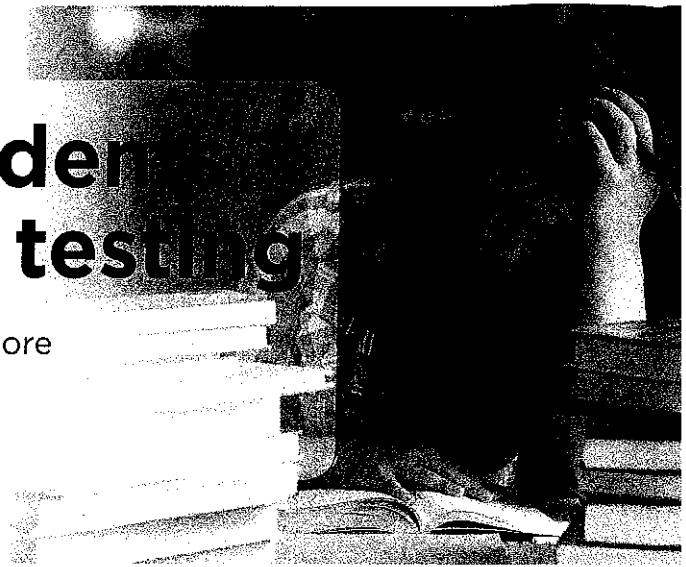


Helping students prepare for testing

Tips to help your students be more prepared come test day

By Barron Whited



During the fall, many 11th and 12th graders will be planning to take the SAT/ACTs in hopes of getting into the college of their choice. As counselors, it is our job to help students to prepare for these tests to the best of their abilities and to familiarize them with the many available resources. Here are a few tips to help your students:

1 Help test anxiety
Many students may have severe test anxiety taking the SAT/ACTs because of being overwhelmed with information and time constraints of the exam. Students may think that if they fail, it will ruin their chances of getting into the college of their choice. This is not true! Students may not realize that colleges look at other things such as grades, letters of recommendation and extra-curricular activities. Students can take the exams several times to help their scores. Counselors can educate students on the types of questions asked on the exams by providing math, reading and writing samples.

2 Make a plan
Students can be better prepared if we help them make a

plan to strategize for the specific type of test they're taking. For example, the ACT exam has a science portion where the SAT doesn't. Students will be more relaxed if they know the expectations prior to the test. Emphasizing to students that they need to "Read Directions Carefully" is a must! Every year students miss basic questions because they do not perform this simple task.

3 Establish time management
Counselors can help students do better on these exams if they teach them how to establish good time management skills. This can be achieved by giving them planners or showing them a version of an electronic calendar. Depending on the student, either way can be very effective. This approach can help them see how many hours each day to spend studying, taking practice exams, and timing themselves on the tests.

4 Know available resources
In the today's society, there are so many resources available at students' finger tips. Counselors can provide resources such as websites, online practice exams,

local tutoring centers and questions of the day. If students have smartphones, there are applications that they can download to receive questions of the day. The more exposure they have to the SAT/ACTs, the better their chances become to get higher scores. It is important to encourage students to take the practice exams as they would on the actual test date. They should sit at a desk in order to get in the mind set of how the day will feel as they take the SAT/ACT.

These tips are just some suggestions that I have found to work for students taking these standardized tests. As counselors, we have the ability to prepare high school students for the SAT/ACTs. As a result, the students will feel more comfortable going into these exams.

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