

How Students Can Learn From Their Mistakes

Testing is primarily used for assessment purposes. It is a way for a teacher to determine if students have mastered the required material. After exams are graded they are often returned to the students with the intention that students will review their incorrect answers and understand their errors. In reality, most students just look at their grade and file the exam away. They never follow through to understand what they did wrong or to learn the concept they missed.

Rather than reviewing exams in class and providing students with the correct answer, allowing students to earn extra points on their grade by making “corrections” will help to ensure that they not only understand why their answer was incorrect but also better understand the concepts. When making corrections, not only must the student show the correct response but also provide a detailed explanation as to how they derived their answer. This includes all steps, calculations and explanations of any concepts, and for exams in multiple choice formats, an explanation as to why all of the other choices are incorrect. By assigning a point value to this exercise, students will be more likely to engage in this activity and complete the assignment.

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