PREVIEW THE EXAM BEFORE TEST DAY

After a large percentage of students begin to fail exams, reflect on student readiness to identify root causes:

- Are students simply not studying to the test format? (e.g. scenario-based Q&A vs. identification quiz)?
- ATI distraction (i.e. is ATI highlighting different material than what you’re testing on a given exam)?
- ATI misalignment (i.e. is ATI disproportionate to other reading & homework or textbook reading)?
- How would you study for your own exam (e.g. flash cards, chapter review, tables in chapters, BE SPECIFIC)?

I. VOTING CARD METHOD (Vanier College, Canada)

“Students can simply hold up colored pieces of paper to indicate answers to multiple choice questions. Engage students in lecture classes by asking cognitively engaging multiple-choice questions to challenge their thinking and foster deep discussion. Students vote with colored cards, try to convince their neighbors”

The point is to check for content mastery and spark discussion to discover knowledge gaps, which then point students in where to place their efforts before exam day. It also highlights the “how-to” aspect in test-taking for your particular exam.

II. CLASSROOM SHOWDOWN

Students are re-grouped via 1-2-3-4. This gets them out of their comfort zone, which simulates testing. In new group formations, the instructor fields questions where groups have the same amount of time per question to answer it as they would on exam day. Gaming formats encourage play and redirect negative emotion. When responses are wrong, listen carefully. It allows you to gently deconstruct logic errors or misunderstandings. Praise what was right even in wrong answers to show far students progressed before going astray.

After 8 questions, the groups are merged from 4 to 2 teams: equal parts low performing and high performing. This is a far superior method to simply splitting the room in half from the start of the game.

Finish the showdown with 4 questions that represent the most difficult content and question type for your upcoming exam. This preview gives students a set of “vital signs” for well they’re prepared and how to focus their efforts.