflection essays or journals allows students to demonstrate metacognition & self-directed learning.

Example:

Incorporating these innovative exam formats and assessments provides a holistic view of students' capabilities, going beyond rote memorization and encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and practical application. By embracing these approaches, educators prepare students for the complex challenges of the 21st century, fostering a generation of learners equipped to thrive in diverse and dynamic environments.



Kathleen F. Burke

PEER EVALUATOR – ITALY

Kathleen F. Burke, serving since 2016, holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Nevada, and M.A. and B.A. degrees in Geography from the University of California, Los Angeles. She retired as Superintendent/President of Santa Barbara City College in August 2016 after four years. With a background as a faculty member at Barstow College, Dr. Gaskin excels in planning, fiscal oversight, educational policies, and institutional evaluation. She has led six comprehensive evaluation and follow-up teams.

ARTICLE 04

A CONVERSATION WITH MS. SARAH GALLAGHER

EXECUTIVE HEAD OF SCHOOL OF MARYMOUNT
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ROME

We had the opportunity to interview Ms. Sarah Gallagher, the Executive Head of Marymount International School Rome. She discussed the role of innovation in education and how the school incorporates it into its programs. The school has introduced blended learning and virtual reality technology to enhance students' learning experiences. Ms. Gallagher also talked about how the school fosters a sense of community and belonging among its students through the student council's programs, activities, and initiatives.

Q. Can you tell us a little about yourself and your background?

A. Of course. I am Sarah Gallagher, the Executive Head of Marymount International School Roma, an international school in Rome, Italy. I grew up and was educated in Ireland. I received my Bachelor's Degree, a Higher Diploma in Education, and a Master's Degree in Ancient Classics at the National University of Ireland, Galway. I pursued doctoral studies in the United States. I have been working in education for over 25 years, starting as a teacher of Latin and Greek as an Assistant Professor of Classics at Purdue University and later at Ball State University. After returning to the UK in 1995, I held various teaching posts in London, becoming Deputy Head (pastoral) and Head of Boarding at St Leonards-Mayfield School, a Catholic Independent Boarding School for girls in East Sussex. I was appointed Executive Head of School for Marymount International School Rome in August 2016 and Headmistress of Marymount International School London in August 2010. I am passionate about providing students with a high-quality international education and fostering a love of learning in all my students.

Q. Can you tell us about some initiatives & programs you have implemented at Marymount International School Rome?

A. I am proud to say that I have implemented several programs to enhance our students' educational experience. One of our most successful initiatives has been our STEM program, which provides students with hands-on learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. We have also introduced a language immersion program, which allows students to become fluent in a second language.

Additionally, we have expanded our service learning program, allowing students to work with local organizations and positively impact their community. These initiatives and our strong academic program provide our students with the skills and experiences they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Q. Can you tell us about Marymount International School Rome and what makes it unique?

A. Marymount International School Rome is a co-educational, Catholic international school that provides students with a rigorous and well-rounded education. We offer programs for students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade and follow a curriculum that prepares students for success at top universities worldwide. Our faculty is highly qualified and dedicated to providing a supportive and challenging learning environment. What sets us apart is our focus on cultural diversity and our commitment to providing students with a global perspective. Our student body comes from over 50 countries, and we offer a variety of extracurricular activities, including language classes, service learning opportunities, and cultural excursions that help our students understand and appreciate the world around them.

Q. Can you talk about the future of education and how Marymount International School Rome is preparing students for it?

A. The future of education is constantly changing, and schools need to be flexible and adapt to these changes. At Marymount International School Rome, we prepare our students for the future by integrating technology into the classroom, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and encouraging creativity and innovation. We also strongly emphasize developing soft skills, such as communication, collaboration, and leadership, which are essential for success in any field.

In addition, we are committed to sustainability and environmental awareness and are incorporating these values into our curriculum and programs. By providing our students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for the future, we are confident they will succeed in whatever they choose.

Q. Can you talk about the role of innovation in education and how Marymount International School Rome is incorporating it into its programs?

A. Absolutely. Innovation is crucial in education, as it helps us to stay ahead of the curve and provide our students with the skills they need to succeed in the rapidly changing world. At Marymount International School Rome, we constantly explore new ways to incorporate technology and other innovative approaches into the classroom.

The latest technology supports the learning environment, including Italy's first Fabrication Laboratory in a private school. This space is designed for our 21st century digital natives and is built on the work of Professor Seymour Papert and his colleagues at MIT. Our program of studies is based on an international and American curriculum, culminating in the IB Diploma, which Marymount has offered for over 30 years.

Additionally, we have implemented virtual reality technology in some subjects, such as history and geography, to bring the material to life and engage our students in new and exciting ways.

Q. Please elaborate on how Marymount International School Rome fosters community & belonging among its students?

A. At Marymount International School Rome, we strongly emphasize creating a welcoming and inclusive community for all our students. A sense of belonging is essential for academic success, and we strive to provide a supportive environment where all students feel valued and respected.

To achieve this, we offer a variety of programs and activities that bring our students together, such as clubs, sports teams, and cultural events. Our student council is also active in promoting a sense of community, and our student-led initiatives have positively impacted the school culture. Additionally, our homeroom program provides a supportive and nurturing environment for our students and helps to build strong relationships between students and teachers.



Q. That's excellent to hear. Can you discuss how Marymount International School Rome prepares its students for university and beyond?

A. At Marymount International School Rome, we intensely focus on university preparation and work closely with our students to help them achieve their academic and personal goals. Our curriculum is designed to prepare students for success at top universities worldwide, and we offer a variety of programs and resources to support this goal.

For example, our extensive college counseling program guides students on university selection, admission processes, and scholarships. Our students also have the opportunity to participate in internships and service-learning programs, which give them hands-on experience in their field of interest and help to build their skills and confidence. Additionally, we encourage our students to participate in extracurricular activities, such as clubs and sports, which help to round out their university applications and prepare them for life beyond the classroom.

That's excellent. Well, Ms. Gallagher, thank you for speaking with us today and sharing your insights on Marymount International School Rome. It was a pleasure to have you.

ARTICLE 05

NAVIGATING THE PATH TO EXAM SUCCESS 5 PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING ACADEMIC STRESS

WRITTEN BY: MICHAEL CLAIRE

Exams, a quintessential component of the academic journey, often bring along an unwelcome companion—stress. The pressure to perform, coupled with the weight of expectations, can create a daunting atmosphere that hampers effective learning and preparation. However, fret not, for there exists an array of time-tested strategies to conquer exam-related stress and emerge triumphant.

1. Strategic Planning & Prioritization

The art of successful exam preparation lies in meticulous planning and intelligent prioritization. Crafting a well-structured study schedule that dissects your study sessions into manageable segments is paramount. By discerning the significance of each task and allocating dedicated intervals for restorative breaks, you can prevent burnout & maintain sustained productivity.

2. Incorporating Relaxation Techniques

Amid the frenzy of exam season, embracing relaxation techniques becomes a potent weapon against anxiety. Infuse your daily routine with practices like deep breathing exercises, mindfulness meditation, or soothing visualizations. These brief interludes of tranquility not only counter stress but also cultivate a serene mental state conducive to effective learning.



3. Sustaining Physical Activity

Engaging in regular physical activities isn't merely an exercise for the body but also a tonic for the mind. Whether it's invigorating walks, revitalizing yoga sessions, or energizing workouts, exercise releases endorphins—nature's mood enhancers. These neurotransmitters play a pivotal role in elevating your mood and alleviating stress.

4. Holistic Lifestyle Choices

The foundation of effective exam management extends beyond study materials. Nourishing your body with nutrient-dense meals, maintaining optimal hydration levels, and ensuring sufficient restorative sleep are vital components. A well-nourished body and a well-rested mind synergize to sharpen concentration levels and enhance cognitive prowess.

5. Leveraging Support Networks

Remember, you don't have to face this academic journey alone. Cultivate a support network comprising friends, family members, and teachers. Engage in candid conversations to articulate your emotions and concerns. Not only does this provide catharsis, but it also opens doors to valuable insights and coping strategies.

In the pursuit of conquering exam-induced stress, it is imperative to adopt an adaptive approach. Experiment with these proven strategies, adapting them to your unique needs and preferences. As you embark on this transformative journey, make self-care a cornerstone, nurturing your holistic well-being and creating an environment primed for academic triumph.

HOW TO REDUCE EXAM STRESS

TRY THESE TIPS



Stick to a proper routine



Get a good sleep



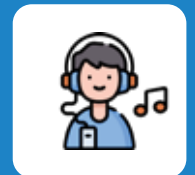
Don't let social media & other things distract you



Avoid junk food & eat a well-balanced diet



Never skip taking rest



Mini rewards are a must: Watch TV or listen to music



Michael Claire

PEER EVALUATOR – FRANCE

Mr. Michael Claire, Chancellor of San Mateo County Community College District since 2019, collaborates with stakeholders and the Board of Trustees to strategize and execute plans, enhancing student access and success. He supervises district staff and college presidents at Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College. Previously, at College of San Mateo, he held various roles, including a 13-year presidency, Vice President of Instruction, Dean of the Technology Division, and business faculty. Experienced in strategic and fiscal management, he chaired five of seven seats.

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ARTICLE 06

ADVANCING EDUCATION THE PROMISE & CHALLENGES OF OPEN-BOOK EXAMS

WRITTEN BY: DR. SUDHEER KUMAAR

As education evolves, so must our assessment methods. One debate that has ignited significant discourse is the feasibility of implementing open-book exams in institutes. Advocates believe these exams cultivate practical skills and alleviate stress, while critics voice concerns over academic standards and cheating risks. This article delves into the intricacies of this discussion, examining both sides, and presenting my perspective on the matter.

ADVANTAGES OF OPEN-BOOK EXAMS

1. Real-World Application

In a professional setting, individuals often reference resources. Open-book exams mirror this reality, effectively preparing students for a world where applying knowledge practically is the key.

2. Deeper Understanding

Open-book exams encourage profound comprehension. Requiring students to interpret and apply information fosters a mastery of subjects beyond mere memorization.

3. Problem-Solving Skills

By design, open-book exams prioritize higher-order thinking. Emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving prepares students for the multifaceted challenges they'll encounter.

4. Reduced Stress

Traditional exams can burden students with memorization, triggering anxiety. Open-book exams alleviate this pressure by allowing resource access, promoting a calm test-taking environment.

5. Learning Independence

Navigating resources becomes a crucial skill in open-book exams. This cultivates self-directed learning, a trait pivotal in nurturing independent thinkers.



DISADVANTAGES OF OPEN-BOOK EXAMS

1. Time Management

Striking a balance between resource exploration and responding effectively within the time limit can prove challenging for some students.

2. Surface-Level Learning

Over-reliance on resources risks preventing true engagement with the material. Superficial understanding could overshadow deeper analysis.

4. Cheating Concerns

The digital era facilitates academic dishonesty. Students may share answers or resort to unauthorized resources, posing authenticity concerns.

3. Assessment Validity

Crafting questions that evaluate understanding and application is pivotal for open-book exams. The challenge lies in creating questions that transcend basic memorization.

5. Subject Suitability

Not all subjects align with open-book exams. Disciplines like mathematics or languages may necessitate assessments that gauge recall & application unaided.



MY OPINION: FINDING THE RIGHT BLEND

1. Adaptive Integration

Introduce open-book exams strategically, aligning them with subjects that encourage critical thinking and practical application.

2. Guided Resource Use

Provide clear guidelines on resource access and citation methods. Students must learn to extract relevant information effectively.

3. Refined Question Design

Formulate questions that demand critical analysis and application. These queries should foster genuine understanding rather than incentivize mere searching.

4. Skill Enhancement

Equip students with resource navigation skills and emphasize engagement with the material prior to exams. This enriches the learning experience.

5. Ethical Upholding

To deter cheating, employ advanced monitoring technologies and instill a sense of academic integrity among students.

As institutes consider the introduction of open-book exams, it's paramount to recognize the multi-faceted nature of this decision. By embracing the potential advantages and addressing the associated challenges, a customized blend of open-book and traditional exams can serve as the foundation for an education system that empowers students to thrive in a complex world.



Dr. Sudheer Kumar

PEER EVALUATOR – INDIA REGION

With a decade-long tenure at the Ministry of Education Department, Govt of India, Dr. Sudheer Kumar brings a wealth of experience to our team. His remarkable portfolio includes the evaluation of over 1500 educational institutes in India. His impactful contributions extend to roles like Teaching Assistanship, IIT Bombay & as a National Service Scheme Member, Govt of India.

ARTICLE 07

RAISING STANDARDS & FOSTERING EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTES

Opening doors to endless opportunities for academic growth and international collaboration with our globally accepted seal of excellence.

Accreditation from GSAAA raises your reputation by confirming your institution's commitment to high standards in education, welfare, and best practices. Accreditation gives students confidence by indicating that your school, college, or university provides excellent instruction, prestigious certifications, and a fulfilling learning experience. This prestigious certification reflects your dedication to quality.

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Whether you represent a school, an institute, or a university, obtaining GSAAA certification is a booming statement of the great education your institution provides. This recognition greatly increases the worldwide reputation & legitimacy of your academic programs among students, peer institutes, and future employers, enabling widespread acceptance of your offerings within the global educational scene.



Increased Trust in Students, Parents & Employers

International accreditation from GSAAA has the transforming capacity to raise trust and acceptance levels inside the institute, resonating with staff, students, and parents alike. This endorsement represents a commitment to quality and excellence, based on our established track record across various institutions, schools, and universities that we have approved. The accrediting symbol acts as a mark of assurance, increasing employee trust in the workplace, fostering pride in students' educational choices, and assuring parents of a secure academic future. The combined experience demonstrates that GSAAA certification functions as a unifying force within the educational environment, improving credibility and promoting a culture of unflinching confidence.



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Annually

Involved in Continuous Improvement of Institutional Performance & Education

Our accreditation process is a collaborative journey dedicated to encouraging continual improvement in institutional performance and education. When you become an approved member of our organization, our committee works closely with you to determine your strengths and limitations. By correcting these flaws, your institute improves academic achievement, faculty management, and organizational features. Our ongoing support does not end with accreditation; we keep in touch on a regular basis to ensure your progress is recorded and supported through monthly reports. With our accrediting committee at your side, you may experience a transforming approach to growth and advancement.

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✔ Audit Report

✔ Faculty & administration training programs



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Becoming an approved member of our organization provides your institute with an extensive range of worldwide promotional opportunities. As a respected member of our extensive network of institutes, you will have several possibilities for worldwide exposure. Display your institute's expertise on a variety of venues, including yearly seminars, workshops, and magazine articles. Increase your visibility by participating in online activities such as podcasts and webinars and providing informative interviews in our acclaimed publications. Accept a thorough promotional trip that increases your institute's global exposure and impact. Join us in opening up a world of promotional opportunities with GSAAA accreditation.



- Annual seminars & workshops
- Ads & Articles in magazines
- Participation in webinars & podcasts

DISCOVER FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES FROM OUR ACCREDITED MEMBERS

“

“We are very appreciative of GSAAA and its efforts in bringing our institute to a global level, as soon as we receive our notarized certificate we will present it to our ministry. We are looking forward to the GSAAA magazine as soon as it launches.”



Center For Parlimentary Studies

“

“GSAAA accreditation transformed us. It's a seal of excellence that attracted diverse, talented students globally. The process refined our curriculum, enhanced support services, and sparked collaboration. We proudly display the GSAAA seal as a defining achievement in our journey toward educational excellence.”



Libertas International University

“

“GSAAA accreditation validates our commitment to quality education, building trust and attracting top students. The process elevated us, guided by valuable insights. We're proud to be GSAAA-accredited, a testament to our dedication.”



Hope Training College of Perth

A close-up photograph of a brown graduation cap with a tassel, resting on a globe. The globe is partially obscured by the cap and has a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

ARTICLE 08

FEATURED ACCREDITED INSTITUTES OF GSAAA

WRITTEN BY: DR. SUDHEER KUMAAR

GSAAA takes pride in its successful accreditation of educational institutes worldwide that align with our rigorous accreditation criteria. This quarter, we are delighted to showcase a selection of institutes that have earned our esteemed accreditation. These institutes stand as a testament to their resolute dedication to providing exceptional education. Through their unwavering commitment to upholding stringent quality standards, they have achieved global certification from GSAAA.



COSTEAS-GEITONAS SCHOOL

The Educational Programmes at CGS aim to bring out each student's unique talents and capabilities while equipping them with the essential tools to develop their critical thinking and analytical skills. The programmes encourage students to combine their learning experiences with real-world situations and promote self-motivation, initiative, and respect for universal human values. The curriculum is designed to provide pupils with specialized knowledge and a global perspective, ensuring they receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for successful entry into higher education and the workforce. To ensure that the educational programmes are implemented effectively, the school relies on a team of experienced modern educators who receive regular training, supervised and evaluated by international organizations. By providing high-quality, world-class education, CGS is committed to shaping well-rounded, responsible global citizens who can excel in an increasingly competitive and ever-changing international environment. The achievement of accreditation status by Costeas-Geitonas School IB clearly demonstrates its unwavering commitment to delivering outstanding academic programs to its students.



JERSEY
COLLEGE
for Girls

JERSEY COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, JERSEY

Nestled in the heart of excellence, Jersey College for Girls proudly stands as a distinguished institution dedicated to nurturing the potential of young women in Jersey, Europe. Its roots trace back to 1880 in Saint Helier when it was founded as the Jersey Ladies' College, later assuming the name Jersey College for Girls. With a legacy firmly rooted in academic brilliance and holistic development, the college offers a transformative educational experience. Their devoted faculty and innovative approach cultivate an environment where students are encouraged to break boundaries, embrace challenges, and uncover their distinct strengths. Beyond academic achievements, Jersey College for Girls instills character, leadership, and a global perspective, ensuring each graduate emerges as an empowered and enlightened individual poised to create a meaningful impact on the world. At Jersey College for Girls, education transcends the ordinary, paving the way for extraordinary futures.

Following a rigorous evaluation of their institution according to our accreditation standards, Jersey College has been granted accreditation by GSAAA. This achievement is a testament to their unwavering commitment to providing quality education. The evaluation visit was conducted by one of our esteemed peer evaluators, Mr. Mathew Patrick. The conferred accreditation stands as a testament to their dedication to excellence in education.



LEAD COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT, INDIA

Yet another distinguished institution that proudly attains our esteemed accreditation is LEAD College of Management, a testament to their unwavering commitment to educational excellence. Established in 2011 and nestled in the heart of Kerala, India, LEAD College of Management is not just an MBA college; it is a beacon of inspiration aimed at nurturing leadership and entrepreneurship among the youth. With a profound dedication to grooming future leaders, LEAD is equipped with a top-tier faculty and cutting-edge facilities that provide students with an enriching learning experience. The college is driven by a team of exceptional individuals, hailing from diverse backgrounds and collectively shining as the guiding stars of the institution. In essence, LEAD's innovative teaching methodologies, relentless pursuit of excellence, and forward momentum have propelled them to the pinnacle of achievement, securing a coveted spot on GSAAA's accredited list. The process commenced with the submission of a comprehensive accreditation form and relevant documents, shedding light on various aspects of Lead College of Management's educational offerings and campus facilities.

After careful review of the application, the visit was scheduled and conducted on 21st July 2023 at 11:00 am, Saturday, with esteemed peer evaluation member, Sudheer Kumar.



HAMBURG CODING SCHOOL, GERMANY

Established in April 2017, Hamburg Coding School stands as a prominent private educational institution dedicated to providing comprehensive programming courses in the vibrant city of Hamburg. With a firm commitment to equipping individuals with valuable tech skills, the school has been a beacon of education, offering a diverse range of courses tailored to meet the evolving demands of the digital era. Through its dedicated approach and hands-on learning experiences, Hamburg Coding School has been shaping the tech talents of tomorrow, fostering a community of learners eager to excel in the ever-changing world of programming.

Recognizing the importance of quality education, the school undertook a rigorous evaluation process conducted by the GSAAA. This comprehensive assessment encompassed a meticulous review of the school's courses, interaction with its faculty, and engagement with its students. We are thrilled to announce that as a result of this thorough evaluation, Hamburg Coding School has earned the prestigious accreditation from GSAAA. This accomplishment underscores the institution's dedication to providing high-quality education and its unwavering commitment to nurturing the tech talents of tomorrow.



BILDUNGSWERK FÜR GESUNDHEITSBERUFE E.V

Bildungswerk für Gesundheitsberufe e.V. is a distinguished institution with a profound legacy in healthcare education. Situated in Erfurt, this state-recognized private higher vocational school has been a stalwart in medical field vocational training since 1990. With an unwavering commitment to excellence, the institute has fostered close collaborations with medical institutions across Thuringia, thereby delivering top-tier education and training.

The institute's comprehensive curriculum encompasses an array of training courses catering to the diverse demands of the medical sector. From physiotherapy and pharmaceutical-technical assistance to nursing and social work, the Bildungswerk für Gesundheitsberufe e.V. offers a wide spectrum of educational opportunities. Additionally, the institute offers specialized continuing education and in-service training programs, such as Hospital Hygiene Specialist and Practical Instructor, designed to enhance professional expertise.

Through rigorous evaluation conducted by GSAAA, the Bildungswerk für Gesundheitsberufe e.V. has achieved a significant milestone – accreditation. This accreditation is a testament to the institute's dedication to providing outstanding education that aligns with industry standards and best practices.



Scuola Montessori
Bilingue di Milano

MONTESSORI BILINGUAL SCHOOL OF MILAN

The Montessori Bilingual School of Milan offers a unique program that is based on the philosophy and educational method of Maria Montessori and on Italian-English bilingual teaching.

The Montessori Bilingual School of Milan has achieved accreditation status, marking a significant milestone in the school's commitment to providing high-quality bilingual education. Accreditation involves a rigorous external evaluation process that assesses a school's curriculum, faculty, facilities, and overall educational quality. By achieving this status, the Montessori Bilingual School of Milan has demonstrated its dedication to continuous improvement and providing its students with an excellent educational experience. The accreditation status not only affirms the school's high standards but also provides reassurance to parents and the broader community that their children are receiving a top-notch education.



ST. LOUIS SCHOOL

As a leading school in Europe, St. Louis School provides an exceptional education to children aged 2 to 18, through the full range of Foundation, Primary and Secondary Schooling. St. Louis is a top-ranking IB school in continental Europe and boasts the highest sustained IB Diploma score in continental Europe over the past 6 years. Having developed its reputation for high-quality education over 25 years, today's school has more than 1500 students, representing over 50 nationalities.

St. Louis School has achieved accreditation status, a significant accomplishment in its commitment to providing top-quality education to its students. Accreditation involves thoroughly evaluating a school's educational standards, curriculum, faculty, facilities, and overall performance. St. Louis School has demonstrated its commitment to continuous improvement and providing its students with an excellent learning environment by achieving this status. This accreditation status affirms the school's high educational standards and serves as a benchmark for ongoing evaluation and improvement. It also confidence parents and the community that their children receive a highquality education at St. Louis School. Achieving accreditation status is a testament to the school's hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment to student success.

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