

JOURNALING ANXIETY

PURPOSE:

Students are able to express themselves in different ways. Some students are comfortable verbally communicating, whereas other students prefer writing down their thoughts. This activity allows students to express their anxiety in written form, which can lessen anxiety.

WHY IT WORKS:

Several studies have shown when students feel a desire to perform at a high level, they worry about the situation and its consequences. These worries compete for the working memory (WM) available for performance. WM is a short-term memory system involved in the control and regulation of a limited amount of information immediately relevant to the task at hand. If the ability of WM to maintain task focus is disrupted because of situation-related worries, performance can suffer. Writing may alleviate the burden that worries place on WM. This allows an opportunity to reevaluate the stressful experience in a manner that reduces the necessity to worry altogether.

DIRECTIONS:

- Write about your anxiety on a piece of paper. When do you become anxious? Physically, how do you feel? Is your heart rate fast? Do your palms sweat? What is going through your minds?
- For students who report getting test anxiety, this activity can be useful to do 30 minutes before the exam.

Source: Ramirez and Beilock. Writing About Test Anxiety Boosts Exam Performance In the Classroom. *Science* 2011. 321 (211). DOI: 10.1126/science.1199427